

Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 February 2015



Local Safeguarding Children's Board Serious Case Review Process

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive, and Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director of Children & Adult Services

Purpose of Report

1. To provide members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information on the processes involved in the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Serious Case Review. The presentation will be given by Pixley Clarke, Business manager for County Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Background

2. Members requested an overview on the serious case review process after receiving the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report at Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June.

Detail

3. Serious Case Reviews are multi agency reviews of how professionals and organisations have worked together with a child and their family when a serious incident has occurred.
4. The Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulation 2006 indicates the functions of local safeguarding children boards including the criteria for serious case reviews.
5. A serious case review must be initiated when abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; a child is seriously injured or when a child has died. Other circumstances where such a review must be conducted are outlined in the presentation slides.
6. The Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager will provide the committee with information in relation to:
 - What is a serious case review?
 - When and why they are carried out?
 - Who is involved in serious case reviews?
 - Which organisation leads serious case reviews?
 - How are Serious Case Reviews undertaken?
 - What happens after the review has taken place?

7. The presentation will also outline the new freedom and flexibilities and specific expectations on Safeguarding Children's Boards to publish Serious Case Review reports as set out in Working Together 2013. Mention will be made of the role of the Department for Education (DfE), the National Panel of Experts and the NSPCC.

Recommendation

8. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive the presentation and note its content.

Contact: Pixley Clarke, Business Manager, LSCB, Tel: 03000 265775
pixley.clarke@durham.gov.uk

Ann Whitton, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 03000 268143,
ann.whitton@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Serious Case reviews cost money to conduct because of the national requirement to commission an independent person to conduct the review. These will vary depending on how complex a case might be. The cost of reviews are primarily met by the LSCB through its direct funding from partner agencies. Some agencies also commission independent reviewers to conduct individual management reviews which inform the overview report.

Staffing – Serious Case Review involves significant amount of staff time in terms of their involvement in meetings and interviews with the reviewer and afterwards in attending training sessions to learn lessons from reviews.

Risk - However if poor practice is highlighted in a review there are risk associated for the council and its partners who make up the LSCB – e.g. reputational risk

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – Serious Case reviews have to take into account issues of Equality and Diversity

Accommodation - No direct implications.

Crime and Disorder – No direct implications.

Human Rights - No direct implications.

Consultation – No direct implications.

Procurement – the LSCB is required to commission an independent Overview author to lead the Serious Case review and write the final overview report for publication. This therefore has implications for the LSCB Budget.

Disability Issues – No direct implications

Legal Implications – In conducting Serious Case Reviews the LSCB has to take account of any legal processes that are taking place such as Coroner proceedings, proceedings in the family or the criminal court.