

Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) Commissioning Strategy

October 2026

Document control and approval

Control	Detail
Document owner	Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)
Author	Ruth Lacey Head of Safeguarding, QA and PCFSW, Children and Families Service, LB Redbridge
Responsible group	Learning and Improvement Subgroup
Approval body	RSCP
Version and date	Draft Version 1.0, August 2026 Version 1, October 2026
Review date	October 2028, or earlier if national requirements change
Applies to	LCSPRs and, where proportionate, other commissioned multi-agency safeguarding learning reviews

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1. Purpose and Scope

This Strategy sets out how the Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) will commission, appoint, supervise and quality assure independent Reviewers and authors for Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs). It also provides a proportionate framework for other multi-agency safeguarding learning reviews where an external Reviewer is commissioned.

Its purpose is to secure reviews that are legally compliant, independent, analytically rigorous, child-centred, trauma-informed, anti-racist and capable of producing practical system improvement and learning. It supports transparent decision-making, fair procurement, effective oversight and demonstrable impact on multi-agency safeguarding practice.

Core outcome

Every commissioned review should help the RSCP understand not only what happened, but why the safeguarding system operated as it did, what this meant for the child, and what must change to improve future help and protection.

2. Statutory and National Framework

Commissioning decisions will be made with regard to the following framework:

- [UK Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#), particularly the chapter on child safeguarding practice reviews and the responsibilities of safeguarding partners for commissioning and supervising Reviewers.
- [Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#), which underpin the review framework and relevant agency duties.
- [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: Guidance for Safeguarding Partners \(June 2025\)](#), which provides additional non-statutory guidance on the review process, children's experiences, intersectionality, race, ethnicity and culture, publication and tracking learning.
- The [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel briefing "It's Silent": Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children \(March 2025\)](#), including its recommendations and reflective questions for safeguarding partnerships and Reviewers.
- Any subsequent statutory guidance, Panel guidance, national review findings or local RSCP policy adopted after this strategy is approved.

Where documents have different legal status, statutory requirements take precedence. Panel guidance and thematic learning will inform the RSCP's standard of good commissioning and review practice.

3. Commissioning Principles

Principle	Commissioning expectation
Independence	The Reviewer must be free from real or perceived conflicts that could compromise confidence in the Review.
Child-centred and trauma-informed	The child's identity, voice, daily-lived experience, relationships, safety and experience of services must remain central. Engagement must minimise avoidable distress, re-traumatisation and respect family circumstances.
Systems-focused	The Review should analyse the conditions that shaped practice and multi-agency decision-making, without defaulting to hindsight or individual blame.
Proportionate and timely	The scope, method, resource and timescale should reflect the complexity of the incident and the learning sought.
Inclusive and anti-racist	Race, racism, racial bias, ethnicity, culture, faith and intersectionality must be considered explicitly and not treated as peripheral or optional.
Evidence-led	Findings must be clearly connected to evidence, distinguish fact from interpretation, and reflect relevant research and national learning.
Learning to impact safeguarding practice	Outputs should support measurable improvement and learning, not simply describe deficits. Actions should be specific, owned, monitored and evaluated.

4. Governance and Decision-Making

Statutory safeguarding partners retain collective accountability for the decision to commission a LCSPR, the appointment and supervision of the Reviewer, the quality of the final report, publication decisions and the response to learning. Commissioning activity may be coordinated through the RSCP Independent Scrutineer and/or RSCP Partnerships Manager, or a formally delegated group, but accountability remains with the safeguarding partners. Key steps are:

- recording the decision to commission, the rationale, scope;
- agree the budget, procurement route, timetable and responsible commissioning lead;
- confirm Reviewer independence, capability and conflicts of interest before appointment;
- provide proportionate access to information, practitioners, children and families;
- maintain constructive leadership and oversight without compromising Reviewer independence; and
- resolve challenges promptly and document significant decisions.

5. Commissioning Pathway

1. Define the requirement

Translate the Rapid Review decision and Child Safeguarding Review Panel feedback into a clear brief, learning questions, scope, timescale, outputs and budget.

2. Market engagement or invitation

Use a proportionate and transparent route that supports a diverse field of suitably experienced Reviewers.

3. Written submission

Require a methodology, relevant experience, anti-racist and culturally responsive approach, delivery plan, fees, references and conflict declaration.

4. Evaluation and interview

Score against published criteria, test analytical thinking and explore how the applicant would engage families and address race, racism and intersectionality.

5. Appointment and contract

Issue a written agreement covering scope, deliverables, milestones, confidentiality, data handling, publication, intellectual property, escalation and termination.

6. Inception and scoping

Agree the review plan, information request, engagement strategy, governance arrangements and any required refinement to terms of reference.

7. Delivery and oversight

Use scheduled checkpoints focused on progress, risks, participation, evidence quality.

