



Serious Case Review Newsletter Issue 2, January 2012



Serious Case Reviews – Sharing Learning

This is the second newsletter published by Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) to focus on Serious Case Reviews (SCRs).

Sharing learning from SCRs in order to improve practice is vital.

We want to recognise and learn from good practice that is regularly commented upon in these reviews, as well as any weaknesses.

We all know reviews can take a long time, so we want to share good practice and learning points with you as they emerge. This way, we can implement this practice straight away and improve safeguarding for children.

I hope that you will read the executive summaries of Bradford's SCRs which are published in the SCR section of the BSCB website: <http://www.bradford-scb.org.uk/scr.htm>

Updates about SCRs will be published on a regular basis, and will include information about local, regional and national SCR findings. Thank you for taking time to read this newsletter.

Professor Nick Frost, Independent Chair, BSCB

Bradford's Serious Case Reviews

Since 2007 Bradford Safeguarding Children Board has completed four SCRs. All four children were boys. Two were under 3 years old at the time of the incident/death, and the other two were aged 9 and 12. Out of the four children, three died whilst one child experienced a life-threatening incident.

Issues that were prevalent in the families of the children that were the subject of SCRs in Bradford reflect national findings. The main issues were substance misuse, domestic abuse, and mental health and in most of the SCRs more than one of the issues was present. One of the parents involved in the SCRs had a care history of their own with associated issues resulting from this. All of the SCRs reminded agencies about the need to consider the whole family.

Our last newsletter contains a brief summary of the learning identified for each of the four cases. This can be found at: http://www.bradford-scb.org.uk/PDF/SCR_Newsletter_April_2011.pdf


Learning from Bradford Cases: an update on SCR outcomes


A number of initiatives have taken place in order to embed key learning points:

Hearing the voice of the Child

- To ensure the views of children are heard Children's Specialist Services use the Viewpoint software (electronic survey) to consult and obtain the views of Looked After Children in regards to aspects of their life such as their care, school, health, safety, services received etc. Viewpoint is currently being piloted for use with children subject of Child Protection Plans.
- A multi agency conference – 'Hearing the Voice of the Child' was organised by the BSCB Safeguarding Disabled Children sub – group. The emphasis was on communication and highlighted some of the lessons from a recent serious case review.

Taking a joint approach to the whole family

- A Joint Protocol produced by Bradford Children's Social Care and the Bradford District Care Trust aiming to promote effective joint working. A 'whole family' approach is highlighted to ensure that both the needs of children and their parents are taken into account during any assessment made by the above agencies.
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The protocol was launched at the Multi Agency Practice Forum in May. This gave an opportunity for all partner agencies to be made aware of the protocol and to pledge how they were going to embed it into practice. The pledges were followed up six months later with a very positive response and examples of how partners have raised awareness of the protocol and a reported increase in number of joint assessments.

- The BSCB also worked jointly with the Adult Safeguarding Board and the Domestic Abuse Partnership to provide multi agency learning and development for managers in partner agencies. The content for these are based on lessons from local case reviews and the first two were held in November focused on assessing risk. *More of these events will be planned, check the BSCB website and Bradford Schools Online for further details.*
- A multi-agency information sharing protocol has been agreed and adopted by the Children's Trust Partnership.

Working with Men and Fathers

- Working with and understanding the role of men and fathers has been highlighted as an issue. BSCB are taking part in the DfE funded national research and training initiative into engaging and working with men and fathers, which is led by the Fatherhood Institute. This will include:
 - a programme of case audit and action learning sets;
 - a "perception survey" of professionals' awareness of the challenges of working with men;
 - a review of inter-agency procedures;
 - provision of inter-agency training to improve practice in work with men.

Improving information sharing

- SystemOne, an electronic patient records system, has been rolled out across some community health services including GPs, Accident & Emergency departments, Drugs and Alcohol Teams. In the coming weeks it will continue to be rolled out and made available to further services including Health Visitors, School Nurses. The introduction of the system has improved information sharing and provided greater clarity about which services are being provided to a family. This ensures an adequate interface between Adult and Children's services protecting service users.
- The format of Health Visitor reports to Child Protection meetings has been redesigned to ensure there is a better analysis of risk.
- Education Services / Schools Current carried out a review of schools' templates for record keeping, with a view to implementing a standardised version. As part of this, principles of good file management and quality standards have been agreed.

BSCB Monitoring of SCR Action Plans

The BSCB's SCR Sub-Group regularly monitors the progress of SCR Action Plans. Agency representatives are required to provide regular updates on actions with examples of evidence where possible including impact on practice. The sub-group then agrees a Red, Amber or Green status for actions.

National Learning and Developments


Two national studies have been published which highlight learning points


Ages of concern: learning lessons from serious case reviews: a thematic report of Ofsted's evaluation of serious case reviews from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2011: report summary:

Using a thematic analysis of 482 SCRs, this report highlights key safeguarding issues in relation to babies less than one year old and young people aged 14 or above.

The report illustrates the wide diversity of reasons for the serious case reviews and explores the different vulnerabilities of these two groups of children. Issues discussed for babies include the role of pre-birth assessments, the role of parents, the contribution of health agencies, and the particular vulnerabilities of babies.

The analysis of cases involving young people over the age of 14 focuses failings of the professional to treat the young person as a child in need.





The report explores the lessons learnt in relation to specific age groups of children in more depth, and draws out practice implications for practitioners and Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Annexes provided include the Ofsted evaluation of the serious case reviews and a list of the 117 serious case reviews.

The full report can be found at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/ages-of-concern-learning-lessons-serious-case-reviews>

A study of the recommendations arising from serious case reviews 2009 – 2010 Published by Department for Education.

This is a small study presenting a critical, thematic analysis of recommendations from 33 of the SCRs completed between 2009 – 2010 in England. The study looks at what part recommendations can play in helping agencies and individuals improve the way they work to safeguard children. Themes include recommendations focusing on the child and their family, managing the case, professional knowledge and workforce knowledge and capacity and national issues. The study found that recommendations of SCRs are becoming more clearly focused but this has resulted in a proliferation of recommendations and actions. It suggests that Local Safeguarding Children Boards need to take responsibility for curbing this excess.

The full report can be found at <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR157.pdf>

Local Learning and Developments

- Bradford Safeguarding Children Board has training about “Serious Case Reviews and lessons to be learned” on its annual training programme. In addition briefings and professional practice forums provide an opportunity to share lessons and improve practice from both local and national serious case reviews.
- Further information about the various learning opportunities can be found at www.bradford-scb.org.uk
- Training and ongoing support is also provided to managers who are required to write an Individual Management Review (IMR).
- Ongoing support for IMR authors is provided as required by each case.
- There is now a greater emphasis on including staff involved in a case in the process of the review.
- We are encouraging all our partner agencies to have a pool of potential IMR authors. If you are a manager who needs this training please contact Rachael.Hammond@bradford.gov.uk

If you would like to read more about how and why we undertake SCRs, please read Working Together 2010, chapter 8 also available at www.bradford-scb.org.uk

If you need to refer to BSCB Serious Case Review procedures they can be found at <http://www.proceduresonline.com/bradford/scb/chapters/contents.html#serious>

We are keen to hear your views and ideas about this publication. Please email info@bradford-scb.org.uk with your suggestions.

