



Serious Case Review Sub Group Annual Report

2016 - 2017

June 2017

Lisa Walsh and Sean Carter

Contents

1. Introduction/context/background	3
2. Governance and accountability, links to objectives	3
3. Progress / services / provision (including progress on actions arising from recommendations in previous report).....	3
4. Outcomes/performance/successes/achievements.....	5
5. Challenges/issues/developments/opportunities	6
6. Next steps/plans/priorities/actions.....	7

1. Introduction/context/background

This report covers the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 and is a narrative of the work undertaken by the Serious Case Review (SCR) Sub Group focusing specifically on successes, current developments, learning and challenges.

The SCR Sub Group has had another very busy year, resulting in monthly meetings throughout the last year, to address the volume of work referred to the Sub Group and to maintain oversight of current reviews.

In moving forward through 2017-2018, it is intended that the Sub Group meet on a six-weekly basis. This reflects the diligent oversight the Sub Group intends to maintain over its priorities, action plans and current reviews.

Throughout 2016-2017, the SCR Sub Group has maintained good, consistent multi-agency attendance and commitment to meetings, with positive, robust discussion and challenge when considering referrals.

The Assistant Director for Early Help, Safeguarding and Children's Services, Northamptonshire County Council chaired the SCR Sub Group through to December 2016. Since this date, the Strategic Manager for Safeguarding and Quality and Assurance, Northamptonshire County Council has chaired the Sub Group on an interim basis; this arrangement continues into 2017-2018.

2. Governance and accountability, links to objectives

The SCR Sub Group works against a set of actions based on the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) Business Plan priorities for 2016-2017. All actions have been achieved. The Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board works under the guidance of Working Together 2015 and works specifically to Chapter 4, Serious Case Reviews (page 75).

3. Progress/services/provision (including progress on actions arising from recommendations in previous report)

Each of the 10 referrals considered by SCR Sub Group during the year had an outcome requiring a type of review:

SCR Sub Group considered 10 referrals between 01.04.16 – 31.03.17	
Recommendations as follows:	
No further action required	0
Single Agency Review	2
Case Mapping Exercise	5
Thematic Learning Review	1
Serious Case Review	2

Serious Case Reviews:

New Serious Case Reviews agreed:

Ref	Summary	Location	Gender	Age	Status
Ref053	Extreme neglect and cruelty	Northampton	Male	12 yrs	5 th February 2017 – SCR agreed and initiated
Ref057	Murder by stabbing	Northampton	Male	17 yrs	2 nd April 2017 – SCR initiated
Ref052 **	CSE involving multiple victims	Northampton	Male and Female	Various	13 th May 2017 – SCR initiated

*** Please note Ref050 will be undertaken as a Thematic Learning Review with a published report on completion.*

Serious Case Reviews already underway, completed and published

Ref	Summary	Location	Gender	Age	Status
Ref021	Significant non-accidental injury	Kettering	Female	6 wks	SCR completed. Published 26 th January 2017
Ref023	Death following non-accidental injury	Deanshanger	Male	4 mths	SCR completed. Published 6 th July 2016
Ref035	Death following dog attack	Daventry	Female	6 mths	SCR completed. Published 20 th October 2017

Three Serious Case Reviews were published in 2016-2017, with each publication being managed professionally and with a well organised media event. The Sub Group constantly look to learn and improve process, and the publication of Ref021 was undertaken in a slightly different manner to previous publications in the county and rather than holding an open session for the media to pose questions, 1:1 interviews between the Independent Chair and the media were arranged. This worked well, enabling an opportunity for additional discussion. It is intended that this method will be adopted for future publications.

