

Leeds Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Serious Case Review Policy and Procedure

A. Introduction

Some safeguarding adults cases raise issues that are beyond the scope of the multi-agency enquiry, such as the potential for institutional abuse, risks to people not supported by Leeds Adult Social Care, concerns about multi-agency working and risk management, poor communication and practice. In such cases a serious case review will consider these issues and recommend actions to address them.

The overall purpose of a serious case review is to promote learning and improve practice.

This procedure is based on guidance set out by the ADASS¹.

B. Purpose of the serious case review

The purpose of having a serious case review is not to re-investigate or to apportion blame but is to:

1. Establish what lessons may be learnt from the circumstances of the case and the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard vulnerable adults;
2. Review the effectiveness of procedures;
3. Inform and improve local inter-agency practice;
4. Improve practice by acting on learning and developing best practice;
5. Prepare or commission an overview report which brings together and analyses the findings of the various reports from agencies in order to make recommendations for future action;
6. Recommend further enquiries or investigations arising from the review, preparing terms of reference and recommending responsible agencies for such enquiries or investigations.

C. Criteria for serious case review

The Leeds Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (LSAPB) will undertake the lead responsibility for conducting a serious case review.

The LSAPB will consider conducting a Serious Case Review when:

a.) a vulnerable adult dies (including death by suicide) and where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in their death;

or,

b.) a group of vulnerable adults has sustained any of the following:

- i. A life threatening injury;
- ii. Sexual abuse causing serious harm;
- iii. Serious or permanent impairment of development through abuse or neglect;
- iv. Serious inhuman or degrading treatment;
- v. Abuse or neglect arising from institutional factors.

¹ Safeguarding Adults, ADSS 2005

and,

- i. Where the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services worked together to safeguard vulnerable adults.

The LSAPB can also consider conducting a serious case review into any incident(s) or case(s) involving vulnerable adult(s) where it is clearly in the public interest to do so.

The Secretary of State also has authority under the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to cause an enquiry to be held where he or she consider it advisable.

D. Principles underpinning the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board serious case review policy

1. The Leeds Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board will be the only body which commissions safeguarding adults serious case reviews in Leeds.
2. The Board will publicise the criteria under which a serious case review will be considered and the process under which application should be made.
3. The Coroner, MPs and Elected Members may make requests for a Serious Case Review.
4. All Serious Case Reviews will be conducted in a manner that is sensitive and takes account of matters relating to race, culture, religion, sexuality, gender and disability.

E. Referral process

The need for a serious case requiring a review may be identified by any agency or professional if they believe the case fulfils the criteria. The referral will be passed to the Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Serious Case Review Sub-group (SCRG) for consideration.

The SCRG will consider the request at its next scheduled meeting, or if this is not within a fortnight of receipt of the referral, an extraordinary meeting will be arranged.

If the SCRG decides that the request does not meet the criteria for a serious case review, the group will consider whether or not the matter should reviewed via other learning processes, such as individual agency review. The Chair of the SCRG will write to the referrer explaining the reasons for not pursuing a serious case review and making suggestions for alternative learning processes as appropriate.

If the SCRG agrees that the referred case does meet the criteria for a serious case review, the SCRG Chair will advise the Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board of the reasons for the Group's decision and recommending that a serious case review be commissioned. The Independent Chair of the Board will make the final decision as to whether or not a serious case review will be held.

The Safeguarding Adults Partnership Manager will advise the Car Quality Commission that a serious case review is being commissioned.

F. Appointment of the Independent Author and Chair of the Serious Case Review Panel

The Chair of the SCRG will advise the referrer of the decision to proceed and the SCRG will decide who to appoint to be the independent author of the serious case review and chair the review panel

(IA). The Chair of the SCRG will meet with the IA and agree the initial scope of the serious case review and set draft timescales for the review.

G. Contact with victim(s)' family and significant others

The family, friends and other people close to the victim(s) have a valuable role in the serious case review process and the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board values the importance of their views and also recognises that this process can be difficult. As such, the SCRG Chair and Safeguarding Adults Partnership Manager (SAPM), who has responsibility for the Serious Case Review process will offer to meet with those family members, close friends and significant others of the victim(s) as soon as the decision has been made to proceed with a serious case review in order to hear their views and explain the process.

