KENT AND MEDWAY
SAFEGUARDING
VULNERABLE ADULTS COMMITTEE

PROCEDURE
FOR REVIEW OF SERIOUS
ADULT PROTECTION CASES

Approved by SGVA Committee
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KENT AND MEDWAY SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE
ADULTS COMMITTEE
(SGVAC)

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF
SERIOUS ADULT ABUSE CASES

Introduction

The purpose of this document is:

To ensure that there is a consistent approach to the process and practice in undertaking Serious Case Reviews (SCR)s where a vulnerable adult(s) is the victim(s) of abuse and concerns are expressed about factors in the case(s).

To acknowledge that there is no statutory requirement for agencies to cooperate with such reviews, voluntary involvement leading to good practice development.

The document Safeguarding Adults published by the Association of Directors for Social Services (ADSS) published in (Oct 2005) provides a National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work. One of the standards in the document states that as good practice Safeguarding Vulnerable adult’s Committees/Boards should have in place a multi agency SCR protocol.

The standard recommends 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.

There is a clear process for commissioning and carrying out of a Serious Case Review by the partnership

1. PURPOSE OF SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS

1.1 SCRs are not inquiries into how an adult died or suffered injury or who is culpable. There are four main purposes to be fulfilled by a SCR:

i. To establish whether there are lessons to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard vulnerable adults.

ii. To review the effectiveness of procedures.

iii. To inform and improve local inter-agency practice and working together to better safeguard vulnerable adults.
iv. To prepare an overview report which brings together and analyses the findings of the various reports from agencies/services in order to make recommendations for future action(s).

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

2. CRITERIA FOR CONDUCTING A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW

2.1 The SGVAC should undertake the lead responsibility for conducting a 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.

- A vulnerable adult has sustained any of the following:
  - A life threatening injury through abuse or neglect.
  - Serious sexual abuse.
  - Serious or permanent impairment of development through abuse or neglect.

  OR

  - Where serious abuse occurred in an institutional setting.
  - A culture of abuse was identified. (Section 4.7 AP Policy)
  - Multiple abusers were involved.
    (The last three points have been included to accord with the recommendations of the AP National Reference Group).

AND

The case(s) give rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services work together to safeguard vulnerable adults.

2.2 In deciding whether a SCR should be conducted in cases other than those involving a death, the following questions should be considered. A positive response to several is likely to indicate that a SCR should be conducted:

- Was there clear evidence of a risk of significant harm to a vulnerable adult which was:
  - not recognised by agencies or professionals in contact with the adult or perpetrator, OR
  - not shared with others, OR
  - not acted upon appropriately?

- Was the adult abused in an institutional setting?

- Was the adult abused while being supported by the local authority or a NHS Trust?
• Does one or more agency or professional consider that their concerns were not taken sufficiently seriously, or acted upon appropriately, by another?

• Does the case indicate that there may be failings in one or more aspects of the local operation of formal adult protection procedures, which go beyond the handling of this case?

• Does the case appear to have implications for a range of agencies and/or professionals?

• Does the case suggest that the SGVAC may need to change its local protocols or procedures, or that protocols and procedures are not adequately being promulgated, understood or acted upon?

3. IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL OF CASES FOR SERIOUS CASE REVIEW

3.1 Any agency representative or professional may refer a case believed to conform to the criteria and guidance contained in paragraphs 2.1 or 2.2 above using the format set out in Appendix “C”. Referral may be made directly to the Chairperson of the SGVAC or to the Kent Adult Protection Policy Manager, together with a brief outline of the case that identifies the factors that suggest conducting a SCR is indicated. District/Service/Team managers or others chairing adult protection case conferences and representatives from partner agencies and services will be particularly well placed to identify cases that warrant review.

3.2 A summary of all cases that potentially meet these criteria will be submitted to the SCR Panel from which the Panel will independently prioritise cases for review and pass their recommendations to the Chairperson of the SGVAC.

3.3 The SCR Panel will be chaired by an Independent Chair who will be commissioned by the SGVAC. The Chair will be supported by the Kent County Council’s Adult Service Directorate’s Adult Protection Policy Manager.

3.4 The assessment of the need for a SCR will be delegated by the Chairperson of the SGVAC to the SGVAC SCR Panel that will comprise a representative from each of the following agencies:

- Kent ASD – 1 Representative
- Kent CFE – 1 Representative from Education
- Medway Council – 1 Representative
- Kent Police – 1 Representative
- Health Representation x 2 – Nominated via PCT’s
- Legal Representative, where appropriate -- 1 representative
- CSCI – 1 Representative

These will form the core membership of the Panel.