8. Quality assurance and sign-off

Undertake staged quality assurance of the draft and final report, including explicit scrutiny of child-centredness, systems analysis and treatment of race and bias.

9. Publication, dissemination and impact

Complete required notifications, publication activity, accessible learning products, action planning and impact evaluation.

6. Reviewer Selection and Due Diligence

6.1 Essential capability

- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to LCSPRs.
- Demonstrable experience of high-quality safeguarding reviews or comparable complex multi-agency analysis.
- Ability to engage sensitively and effectively with children, families and practitioners.
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant safeguarding research.
- Ability to recognise the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together.
- Ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of individuals and agencies at the time, rather than through hindsight.
- Clear, accessible and persuasive written and verbal communication.
- Capacity to deliver within the required timescale and budget.

6.2 Anti-racist and culturally responsive capability

- Knowledge of the findings and recommendations in ["It's Silent" Race, racism and safeguarding children, 2025](#).
- Ability to recognise, name and analyse racism, racial bias, stereotypes, disproportionality and structural inequality where evidenced.
- Cultural humility and the ability to explore identity, culture and faith without stereotyping or cultural relativism.
- Ability to apply an intersectional lens, including the interaction of race with disability, sex, gender, poverty, age, migration experience, language, faith and other factors.
- A clear plan for culturally sensitive engagement and, where needed, interpreters, advocates or trusted community support.

6.3 Independence and conflicts

Applicants must declare all actual, potential or perceived conflicts, including previous employment, consultancy, professional relationships, involvement in the case, or interests connected to participating agencies. The Partnership will record its assessment and any mitigation. A Reviewer will not be appointed where a conflict would reasonably undermine confidence in independence.

7. Required Review Methodology

The commissioning brief will require a methodology proportionate to the review and capable of producing credible systems learning. As a minimum, proposals should address:

- How the child's lived experience and identity will be reconstructed and kept central.
- How information will be gathered, triangulated and analysed.
- How practitioners and leaders will contribute safely and reflectively.
- How children and family members will be offered meaningful involvement.
- How race, ethnicity, culture, faith, racism, racial bias and intersectionality will be examined.
- If required how will experts by experience panel be engaged and supported.
- How relevant research, national reviews and local context will inform analysis.
- How divergent accounts, evidential gaps and uncertainty will be handled.
- How emerging safeguarding concerns or serious governance issues will be escalated.
- How findings and recommendations will be tested for accuracy, fairness, feasibility and impact.

8. Race, Racism, Culture and Intersectionality

The RSCP adopts the learning from [“It’s Silent” Race, racism and safeguarding children, March 2025](#), as a standing commissioning expectation. Reviewers must not wait for racism to be alleged before considering whether race, ethnicity, culture, faith, racial bias or structural inequalities influenced the child’s experience, access to help, professional interpretation, risk assessment, decision-making or service response.

Required analytical position

The review must make visible what was considered. Where race or racism is relevant, it should be named and analysed. Where the Reviewer concludes it was not material to a particular line of analysis, the report should still demonstrate that the issue was consciously considered rather than omitted by default.

The Reviewer will be expected to consider:

- Whether the child’s race, ethnicity, culture, faith, language and family context were accurately recorded and meaningfully understood.
- Whether stereotypes, adultification, credibility judgements, assumptions about parenting or service engagement, or racialised interpretations may have affected responses.
- Whether professionals showed cultural curiosity while maintaining a clear focus on harm and the child’s rights.
- Whether the child and family experienced racism or perceived professional responses as racist, and how concerns were heard and addressed.
- Whether service design, thresholds, pathways, resource allocation or organisational cultures created unequal access, response or outcomes.
- How race intersected with other identities, vulnerabilities and inequalities.
- The strengths, protective factors and assets within the child’s family and community, avoiding deficit-based narratives.
- Whether the composition and expertise of the Review Panel are sufficient for the analysis required.

9. Children, Families and Practitioner Involvement

The Reviewer must provide a clear participation plan. Involvement should be purposeful, voluntary, accessible and trauma-informed. Participants should understand the Review’s purpose, what can and cannot be changed, how their information may be used, and how they will be updated.

- Offer flexible methods and timing, taking account of communication, language, disability, faith and cultural needs.
- Provide appropriate preparation, support and debriefing.
- Avoid repeatedly asking families to retell distressing experiences where information can be obtained safely in another way.
- Explain how participants can comment on factual accuracy without transferring authorship or decision-making responsibility.
- Create psychologically safer opportunities for practitioners to reflect on system conditions, judgement and bias.
- Record and address barriers to participation, including mistrust associated with racism or previous service experiences.

10. Contract Management and Quality Assurance

10.1 Contract requirements

- Named deliverables, milestones, final deadline and payment schedule.

