



National SCR panel's first annual report – DfE response to recommendations

This paper sets out the nine recommendations in the first report of the national panel of independent experts on serious case reviews (SCRs), and gives the DfE response to each.

	Recommendation	Response
1.	DfE should instigate in the next 12 months a review of SCRs produced under <i>Working Together 2013</i> guidance, to judge how well they are measuring up to the points above, and publish the findings. In the light of these it should consider whether the training for SCR authors which it funded has been effective.	We will assess the number of SCRs initiated and published under the new guidance, in order to ascertain when sufficient numbers have been produced to make such a review meaningful.
2.	DfE should seek to demonstrate what a good SCR looks like and make this available.	We plan to undertake a small-scale trial under which SCRs would be commissioned centrally. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) would be involved on a purely voluntary basis and the ultimate statutory responsibility for the review would remain with them, though the aim would be that LSCBs would publish all SCRs carried out in the trial.
3.	DfE and Ofsted should ensure those local areas which have not submitted a serious incident notification in the last twelve months, or longer, have had no cause to do so.	DfE has contacted local authorities where no notifications have been received, to ascertain why. Two have now submitted a notification and the remaining areas have confirmed they have not had a serious incident in the last twelve months. DfE will continue to liaise with Ofsted on this issue.

4.	The panel believes that the issue of cost should not be a factor in the decision as to whether or not to initiate an SCR. DfE should consider the resourcing implications of carrying out SCRs and discuss ways of mitigating this with the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs.	We will discuss this further with the Association.
5.	DFE should seek to determine what negative effects, if any, the full publication of SCR reports has caused.	We will keep under review the impact of publication of SCR overview reports via feedback from individual LSCBs and elsewhere.
6.	DfE should take responsibility for considering how a repository of past reports could become a more active resource for learning, and what role it might play in ensuring the existence of such a centralised resource.	We welcome the development and launch of the national repository of SCRs by NSPCC and the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs, and will continue to discuss with them how such a repository can be used most effectively.
7.	DfE should consider reinstating the SCR biennial reviews, including a review of recommendations made and their implementation, as a useful facility for reviewing national trends in SCRs.	We accept this recommendation and are exploring the most effective way to progress this.
8.	LSCB Chairs should ensure SCR authors appointed understand the need for any recommendations or findings made to be clearly defined and addressed.	We agree and will consider how we can improve the quality of leadership of the SCR process and the quality of authors.
9.	LSCB Chairs should each ensure they have a mechanism in place to monitor the implementation of SCR recommendations. This should include publication in their annual report to show clearly what action has been taken, and by whom, in respect of SCR recommendations made in the relevant period.	We agree. We are beginning by assessing how annual reports are reflecting recommendations made in SCRs and will discuss findings with the Association.