



Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)

Undertaking Serious Case Reviews

**Practice Guidance
and
Standard Template**
To be completed by Authors of
Individual Management Review (IMR) reports

*Conforms to the template adopted regionally by NW Local Safeguarding Boards
and the revised Chapter 8 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
(December 2009)*

Date adopted:

Review by:

Version: **Warrington v3.0**

Version date: **10 March 2010**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The statutory guidance on conducting Serious Case Reviews (SCR) is contained in Chapter 8 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2009)'¹. Please ensure you are familiar with this before progressing any further with the completion of this template.
- 1.2 An SCR is carried out when a child dies (or sustains life-threatening injuries) and abuse or neglect is suspected **and** the local safeguarding board considers there are lessons to be learned about how agencies worked together on the case. Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has developed procedures for determining whether a review is warranted and for the conduct of such reviews.²
- 1.3 The Serious Case Review Panel draws together an Overview Report that examines the actions of local safeguarding children board agencies against their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In Warrington the SCR Panel is chaired by an independent person, engaged specifically for the task. The Overview is submitted to Ofsted for formal evaluation.
- 1.4 Individual Management Report's (IMR's) are the key components in compiling a thorough Overview Report. The IMR should look openly and critically at practice to see whether the case indicates changes could be made which would improve outcomes for children (see para 8.34 of 'Working Together'). Agencies or organisations who worked with the child(ren) whose case is subject to review, will be required to complete an Individual Management Review of their involvement, and submit it to the Serious Case Review Panel.
- 1.5 This guidance aims to help IMR authors to produce a good report by using the IMR template provided.
- 1.6 An IMR has three parts:
- A comprehensive single agency chronology
 - The main IMR
 - Recommendations and Action Plans

A template has been provided for each of the above sections.

- 1.7 This IMR Practice Guidance should be read in conjunction with the WSCB Serious Case Review Practice Guidance and Chapter 8 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2009).

¹ Statutory Guidance – Chapter 8 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2009)

² Add in reference to SCR Guidance on the website

2 IMR PROCESS

- 2.1 The Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has agreed procedures for undertaking a Serious Case Review (SCR), which have been devised to be compliant with Chapter 8 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The Board takes seriously its obligations to undertake thorough and effective SCRs. This guidance and IMR template has been produced to support this process, and is part of a North West region approach co-ordinated via Government Office. The use of a common template supports consistent improvement in quality of an IMR through the sharing of effective practice identified in one area to the benefit of reviews held elsewhere.
- 2.2 Agencies required to submit an **Individual Management Review (IMR) report** as part of a SCR in Warrington must use the templates provided here. Please note that this Guidance and Template has been designed in light of Ofsted direction and requirements. Please ensure that your IMR report is compliant with the following:
- ✓ All type must be in black ink.
 - ✓ All type must be Arial 12 apart from chronology and action plan where font 10 is sufficient.
 - ✓ Make sure you make an explicit statement about the involvement of family members and the child, and give reasons if they were not seen or involved.
 - ✓ Address issues of diversity.
 - ✓ Include and consider the child and the family's view and perspective on the events.
 - ✓ Ensure that the information provided is appropriately evidenced in the report.
- 2.3 When completing the IMR Template, the notes in *blue italics* are there as support and guidance to authors. These notes in *blue italics* MUST be deleted before the IMR report is submitted to the SCR Co-ordinator.
- 2.4 Ofsted, GONW and the DCSF require anonymised reports only to be submitted. You are advised to anonymise your IMR from the outset, and certainly before a version is submitted for consideration by the SCR Panel. You must avoid inadvertently revealing information which may identify the child, family or practitioners involved in the case.
- 2.5 The SCR Co-ordinator will provide a reference for the family members at the outset of the review and a standard list of abbreviations and key anonymised references. If you need to identify a person or address which does not appear on this list, contact the Co-ordinator for advice.
- 2.6 Agencies will receive a letter from the chair of the SCR Panel requesting completion of an Individual Management Review report and giving **three dates for submission** of the constituent parts of the IMR:

