

Appendix 4

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD

DRAFT

Procedure & Guidance for Conducting Serious Case Reviews

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Introduction

The guidance suggests that local agencies should collaborate to achieve effective inter-agency working, through the formation of multi-agency management committees known as Adult Protection Committees. This has been renamed the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB) in Richmond.

The document Safeguarding Adults published by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) October 2005, provides a National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work. One of the standards in this document states that, as good practice Adult Protection Committee's should have in place a Serious Case Review (SCR) protocol.

It is recommended that:

- *There is a 'Safeguarding Adults' Serious Case Review protocol. This is agreed, on a multi-agency basis and endorsed by the coroner's office, and details the circumstances in which a Serious Case Review will be undertaken. For example: when an adult experiencing abuse or neglect dies, or when there has been a serious incident, or in circumstances involving the abuse or neglect of one or more adults. The links between this protocol and a domestic violence homicide review should be clear. (Paragraph 1.22 Safeguarding Adults)*
- *There is a clear process for commissioning and carrying out of a Serious Case Review by the partnership. (Paragraph 9.10.15 Safeguarding Adults)*

The London Borough of Richmond Serious Case Review (SCR) protocol is contained in the Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Policy and Procedure. This guidance explains how the protocol should work operationally.

Purpose

The purpose of having a Serious Case Review is:

- to establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the circumstances of the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard vulnerable adults
- to review the effectiveness of procedures (both multi-agency and those of individual organisations)
- to inform and improve local inter-agency practice
- to improve practice by acting on learning (developing best practice)

- to prepare or commission an overview report which brings together and analyses the findings of the various reports from agencies in order to make recommendations for future action

SCRs are not enquiries into how a vulnerable adult died or who is to blame; that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts to determine.

It is acknowledged that all agencies will have their own internal/ statutory review procedures to investigate serious incidents; e.g. an untoward incident. This protocol is not intended to duplicate or replace these. Agencies may also have their own mechanisms for reflective practice.

Where there are possible grounds for other review processes (e.g. Domestic Homicide Review, Child Serious Case Review, Health Serious Untoward Incident) a decision should be made at the outset by the lead decision makers of the review processes involved, as to which process is to lead and who is to chair with a final joint report being taken to all the relevant Review commissioning bodies.

Section 1 - Criteria for Serious Case Review

1.1 The SAPB has the lead responsibility for conducting an SCR.
A SCR should be considered when:

- A vulnerable adult dies (including death by suicide) and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in their death **or**
- A vulnerable adult has sustained a potentially life-threatening injury through abuse or neglect, serious sexual abuse, or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development through abuse or neglect **or**
- Serious abuse takes place in an institution or when multiple abusers are involved, the same principles of review apply. Such reviews are, however, likely to be more complex, on a larger scale, and may require more time. Terms of reference need to be carefully constructed to explore the issues relevant to each specific case
- A vulnerable adult dies (including death by suicide) and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in their death

1.2 The SAPB can also consider conducting a Serious Case Review into any incident(s) or case(s) involving vulnerable adult(s) where it is believed to be in the public interest to conduct such a review.

1.3 Any agency or professional body, also councillors, MPs and the coroner may refer such a case to the SAPB seeking a Serious Case Review to establish if there are important lessons for inter-agency work to be learnt from a case.

- 1.4 The Secretary of State also has authority under the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to cause an enquiry to be held where she/he considers it advisable.

Section 2 - Initiating the process

- 2.1 Any agency or professional may refer a case to the SAPB via the Serious Case Review Sub Group (SCRSG) using the referral form in Appendix 1. Staff will usually find it helpful to discuss their concerns with either their agency's SCRSG representative (if they have one, or the Head of service Safeguarding Adults & DoLS prior to making a referral. Referrals must be in writing (see Appendix 1). To ensure the efficient identification of appropriate cases for SCR consideration, the relevant operational and 2nd line managers of agencies represented on the SAPB need to be aware of the criteria for implementing a SCR (see section 3 above). The SAPB should ensure that this takes place.
- 2.2 Once a decision has been made to instigate a Serious Case Review, the Care Quality Commission will be notified of the decision. This task will be the responsibility of Richmond Head of Service Safeguarding Adults & DoLS.

Section 3 - Decision making

- 3.1 The SCRSG is a sub-group of the SAPB and is responsible to that committee.