- Expected meetings, learning events and revisions included in the fee.
- Information governance, confidentiality, secure storage and disposal requirements.
- Compliance with lawful information-sharing and data protection requirements.
- Ownership, publication and permitted use of review products.
- Process for variations, delay, non-performance, disputes and termination.
- Immediate escalation route for current safeguarding concerns.

10.2 Quality assurance gates

Gate	Minimum assurance
Inception	Independence, methodology, scope, participation, equality analysis and timetable agreed.
Emerging learning	Evidence base, systems themes, family and practitioner involvement, and treatment of race and intersectionality tested.
Draft report	Factual accuracy process complete; analysis is supported; child's experience is central; language is respectful; recommendations are proportionate.
Final report	Required revisions addressed; legal and publication checks complete; learning products and action planning arrangements agreed.

11. Outputs, Publication and Learning Impact

The contract should specify outputs required for the Review. These may include:

- Practitioner and/or leadership learning events.
- Final Overview Report, including recommendations, suitable for publication upon approval, following presentation to the RSCP.
- Executive or accessible learning summary.
- An explicit account of how race, ethnicity, culture, racism, racial bias and intersectionality were considered.

The Partnership will track how learning is disseminated, translated into action and evaluated. Closure should be based on evidence of change and impact, not solely completion of actions.

12. Conflicts, Information Governance and Escalation

- Conflicts will be reviewed at appointment. New conflicts must be declared immediately.
- Information will be shared on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis through secure routes.
- The Reviewer must follow agreed arrangements for retention, return and secure disposal of information.
- Any immediate concern that a child may be at risk must be escalated without delay through agreed safeguarding routes.
- Material concerns about obstruction, delay, evidence integrity or Reviewer performance will be escalated to the commissioning lead and safeguarding partners.

Appendix A: Mandatory procurement requirement

Suggested mandatory wording for invitations to quote, tenders and contracts

"The Independent Reviewer must demonstrate an ability to undertake safeguarding reviews through an anti-racist, culturally responsive and trauma-informed lens. In accordance with the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report 'It's Silent: Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children' \(2025\)](#), the Reviewer will explicitly consider the potential impact of race, ethnicity, culture, faith, racism and racial bias on children's experiences, professional decision-making, multi-agency safeguarding practice and organisational learning."

The following supplementary requirement should be included where appropriate:

Supplementary evidence requirement

Potential Reviewers Expression of Interest must explain how this requirement will be reflected in their methodology, engagement with children and families, analysis, report structure and quality assurance. They must provide evidence of relevant knowledge or experience and identify any additional expertise needed within the Review Panel.

Appendix B: Suggested evaluation criteria

Criterion	Indicative weighting
Safeguarding review expertise and statutory knowledge	20%
Proposed systems methodology and analytical rigour	15%
Child-centred, trauma-informed and family engagement approach	10%
Anti-racist, culturally responsive and intersectional capability	20%
Independence, conflicts and professional credibility	5%
Delivery plan, capacity and risk management	5%
Cost and overall value	25%

Appendix C: Commissioning checklist

- ☐ Decision and rationale recorded
- ☐ Statutory and Panel notifications considered/completed
- ☐ Scope and learning questions agreed
- ☐ Budget and procurement route authorised
- ☐ Mandatory procurement wording inserted
- ☐ Evaluation panel and scoring criteria agreed
- ☐ Reviewer independence and conflicts checked
- ☐ References and relevant experience checked
- ☐ Methodology addresses child lived experience and systems learning
- ☐ Methodology explicitly addresses race, racism, culture and intersectionality
- ☐ Child and family participation plan agreed
- ☐ Information-sharing and data security arrangements agreed
- ☐ Contract, milestones and escalation routes agreed
- ☐ Quality assurance gates scheduled
- ☐ Publication and communication plan agreed
- ☐ Learning action plan and impact evaluation route agreed

Appendix D: Suggested terms of reference questions

- What was the child's lived experience, including their identity, relationships, strengths, needs and experience of help and protection?
- How did practitioners understand and respond to race, ethnicity, culture, faith, language and the family's context?
- Did racism, racial bias, stereotypes, adultification, structural inequality or discriminatory assumptions influence assessment, credibility judgements, decisions or services?
- How did race intersect with disability, sex, gender, poverty, age, migration experience, faith or other factors?
- Were the child's and family's views sought, heard and acted upon, and were barriers to engagement understood?
- What system conditions helped or hindered effective multi-agency safeguarding?
- How did leadership, supervision, workload, information systems, thresholds, resources and organisational culture shape practice?
- What examples of effective practice and protective action should be sustained?
- What changes are necessary, who owns them, and how will their impact on children be evaluated?

Note: This strategy is a governance and commissioning document. It should be reviewed against the version of legislation and statutory guidance in force at the time of each commission and alongside the RSCP principle, priorities, procurement rules and information governance requirements.