Case Mapping Exercises:

New Case Mapping Exercises agreed:

Ref	Summary	Location	Gender	Age	Status
Ref 050	CSE and grooming	Kettering	Female	16 yrs	Review underway and workshop arranged for June 2017
Ref 051	Siblings in repeat PLO processes	Daventry	Male	7 yrs	Review underway and workshop arranged for May 2017
Ref 054	Sibling witnesses of domestic violence	Wellingborough	Both	Various	Review underway and workshop arranged for May 2017
Ref 056	Non-accidental injury	Rushden	Female	4 mths	Review underway and workshop arranged for May 2017

Case Mapping Exercises already underway and completed:

Ref	Summary	Location	Gender	Age	Status
Ref044	Sustained non-accidental injuries	Northampton	Male	1 yr 11 mths	Review completed September 2016 and 6-step briefing available on NSCB website
Ref047	Neglect	Northampton	Male	1 yr	Review completed February 2016 and 6-step briefing available on NSCB website

Each review, once completed, has a 6-step briefing developed. The briefing is a short, smart summary of the review which serves to identify the learning arising from the process and provides evidence of changes to practice but also identifies good practice from partners. The briefings are widely disseminated across the partnership and are designed to encourage team discussion and feedback. All 6-step briefings are available on the NSCB website and are promoted through the bi-monthly NSCB newsletter.

Feedback from the 6-step briefings is positive:

Northampton General Hospital: *"Staff have commented that they feel the 6 step briefings are a great tool and easy to use to share information".*

A briefing paper is provided at each SCR Sub Group meeting which provides information on the current status of all reviews being undertaken. This briefing paper is now also provided to the Quality Assurance Sub Group to keep them advised of the progression of reviews and associated identified learning.

2015 - 16 Priorities

The Sub Group has completed its priorities set out in the previous year's annual report:

- The Sub Group continues to monitor and review its performance by a regular health check;
- The Sub Group's Action Plan was refreshed in line with the recommendations from the Ofsted Review in February 2016 and the NSCB Business Plan. The Sub Group scrutinises the progression of each review by means of a Briefing paper on current reviews at every sub Group meeting;
- 6 Step Briefings are disseminated (via newsletters and placed on the NSCB website) following the completion of each Review. Sub Group members take the 6 step briefing into their own agency and provide evidence and feedback of dissemination and discussion; and
- A Serious Case Review started at the end of 2016-2017 is being undertaken using the Welsh methodology.

4. Outcomes/performance/successes/achievements

For each Serious Case Review a professionals' learning event is held midway through the process and a de-brief session following its completion.

The midway learning event is for practitioners to attend and seeks to allow them to speak about their direct experience of the case. Professionals are encouraged to openly and honestly discuss their involvement and this affords the Independent Author the opportunity to include any relevant details within the Overview Report.

Following the completion of each Serious Case Review, two de-brief sessions are held ; one is designed specifically for practitioners directly involved in the case and an additional wider event for 100 practitioners. The Serious Case Reviews completed and published during this year have had very good attendance at de-brief sessions, with wider de-brief sessions averaging an attendance of around 70.

Four 'Learning from Serious Case Reviews' multi-agency training events have also been provided by Barnardo's. This will be repeated in 2017-2018, with particular emphasis on local SCR learning. With the wealth of knowledge and input on local Serious Case Reviews, the NSCB Project Officer will facilitate these training events and continue to support the learning with professionals throughout the partnership as evidenced below.

In addition to the multi-agency training, any agency can request specific training regarding learning from local Serious Case Reviews. In December 2016, training was provided to Healthwatch colleagues and in February 2017, two sessions were provided to health colleagues (totalling 80 professionals). The feedback from these sessions was extremely positive as highlighted below:

Children, Families and Education, Northamptonshire County Council: *"xxxx family embraced the advice as they were actively seeking to achieve the best outcome for their son".*

Children, Families and Education, Northamptonshire county Council: *"The safe sleeping booklet produced by NSCB was discussed with the mother of a 4 week old child. Due to the family not being able to communicate in English, the interpreter read through the whole booklet with the mother to ensure that she understood the risks especially associated with co-sleeping".*

Healthwatch colleagues: *“We spent a lot of time after you’d gone reflecting on what you’d said about processes and people – we were very moved by what you said about the whole approach to SCRs and the sensitivity with which you undertake your part of the process.... We all felt we learnt so much and that it will inform us as we go about our various roles”.*