When a case is referred, the group will determine (within a maximum of one month) and make a recommendation to the Chair of SAPB (or Vice Chair in their absence) who has ultimate responsibility for deciding whether or not to conduct a review. To facilitate timely decision making this process will usually be conducted by 'virtual meeting' (email, telephone etc) with a physical meeting taking place if required. The decision making process by the SCRSG will need to be supported by the consideration of as much available information about the case as possible at the time, including notes of safeguarding adults strategy meetings and case conference. In the likely event that a SCR will be recommended, the SCRSG can further utilise this information to help provisionally scope the SCR and its terms of reference. If there is sufficient information at this stage, some initial draft terms of reference for the SCR will be drawn up (see paragraph 6.6).

- 3.2 As soon as the SCRSG has made a recommendation that an SCR should take place, and this has been confirmed by the chair of the SAPB (via standard letter A), a letter from the SAPB chair (or the chair of SCRSG on his/her behalf) will be sent to the chief executive (and copied to their respective SAPB representative) of each relevant agency,

advising them that records relating to the vulnerable adult need to be secured, and requesting that the process be set underway to undertake their individual management review (standard letter B – if there are draft terms of reference, these should be included in the letter). This communication will also include the two templates for completing the chronology and the analysis components of the individual management reviews as well as Appendix 7 of this document.)

NB: If the chair of SAPB does not agree with the recommendation of the SCRSG, a meeting should be convened with the chair of the SCRSG to try to resolve the issue as a matter of urgency. If necessary, a special meeting of the full SAPB should be convened to make a final decision.

- 3.3 When a decision has been made to proceed with a SCR, the Care Quality Commission will be notified. This task will be the responsibility of the Richmond safeguarding adults Head of Service.
- 3.4 The SCRSG will need to agree arrangements to contact appropriate relatives to inform them that an SCR will be undertaken.
- 3.5 The SCRSG will need to consider how the vulnerable adult (where he or she has survived the abuse) and appropriate relatives will be supported through and involved in the SCR process.
- 3.6 The SCRSG should consider whether the SCR requires the involvement of friends of the vulnerable adult or any other relevant person, and should also consider whether it is appropriate to involve/interview the alleged perpetrator.
- 3.7 If the recommendation of the SCRSG is not to proceed to a SCR, the group may consider whether to request an individual management review or a smaller-scale audit of agency involvement. In such cases, arrangements should be made for the agency to share relevant findings with the SCRSG or other appropriate body.
- 3.8 If the decision is not to proceed to an SCR, the referrer should be notified by letter from the chair of the SCRSG, stating the reasons.

Section 4 - Planning the Serious Case Review

- 4.1 As soon as the SAPB chair's decision is made to proceed with an SCR, he/she will need to commission the creation of a Serious Case Review panel whose role it will be to undertake the review of the case in question. The following actions should therefore be taken, either by the convening of a SRCG meeting, or if this is not possible by the chair of the SCRSG in consultation with members of the SCRSG. It may have been possible for much of this work to have already been initiated from the SCRSG meeting held to recommend the need for the SCR.
- 4.2 The chair of the SCRSG, in consultation and with the active support of members of the SCRSG, should create an SCR panel, by identifying and communicating with potential members drawn from SAPB member organisations involved in the case and other agencies/organisations as appropriate. Depending upon the circumstances of the case, it may be necessary to seek the involvement of a specialist professional, (e.g. adult psychiatry, substance misuse) and ask them to join the SCR panel.
- 4.3 Agencies represented on the SAPB will be asked to provide a list of people who might be in a position to serve on such a review panel. The agency SCR panel member should not be the same person who compiles the individual management review, and if possible should be drawn from a different operational area or division of the agency to that which has had the direct contact with the vulnerable adult.
- 4.4 Once agreed, the chair of the SCRSG should write (letter C) to confirm the individual's role on the SCR panel and (where relevant) provide them with a copy of the initial letter to their chief executive (letter B). The SCR panel member should be asked to monitor their agency's progress in respect of the instigation of their individual management review.
- 4.5 The chair of the SRCG, in consultation with members of the SCRSG, should identify, approach and appoint an independent person, to act as the chair of the panel. (A standard contract to be devised for this purpose). For the purposes of a SCR an 'independent person' will be either:
 - A person who has no connection with any agencies/services covered by the SAPB Inter-Agency Policies and Procedures. Or
 - In SCR's that involve few SAPB partners, a person who has no connection with any of the services/agencies involved in the case.
- 4.6 The SCRSG will decide whether to appoint a separate independent report writer, or whether the Chair of the panel will undertake this role.
- 4.7 The independent chair of the panel will be accountable in the first instance to the chair of the SCRSG for the quality of their work and the need to keep to the Terms of Reference/timescales for the review. The report writer will be accountable to the Chair of the panel.