3.5 In addition to this core group additional members may be co-opted to address particular cases or issues: these will usually be drawn from a list of nominees
provided by each of the agencies listed in paragraph 3.4 or recognised voluntary bodies.

3.6 Nominees will have appropriate levels of experience of adult protection and inter-agency work and will have suitable qualifications and seniority within their agencies when contributing to a SCR. In order to enhance the independence and objectivity of the Panel, nominees selected to contribute to specific reviews will normally be chosen from an operational area having no involvement with the case in question. The selection of contributors will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the SCR Panel in discussion with Panel members.

3.7 The SCR Panel will meet, within one month of the referral being received, to consider a request for a SCR. Kent’s Adult Protection Policy Manager will make relevant information available to the Independent Panel Chair and other members of the Panel either at this meeting or by prior correspondence. The Panel will decide if, from the information provided, the case meets the criteria contained in paragraphs 2.1 or 2.2 and is of a sufficiently high priority to warrant follow-up. If the criteria are met the Panel will decide how the issues will be addressed. The Panel may wish to seek further information from relevant agencies prior to recommending that a SCR is desirable.

3.8. Where, in the opinion of the Panel, a case does not meet the agreed criteria for a SCR, the Chair or the Panel may recommend that one or more agencies conduct internal reviews or audits to address areas of concern. Such reviews/audits should be completed promptly and the findings shared with the SGVAC. Whatever the outcome of this initial discussion the referrer will be informed as to the status of the case they have referred.

4. INITIATING A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW

4.1. Where the SCR Panel concludes that a SCR is appropriate, the Panel should draw up clear terms of reference for the conduct of the review. The terms of reference will address the following elements:

i. The most important issues to address in trying to learn from this specific case?

ii. Which agencies and professionals should contribute to the review and who from other sources (e.g. proprietor of care establishment, etc.) should be asked to submit reports or otherwise contribute?

iii. How can the relevant information best be obtained and analysed. This may include calling any relevant individuals to give a direct account of their involvement?

iv. Are there any features of the case, which indicate that any part of the review process should involve, or be conducted by, a party independent of the professionals/agencies who will be required to participate in the review? Would it assist the SCR Panel to bring in an outside expert at any stage to shed light on crucial aspects of the case?

v. Over what time period should events be reviewed?
vi. What family/service history and background information will help better understand the past events and present?

vii. Should the victim or family members be invited to contribute to the review?

viii. Will the case give rise to parallel investigations (e.g. a Mental Health Serious Untoward Incident, homicide or suicide inquiry) and if so, how can a co-ordinated review process best address all the relevant questions in the most economical way?

ix. Is there a need to involve agencies or professionals from other authorities?

x. How should the review process take account of a Coroner’s inquiry and any criminal investigations or proceedings related to the case? Is there a need to liaise with the Coroner and/or the Crown Prosecution Service?

xi. When should the review process start and by what date should it be completed?

xii. How should the public, family and media interest be handled before, during and after the review?

xiii. Does the SGVAC need to obtain legal advice about any aspect of the proposed review?

The SCR Panel will complete its deliberations about what action to take as soon as possible following the referral. The Panel will recommend whether a SCR should be conducted and, if so, make further recommendations regarding the conduct and scope of the review based on the elements identified in section 4.1 and any other special aspects of the case. Where a SCR is not recommended, the Panel will indicate whether any other action appears appropriate (e.g. internal review or joint audit by one or more agencies).

The final decision whether or not to conduct a SCR and its scope and management rests with the Chairperson of the SGVAC. If the Independent Chair of the Panel disagrees with this decision the matter should be referred to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board for a final decision to be made.

5. **CONDUCTING A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW**

5.1 On confirmation of the SCR Panel’s recommendation to conduct a review, the Chairperson of the SGVAC will formally request relevant member agencies and independent bodies to prepare and submit a management report and where necessary an agency action plan. Guidance will be provided to agencies/services to enable them to focus their report in the specific issues identified by the Panel in their involvement with the vulnerable adult(s) service and/or family. (See Appendix A for detail of contents of management reports for SCRs.)

5.2 The management reports, chronology, plus any other information identified as necessary, must be sent by e-mail (marked confidential) to the Administrator of the SGVAC within 6 weeks of the report being requested.
5.3 The agencies/services chronologies will be amalgamated and all the documentation
will be forwarded to the Chair of the SCR Panel for a draft report to be prepared.
The Chair of the Panel will ask the Administrator to convene a meeting of the Panel
including any co-opted members to consider the issues in the case.

