1. Single Unified Safeguarding Review

The Welsh Government statutory guidance issued in accordance with the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 requires Safeguarding Boards to have a process in place to manage complaints in relation to SUSR/ Adult/ Child Practice Reviews to take into account the multi-agency nature of Practice Reviews.

What can be Complained About?

Any person directly involved or affected in the SUSR process can make a complaint that will be considered by the Board. Complaints will be considered in respect of one or more of the following aspects of the process:

a. The decision on whether or not to proceed with a SUSR Adult/Child Practice Reviews
b. The process followed in terms of adherence to the statutory guidance

Please note that once an SUSR is published the complaints process cannot be used.

Stage 1 - Resolution by the Business Manager

The North Wales Safeguarding Board is committed to resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity and at a local level where this is possible.

A complaint can be made in writing, email or by telephone to the Safeguarding Business Manager. The Business Manager will inform the Chair of the Panel who will, in turn, notify the reviewers of the complaint.

The business manager will provide a written response to the complainant within 10 working days. The written response will also provide information to the complainant on the next stage, should they be dissatisfied with the response received.

A request may be made that any further communication regarding the matter is in written format for reference.

Based on the details of the complaint consideration will be given as to suspend/convene the SUSR by the complaints Panel/ Chair. (This is noted further down)

Stage 2 - Inter-agency Complaints Panel

The Business Manager will convene an Inter-agency North Wales Safeguarding Complaints Panel. The panel should consist of a minimum of three representatives from the relevant Board, one of whom will act as chair. The Panel shall not include any individual that has had direct involvement in the case/review and therefore will ensure maximum independence within this process.

The Business Manager will circulate all relevant documentation to members of the Panel including the original complaint and any relevant reports.

The complainant will be advised of the meeting and be provided with an opportunity to attend. They will be entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choice to support them as appropriate but not represent them.

At the Panel meeting the chair will be responsible for:

- Introducing the meeting and explaining its purpose;
- Explaining what the Panel will and will not consider;
- Outlining any previous measures that have attempted to resolve the complaint and any background issues;
- Providing the complainant with an opportunity to make a statement in person or in writing to the panel and call evidence relating to his/her complaint. (If the complainant wishes to submit information in writing, this must be received by the Panel at least 10 working days prior to the Panel hearing date).

Both the Panel and the complainant may call witnesses.

The Panel has 8 weeks from the date that the complaint was **signed and received** to inform the complainant of their findings.

Decision of the Panel

The Complaints Panel will determine:

- Whether the process followed adhered to the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, SUSR guidance
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the proper observation of the statutory guidance;
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the information available to the original Sub Group meeting or SUSR Panel.

The Panel Chair will write to the complainant informing them of the panel decision, within 10 working days, and provide a rationale for this. Copies of the letter will be sent to:

- The child/adult at risk, if appropriate;
- Any other person with care-giving responsibility if appropriate;
- The Co-Chairs of either the North Wales Safeguarding Board;
- The Chair of SUSR Safeguarding Case Review Group;
- The Chair of the SUSR panel, if appropriate;
- Any other relevant person involved in the case that is identified by the Panel.

The Complaints Panel can recommend the original SUSR Case Review Group meeting or SUSR Panel is reconvened to take account of the Complaint Panel's findings. A different independent Chair must be nominated, and the meeting reconvened within 15 working days of the Panel decision.

If any part of the complaint is upheld the Complaints Panel will refer their recommendations to the reconvened meeting. The original decision will remain in place until the reconvened meeting has taken place.