- 4.8 The SCRSG should identify if the SCR will need to take account of any outstanding criminal proceedings or other legal circumstances, and make recommendations to the SCR panel accordingly.

Section 5 - Undertaking the Serious Case Review

5.1 The SCR Panel Planning Meeting

- 5.1.1 The Chair of the panel will be responsible for ensuring all members of the panel, and independent management review authors, have clarity about the terms of reference and scope of the Review, roles and expectations. This will normally require an Initial meeting of the panel prior to commencement of the review. The panel chair will liaise with the chair of the SCRSG for agreement to any recommended changes to the scope the review, that result from clarification discussions.
- 5.1.2 The panel will agree how to communicate and share information (e.g. all documents sent to the Chair/report writer or direct to all panel members, how and when to inform the chair of problems), and time frames for completion of individual management reports/chronologies.
- 5.1.3 The panel will consider whether victims/family etc need to be interviewed, and if so who by (for example the Independent Chair/Report writer).
- 5.1.4 The Panel will need to consider how to address any refusal to fully cooperate with the SCR by relevant services/agencies. This may require involvement of the Chair of the SAPB, and escalation to the Local Strategic Partnership in extreme cases.

5.2 The First SCR Panel Report Meeting

- 5.2.1 The first SCR panel meeting should be convened within 10 working days of the deadline for the return of the individual management reviews. All members of the panel should receive relevant documents a minimum of 5 working days prior to the first meeting of the SCR panel by agreed secure arrangements. Documents should include completed individual management reviews and an amalgamated chronology.
- 5.2.2 This will provide the material for the first panel meeting, whose main purpose will be to collate and analyse the detailed information and findings from the individual management reviews, and overview Chronology and in the light of this to:
- Identify if any further information is needed or other reports need commissioning, and who, how, when this will be achieved.
 - Review/revise the terms of reference and time period for the SCR
 - Audit the quality of the IMRs.

NB: Services/agencies completing IMR's should not delay implementing own agency improvements once they have been identified.

5.2.3 Different options may be employed in order to separately consider the individual management reviews e.g.

- Each member of the SCR panel will take responsibility for summarising their agency's respective review in order to generate further analysis, or alternatively:
- The author of each report could be formally invited to attend the meeting (at appropriate intervals), to individually present their report, and for the SCR panel to ask any questions for clarification.

5.2.4 By the end of the first panel meeting, there should have been sufficient examination, discussion, and analysis of the SCR information, for the independent author to be able produce the first draft of the overview report, subject to any supplementary information gathering agreed. A deadline will be given for its completion and a date agreed for the next panel meeting.

5.2.5 Where there has been a refusal to fully cooperate with the SCR by a service agency, following repeated attempts by panel members, the Panel Chair will inform the Chair of the SCRSG who will involve the SAPB Chair in deciding appropriate action.

5.3 The Second SCR Panel Report Meeting

5.3.1 At a minimum of 5 working days prior to the second meeting of the SCR panel, the members will be sent a copy of the draft overview report from the independent author.

5.3.2 The main purpose of the meeting will be to consider and examine the draft overview report in detail, in order to ensure that it reflects the factual background, analysis and discussion from the previous meeting, taken from the material within the individual management reviews and relevant supplementary information. The draft report will also need to reflect any relevant independent perspectives regarding the management of the case, developed by the independent author, and agreed by the panel. (A standard agenda for the second SCR panel meeting is attached as Appendix 6)

5.3.3 By the end of this panel meeting, there should have been sufficient examination, discussion, and analysis of the draft overview report, for the independent author to produce the final draft of the overview report, including draft recommendations.