- Date 1** deadline for confirming formally
- the agency's involvement with the case
 - the name and contact details of the IMR author
- Date 2** deadline for submission of a comprehensive chronology
- Date 3** deadline for submission of the IMR report, to include analysis, recommendations for action and a completed comprehensive Single-agency Action Plan.
- 2.7 IMR authors are reminded not to assume that people who read their reports have any knowledge of the issues under examination. Consequently, it is important to ensure that the evidence, upon which conclusions and recommendations are drawn, is clearly stated. Do not use abbreviations, jargon or initials.
- 2.8 Paragraph 8.33 of 'Working Together' states that:
- 'Those conducting management reviews of individual services should not have been directly concerned with the child or family or the immediate line manager of the practitioners involved'.**
- 2.9 IMR authors must ensure that the report is subject to internal review within their agency and receives the endorsement of a senior strategic manager **before** it is submitted to the SCR Panel. Authors should ensure that sufficient time is allowed to secure this endorsement within the timescales set for IMR submissions
- 2.10 A Designated Senior Manager must :
- 'Quality Assure' the IMR report against the required standards
 - ensure that the report is appropriately thorough, analytical and challenging
 - accept it's contents on behalf of the agency,
 - formally submit it to the serious case review panel,
 - endorse any revisions or amendments finally submitted to the SCR Panel
- 2.11 The Independent Chair of the SCR Panel and its members have the authority to challenge IMR reports where they deem them not to be of a sufficient standard (based on Ofsted guidelines). All the IMR reports will be closely scrutinised, and if not of sufficient quality to aid the analysis and learning required for an SCR, these will be returned for 'Revision' to the agency. This will be referred to in the SCR Overview Report.
- 2.12 Individual Agencies will receive a judgement on the quality of their IMR reports as part of Ofsted's overall judgement of the Serious Case Review.
- 2.13 A copy of all IMRs will be submitted to Ofsted, Government Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families alongside the overview report, executive summary and the action plan.

3 IMR TEMPLATE

- 3.1 WSCB have agreed to use a standard template to be used for all IMRs submitted as part of serious case reviews in Warrington. The template, with guidance notes to support authors in its completion, is included below. It has been devised to conform to common practice emerging across the North West region, as part of a project led by LSCB Managers and supported by GONW.
- 3.2 It is recognised that using a broadly similar format for IMRs across authorities, will support the development of competence and good practice. It will also avoid unnecessary confusion, particularly for agencies likely to be required to submit IMRs to more than one safeguarding board.
- 3.3 The template is divided into the following sections:
1. Introduction
 2. Terms of reference
 3. Author's Information
 4. Methodology
 5. Family Composition as known to the agency
 6. Comprehensive Chronology Template
 7. Narrative on the Chronology
 8. Critical Analysis
 9. What do we learn from this case?
 10. Recommendations for Action and Single-agency Action Plan
- 3.4 An Ofsted inspector commented recently that the Individual Management Reviews should say;
- this is what happened (section 5 and 6)
 - this is why (section 7)
 - this is what we learnt (section 8)
 - this is what we need to change (section 9)
 - this is how we are going to change it (section 10)

GUIDANCE:

Please find below the Template for your IMR which you should use to complete your report. You can type straight into this document and *delete all guidance notes as complete your report.*

Insert AGENCY LOGO here

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW REPORT

* Throughout the remainder of this template 'child' implies child, children or young person(s)

Serious Case Review in respect of	Initials of child (ren)* here
Date of Birth	
Date of Death or serious incident Delete as appropriate	
Author of IMR	Insert name and designation of IMR Report Author here Signature _____ Date _____
Agency	<i>Insert the name of agency together with a brief agency profile here</i>
Quality Assured and Approved by	<i>Insert the name and designation of person quality assuring and signing off the report on behalf of the agency- this cannot be the IMR author.</i> Signature _____ Date _____
Date of Submission (version 1.0)	<i>Date the report was submitted to Warrington Safeguarding Children Board</i>

Date of revised submission if necessary (version 2.0)	<i>Date revised version submitted if applicable</i>
Date of revised submission if necessary (version 3.0)	<i>Date revised version submitted if applicable</i>
Date of final submission	<i>Date the final report was submitted, if applicable</i>

GUIDANCE:

*A front sheet which is signed by the author and countersigning person in **hard copy** will be required for the final IMR as the reports are submitted to Ofsted in hard copy and must show the necessary signatures. The **SCR administrator will ask for this when revisions are completed.***

Whilst it is not necessary to provide hard copy signatures for preliminary stages of submission, ie prior to acceptance of the IMR by the SCR Panel, please ensure that the countersigning person has seen the IMR at each submission stage and agrees the content.

