

PART 8 (B)

SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS – SECURING FILES

Introduction

Process

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1. Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) have a statutory responsibility to undertake Serious Case Reviews in accordance with Chapter 8 of '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' 2006 (p.169 - 180) when a child dies, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor.
2. Local organisations need to respond immediately to ensure that there are no safeguarding concerns for any other children who may be at risk of harm (i.e. other siblings in the family home or extended family) and then consider whether there are any lessons to be learnt about the way in which agencies and professionals work together to promote the welfare and safety of children.
3. The purpose of a review is to neither apportion blame nor to establish culpability but it should identify what the lessons are, how they can be acted upon, and what should change to improve existing inter-agency practice.
4. **For further detailed procedural guidance on Serious Case Reviews please go to Section 8 of the SSCB Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures by using the following link: www.staffsscb.org.uk/procedures.**

5. Securing Files

6. When a serious incident has occurred, the case files for that child and its family will be scrutinised and the information contained in them used as part of the investigative and review process.
7. Once it is known that a case is being considered for a serious case review and, as continued agency and practitioner interventions will in most circumstances continue due to the very nature of undertaking a serious case review, the following process should occur. *(Please note: Although this process is targeted specifically at Staffordshire Children's Social Care, VCD practitioners, the structure can be used as a guide for other agencies and then internal processes can be added to ensure it is specific to your own agencies requirements):*

8. Each agency will be sent a letter by the SSCB Manager inviting them to attend a scoping panel meeting and advising that a senior manager (preferably one who does not have direct line management responsibility for the case), should immediately secure all paper or electronic records and files to guard against loss or interference. The date that records should be secured up to will be detailed within this invite.
9. Once the VCD Assistant Director (or equivalent Senior Manager) has received the written invite to attend the Scoping Panel they must ensure that:
 - All original paper records and files pertinent to the case are immediately secured by the appropriate VCD Senior Manager and then securely maintained.
 - Any paper or file records required by the Children's Social Care practitioner for the purpose of their continued intervention with children and their families (i.e. due to comprehensive assessments and care proceedings) should be photocopied within a strict timescale as agreed by the senior manager and a copy left with the case-holding practitioner.
 - If care proceedings have commenced and court documents need to be used as part of the serious case review process, a written request must be made immediately to the appropriate Court for formal permission to use the required documents.
 - A written or electronic request to secure all electronic records (TRIM & ICS) should then be sent to the Support Services Manager at; Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford:
(This is currently jacquie.clifford@staffordshire.gov.uk, tel: 01785 277042)

- The SSM or another appropriately trained and authorised support services administrator, then has the responsibility to ensure that all electronic records are changed to '**view only**' to prevent any amendments or changes being made to the existing records.
- When all electronic records have been secured (both TRIM & ICS), the SSM has the overall responsibility for notifying the Senior Manager via written or electronic confirmation that this action has been completed. A copy of this confirmation must also be sent to the SSCB Manager to add to the serious case review file records.
- If any relevant records are discovered at a later date within the SCR process they must be passed to the Senior Manager as soon as they are found.
- All records must remain secure until the completion and ratification of the Serious Case Review by the LSCB.