

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD

SERIOUS CASE REVIEW REPORT & PUBLISHING POLICY

Introduction to the policy

North East Lincolnshire (NEL) Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LSCB) is committed to the principles of learning and improvement outlined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children Guide (March 2015).

To this end North East Lincolnshire aims to ensure that the Serious Case Review (SCR) process enables professionals and organisations protecting children to reflect on the quality of services provided and learn from their own practice and the practice of others. The LSCB also aims to be transparent in SCR processes through publishing reports on its website so that our community and partners across NEL have an understanding of both what works in practice and what can go wrong.

Our learning and improvement framework is geared towards ensuring both professionals and the public are aware of the various roles and responsibilities involved in children's safeguarding and support services, across the spectrum of universal provision through to statutory interventions.

Where cases have been subject to SCR, the LSCB is committed to allowing all parties access to the full overview report in order to be aware of the learning regarding: 'what happened', any practice issues that were found to have contributed to the outcomes in the case and what actions have been or are being taken as a result. To ensure transparency, we are committed to publishing the full SCR reports and actions being taken to promote lasting improvement to practice and children's welfare.

Period of Publication

All reviews of cases meeting the SCR criteria will result in a report that is published and readily accessible on the LSCB's website for a minimum of 12 months. Once a report has been published in NEL, it will remain on the website for no less than the minimum required period and in most cases it will remain on the website longer, until all actions arising from the SCRs have been completed.

In some instances and where appropriate, reports may be left on the website for extended periods, for example where a further SCR has been conducted that reflects similar learning or where the SCR findings will link with or contribute to learning from subsequent reviews.

Following removal from the website and for the benefit of national and shared learning, the LSCB will continue to make reports available on request. The LSCB ensures from the start, that consideration is given to the fact that reports will be published, and written in such a way that publication will be unlikely to harm the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult in the case.

The LSCB therefore quality assures final SCR reports to ensure that they:

- Provide a sound analysis of what happened in the case
- State what needs to happen in order to reduce the risk of recurrence;
- Are written in plain English and in a way that can be easily understood by professionals and the public alike;
- Are suitable for publication without needing to be amended or redacted
- Include information about actions planned and already taken in response to the findings, showing the impact those actions have had on improving services and what more will be done.

Preparing to Publish SCRs

When compiling and preparing to publish reports, we carefully consider how best to manage the impact of publication on children, family members and others affected by the case. The LSCB complies with the **Data Protection Act 1998** and with any other restrictions on publication, such as court orders. The timing of publication therefore takes account of the impact on any ongoing legal or criminal proceedings, including inquests.

Once completed copies of all SCR reports, including any action taken as a result of the findings of the SCR, are forwarded to Ofsted, DfE and the National Panel Of Independent Experts at least 7 working days before publication.

Decisions Not to Publish SCRs

On rare occasions, having conducted an SCR, the LSCB will consider that it is not appropriate to publish the full report. This may be for a range of reasons but will usually be because the LSCB considers that publication is likely to have a negative and harmful impact on the child, his or her siblings or on another family member or relative; E.g. where the subject or a sibling will be identified and subject to media interest.

In the event that the LSCB considers an SCR report should not be published, the DfE and the national panel will be informed and they will advise the LSCB on making a final decision. To assist with this process the LSCB provides all relevant information to the panel. In cases where the board is challenged by the panel to change its original decision about publication, Ofsted, DfE and the National Panel are kept informed of the final decision.

Removal of SCR reports from the website

In most cases subject to SCR, the learning relates to the context of practice within the individual case and to the guidance and legislation current at the time of the review. SCR reports therefore also reflect the structures and frameworks in which agencies and services are operating.

For most agencies and services, guidelines and procedures are continually evolving to reflect changes to legislation and government guidance so that over time, legislative and practice frameworks applicable at the point of conducting an SCR may change. As learning becomes embedded therefore, the reports, findings and actions arising out of historical reviews may become less relevant to specific cases.

NEL LSCB however is committed to consolidating and maintaining a record of all learning from SCRs and therefore produces an annual summary of findings and recommendations. This is delivered to partners via training and learning events and to the public via an annual report.

Persons wishing to gain access to individual historical reports can make a request via the LSCB for further information and/or links to SCR cases. For broader requests, individuals can contact the DfE for information held nationally on all SCRs.