Useful contact information relating to this Serious Case Review:

SCR Co-ordinator: Chris Jones, WSCB Business Manager
Email: cxjones@warrington.gov.uk
Tel: 01925 443137

WSCB Core Team Email: mariahughes@warrington.gov.uk or
egregory@warrington.gov.uk
Tel: 01925 443126

WSCB Independent Chair: Edwina Harrison
Email: eharrison@warrington.gov.uk

SCR Panel – Independent Chair: DCI Andy Smith

SCR Overview Author: *Name- to be confirmed*
Email:
Tel:

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

GUIDANCE:

This is an example Introduction to the report. You do not have to use these phrases exactly. This example introduction sets out the rationale for an Individual Management Review report according to the revised 'Working Together' 2009.

Continue to type in the box as you wish – the box will grow to fit your text. The box borders can be removed for the final printed version of the IMR report if required.

This Individual Management Review (IMR) report of *(insert Name of the Organisation here)* is produced in accordance with Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) procedure for conducting a Serious Case Review (SCR). It will form part of a multi-agency SCR Overview Report as recommended in Chapter 8 of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (Dec 2009).

This report has been prepared following a review of the *(Insert specific agency and the service provided)* to *(insert child and family name)*. Its purpose is to look openly and critically at individual and organisational practice to see whether the case indicates changes could and should be made, and if so, to identify how those changes will be brought about.

SECTION 2 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

GUIDANCE:

- *You will have been sent the Terms of Reference agreed by the Serious Case Review Panel and the WSCB Independent Chair. You can 'cut and paste' these here.*
- *Keep the same numbers for the Terms of Reference and keep to the numbering throughout the Report when making any reference to them.*
- *Remember - it is possible that the Terms of Reference will be amended by the SCR Panel and Independent Chair of the SCR panel in the course of the review. You will be advised of this by the SCR Co-ordinator*
- *Type your text in this box – the box will expand as needed.*

Events have been reviewed over the period from *(insert start date)* to *(insert end date)*.

This IMR will address the 'Terms of Reference' agreed for the Serious Case Review, which are as follows; *(insert Terms of Reference supplied by SCR Panel)*

SECTION 3 – AUTHOR’S DETAILS

GUIDANCE:

- *Use this section to state what your role is, how this equips you to undertake this review, and clarify that you do not have any operational involvement in the case.*
- *Describe how you bring an element of independence and challenge.*

Type your text in this box – the box will expand as needed.

SECTION 4 - METHODOLOGY

GUIDANCE:

- *Please explain how you did your report here.*
- *List the sources of information that your agency has used to compile your report. This might include paper records, IT systems searched, computer records, supervision notes etc.*
- *Include some details about staff that have been interviewed as part of this review, or if not why not.*
- *Say if files could not be found and why.*
- *Use this section to include a glossary of any acronyms or abbreviations and codes used (for names etc)if they differ from the key provided by the SCR Co-ordinator*

Type your text in this box – the box will expand as needed.

The following sources of information regarding (insert Name of Subject(s) here) have been used to inform the report:

SECTION 6 - COMPREHENSIVE CHRONOLOGY

GUIDANCE:

The chronology should be created separately from your IMR and should be the first thing you do. You will be given a date to submit it to the SCR Co-ordinator and SCR Panel early in the process (ie before the IMR is complete). This is so that combined chronology of all agencies' involvement with the case can be drawn up.

- *Construct a comprehensive chronology of involvement by the agency and/or professional(s) in contact with the child and family over the time period set, and in light of the 'Terms of Reference' for this SCR.*
- *Provide a detailed chronology of involvement including information about when the child was seen, details of that contact and relevance to the Terms of Reference.*
- *Also, please briefly summarise decisions reached, the services offered and/or provided to the child and family and other action taken.*
- *Note specifically each occasion the child was seen, whether the child was seen alone, and whether the child's wishes and feelings were sought, and expressed.*
- *Cross-reference the entry to a particular term of reference, and you should enter just the number. Your entry may not be specifically relating to one, in which case leave it blank. This should also help you in your analysis of the contacts.*
- *Where an agency has had relevant contact with the alleged perpetrator the chronology should cover this.*

The table template is provided below in WORD. An Excel version is also available for the SCR Co-ordinator.

