

Methodology Summary

This is a working methodology which has been developed in response to lessons learned in the production of the SCARE briefings 6-10, and to fulfil the standards required by these briefings. This methodology is composed of a number of stages.

Steps 1-4

Topics are proposed by social care practitioners, academics working within health and social care, and representatives from social services. Scoping searches are conducted by the Social Care Information Officer at SchARR, Sheffield University, to identify the principal issues relating to the topic, and propose refinements (for example, limiting the briefing to a particular age group, type of care, or type of intervention). These issues are discussed by the editorial board, who then define the scope of the briefing.

Steps 5 and 17

When the topic has been defined, experts in the field designated by the SCARE group are approached to provide information on the topic in question, such as the most relevant policy documents and research, and to highlight any pertinent issues relating to the topic. This can help focus the briefing onto the most important areas, and signpost vital documents.

Consultation with service users is also conducted and provides important additional information to fill gaps in the published research relating to the views and concerns of users of health and social services, and to confirm or challenge current research findings.

Both consultations provide valuable information, and so must be received before the first draft of the briefing is produced (Stage 20).

Steps 6-16

The Information Officer constructs a search strategy based on the scoping search and topic definition, and runs searches on an extensive predetermined list of databases and other online resources. Selection criteria are applied to the results of these searches, and the selected literature is read and appraised. The results are then summarised for the briefing.

Steps 20-29

A full draft of the briefing is produced and subjected to a series of reviews and revisions.

Step 30

The final version is submitted to SCIE for publication on the eLSC.