

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Public Protection
DATE	5 December 2018
REPORT TITLE	Findings from National Significant Case Reviews
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/18/282
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
REPORT AUTHOR	Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide assurance to the Public Protection Committee that there is appropriate systems and process in place to respond to local and national Significant Case Reviews.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the role and function of the Significant Case Review Sub-Committee; and
- 2.2 To endorse the work of the Significant Case Review Sub-Committee to ensure the learning of all local and national Significant Case Reviews is embedded into local practice to improve the outcomes for children and young people who require care and protection.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In Scotland, Significant Case Reviews examine the circumstances and context of a child being harmed or killed, to evaluate the nature and quality of professional contact, if any, with the child, to identify any system failures which may impact on other children, and to learn from the incident, any specific lessons which will strengthen child protection systems, locally and nationally.
- 3.2 Any agency can ask for a case to be reviewed if they consider it meets the Significant Case Review (SCR) criteria. The criteria is set out in the 2015 National Guidance for Child Protection Committees - Conducting a Significant Case Review namely;
 - i. **When a child dies and** the incident or accumulation of incidents (a case) gives rise to significant/serious concerns about professional and/or service involvement or lack of involvement, and **one or more of the following apply:***

- Abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the child's death;
- The child is on, or has been on, the Child Protection Register (CPR) or a sibling is or was on the CPR.
- The death is by suicide or accidental death;
- The death is by alleged murder, culpable homicide, reckless conduct, or act of violence
- At the time of their death the child was looked after by, or was receiving aftercare or continuing care from, the local authority,

ii. When a child has not died but has sustained **significant** harm or risk of significant harm

and in addition to this,

iii. The incident or accumulation of incidents gives rise to serious concerns about professional and/or service involvement or lack of involvement, and Child Protection Committee determines there may be learning to be gained through conducting a SCR.

3.3 The Scottish Government report - **Protecting Scotland's Children and Young People: It is Still Everyone's Job** published in March 2017 examined the systems and processes relating to child protection. It reinforced the critical role SCR's play in supporting a continuous learning culture across Child Protection. The report also recommended that the Care Inspectorate continue to act as the repository for all SCR's and that they ensure that the learning from these is made widely accessible.

3.4 The last report published by the Care Inspectorate in relation to SCR's was in 2016 and covered the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. During this period a total of 20 SCR's had been undertaken across Scotland concerning a total of 23 children, 11 of whom had died. The reasons for the SCR's were:

Non-fatal cases

Type of harm	Number of children/young people
Neglect	2
Eating disorder	1
Mental health and risks to self and others	1
Physical abuse	4
Sexual abuse	3
Causing death of another person	1
Total	12

Fatalities

Cause of death	Number of children/young people
Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)	3
Drowning	1

Physical injuries	1
Fall from height whilst intoxicated	1
Drug overdose	2
Suicide	3
Total	11

- 3.5 The 2016 Care Inspectorate report on SCR's made several recommendations which were further considered in the 2017 Scottish Government report ***Protecting Scotland's Children and Young People: It is Still Everyone's Job***. These recommendations have been fully taken onboard by Aberdeen City and contributed to the resulted in a revision of the terms of reference for the Chief Officers Group Public Protection meeting and to the establishment of a sub-committee to the Child Protection Committee to focus on SCR's both locally and nationally.
- 3.6 The 2016 Care Inspectorate report made clear reference to the ***National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Conducting a Significant Case Review*** published in 2015. The National Guidance has been fully adopted by the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee. The SCR Sub Committee is a multi-agency committee whose membership consists of senior officers from across children's services partnership in Aberdeen City. The sub-committee offers rigorous professional challenge and assurance to cases referred for consideration of an SCR before making a recommendation to the Chief Officers Group. It is the responsibility of the Chief Officers Group to determine the need for a SCR.
- 3.7 Since its establishment in early 2017 the SCR Sub Committee has received four referrals for consideration of conducting a SCR. It is the role of the SCR Sub Committee to undertake an Initial Case Review (ICR) to determine the need for a SCR. The outcome of these referrals was:
- 1 was deemed not to have met the criteria set out in 3.1
 - In 2 cases the Chief Officers Group accepted the recommendation of the SCR Sub Committee that having undertaken an ICR, while there was clear professional learning across all agencies, there was no requirement to conduct a SCR.
 - 1 was deemed to require a SCR and this is being progressed.
- 3.8 The four referrals have come from across the Child Services Partnership – 2 x Police Scotland; 1 x Children's Social Work and 1 x NHS Grampian. This demonstrates that the guidance has been appropriately disseminated and understood by the multi-agency workforce.
- 3.9 The SCR Sub Committee through the Child Protection Committee (CPC) has responsibility to ensure that learning from SCR/ICR's is understood and disseminated across all agencies. Individual agencies are required to demonstrate to the Chief Officers Group via the CPC how the learning has

informed practice improvement and if appropriate revising practice guidance and/or systems.

- 3.10 The SCR Sub Committee also has a duty to consider the findings of SCR's carried out across Scotland and to give consideration as their relevance for all agencies in Aberdeen City. The relevance of findings of national SCR's are also reported to the Chief Officers Group with the subsequent expectation that all agencies demonstrate their positive impact on services delivered to children and young people across Aberdeen City.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	None		
Legal	None		
Employee	SCR's support the continuous professional development of staff working across children's services ensuring lessons are learnt and best practice promoted.	L	The Child Protection Committee ensures the learning from SCR's is disseminated across the children's services workforce. Individual agencies are required to feedback how learning has been embedded into practice to improve the outcomes for children and young people.
Customer	A SCR is undertaken following an incident which has caused significant harm to a child to ensure that	L	Children and young people can be assured that services in Aberdeen City are learning from SCR's to

	similar incidents can be avoided.		improve the quality of locally delivered services.
Environment	None		
Technology	None		
Reputational	The circumstances surrounding a SCR can bring significant media interest and scrutiny of services delivered to children and young people.	L	The focus and attention of the Chief Officers Group and Child Protection Committee to SCR's ensures that all agency's are embedding the learning from SCR's to improve the services delivered to children and young people.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous People	The functions of the Child Protection Committee are central to supporting and assuring that the multi-agency Children's Services Partnerships deliver on the outcomes of the LOIP Prosperous People - Children are our Future and that they have "the best start in life"; they are "safe and responsible" and "protected from harm". Children who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Governance	Appropriate oversight of services delivering public protection provides assurance to both the organisation and the public in terms of meeting the council's statutory duties, and also contributes to compliance with agreed standards
Workforce	A proactive learning approach is taken to support staff understanding and embedded lessons from SCR's carried out locally and nationally.
Partnerships and Alliances	Services to children and young people are delivered on a multiagency basis and the scrutiny, challenge and learning similarly requires all agencies to work in partnership with each other.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not Required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Graeme Simpson
Chief Officer – Integrated Children and Family Services/CSWO

gsimpson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

01224 523496