IMR from: *(insert name of Agency)*

in respect of SCR *(insert case identifier)*

Date	Time	Source of Information	Subject of recording	Event description, actions and outcomes	Expected Practice/Standards	Relevant Terms of Reference	Child Seen (y/n)
Enter the date dd/mm/yyyy ONLY	Enter the time in 24 hour format, e.g. 17:56 ONLY . If no time is available enter 00:00 and note why in Event Description	e.g. data systems, hard file, interview, etc.	e.g. Family member	Detail the event, any observations noted, reasons for decisions taken and action take/not taken with reasons	Refer to your own internal policies and standards and what was/was not met	Number the relevant TOR	Simply state Y or N

SECTION 7 - NARRATIVE

This section should

- *bring the chronology to life*
- *tell the story of the child/ family involvement with your agency*
- *include a description of the key events,*
- *highlighting concerns, omissions and good practice.*

Type your text in this box – the box will expand as needed.

SECTION 8 – CRITICAL ANALYSIS

GUIDANCE:

Link to Terms of Reference:

- *In this section the author must review the information in the comprehensive chronology and produce a critical analysis. The information provided and the analysis should be appropriately evidenced and explicitly linked to the Terms of Reference.*
- *Clearly specify if any of the Terms of Reference are not relevant to your agency and/or service and the reasons why. Using the Terms of References as headings may be a good way to construct your critical analysis, learning and recommendations*

Focus on the child:

- *The report should focus on the child or young person*
- *You must explicitly address issues of diversity - consider how the services offered took account of the individual needs of the child and family, and were sensitive to their **race and culture, age, disability, faith, gender, sexuality and economic deprivation**. Please make sure to answer to the following questions:*
 - *Does your agency routinely collect this information?*
 - *Does your agency use this information in assessments?*
 - *Have you any evidence that these have been taken account of in the delivery of a service to the child and their family?*

Agency practice:

- *Practice at individual and organisational levels must be openly and critically analysed against national and local statutory requirements, professional standards and current procedural guidance:*
 - *Were existing internal policies and procedures adhered to?*
 - *Were LSCB or multi -agency policies and protocols adhered to?*
 - *How did the children feel about the service being offered?*
 - *Do your decisions and actions adhere to current best practice, national guidance and your agency's professional standards?*
 - *Where research is available on the issues being addressed, how the actions in this case compare to research findings?*
 - *Where decisions and actions did not adhere to duties, policies and procedures guidance and professionals standards, analyse what staff practise and organisational factors contributed?*
- *Your analysis should reflect willingness by your agency to challenge practice and address wider agency responsibility. Please focus attention on why procedures were not followed, as well as identify what procedures had been followed or were lacking.*
- ***Good practice** should be highlighted and areas for change in practice must be clearly identified.*
- *Where practice has changed from that detailed in the chronology, i.e. new service or revised procedures, this should be explained in the report.*

Additional considerations to support analysis:

- Consider the events that occurred, the decisions made, actions taken and actions not taken.
- Where judgments were made or actions taken that indicate that practice or management could be improved, try to get an understanding not only of what happened, but **'why'**.
- Consider the **context** in which decisions were made and what was going on in your agency at the time which may have influenced decision making.

Consider specifically:

- When and in what way were the child (ren)'s wishes and feelings heard and addressed? Was this information recorded? How was this responded to by your agency? Did your agency listen to the child? This is particularly important to include in your review report.
- Were practitioners sensitive to the needs of the children in their work, knowledgeable about potential indicators of abuse or neglect and about what to do if they had concerns about a child?
- Did the organisation have in place policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and acting on concerns about their welfare? If not, this needs to be addressed in your report. Were these adhered to? If not, why not?
- Were there any issues in communication, information sharing or service delivery, between those with responsibility for work during normal office hours and others providing out of hours service?
- Was practice sensitive to the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious identify and issues of disability of the child and family?
- Were senior managers or other organizations and professionals involved at the point in the case where they should have been?
- Was the work in this case consistent with each organisation's and the LSCB's policy and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and with wider professional standards?
- Were there organisation difficulties being experienced within or between agencies? Were these due to a lack of capacity in one or more organisation? Was there an adequate number of staff in post? Did any resourcing issues such as vacant posts or staff on leave have an impact on the case?
- Was there sufficient management accountability for decision-making?

Remember: Constructive use of hindsight will benefit the analysis.

Type your text in this box – it will expand as you type and the border can be removed from the final version.

SECTION 9 - WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS CASE?