5.4 The Panel will consider the draft report and review agency/service management
reports and reports commissioned from any other source, and agree the content of
the overview report. This should bring together information from the reports,
analyse findings and make recommendations for future action plans. (See
Appendix B for detail of contents of SGVAC overview reports for SCRs.)

5.5 The review process should be completed within three months of the Chair of the
SGVACs’ agreement to the Panel’s recommendation to conduct the review, unless
an alternative time-scale has been agreed.

6 IMPLEMENTING THE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 On completion, the overview report together with an executive summary,
recommendations and actions plans will be presented to the Chair of SGVAC who
will:

• Ensure contributing agencies are satisfied that their information is fully and fairly
represented in the overview report.

• Ensure that the recommendations and actions plans from the overview report
are endorsed at senior level by each agency. The action plan will indicate:

i Who will be responsible for various actions.
ii Time-scales for completion of actions.
iii The intended outcome of the various actions and recommendations.
iv The means of monitoring and reviewing intended improvements in practice
and/or systems.

• It must be made explicit in each case to whom the report or parts of the report
should be made available and agree the means by which this will be carried out.
This may include publication of a fictionalised summary of the report
recommendations and actions points on the committee website to assist in
training.
• Disseminate the report, executive summary, recommendations and action plans
to interested parties as agreed and provide appropriate feedback and debriefing
to staff, family members and media.
• The Panel should ensure that an agency representative is nominated to address
any media enquiries arising from the SCR.

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APPENDIX ‘A’
1. When a case meets the criteria for conducting a SCR (see Sections 2 and 3 of this process), the Chairperson of the SGVAC will formally request the agencies (and possibly some independent practitioners) to conduct a management review of their involvement with the adult, the service and/or their family and to submit a report, recommendations and where necessary an agency action plan arising from that review. The review and report should comply with the individual review’s terms of reference (which will be sent with the request) and guidelines contained in this Appendix. **The management review, report and chronology (if appropriate) must be sent to the SGVAC Administrator by e-mail within 6 weeks of the report being requested.**

2. The request for a management review and report including a chronology if appropriate will be addressed to the Chief Officer or Chief Executive of the agency concerned (or directly to any independent practitioners identified in the recommendations of the Serious Case Review Panel). The task of completing the chronology, review, report and where necessary an agency action plan should be delegated to a **suitably qualified and experienced senior manager** within the agency/service. This should not be the original caseworker or anyone who has directly managed the case. It is important that the management review, report, recommendations and agency action plan are fully endorsed by the Chief Officer before submission to the SGVAC Administrator.

3. On receipt of the SGVAC Chairperson’s request, it is recommended that agencies should take action to secure all relevant records relating to the case to guard against loss or interference.

4. The aim of the management review is to look openly and critically at individual and organisational practice to see whether the case indicates that changes could and should be made and, if so, identify how those changes will be brought about.

5. The SCR to which the management reviews contribute, are not part of the disciplinary inquiry or process. However, information that emerges in the course of reviews may indicate that disciplinary action should be taken under established agency procedures. Alternatively, reviews may be conducted concurrently with disciplinary action. In some cases (e.g. alleged institutional abuse) disciplinary action may be needed urgently to safeguard other vulnerable adults. Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews (DVHR) may run concurrently with this process and reports submitted as a result of a SCR may be made available to inform a DVHR.

6. The following format should guide the preparation of management review: to help ensure that the relevant questions are addressed and to provide information to the SGVAC in a consistent format to help with preparing the overview report. The questions posed do not comprise a comprehensive checklist relevant to all situations. Each case may give rise to specific questions or issues which need to be explored, and each review should consider carefully the circumstances of individual cases and how best to structure a review in the light of those particular circumstances.
7. Where staff or others are interviewed by those preparing the management review, a written record of such interviews should be made and this should be shared with the relevant interviewee. If any individual is interviewed directly by the Panel a formal note will be put on record.

CONTENT OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW

What was the agency’s involvement with the vulnerable adult and/or their family?

A comprehensive chronology should be compiled of involvement by the agency and/or professional(s) in contact with the adult and family over a period of time set out in the review’s terms of reference. (A standard format for the chronology must be used to enable the amalgamation of all chronologies). Briefly summarise decisions reached, the services offered and/or provided to the adult, family/carer, and other action taken.

