



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

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Ms Karen Manners
Interim Chair, Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

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5 June 2020

Dear Karen,

Thank you for Mark Gurrey's letter about the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's plans to undertake a thematic review looking at non-accidental injury in children under one. I would however, like to apologise for the delay in responding which is due to the unprecedented circumstance we find ourselves in.

I am responding on behalf of my colleagues in the Home Office and Department for Health and Social Care. This review is welcomed as is the continuing focus on our youngest and most vulnerable children. I understand this age group will also be the focus of your review into sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI). It is deeply concerning that we continue to see so many cases where infants suffer serious harm or are killed as a result of SUDI or non-accidental injury. Each of these cases is a tragedy and the Government is determined to do everything we can to protect these children.

In the current pandemic, where families are under pressure and experiencing escalating tensions and anxiety in the home, we are all aware that more children may be at risk of serious harm. We are alert to that possibility and are working with the local safeguarding partners and their representatives at a national level. Your reports support us to act quickly and with impact when we see such tragic cases. These reviews, which examine how the safeguarding partners can work more effectively to safeguard our children, will play an important role in helping us address this. The findings from both the SUDI review and this review will draw on the experience of local multi-agency partnerships, allowing us to look at how we can learn from previous incidents and improve current practice to ensure children are kept safe.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Panel on the publication of your first national review, looking at adolescents at risk from criminal exploitation. This report is an important contribution to the debate about how we can work together more effectively to counter the threat posed to our young people by criminal gangs. Local partners will welcome the practical learning points that they can draw on immediately to support their practice. We are considering the national recommendations in the report, and I am aware that officials have started discussions with the Panel about how best to take those forward.

I look forward to hearing about the progress of those discussions, and also about the progress of the national reviews on SUDI and NAI. A discussion with the Panel in the coming weeks about this important work and how the lessons we are learning can support the ongoing recovery and reset from Covid-19 would be welcome.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Panel on the publication of its first annual report. The report highlights the outstanding work undertaken by the Panel to ensure lessons are learnt to help reduce the chance of tragedies happening in the future. We look forward to working with the Panel throughout the next year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education