

## Serious Case Review Quality Markers

### Supporting dialogue about the principles of good practice

### Quality Marker 17: Publication

**Quality statement:** decisions about whether, when and how to publish the Serious Case Review (SCR) report and response are made with sensitive consideration of the impact

#### Rationale

For the learning from an SCR to have impact beyond the local area, publication can be helpful and it is a statutory requirement.

Publication of the SCR report and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) response can also enhance public trust and confidence in services by providing an understanding of what has gone wrong and why, and the actions that agencies are taking to improve services. Well conducted and presented reviews can also serve to improve public understanding of the complexity of work to safeguard children.

The longer the delay in publication, the more likely the learning will be out of date. However, parallel criminal and investigatory processes can provide additional information pertinent to the accuracy of the SCR and the learning generated, requiring publication to be delayed until their conclusions are reached. Publication prior to the completion of parallel criminal and investigatory processes can also have an impact on those legal proceedings, including any inquest.

Publication can also expose details about the child concerned, siblings and other family members as well as professionals who worked with them, and create risks. These can potentially be mitigated if the report clearly identifies the analysis and findings of the SCR that are key to making improvements, while keeping details of the family to a minimum. It can also help to give consideration to whether, when and where the report should be published, and what support family members, foster carers and staff will need. Final decisions need to comply with the Data Protection Act 1988 and any other restrictions on publication of information, such as court rulings.

#### How might you know if you are meeting this quality marker?

1. Are genuine efforts being made to publish as soon as possible?
2. Are the professionals directly involved being informed of the contents of the report, of the schedule for publication and being given appropriate support?
3. When will the family have the report and are they being given appropriate support regarding its publication?
4. Is there a media strategy to support publication of the report?

## Knowledge base

- We have not been able to identify any relevant research base or practice knowledge for this quality statement.

## Link to statutory guidance and inspection criteria:

- 'Working together' (HM Government, 2015: 79) requires all SCR reports to be published. It also requires (p 80) LSCBs to publish, either as part of the SCR report or in a separate document, information about: actions which have already been taken in response to the review findings; the impact these actions have had on improving services; and what more will be done.
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection guidance requires that good practice be disseminated and, where practice can be improved, SCRs are published.

## Tackling some common obstacles

- If there are delays in publishing, because of parallel processes, it is important to plan how to advise all involved prior to publication. This may also require the LSCB response to be updated.

This is one of a set of 18 Quality Markers which aim to support commissioners and reviewers to commission and conduct high quality reviews. Covering the whole process, the quality markers provide a consistent and robust approach to SCRs. They are based predominantly on established principles of effective reviews / investigation as well as SCR practice experience and expertise, and ethical considerations.

The SCR Quality Markers were produced as part of the Learning into Practice Project, a one-year DfE-funded project conducted by NSPCC and SCIE between April 2015 and March 2016. For more information see [nspcc.org.uk/lipp](http://nspcc.org.uk/lipp) or [scie.org.uk/lipp](http://scie.org.uk/lipp)