

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 25 June 2018

By: Independent Chair of East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board

Title: East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Reviews

Purpose: To brief the Committee on the findings and learning from published Serious Case Reviews 2017/18

RECOMMENDATION:

For the People Scrutiny Committee to consider and note the findings and learning from Serious Case Reviews.

1 Background

1.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has the statutory responsibility for undertaking and publishing Serious Case Reviews (SCRs).

1.2 This links to the priority outcome of Keeping Vulnerable People Safe in the Council Plan and informs the Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures and council practice and policy.

1.3 The Annual Report and Business Plan of the LSCB are presented to the People's Scrutiny Committee (previously the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee) by the Independent Chair and when it came to the Committee in 2014 it was agreed that the findings and learning from published reviews would be presented to the Committee on an annual basis, this report covers reports published in the year 2017/18.

1.4 The Lead Member for Children and Families is a participating observer on the LSCB.

1.5 The LSCB is independent of the Council and has the responsibility for scrutinising and challenging multi-agency safeguarding practice, therefore the Committee is not tasked to scrutinise the work of the LSCB or the SCR reports and the SCR reports are submitted to the Department for Education and Ofsted and published on the East Sussex LSCB website.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out the functions of LSCBs (under Working Together 2015, Department for Education). This includes the requirement for LSCBs to undertake reviews of serious cases in specified circumstances. Regulation 5(1)(e) and (2) set out an LSCB's function in relation to serious case reviews, namely:

5(1)(e) undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (e) a serious case is one where:

(a) abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and

(b) either — (i) the child has died; or (ii) the child has been seriously harmed and there is cause for concern as to the way in which the authority, their Board partners or other relevant persons have worked together to safeguard the child.

“Seriously harmed” in the context of regulation 5(2)(b)(ii) above includes, but is not limited to, cases where the child has sustained, as a result of abuse or neglect, any or all of the following:

- a potentially life-threatening injury;
- serious and/or likely long-term impairment of physical or mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

2.2 Since 2013 there has been a national panel of independent experts to advise LSCBs about the initiation and publication of SCRs. The role of the panel is to support LSCBs in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to learn from serious incidents in all cases where the statutory SCR criteria are met and to ensure that those lessons are shared through publication of final SCR reports. The panel also reports to the Government their views of how the SCR system is working.

2.3 Following a national consultation in 2017 the government is due to publish new Working Together statutory guidance that will set out changes to how serious case reviews will be conducted. A central body will conduct serious case reviews deemed to have significant national learning but there will still be a requirement for local learning reviews to be undertaken.

2.4 If SCRs make recommendations for individual agencies then this leads to an action plan that is scrutinised and signed off by the LSCB. The actions identified will be immediately addressed and are not dependent upon publication for them to be actioned.

2.5 To demonstrate the LSCB’s focus on review and evaluation of impact of the learning a Learning and Impact Review is currently being carried out. The review considers learning and improvement activity from the past three years (from April 2014 to date) including Serious Case Reviews, Independent Management Reviews, and Quality Assurance case file audits. (Appendix 2)

2.6 East Sussex LSCB published 1 SCR in 2017/18. Published in March 2018 Family S, the SCR concerns two children aged 7 years and 22 months who experienced hidden neglect. The children were living in home conditions that were deemed unfit for human habitation when discovered. The mother had successfully kept all professionals and wider family members away from the home. In addition the older child was found to have a significant physical impairment which had not been addressed and therefore means there will be a need for lifelong medical treatment. There were no signs apparent to professionals or wider family network that would have led to an earlier intervention.

2.7 The attached briefing provides a brief summary, key learning and summary of recommendations from the SCR on Child S (the full report can be found on the LSCB website). (Appendix 1)

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 This report has been provided in order to brief members on key learning and findings from the East Sussex LSCB SCR.

REG HOOKE
Independent Chair of East Sussex LSCB

Contact Officer: Douglas Sinclair, Head of Children’s Safeguarding
Tel. No. 01273 481289
Email: douglas.sinclair@eastsussex.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

LSCB Family S Learning Briefing 2017 (Addendum 1)

Full SCR reports <http://www.eastsussexlscb.org.uk/professionals/serious-case-reviews-2/>

LSCB Learning and Impact Review (Addendum 2)