

# Principles *Applying principles*

## Core Competency 1A: Principles, standards and values

### A principled journey

Begin by adopting **proportionality** on the subject of scope and methodology... showing **leadership** and *clarity in your own mind* as to purpose of the review and its limits... *politeness* when making contact with *families* professionals and organisations.... **communicating the learning spirit** to everyone... putting procedures in place to ensure conclusions as to individual practice are *dealt with fairly*... ensuring you are perceived as **impartial, objective, open-minded and independent**, but also as having *compassion, recognising the stress* associated with the review... being *guided by humanity* when hearing from individuals... exercising **moral courage** to probe when more information is needed and being **fearless** in pursuit of the goal of learning lessons... whilst being **sensitive** to families, *aware of their grieving*... and giving all individuals an **equal and fair opportunity to express their views**, being **respectful** of those views..., **dealing fairly with disability, cultural and religious diversity**...then when analysing and reaching conclusions being **thorough, accurate and meticulous**... so that the report is based on *openness and transparency* and published so that it satisfies **accountability to commissioners, family victims and the public**.

Approach
Be guided by humanity
Exercise moral courage
Show leadership, with a clear understanding of the purpose of the review
Be objective, open-minded, impartial and independent
Be fearless in pursuit of the goal of learning lessons
Interface with people
Communicate the learning spirit of the review to others
Deal politely with all who have contact with the review
Recognise the stress associated with a review
Respect the confidentiality of all persons affected by the review
Reach conclusions as to individual professional practice fairly
Conduct the review with compassion
Give sensitive, appropriate time and attention to victims' families and friends, being aware of their grieving
Respect and deal openly and fairly with cultural and religious diversity, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other protected characteristic, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
When receiving evidence be respectful of all views
Provide all those involved with the review an equal and fair opportunity to express their views

## Why principles?

Where national review procedures exist, guidance ensures that principles such as fairness are incorporated into the review. Procedures can help standardise reviews and ensure consistency of approach.

But what if there are no procedures? Can a review manage without them? The Department for Education not only thinks so, it has gone as far as relying only on principles in its national guidance on children's serious case reviews.

## Principles in children's serious case reviews

***Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*** March 2013 lists in 'Chapter 4: Learning and improvement framework' a set of principles which LSCBs should apply to **all** reviews, including serious case reviews. At Paragraph 9 (page 66) these are:

- 'a culture of continuous **learning and improvement** across the organisations that work together....
- the approach taken to reviews should be **proportionate**...;
- reviews of serious cases should be led by individuals who are **independent** of the case under review and of the organisations whose actions are being reviewed;
- **professionals must be involved fully** in reviews and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith;
- **families, including surviving children, should be invited to contribute** to reviews....;
- final reports of **SCRs must be published**... The impact of SCRs.... must also be described in LSCB annual reports and will inform inspections; and
- **improvement must be sustained through regular monitoring** and follow up....'

Paragraph 11 states 'LSCBs may use any learning model which is consistent with the principles in this guidance, including the systems methodology recommended by Professor Munro'.

Procedure
Be thorough, accurate and meticulous
Carry out reviews which are time, scope and cost proportionate
Promote openness and transparency in the review procedure
Keep in mind accountability to commissioners, victims and the public
Be aware of the limits of the review.

Any application of the principles in Paragraphs 9 and 10 above will be considered by the Department for Education to be consistent with systems methodology.

Sequeli's principles have been incorporated into DfE training materials created by Sequeli as part of a training programme for reviewers and LSCB Chairs. Sequeli recommends that if you are a children's serious case reviewer, you consult that [training materials document](#).

## Ensuring principles, standards and values permeate the review

We suggest the review makes a statement of commitment to principles, standards and values. How that is done will be a matter for the review. For example, the terms of reference or framework for the review could include commitment to an ethos of fairness, equality, openness and transparency, with reference to the Equality Act 2010. Or there could be a separate document provided to all who have contact with the review.

August 2014