Analysis of involvement
Consider the events that occurred, the decisions made, and the actions taken (or not taken). Where Judgements were made, or actions taken, which indicate that practice or management could be improved, try to get an understanding not only of what happened, but why. Consider specifically:

- Were practitioners sensitive to the needs of the adult in their work, knowledgeable about potential indicators of abuse or neglect, and about what to do if they had concerns about a vulnerable adult?
- Did the agency have in place policies and procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults and for acting on concerns about their welfare?
- What were the key relevant points/opportunities for assessment and decision-making in this case in relation to the adult, family/carer? Do assessments and decisions appear to have been reached in an informed and professional way?
- Did action accord with assessments and decisions made? Were appropriate services offered/provided, or relevant enquiries made in the light of the assessments?
- When, and in what way, were the adult’s wishes and feelings ascertained and considered? Was this information recorded?
- Was the person’s mental capacity appropriately assessed and taken into account throughout the agency’s involvement with the client?
- Where relevant, were appropriate care plans or adult protection processes in place, and care plan reviews and/or adult protection reviewing processes complied with?
- Was practice sensitive to the racial, cultural, linguistic, age, disability and religious identity of the adult, and family/carer?
• Were more senior managers or other agencies and professionals involved at points where they should have been?

• Was the work in this case consistent with agency and SGVAC policy, protocols and guidance for safeguarding vulnerable adults and wider professional standards?

Are there lessons from this case for the way in which this agency works to safeguard vulnerable adults and promote their welfare? Is there good practice to highlight ways in which practice can be improved? Are there implications for ways of working; training (single and inter-agency); management and supervision; working in partnership with other agencies; resources?

**What has been learned from the case?**

Each agency should produce and submit an action plan setting out any changes or improvements to their practice in light of this case. This should include possible disciplinary or regulatory action. The agency should set out how the plan will be reviewed to determine if the outcomes have been achieved?

A report of the management review should be completed, endorsed by the agency’s Chief Officer and sent to the Administrator of the SGVAC within the time stipulated in the original request. Any foreseeable delays should be communicated to the Chair of the SGVAC or the Adult Protection Policy Manager for Kent as a matter of urgency.

The SCR Panel will collate and comment on the recommendations of each agency. Any additional action points identified by the panel will be discussed with the agency concerned and maybe included in the SCR final report.

It is recommended that the management report should normally be limited to 10 pages.
OVERVIEW REPORT BY SGVAC

1. On receipt of management reports provided by agencies, the SCR Panel will review the reports and any other information with the aim of preparing an overview report for the SGVAC

2. The report should be set out in the following format:

SGVAC OVERVIEW REPORT

Introduction
1. Summary of circumstances that led to review being undertaken in this case.

2. Terms of reference of review.

3. List of contributors to the review and the nature of their contributions (e.g. management review by Kent County Council, report from adult mental health service, etc.) List Review Panel members and author of overview report.

The facts
1. Details of the family/household and/or care service(s) provided.

2. Integrated chronology of involvement with the adult, family/carer on the part of all relevant agencies, professionals and others who have contributed to the review process. Note specifically in the chronology each occasion on which the adult was seen and the adult’s views and wishes sought or expressed.

3. Overview which summarises what relevant information was known to the agencies and professionals involved about the carers, any perpetrator, and the home circumstances of the vulnerable adult.

Analysis
1. Examination of how and why events occurred, decisions made, actions taken or not. Reviewers can consider, with the benefit of hindsight, whether different decisions or actions may have led to an alternative course of events. This section should also highlight any examples of good practice.

Conclusion
1. A summary of what, in the opinion of the Review Panel, are the lessons to be drawn from the case and how those lessons should be translated into recommendations for action. Recommendations should include, but not be limited to, the recommendations made in individual agency reports. Recommendations should be few in number, focussed and specific, and be capable of being implemented. If there are lessons for national as well as local policy and practice, these should also be highlighted. An action plan should be developed from the recommendations.

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APPENDIX “C”.

REFERRAL TO SGVAC REQUESTING A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW.

The format for requesting a SCR must include the summary information listed below. This should be sent by E-mail to: carol.mckeough@kent.gov.uk

All requests will be assessed and submitted to the SCR Panel within one month of the referral being received. If the matter appears to require urgent attention then it will be sent directly to the Independent Chair of the Panel and to the Chair of the SGVAC. They will decide if the Panel needs to be convened as a matter of urgency.

Content of the report
1. Name of the person submitting the application for a SCR.

2. Position of applicant.

3. Agency of the applicant (if applicable).

4. Contact details, to include Address, Telephone Number, Fax and E-mail.

5. Brief details of the adult protection issue to include:
   - Include the name(s) and date of birth of the victim(s).
   - Name of any service provider involved.
   - District involved in the adult protection case
   - Name of the Social Services lead officer and or the Chair of any adult protection meeting(s). (If Known)
   - Details of why, in your opinion, the case meets the SCR criteria and contained in section 2.

Please note that the report should not exceed 2 sides of A4 paper.

If any additional information is required you will be contacted.