



Home Office

# Local Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Reviews and Individual Management Reviews

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This guidance explains the process for handling Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Individual Management Reviews (IMRs) instigated by Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in which Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and / or Immigration Enforcement are involved.

### 1. Key actions

- 1.1 All SCRs must be immediately notified at the beginning of the process to:
  - I. The SCS with line management responsibility for the business area involved.
  - II. The relevant SCS Children's Lead (if different).
  - III. The Professional Standards Unit (PSU).
  - IV. The Office of the Children's Champion (OCC).
- 1.2 The Home Office representative on a Serious Case Review Panel (SCRCP) must, at the very least, be at Assistant Director (Grade 7) level. More senior representation may be required depending on the nature of the incident. The Home Office representative attending SCRCP meetings should have a strategic understanding of Home Office safeguarding issues and must not have been directly involved, or have line management responsibility for any members of staff who are directly involved, in the case.
- 1.3 PSU writes all IMRs on behalf of Border Force, UKVI, and Immigration Enforcement. When the Home Office is involved in a SCR, all available case records must be secured promptly. Immediately notifying PSU of the SCR will help ensure this.
- 1.4 The Home Office representative on the SCRCP is responsible for ensuring that relevant business areas are aware of all key developments in the SCR, any learning is disseminated appropriately, and any necessary changes to policy and practice are considered.
- 1.5 The Home Office representative on the SCRCP must ensure that there is early consultation with any area of the business referred to in the IMR. The Home Office representative on the SCRCP must record confirmation of this consultation on the Case Information Database (CID).
- 1.6 The Home Office representative on the SCRCP must send a copy of the completed IMR to Investigations North – Lessons Learned Team who monitor changes and communicate progress.

- 1.7 When the SCR overview report and executive summary is published, the Home Office representative on the SCR must send a copy to PSU, OCC and Investigations North – Lessons Learned Team.
- 1.8 To ensure immediate attention is given, all emails relating to a SCR must be clearly marked 'Serious Case Review' in the subject line.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 All parts of the UK have similar processes in place to review cases where a child dies or is seriously harmed from child abuse or neglect. The term 'Serious Case Review' is only used in England<sup>1</sup> and Wales<sup>2</sup>. In Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup>, Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) are required to undertake 'Case Management Reviews', and in Scotland<sup>4</sup>, Child Protection Committees (CPC) conduct 'Significant Case Reviews'.
- 2.2 The Munro Review<sup>5</sup> proposes a new system of SCRs in England, and the Welsh system is also looking at multi-agency forums as a pre-cursor to any SCR.
- 2.3 It is important that the Home Office's response to SCRs, Case Management Reviews, and Significant Case Reviews is consistent in order to ensure that lessons are learned so that we can better safeguard children in the future.
- 2.4 Proper engagement with the work of LSCBs, CPCs and ACPCs in general, and case reviews specifically, is a key way in which the Home Office fulfils its responsibility under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs)

- 3.1 WHEN IS A SCR UNDERTAKEN?
  - 3.1.1 SCRs are undertaken when a child dies (including death by suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in their death. Additionally, LSCBs may decide to conduct a SCR whenever a child has been seriously harmed in any of the following situations:
    - a child sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of physical and mental health and development through abuse or neglect; or
    - a child has been seriously harmed as a result of being subjected to sexual abuse; or
    - a parent has been murdered and a domestic homicide review is being initiated under the Domestic Violence Act 2004; or
    - a child has been seriously harmed following a violent assault perpetrated by another child or an adult;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dhss/publications/091119safeguardingchildrenchapter10.doc>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/safeguard\\_chpt10.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/safeguard_chpt10.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/174043/0048532.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/>

<sup>6</sup> [UK Border Agency | Statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children](#)

And

- the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child(ren). This includes inter-agency and/or inter-disciplinary working.

## 3.2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A SCR?

### 3.2.1 SCRs:

- establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result; and
- improve intra- and inter-agency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## 3.3 THE SCR PROCESS

3.3.1 Where more than one LSCB has knowledge of the child, the LSCB for the area where the child is or was normally resident, or the authority with responsibility for any child who is 'looked after', takes lead responsibility for conducting the SCR. Any other LSCBs that have an interest or involvement in the case should be included as partners.

3.3.2 Any professional may refer a case to a LSCB where it is believed that the criteria maybe met.

3.3.3 A 'rapid review' of the circumstances is conducted and the LSCB decides if a SCR should be convened. In some cases, where the criteria are clearly met, the LSCB Chair will immediately decide that a SCR should be conducted.

