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Background

There is a [statutory requirement to review the deaths of all children under the age of 18](#), regardless of gestation or whether the death was expected or not.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is a multi agency panel that undertakes these reviews. Cases are discussed anonymously with the aim of trying to prevent similar deaths and identify risk factors intrinsic to the child, family and environment or service provision. Every death is categorised, and the panel decide whether there were any modifiable factors. Any themes, trends and areas of good practice are also identified.

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Why it matters

This briefing is about how to report into the panel when you have been working with a child, and their family, who has died.

Agencies should use this [link to notify the Child Death Overview Panel \(CDOP\)](#) of a child death. The link can also be found on the Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership website. It is vital that all the questions on the notification form are completed accurately and with as much information as possible. Locally, data provided supports CDOP reviews and analysis. Nationally, the [NCMD](#) consider data from CDOPs throughout England in their analysis and thematic reviews.

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Information

In accordance with statutory guidance, [you or your organisation](#) may be asked to complete a [Reporting Form B](#). The professional who knew the child or family best should complete the form.

It is important to complete the form with as much information as is available, including things such as parental smoking status, gestational age and maternal BMI. Father and sibling details are often unknown to the CDOP, and it is vital that these are included.

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You should answer every question with as much detail as you can and where information is not available within your organisation, please make this explicit on the form. If you are aware of the involvement of other agencies, you should inform the CDOP so that all agencies can be contacted at the earliest opportunity. This prevents delays in cases being reviewed.

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Information received by the CDOP are reviewed by panel members and form part of case discussions. So far information provided to the panel has been used to:

- Inform local campaigns, including safer sleep and ICON.
- Extract learning on a single and multi agency level to inform practice and prevention.
- Create new health pathways.
- Inform system wide work on the prevention of child deaths.
- Provide evidence to services (genetic counselling for families where parents are related).

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Questions to consider

- How will we ensure that enough time is allocated for the research and completion of reporting forms?
- How do I source the relevant information?
- How do I obtain information about the father?
- How do I ensure that the forms are completed on time?
- Would anyone in your service like to observe a meeting?

Links

[Demonstration video – Reporting Form B](#)

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What to do

Notification forms should be submitted within the first 24 hours following a death, or the next working day.

There is a statutory deadline of 3 weeks to return reporting forms to the CDOP team. You may have to do some research to find some information requested. Ensure that you are given time to complete it, raise this with your line manager if you need additional guidance or support.