

# Core Competencies

sequeli



For reviewers, chairs and report writers

# Core Competencies

A training curriculum for independent chairs, report writers and reviewers of:

children's serious case reviews  
safeguarding adults reviews  
domestic homicide reviews  
mental health homicide investigations

# How to use the Core Competencies

## Independent chairs, reviewers and report writers

If you are reading this as an independent chair, report writer or reviewer, the Core Competencies can provide a framework for your reviewing and investigation practise.

- You may find it helpful to scan through and see what skills and knowledge you already have and what it could be useful to learn more about.
- If you have identified any gaps, you can think about training and support which could help you.
- If you would like to see whether there are any Sequeli Training Materials which fit with the Core Competencies and match your needs, you can **look at the list on Sequeli's website**. The Training Materials are cross-referenced by number to the Core Competencies so you can tell which ones are covered.
- Sometimes the Core Competencies may just be useful as a reminder of the issues to be covered when undertaking an independent review, investigation or inquiry. It can provide a checklist or structure for your practise.

## Commissioners of reviews and investigations

You may be reading this as a commissioner of services and wonder whether the Core Competencies have any relevance for you.

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, Community Safety Partnership Boards, Safeguarding Adults Boards and NHS Commissioners of mental health investigations can use the Core Competencies to specify the knowledge and skills required when setting up tendering arrangements for independent review and investigation contracts to chair, write reports and carry out reviews.

In fact, the Core Competencies can even be used for joint commissioning of reviews and investigations as they offer core knowledge and skills criteria when there are differing national guidance and procedures.

Sequeli can devise criteria for setting up tender arrangements and provide versions of the Core Competencies designed specifically for use by commissioning bodies. If you wish to talk over the options, please contact us on [downham@sequeli.com](mailto:downham@sequeli.com).

## Trainers

Trainers can use the Core Competencies for constructing their own training for reviewers, chairs and report writers. Or they can ask Sequeli to run training for them.

In either case, if you are a trainer yourself or you arrange training for organisations such as local authorities the Core Competencies can be tailored for your own use.

In particular, the Core Competencies can be adapted for specialist training which is up-to-date with all the current issues concerning each area.

Sequeli has created a **training curriculum for Home Office training of chairs and report writers of domestic homicide reviews** and a similar training framework for **Department for Education training of children's serious case reviewers**.

Specialist Training Materials can also be created based on the Core Competencies.

You may find it helpful to glance at **Sequeli's Integrated Training page**.

***Please note that Core Competencies are subject to copyright and you should contact Sequeli if you wish to make use of them for training or commissioning purposes.***

# Competence 1 Principles

## A Principles Standards Values

- Always being guided by humanity
- Exercising moral courage
- Being fearless in pursuit of the goal of learning lessons
- Incorporating a statement of principles into the terms of reference
- Committing the review to an ethos of fairness and equality
- Carrying out only such investigation as is necessary
- Reaching conclusions as to individual professional practice fairly
- Giving sensitive, appropriate time and attention to victims and their families
- Conducting the review or investigation with compassion
- Providing all with an equal and fair opportunity to express their views
- When receiving evidence, being respectful of all views
- Knowing that families and perpetrator's views on services may be helpful
- Acknowledging that those giving evidence may suffer illness or disability
- Respecting confidentiality of all persons affected by the review
- Respecting and dealing openly with cultural/religious diversity
- Dealing fairly with any disadvantage arising from disability
- Dealing politely with all who have contact with the review
- Recognizing the stress caused by reviews and investigations
- Maintaining objectivity, open-mindedness and impartiality
- Remaining independent of commissioners and providers
- Keeping in mind accountability to commissioners, victims and the public
- Being thorough, accurate and meticulous
- Promoting openness and transparency in the review procedure
- Carrying out reviews which are time and cost proportionate
- Being aware of the limits of the review

# Competence 2 Core knowledge

## A Law

- The legal framework for investigations and reviews
- Non-statutory inquiries and inquiries under the Inquiries Act 2005
- Inquests and parallel criminal, care and negligence proceedings
- The requirement of an effective investigation under Article 2 ECHR
- 'Salmon' and 'Scott' requirements of fairness to those giving evidence
- Confidentiality, Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The law concerning consent to disclosure of confidential documents
- Knowledge of disciplinary proceedings/relevant employment law
- Articles 8 and 10 ECHR as they concern anonymity and publication of reports
- Application of the Equality Act 2010 to review procedure

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|----------|---|---|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Context<br/>Procedure<br/>Research</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge of key inquiries, reviews and investigations</li> <li>■ General knowledge of all review and investigation procedures and guidance</li> <li>■ General knowledge of procedures in England, Scotland and Wales</li> <li>■ AND detailed knowledge of at least one procedure and guidance</li> <li>■ The political, economic and social context of reviews</li> <li>■ A knowledge of relevant research concerning reviews</li> <li>■ Knowledge of models of good review and investigation practice</li> </ul> |
| <b>C</b> | <b>Systems<br/>methodologies</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Knowledge of the principles and methods of Root Cause Analysis</li> <li>■ OR knowledge of one other recognized systems methodology</li> <li>■ Knowledge of their place in review and investigation procedures</li> <li>■ Optional advanced systems-approach training</li> </ul>  |