GUIDANCE:

- *Following on from the critical analysis section previously, the author should identify specific lessons which his/her agency can learn from the case. These can include areas of good or poor practice identified, as well as ways in which practice can be improved. Relate the answers to the terms of reference.*
- *Every area identified in Section 8 where practice requires improvement should have a corresponding lesson learned in this section*
- *Every lesson learned and identified should have a corresponding recommendation in Section 9.*

- *Have lessons from this case been identified for the way in which the organisation works to safeguard and promote the welfare of children?*

- *Is there good practice to highlight as well as ways in which practice can be improved? Lessons can be learned from good as well as poor practice*

- *Are there implications for ways of working: training (single and multi-agency), management and supervision, working in partnership with other organisations, policies and procedures, resources (financial , human assets, or technological)*

Please note that this section will inform the subsequent section on recommendations for action.

Type your text in this box – it will expand as you type and the border can be removed from the final version.

SECTION 10 - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION and SINGLE-AGENCY ACTION PLAN

GUIDANCE:

- *Recommendations for action must flow from the previous 'What do we learn from this case?' section.*
- *Any recommendation about improving or developing new procedures should be specified in terms of the expected practice outcomes and followed through to ensure it happens.*
- *Individual agency recommendations for action contained in this IMR report will be considered by the SCR Panel for inclusion in the Overview Report*
- *The SCR Panel may also recommend further actions for your agency to be included in the Overview Report.*
- *You should add as many actions for your agency as necessary.*

Please note that any individual agency recommendations not included in the Overview Report are expected to be acted on within individual agency governance arrangements.

Recommendations for action must be entered in the Single-agency Action Plan Template below. The template should be clear about:

- *What action should be taken*
- *By whom and by when?*
- *The outcomes these actions should bring about*
- *How the organisation will evaluate whether outcomes have been achieved.*

Complete the template below – continue on another page if necessary.

IMR Action Plan Template

INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE

[CHILD INITIALS] – SCR – [AGENCY NAME]

Lead Person: [NAME and contact email]

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Evidence	Key Outcome	Lead Officer	Date
	As they are written in section 9	<p>Indicate the actions or series of actions to be taken to achieve the expected outcomes. These must be</p> <p>Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time scale</p> <p>Examples might be delivery training, develop new policy, Introduce new standard, Review working practices , etc</p>	<p>List the evidence you will provide to the Board to show the actions are being undertaken or achieved</p> <p>These might include correspondence, minutes of meetings, new policy, training material etc</p>	<p>What improvements in service and child and family safety and welfare should result from actions</p> <p>Examples might be increased awareness of multiagency referrals, quicker access to services, attendance patterns improved for identified young children, reduction in young offenders, etc</p>	Designation of lead officer charged with implementing the actions	Date by which actions will be completed

Appendix 1

This Document should be used by your counter-signer or QA manager to check the content of your report.

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW QUALITY ASSURANCE FORM

Agency	
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Name and contact details of person completing this form	
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Child/ Family Identifier	
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Criteria	Yes	No	Partially	Comments (for SCR Panel's information)
The scope of the review is unambiguous, outcome-focused and supported by clear terms of reference				
The IMR author was independent as per Working Together 8.34.				
Access to legal advice was available for critical aspects				
The report is completed within agreed timescale				
The Report includes genogram and full details of changes to the family composition for the identified time period including transient members as appropriate				
The Report includes chronology of involvement for identified time period				
The Report takes addresses actions taken to reflect the individual needs of the child(ren) and family members				

Criteria	Yes	No	Partially	Comments (for SCR Panel's information)
The Report is sensitive to the racial, cultural and linguistic identity of the child (ren) and family members				
Report reflects a critical examination of the facts and provides a credible explanation for how and why events occurred				
Report reflects a critical examination of the facts and provides a credible explanation for actions/ decisions that were/ were not taken				
Practice at individual and organisational level is analysed openly and critically against local and national requirements, professional standards and local procedural guidance				
Good practice is highlighted beyond expected minimum practice				
Report contains an action plan with measurable and relevant recommendations for improvement and a timescale for implementation.				
Action plan has been agreed with relevant senior management groups				
Appropriate senior managers Quality Assured this IMR				

Signed:

Date:

Please send this form together with the IMR report and any accompanying documentation to the LSCB Business Manager/Serious Case Review Manager.

Please ensure that all information is transmitted securely.