Health colleagues at Northampton General Hospital: *“Looking at the SCR was very interesting and thought provoking” and “The presentation of the SCR’s was extremely interesting and has really increased my understanding and knowledge. I would feel more confident in my ability to remain professionally curious”.*

5. Challenges/issues/developments/opportunities

Monitoring and Review of Actions from Serious Case Reviews

The Serious Case Review Composite Action plan is regularly monitored by the SCR Sub Group, but there is still a level of challenge to ensure that actions are appropriately addressed and responded to in a timely manner. In order to achieve this, SCR Sub Group members are accountable for their own agency’s actions and this also applies to evidence and feedback of dissemination of 6-step briefings. This allows the SCR Sub Group to maintain tighter control and oversight of outstanding actions and assists with the support of appropriate evidence. In addition the Composite Plan is reviewed and monitored by the Project Officer on a bi-weekly basis and any concerns escalated to the Business Manager.

The Terms of Reference for the SCR Sub Group have been reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose and that membership of the Sub Group is appropriate. The SCR Sub Group continues to monitor its effectiveness every six months through a health check. A permanent Chair for this Sub Group has been identified and Tina Swain, Head of Safeguarding for the Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups will be taking over the role from September 2017.

The timeliness of completing Serious Case Reviews has been a difficult issue to address and, whilst plausible and appropriate reasons for delays have been recorded, the NSCB must ensure every effort is made to try to conclude reviews within the six-month guidance – as set out in Working Together 2015. The reviews ongoing in the report period exceeded the six month period due to delays in legal proceedings, which were appropriately challenged by the Group. In one case, the judges comments at sentencing meant that a further report had to be commissioned. In moving forward, current Serious Case Reviews are being undertaken using the Welsh methodology; this is an approach noted for its effectiveness in maintaining timescales. The SCR Sub Group will continue to monitor progression of the reviews currently underway, with regular updates to the NSCB through the Chair’s bi-monthly report, provided to the Executive Support Group. Any concerns or issues will be escalated, through this route, to the NSCB Chair.

Identifying appropriate authors for reviews is becoming increasingly difficult with far fewer reputable authors available. The NSCB Chair is fully engaged in supporting the SCR Sub Group to identify the appropriate authors.

The SCR Sub Group has recognised the increasing pressure on finances for Board partners and has recommended all future SCR’s have one independently commissioned Author who also undertakes the role of Chair of the SCR Panel. The NSCB has welcomed this recommendation which is also expected to improve the efficiency of the process. In addition, the NSCB Safeguarding Project Officer undertakes facilitation of all training, visits to parents and delivering the de-brief sessions.

The three new reviews initiated will result in significant challenge for the Sub Group, including to ensure they are completed in a timely manner; this is due to the specific nature of the reviews and their complexity (subject, nature and number of identified participants to consider). This concern has been raised with the NSCB Chair – for his awareness and assistance in managing this aspect.

The SCR Sub Group now has oversight of all Ofsted Serious Incident Notifications that are submitted by Safeguarding Children's Services, Northamptonshire County Council. Moving forward, all Ofsted Serious Incident Notifications will also be referred to the NSCB SCR Sub Group in order to be considered or a type of review.

6. Next steps/plans/priorities/actions

There a number of next steps and priorities for 2017-18 including:

- The SCR Sub Group Action Plan has been reviewed and, whilst there will be continued monitoring of timeliness of reviews, there is also agreed priority and emphasis on gaining family views, in particular the views and the voice of children, including their wishes and feelings. This is particularly relevant to SCR - Ref053;
- A re-structure of Business Office functions for NSCB and Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults board (NSAB) will ensure a more focussed, consistent approach to reviews, methodology and shared learning;
- The Action Plan will be refreshed again once the NSCB has set its priorities for the new financial year and the Business Plan refreshed;
- The SCR Sub Group will continue to scrutinise and discuss all referrals, including all Ofsted Serious Incident Notifications, which will be referred for consideration of a type of review; and
- The SCR Sub Group will continue to hold partners to account for dissemination of learning from SCR's and to provide evidence of impact arising from identified learning.