3.3.4 Consideration is then given to:

- Timescales.
- Agreed format of reports, chronologies and action plan.
- Appointing an Independent Chair of the SCR.
- Appointing members of the SCR. The SCR is usually made up of the Chair, overall independent author, agency nominees, and any identified experts.
- Which organisations and professionals should provide an IMR.
- Whether any outside experts are needed.
- Which members of the family, if any, will be asked to contribute.
- Terms of Reference (TOR).

3.3.5 The LSCB asks the different agencies to nominate a SCR member and an IMR author. The SCR looks at all IMRs, Chronologies and Individual Agency Action Plans. The SCR also commissions an overall independent author to write an Overview Report and Multi Agency Action Plan. These are disseminated to all agencies to action.

3.3.6 The Chair of the SCR chairs all meetings and is responsible for ensuring:

- The TOR are adhered to - though TOR may be amended by the SCR, as appropriate, when knowledge and circumstances of the case emerge.
- The SCR is conducted within the timescales.

- IMR authors receive support and guidance in the completion of chronologies and reports.
- All IMRs, Chronologies and Individual Agency Action Plans have been signed off at appropriate level.
- Links are maintained with the independent author (who may sit in on the meetings) and their Overview Report is completed to a standard required.
- The Multi-Agency Action Plan meets the requirements of the recommendations within the Overview Report.

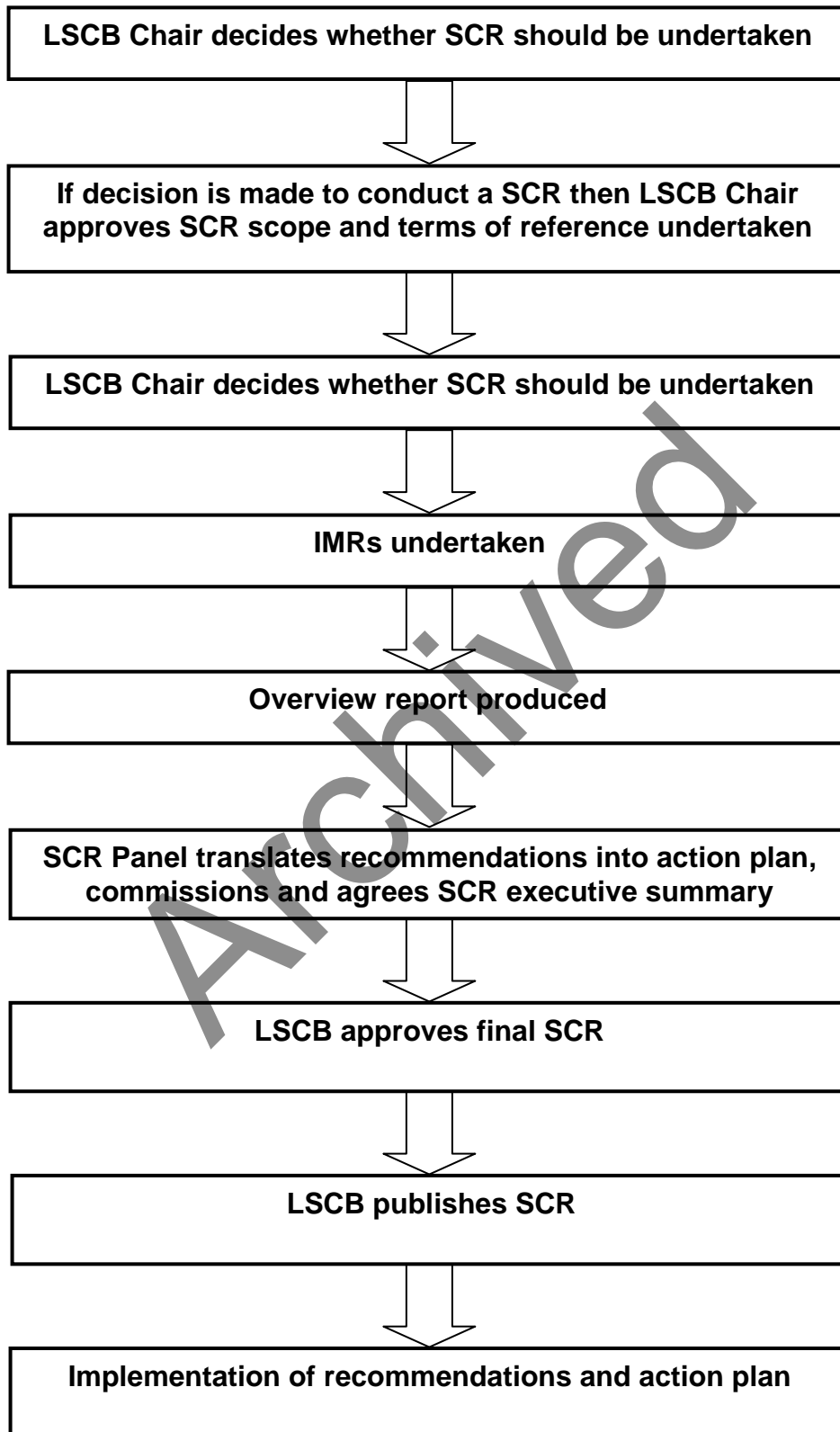
3.3.7 SCRs are normally completed within six months of the date of the decision to proceed.

