

Serious Case Review Quality Markers

Supporting dialogue about the principles of good practice

Quality Marker 8: SCR management

Quality statement: the Serious Case Review (SCR) is effectively managed. It runs smoothly, is concluded in a timely manner and within budget

Rationale

Undertaking an SCR is complex and requires rigorous management skills, good organisation and coordination to avoid wasting time and money.

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

1. Is there a clear plan with allocated roles and responsibilities for the transmission of information?
2. Is sufficient administrative support provided to the SCR?
3. Is the SCR progressing smoothly and in line with anticipated timeframes?
4. Are mechanisms in place to inform the LSCB of any delays and reasons for them?
5. Are any matters arising that could have been reasonably anticipated and addressed prior to the review starting?
6. Is there enough slack in the plan to allow for legitimate delays?
7. Does the lead reviewer have sufficient capacity to do the review to a high standard?

Knowledge base

- Practice knowledge from experienced lead reviewers indicates that good organisational skills are key to effective SCRs.
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) summary evaluation reports evidenced previously the impact of not having effective management of the SCR on timescales etc. (Ofsted, 2008 2009, 2010).

Link to statutory guidance and inspection criteria

- Apart from suggested timeframes for completion, there are no statutory requirements for the management of SCRs.

Tackling some common obstacles

- Good management of the SCR is facilitated by there being dedicated administrative and management time.
- Active leadership by the LSCB chair often assists in successfully addressing challenges that arise during the SCR.
- Where there are changes in key personnel in the LSCB, formalising a review helps identify the impact on the SCR, as the changes can lead to confusion if not addressed.

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 or scie.org.uk/lipp