

Serious Case Reviews

West Dunbartonshire's Adult Protection Committee is committed to promoting good practice and continuing to improve outcomes for adults at risk. As part of this commitment it has developed multi agency Serious Case Review guidance so that significant cases can be identified and the way that they were dealt with examined systematically and transparently.

Purpose:

The purpose of a serious case review is not to apportion blame, but to establish whether there are learning points that can be identified from the circumstances of the case and look at how such points can be disseminated and used to improve practice.

All serious case reviews carried out in West Dunbartonshire will therefore:

- Establish whether there are any lessons to be learned from the circumstances of the case about the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to protect adults at risk
- Clearly identify what those lessons are, whether they relate to inter-agency working or single agency procedures
- Identify examples of good practice
- Produce an overview report that provides both the facts of the case and an analysis of the findings of the review, and where appropriate makes recommendations relating to the lessons learned or examples of good practice identified
- Take the report to the multi-agency Adult Protection Committee in order that the report and its recommendations may be discussed and
 - an action plan developed for the dissemination of the report findings to relevant organisations
 - any single agency or inter agency action plans developed to improve practice in West Dunbartonshire

Criteria for a serious case review:

A serious case review should take place in all cases where an "adult at risk" as defined by the Act

- has died as a result of alleged harm, neglect or suicide
- has received a serious injury as a result of alleged harm (including self-harm) or neglect
- has experienced serious sexual abuse
- is considered to have suffered serious harm in relation to their property, rights or other interests
- where any agency involved with the adult requests a review because they have serious concerns regarding the conduct of a case and believe that this could have led to death or serious harm to the adult

Triggering a Serious Case Review:

Any agency or individual professional may refer a case for a serious case review if the case meets the above criteria. Any request for a review should be made to the Chair of the Adult Protection Committee in writing. The Chair will then ask the adult protection co-ordinator to gather initial relevant information about the case in order that a preliminary check may be made that it meets the above criteria. The information gathered will be passed to the Chair and the Adult Protection Lead Officer who will make the decision as to whether or not a serious case review should be undertaken.

In general it will be desirable to conduct a multi-agency review, as detailed below, but it is acknowledged that where a criminal investigation is required, that process will take precedence over a serious case review. As part of the decision as to whether or not to undertake a serious case review, therefore, or in relation to what may be deemed an appropriate timescale for such a review, due regard will be given to other investigations taking place in relation to the case.

The decision as to whether or not a review will take place will be confirmed to the referrer in writing within 28 days of the initial request.

If it is agreed that a serious case review is required the Chair of the Adult Protection Committee will convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee as soon as is practical, and within at least 14 days of the decision to hold the review.

Extraordinary Adult Protection Committee meeting

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish the serious case review group who will be responsible for conducting the review.

The Chair of the Adult Protection Committee will appoint a chair for the review group. The chair will be a senior officer from an agency with no or limited involvement in the case under review.

The Adult Protection Committee will agree membership of the review group as most appropriate to the case under review. Members of the Adult Protection Committee may nominate officers from their agencies to undertake this piece of work as representatives of the organisations on the Adult Protection Committee

The Adult Protection Committee will agree an appropriate timescale for nominations to be agreed and an initial meeting of the review group convened.

The Adult Protection Committee will provide a clearly defined scope for the review, indicating the essential areas agreed for it to examine.

The Adult Protection Committee will agree a timescale for the completion of the review and the preparation of the first draft of its report. It will also agree a date for the next extraordinary Adult Protection Committee meeting at which the draft report will be presented.

The Chair of the Adult Protection Committee will make arrangements to receive regular progress reports from the chair of the review group in order to maintain an overview of the progress made, any difficulties encountered or any changes that may require to be made to the membership of the group or the agreed scope of the review.

Conduct of Serious Case Reviews:

At the initial meeting of the serious case reviews group the terms of reference for the group, as defined by the Adult Protection Committee, will be confirmed.

Each agency represented will be asked to prepare a single agency report of their involvement in the case including a detailed chronology. The date for receipt of this by the chair will be agreed by the group. Any specific format for such reports will be agreed at the meeting, but each report should also contain any issues or concerns that the agency identified in their involvement in the case.

At the initial meeting the date for the following meeting should be set, allowing time for the single agency reports to be compiled, provided to the chair, copied and distributed to each member.

The review group will then meet to analyse the single agency reports, examine any interagency work that took place and evaluate the issues or concerns identified in the reports received in relation to the case.

Where required, the review group will request further information from any agency involved in the case, specifying the information required and the timescale for providing it.

Where possible, the group will reach conclusions as to any lessons that may be learned from examining the case and identify recommendations and/or action points from the information gathered and evaluated

The chair of the serious case review group will be responsible for compiling a draft report detailing the finding of the group and any recommendations that are made.

The Serious Case Review report:

The Review report will be an anonymised summary of the case and will include details of:

- The agencies who supplied reports and any further information requested
- A summary of the key issues identified by single agencies and those that become apparent from examining inter agency work
- The identification of any recommendations/action points for either a single agency or for inter-agency working

Once the draft report has been agreed by the review group it will be presented at the next extraordinary Adult Protection Committee meeting, as agreed in the timescales identified by the Committee.

Adult Protection Committee:

The Adult Protection Committee will receive and discuss findings of the serious case review report in order to

- Agree the report as it stands or any emendations that are considered appropriate
- Develop an action plan to disseminate the findings of the report amongst appropriate agencies
- Develop an action plan to implement the recommended of the report.

Where any single agency action points are recommended, the agency responsible will be expected to produce a plan to demonstrate how they will action these, including timescales. An appropriate member of the Adult Protection Committee will be delegated to work with the agency to ensure that a plan is produced and monitored at regular intervals.

Where any inter-agency action points are recommended, the agencies responsible will be expected to produce a plan to demonstrate how they will action these, including timescales. This will be monitored and reviewed by the Adult Protection Committee.

West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee Serious Case Review