3.3.8 In all cases, where lessons are identified during the process, they should be acted upon as quickly as possible, without waiting for the SCR to be completed.

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4. SCR process flow chart

4.1 THE BELOW FLOW CHART EXPLAINS THE SCR PROCESS.



## 5. Individual Management Reviews (IMRs)

- 5.1 PSU write all IMRs on behalf of Border Force, UKVI, and Immigration Enforcement. This is because IMR authors must not have been directly involved with the child or the family or have had any direct line management responsibility of those involved. PSU's experience and independence enables the Home Office to provide a centralised and consistent response to all IMRs involving Border Force, UKVI, and Immigration Enforcement.
- 5.2 PSU must be immediately notified when the Home Office is involved in a SCR. This will help ensure that all available case records are secured promptly and enables PSU to quickly draw up a chronology of Home Office involvement with the family. All PSU requests relating to the case must be dealt with as a priority.

## 6. Independent (inter-agency) Management Reviews

- 6.1 In some cases, the LSCB may decide to conduct a single Independent (inter-agency) Management Review rather than a full SCR, or a smaller scale audit of an individual case that gives rise to concern but does not meet the criteria for a SCR.
- 6.2 The processes and notifications for Independent (inter-agency) Management Reviews are the same as for SCRs, so this guidance must also be followed for these reviews.
- 6.3 PSU also writes the IMRs for these reviews.

## 7. Actions agreed by SCS Children's Leads

- 7.1 All SCRs must be immediately notified at the beginning of the process to the SCS with line management responsibility for the business area involved and the relevant SCS Children's lead (if different).
- 7.2 The Home Office representative on a SCR must, at the very least, be at Assistant Director (Grade 7) level. More senior representation may be required depending on the nature of the incident. The Home Office representative attending SCR meetings should have a strategic understanding of Home Office safeguarding issues and must not have been directly involved, or have line management responsibility for any members of staff who are directly involved in the case. SCR meetings offer the Home Office the opportunity to shape the terms of reference and progress of the review so it is important that the agency has a strong and confident voice at the table.
- 7.3 ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISSEMINATION OF LEARNING
  - 7.3.1 SCRs are a standing item on the agenda for the SCS Children's Leads meeting, ensuring that there is a high level overview and understanding of the issues. The SCS Children's Leads disseminate this information as appropriate.
  - 7.3.2 SCRs are a standing item on the Safeguarding Co-ordinators agenda. Whilst details may not be able to be shared it does ensure that all parts of the business are aware it is taking place.

- 7.3.3 Where a SCR makes a recommendation to the Home Office, the Home Office member of the SCR and their line management SCS, are responsible to the LSCB for this recommendation. The LSCB audits and monitors any actions.
- 7.3.4 In some cases, SCR recommendations will have wider application across the Home Office. The Home Office representative attending the SCR, supported by their line management SCS lead, is responsible for making contact as necessary with the rest of the business to ensure that any learning is disseminated appropriately and any necessary changes to policy and practice are made.
- 7.3.5 The Home Office representative on the SCR must send a copy of the completed IMR to Investigations North – Lessons Learned Team who monitor and communicate progress.
- 7.3.6 When the SCR overview report and executive summary is published, the Home Office representative on the SCR must send a copy to PSU, OCC, and Investigations North – Lessons Learned Team.
- 7.3.7 The Home Office representative on the SCR must inform any other business areas referred to in the action plan and make sure they are immediately aware of any LSCB recommendations related to them. Where other business areas have been notified and consulted on LSCB action plans and recommendations, the Home Office representative on the SCR must record confirmation of this on CID.

#### 7.4 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- 7.4.1 For those new to SCRs, talking to the OCC or a colleague in your or a similar business area who has recent direct experience of dealing with one is advisable. Reading through other IMRs and Action Plans will also help. To facilitate this, the OCC maintains a central list of these contacts and holds copies of completed SCRs. Please contact the OCC to access this information.
- 7.4.2 The OCC must therefore be immediately notified at the beginning of the SCR process and with a copy of the overview report and executive summary when the SCR has been completed.

