

Comments from Social Work Scotland on the Scottish Government draft framework for conducting significant case reviews (SCRs)

General Comments

1. We very much welcome the draft SCR document. It is comprehensive, well written and of excellent quality. We also welcome the Scottish Government's leadership on this important matter as well as the inclusive nature of both its drafting and also now its circulation for comments.

2. The status of the proposed Framework may not be clear. However we feel that the undertaking of SCRs should not be optional. Our experience of the implementation of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 is that it has been hugely effective in many ways but not as effective as it could have been on occasions because some "Public Bodies" have not been as fully committed to complying with it as could/should have been expected. A voluntary SCR process regards adult protection cases would not be as helpful as a Framework and guidance with statutory authority. We would welcome therefore the SCR adult protection framework being made mandatory with greater clarity regards the requirements of key agencies to fully co-operate with SCRs in terms of sharing information and providing evidence being made explicit.

3. There has been discussion within the SWS Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Practice Network regarding the link between the draft SCR framework and the existing and/or planned arrangements re SCRs for Child Protection Committees.

We are aware that there have been issues arising from SCRs conducted by Child Protection Committees, including questions about the quality of some reports. I understand that this has led to a review of the SCR process for child protection committees. Other issues we have considered in the drafting of this response include:

- The potential disconnect of the management and oversight of both child and adult social work services precipitated by the Integration of Health and Social Care (this relates to areas where health and social care integration has not included children's services)
- The desirability of maintaining close links between the 3 planks of public protection – adult protection, child protection and management of high risk offenders

- The need to give the protection of “more vulnerable” adults the same priority and status as the protection of children

We believe, on balance, that there should be a single statutory framework for the conducting of SCRs that encompasses child and adults protection committees but that this should be the eventual outcome.

We do not believe there is any merit in delaying the introduction of the draft framework for adult protection committees. The ongoing absence of a statutory framework for Adult Protection Committees conducting SCRs is a gap that should be filled now.

It is therefore suggested that the SCR Framework for Adult Protection Committees be introduced on a mandatory basis as soon as possible.

It is further suggested that the review being conducted into SCRs for child protection committees should be extended to include adult protection and MAPPA SCRs to ensure that any resulting framework and guidance is fit for use by child and adult protection committees and MAPPA.

Social Work Scotland
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