The Independent Author will also meet with these people prior to the setting the terms of reference for the serious case review in order that he or she has heard their perspective. The SAPM will keep the family, close friends and significant others of the victim(s) regularly informed of progress throughout the review.

At the conclusion of the serious case review, and once the overview report and executive summary have been accepted by the Director of Adult Social Services and the Independent Chair of the Board, the IA will arrange to meet with these people to explain the serious case review conclusions and the findings and recommendations.

H. Contact with relevant agencies

The SAPM will work with the referrer and the victim(s)' family, close friends and significant others to establish which agencies have been involved with the victim(s). The Chair of the SCRG will write to the Chief Executive of each agency, copying the letter to the agency's representative on the Board, explaining that a serious case review is to take place and ask five questions:

1. That the agency use the enclosed chronology template to complete a chronology covering the timeframe advised by the Chair of the SCRG;
2. That the agency nominate an individual with no previous involvement in the case to write the agency's Individual Management Review (IMR);
3. That the agency nominate a senior manager with no previous involvement in the case, and with enough authority to effect change in the agency to be a member of the serious case review panel;
4. That the agency confirm which senior manager will authorise the agency's submission of an IMR and chronology and agree recommendations for service improvement suggested by the review panel;
5. That the agency secure its records.

The Chair of the SCRG will provide a deadline for which responses should be received and this will usually be a fortnight from the date of the letter. The chronology will be required within three weeks of the date of the letter. Where an agency does not respond as required, the Independent Chair of the Board and the Chair of the SCRG will consult in order to decide how to proceed.

I. Production of IMRs (Individual Management Reviews)

The SAPM will have received agency's chronologies and will produce a combined chronology. The IA will propose convene a workshop for all agencies' IMR authors. The date of this workshop will be set out in the letter sent by the Chair of the SCRG to all agency Chief Executives. The workshop will be a one day training session for IMR authors, with the IA explaining what is expected from an IMR and providing guidance for authors in providing a critique of their own agency's actions. The IA will also talk through the IMR template. The IA will also discuss the case with the IMR authors and finalise the terms of reference at this meeting.

Agencies will be required to produce their agency's IMR within four weeks of the date of this meeting.

Separate guidance is available for IMR authors.

Agencies will be provided with support from the IA and the SAPM. They will be asked to provide their IMRs, with authorisation from the nominated senior manager / executive password protected to a secure email address, provided by the SAPM.

J. Role of the Review Panel

The role of the Review Panel is to work with the Independent Author and Chair of the Serious Case Review in reviewing the case and ensuring a robust learning and improvement plan for the Partnership. The Panel is formed of senior officers from all agencies involved in the serious case review who come together and, under the guidance of the Independent Chair to review all the individual management reviews and to identify learning for each agency and for the safeguarding adults partnership as a whole.

Separate guidance explains the role of the review panel in further detail.

K. Production of the Overview Report and Executive Summary

The serious case review panel will work with the IA to develop a robust overview report that details the information considered as part of the review and the findings and recommendations from the review. The IA and the review panel will ensure that all recommendations are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) and clearly set out within the action plan the prioritised actions.

Those requiring immediate change to safeguard vulnerable adults will be highlighted and relevant agencies informed of the need for action before the completion of the review. These requirements will also be referred to the Director of Adult Social Services and the Chair of the SCRG for information.

The overview report and executive summary will be provided to the Director of Adult Social Services who is the owner of the report. The Director of Adult Social Services will meet with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Chair of the SCRG to discuss:

1. The content of the report
2. The distribution of the report and of the executive summary
3. The priorities within the action plan
4. Possible media briefing and the involvement of other agencies in that process.

The reports will be circulated to relevant agencies and presented to the next Safeguarding Adults Board meeting with, ideally, a presentation from the IA. Where it is not possible for the IA to attend the next Board meeting, the IA will either ask a member of the serious case review panel to make the presentation, or ask the Chair of the SCRG to do so.

L. Monitoring the action plan

All relevant agencies will be provided with the action plan, which will contain deadlines as agreed by the serious case review panel. The SCRG is responsible for performance managing the action plan and will do so on a six-weekly basis. Where an agency fails to meet the requirements of the action plan this will be raised initially by the Chair of the SCRG with the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board member. If this does not achieve the required action, the Chair of the SCRG will discuss the concern with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.

M. Annual report

- Anonymised details of serious case reviews will be included in the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board's Annual Report, together with detail of the associated action plan.