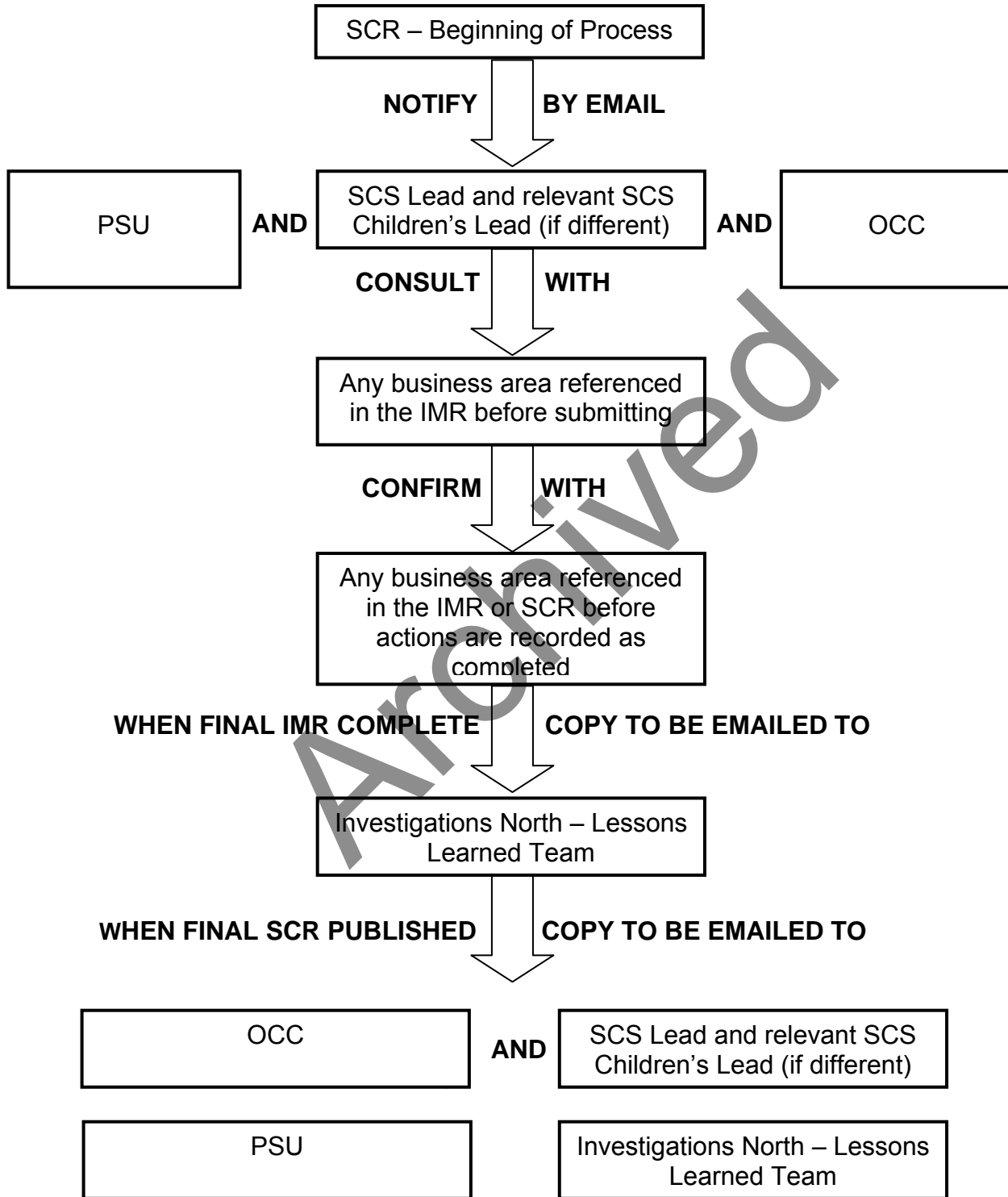
### 8. SCR publication

- 8.1 The Government has amended statutory guidance so that the overview report and executive summary of any SCRs is published. These reports are anonymised, so do not include names / other personal details.
- 8.2 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 introduced a requirement for LSCBs to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. As part of this annual report, every LSCB must include a progress update on the actions that have been taken in response to current and recent SCRs.



### 9. Points of contact throughout the SCR process

9.1 THE BELOW FLOW CHART PROVIDES DETAILS OF THE KEY CONTACT POINTS INVOLVED IN THE SCR PROCESS.



## Glossary

<b>ACPC</b>	Area Child Protection Committees
<b>CID</b>	Case Information Database
<b>CPC</b>	Child Protection Committees
<b>IMR</b>	Individual Management Reviews
<b>LSCB</b>	Local Safeguarding Children Board
<b>OCC</b>	Office of the Children's Champion
<b>PSU</b>	Professional Standards Unit
<b>SCR</b>	Serious Case Review
<b>SCRP</b>	Serious Case Review Panel
<b>SCS</b>	Senior Civil Service
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UKVI</b>	UK Visas and Immigration

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