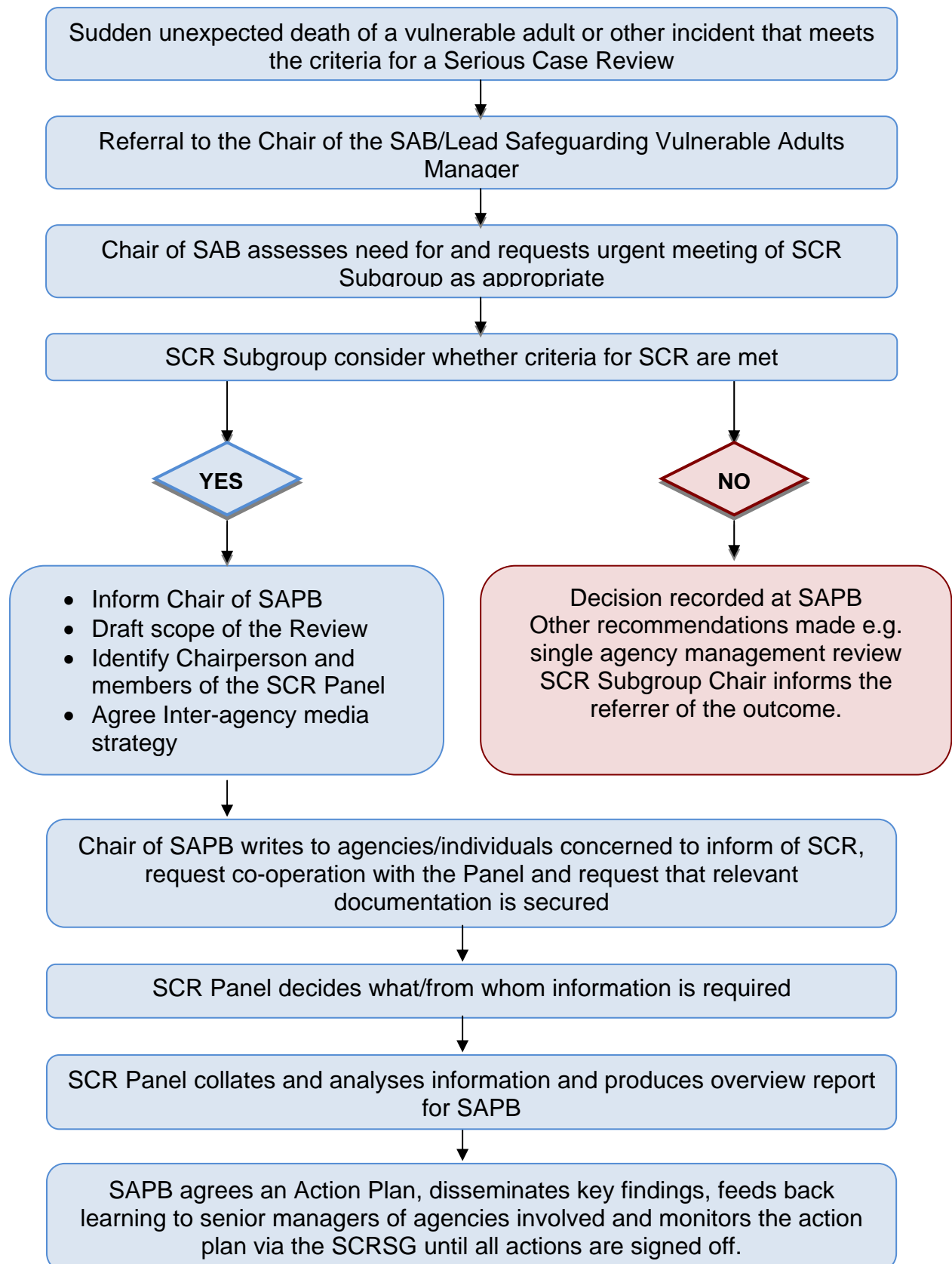
- 5.3.4 Unless there are incomplete pieces of work which may affect the detail of the final draft report (such as plans to seek further views from family members, or some pertinent pieces of information have not been received), a deadline for the final draft report to be completed will be agreed.
- 5.3.5 The final draft of the overview report will be circulated to the members of the SCR panel by the date agreed, for members to ensure that it accurately reflects their agency and the panel discussions, and includes recommendations and changes agreed. The SCR panel members will be given up to 10 working days to respond to the final draft report.
- 5.3.6 The independent author will produce the final overview report based on the feedback received within the agreed time frame. If there is disagreement among the panel members in respect of what should be included in the report, the chair will be responsible for mediating to achieve a consensus by the most appropriate means (email/telephone/conference calls or meetings with relevant panel members), and if necessary for the independent author, in conjunction with the SCRSG chair, to recommend the most appropriate conclusion to the dispute. On rare occasions, a further meeting of the SCR panel may be required.
- 5.3.7 Throughout the process the SCRSG, via the chair, should monitor the progress of the SCR via updates from the independent chair/report writer.
- 5.3.8 The Final Overview Report and a written summary of the key findings/recommendations will be presented to the SCRSG to enable the SCRSG to formally accept the report.
- 5.3.9 The SCRSG will inform the SAPB chair that the review has been concluded and the report is available. Arrangements will be made for a Summary to be presented to the next SAPB meeting for approval of the Report. The SAPB chair will need to make decisions in respect of who should receive copies of the Final Overview Report, although as a minimum these should be forwarded to the chief executives of the agencies who compiled individual management reviews, for onward distribution within their agency as appropriate. It is recommended that, if it is considered appropriate to share the full contents with the whole SAPB, hard copies are distributed at the meeting, and collected afterwards to maintain confidentiality.
- 5.3.10 The SAPB chair will decide who should present the report at the SAPB meeting (e.g. the independent chair of the SCR panel and/or the SCRSG chair), to formally accept the review findings and recommendations. Any recommended final revisions should be referred back to the SCR panel for their action.

