



What is a Safeguarding Children Board?

Safeguarding Children Boards (SCB) are set up in accordance with legal duties and government guidance. They are responsible for coordinating the services of the agencies in their area to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

SCBs represent the following agencies:

- Social Services
- Education, Housing
- Youth Offending Teams
- Police
- Health
- Probation, and
- some voluntary sector agencies

What is a Serious Case Review?

In some serious circumstances SCBs must carry out a Review of a child's/children's case to ascertain whether lessons can be learned which might help interagency practice in safeguarding children. The Reviews also set out to identify what those lessons are, how they can be acted upon and if any changes are necessary as a result. Reviews vary in complexity, but in all cases, where possible lessons should be acted upon quickly without necessarily waiting for the Serious Case Review to be completed.

These reviews are known as Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and must be carried out in accordance with Welsh Government (WG) guidance.

SCRs are carried out by a SCR Panel made up of representatives of the agencies involved in delivering services to the relevant child/children/young person and their families. However, the Panel chair will be independent of these agencies, the case and the child/children/young person concerned.

The SCR Panel will consider whether a Serious Case Review should take place, and make recommendations back to the SCB Chair who will decide whether such a Review should take place.

The SCR Panel will consider the scope of the review process for each individual case, draw up clear terms of reference and identify any specific expertise needed for the Overview Panel.

The SCR Panel will monitor the SCR process and nominate an independent Author for the report.

When does it start?

A decision to start a SCR is taken within weeks of the death or incident. If the death or incident results in criminal proceedings, these must be completed before the SCR is published.

The process of commencing the review usually begins with a discussion at the SCR Management Group where the known facts are analysed to see whether the criteria set out by WG are met.

The chair of the Management Group then makes a recommendation to the chair of the SCB who makes the final decision about whether a SCR is carried out.

Could a SCR lead to disciplinary action/ dismissals /further legal proceedings?

Serious Case Reviews do not in themselves lead to disciplinary action, grievances or further legal proceedings. A SCR does not recommend action against an individual; it seeks to look at how the whole system can be improved to protect children from harm.

However the findings of the serious case review may be used in subsequent actions by individual agencies after it becomes a public document.

Once a SCR is published is that it? Does anything else happen to it?

As well as the Executive Summary, the SCB is also required to publish information about actions which have already been taken in response to the review findings; the impact these actions have had on improving services; and what more will be done.

Once the Executive Summary is published the SCB will monitor the implementation of the actions to be taken by the partner agencies until they are all in place. This process is not a quick fix and can take anything up to 2 years depending on the nature of the recommendation. Progress is regularly reported to the SCB and if there are difficulties in achieving recommendations then the Board has a responsibility to challenge those partners to ensure agreed actions have been taken and changes implemented.

The death of a child through abuse inevitably represents a failing of some kind in the systems which are there to protect children; therefore it is important that there is as full an understanding as possible of the circumstances surrounding the case, and professionals are given the opportunity to learn from this process in order to improve their practice in the future.