## Competence 3 Core skills in conduct of review

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|----------|---|---|
| <b>A</b> | <b>Responsibility<br/>for the<br/>review or<br/>investigation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Negotiating terms of appointment and indemnity arrangements</li> <li>■ Agreeing responsibilities and accountability to commissioners</li> <li>■ Agreeing roles as between chairs and report writers, if separate</li> <li>■ Ensuring the review/investigation team is independent</li> <li>■ Ensuring the review is able to provide cultural/religious expertise</li> <li>■ Ensuring there is issue-specific expertise</li> <li>■ Communicating with a perpetrator to obtain consent to disclosure</li> <li>■ Ensuring the perpetrator has access to legal advice, where possible</li> <li>■ Agreeing terms of reference with commissioners</li> <li>■ Writing a procedure for the review/investigation</li> <li>■ Agreeing scope of the review/investigation with commissioners</li> <li>■ Taking into account any Article 2 ECHR requirements</li> <li>■ Selecting the best methodology for the review</li> <li>■ Agreeing a methodology for jointly commissioned reviews</li> <li>■ Costing the review/investigation</li> <li>■ Making publication/anonymity arrangements at the outset</li> <li>■ Ensuring administrative support is adequate and roles clear</li> <li>■ Ensuring there is independent counselling support for families</li> </ul> |
| <b>B</b> | <b>Management<br/>of the<br/>review or<br/>investigation</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Working effectively on a panel and with the panel clerk</li> <li>■ Obtaining documentation from all relevant agencies</li> <li>■ Making sure interpreters are arranged where necessary</li> <li>■ Deciding upon systems for managing complex information</li> <li>■ Setting up hearings/arranging transcripts</li> <li>■ Chairing hearings</li> <li>■ Managing costs</li> <li>■ Keeping commissioners informed of progress</li> </ul>  |

## Competence 4 Communicating and analysing

### A Obtaining information

- Asking questions to obtain evidence
- Using non-judgmental interviewing
- Cognitive interview approaches
- Adopting active listening skills

### B Hearing from victims' families and perpetrators

- Inviting contributions from families, community and/or the public
- Acknowledging the emotional impact of the incident/review
- Dealing sensitively with emotions during a hearing
- Hearing evidence from children and victims' families
- Hearing from the perpetrator and his/her family/carers
- Hearing evidence where there is mental disorder/lack of capacity
- Asking for opinions on ways to improve services

### C Hearing from professionals, service providers, commissioners, experts and others

- Deciding on documentation needed and from which agencies
- Using internal reviews/individual management reviews
- Seeking written and oral evidence – writing 'Salmon letters'
- Acknowledging stress associated with the incident and review
- Managing solicitor/trade union/professional body representation
- Hearing from professionals and teams, individually or together
- Understanding organisations/teams
- Deciding whether independent expert evidence is needed
- Questioning experts and professionals
- Hearing from community/voluntary/interest/user groups
- Seeking opinions on possible recommendations
- Notification of potential criticism in reports – 'Scott' procedures

### D Analysing information

- Compiling a chronology/tabular timeline/genome
- Differentiating between information, evidence and opinion
- Dealing with conflicting accounts of events/inconsistent opinions
- Analysing complex information
- Using Root Cause Analysis or systems analysis
- Applying deductive reasoning
- Understanding risk, error, hindsight bias and outcome bias
- Reaching conclusions as to the facts
- Dealing with issues of professional responsibility and blame
- Reaching conclusions as to predictability and foreseeability

## Competence 5 Report writing and publication

### A Writing the report

- Structuring the final report
- Writing desktop reviews, status reports and implementation reports
- Setting out the reasons for selecting review scope and methodology

# Competence 5 Report writing and publication

## A Writing the report (continued)

- Incorporating Root Cause Analysis/systems analysis diagrams
- Naming and anonymising in reports
- Writing as part of a team
- Working with chairs, if separate from report writing
- Using internal reviews and individual management reviews
- Writing findings and conclusions based on evidence
- Writing about opinions and expert evidence
- Including victim, family and perpetrator views in the report
- Using recommendations suggested during the review
- Writing about opinions and expert evidence
- Writing findings and conclusions based on evidence
- Including victim, family and perpetrator views in the report
- Using recommendations suggested during the review
- Consulting providers over draft recommendations
- Making recommendations which are capable of implementation
- Avoiding 'the world should be better' recommendations
- Writing recommendations arising from facts or root causes
- Cross-referencing recommendations to the facts
- Addressing recommendations to providers for implementation
- Writing an executive summary

## B Presentation and publication of the report

- Dealing with issues of anonymity and confidentiality
- Agreeing an action plan with commissioners for publication
- Providing victims/families/perpetrator with embargoed report
- Pre-publication meeting with victim's and perpetrator's families
- Ensuring families are offered independent counselling support
- Presenting the report to commissioners
- Presenting the report at a press conference
- Dealing with the media
- Explaining the review's scope and methodology
- Deciding upon circulation of the report
- Explaining there is a further stage of follow-up
- Seeking opinions on possible recommendations
- Notification of potential criticism in reports – 'Crampton letters'

## C Post-report follow-up

- Agreeing an implementation plan with commissioners
- Arranging a date for six/twelve month review of implementation
- Considering the involvement of victims/families/service users
- Seeking evidence as to implementation of recommendations
- Writing an independent implementation progress report
- Presenting a progress report to commissioners/public/victims
- Helping to explain and disseminate the report

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