- 5.3.11 An Executive Summary will be produced to share the learning from the SCR with the public, to be made available on the Council's website.
- 5.3.12 The Panel's work should be completed within 6 months of the initial decision to commission an SCR, unless an alternative timescale is agreed at the outset. If at a later stage the complexity of a case means that this time-scale will have to be extended, this should be agreed with the chair of the SCRSG. Own agency improvements should be commenced as soon as they have been identified e.g. prior to or during the earlier stages of the Review.

Section 6 - Learning the Lessons - Implementing the Recommendations

- 6.1 The only real value of the completion of a Serious Case Review is that relevant professional lessons are learnt and that local multi agency safeguarding practice is improved.
- 6.2 The SCRSG will be responsible for ensuring an Action Plan is produced to implement the recommendations agreed in the review report. The Chair of the SCRSG (or Head of Safeguarding Adults Service on their behalf) will coordinate panel member development of the Action Plan, ie agreement of tasks, timeframes and allocated responsibilities, which may require multi-agency working/pooling of resources to implement. The Action Plan should include cross agency and individual agency actions. Agencies will be required to produce regular updates to the SCRSG on progress/achievement.
- 6.3 The SCRSG will be responsible for ensuring implementation of the Action Plan and the monitoring of progress until the Action Plan has been delivered. The SCRSG will report to the SAPB on progress/achievement.

Supplement 1: Overview of the Serious Case Review Process



Supplement 2: Serious Case Review Referral Form

The format for requesting a Serious Case Review **must** include a summary of information based on the criteria set out below.

The completed request must be sent in the first instance, under **confidential cover** to the or Head of Service Safeguarding Adults or Chair of the SAPB Serious Case Review Group

Email to: safeguarding.adults@richmond.gov.uk

By post to: The Business Centre,
Grimwood Road,
Twickenham, TW1 1BY

All requests will be assessed by the SAPB Serious Case Review Sub Group in accordance with the Richmond SAPB Procedure/Guidance for conducting Serious Case Reviews.

Content of the request:

1. Name of the person submitting the request for a Serious Case Review.
2. Position/designation of person making the request.
3. Agency/organisation of the person making the request (if applicable).
4. Contact details, to include address, telephone number, fax and e-mail.
5. Brief details of the safeguarding adults issue to include:
 - The name(s) and date of birth of the victim(s) (if known)
 - Name of any service provider involved.
 - Local authority involved in the safeguarding adults case
 - Name of the safeguarding adults co-ordinating manager and or the chair of any strategy meeting or safeguarding adults case conference (if known)
 - Details of why, in the person's opinion, the case meets the Serious Case Review criteria and guidelines contained in paragraph 3 of the protocol.

Please note that the report should not exceed two sides of A4 paper. If any additional information is required you will be contacted.