

# Adult Social Care

Making a Difference in the Right Way, Every Day

## Large Scale Enquiry Practice Guidance



**Solihull**

METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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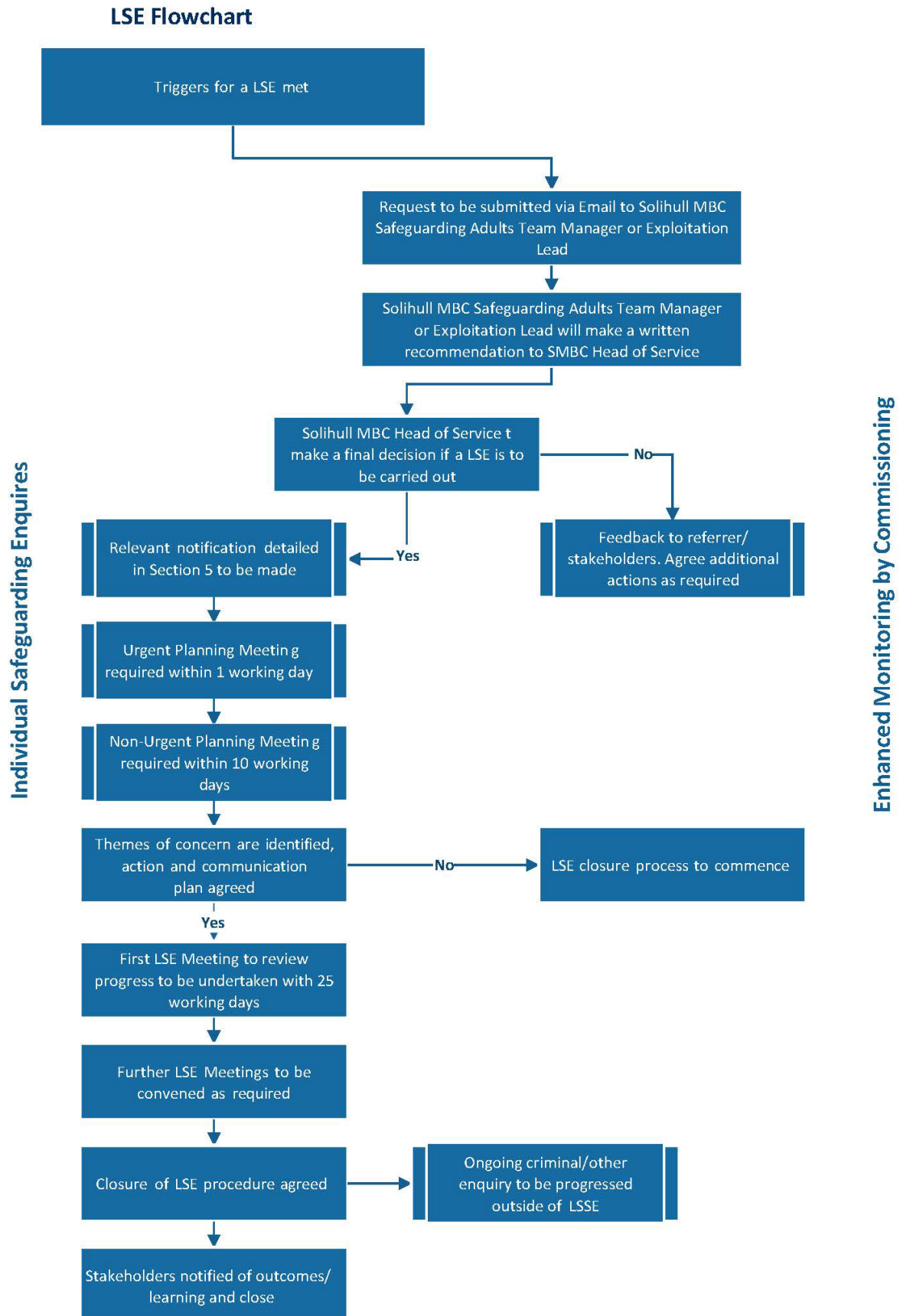
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## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to effectively manage multiple safeguarding enquiries in one process. The guidance should be read in conjunction with the West Midlands Multi Agency Safeguarding Procedures and Solihull MBC Provider Failure process.

## 2. LSE FLOWCHART



### 3. PURPOSE OF THE LARGE-SCALE ENQUIRY (LSE) PROCESS

Historically LSE processes have only focused on institutions and organisations. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Adult Social Care (ASC) define the scope of a Large-Scale Enquiry (LSE) as “where the statutory safeguarding duty is met relating to more than one adult, a location or network that facilitates abuse, or a provider that fails to protect adults from abuse.”

The LSE framework enables Adult Social Care to effectively co-ordinate a multi-agency response that.

- Focuses the enquiry on the alleged abuse and the outcomes of those at the centre of the process.
- Ensures that all agencies act in a timely manner to protect adults in their care.
- Ensures a fair, consistent and proportionate response across all agencies.
- Ensures the safety and well-being for all adults at risk both individually and collectively.
- Supports the development of a safeguarding plan that mitigates risk of harm and protects adults at risk.
- Identifies learning from the experience and share learning as appropriate.

### 4. IS AN LSE THE MOST APPROPRIATE PROCESS?

The LSE framework is to be used in exceptional circumstances where there is a specific risk to several people. Whilst people who live in communal settings may face similar risks when there are allegations of poor or unsafe practice, these should be addressed initially by other processes e.g. contract quality monitoring. The LSE process compliments, but is separate from the Commissioning Provider Failure Protocol, the decision on what process is most appropriate will be made in agreement by Heads of Service and Strategic commissioners.

Where an agency is regulated or licenced to operate by another statutory authority it may be more appropriate for those with regulatory powers to lead any investigation. For example, Trading Standards for Taxi Drivers or premises licenced to sell alcohol. Adults who are eligible and may have experienced abuse should continue to be supported through the safeguarding process as appropriate.

Where it is suspected that a crime may have been committed, the Police must be alerted at the earliest opportunity and their enquiries may take precedence.

Where adults are thought to remain at risk, an LSE may still proceed where the Police agree that the LSE will not impede their enquiries.

## 5. REQUESTING AN LSE

If there is the potential for concerns to meet the LSE threshold, contact should be made with the ASC Safeguarding Team Manager, who will consider the request and make a written recommendation to the appropriate Head of Service.

If the concerns relate to the exploitation of adults, contact should be made with ASC Exploitation Reduction Lead, who will consider the request and make a written recommendation to the appropriate Head of Service.

The decision on whether to commence an LSE lies with SMBC Head of Service in consultation with the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Support.

The decision to initiate the LSE procedure should be communicated by the Head of Service and/or the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Support responsible for the decision or delegated as appropriate to:

- Director of Adult Care and Support
- Assistant Director for Adult Care and Support
- Strategic Commissioner
- Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board
- Safeguarding Adults Lead for the Integrated Care Board (if relevant)
- Police
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) (if relevant)
- Operational Heads of Service
- ASC Communications lead

## 6. THRESHOLD FOR LSE

The decision to undertake LSE processes will be considered where the statutory duty under S42 of the Care Act is met **and** there is evidence that:

- A number of adults have allegedly been abused by the same source of risk resulting in significant harm or there is potential for significant harm.
- Trends and patterns are identified through the Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker, including sources of risk or locations.

- High volumes of S42 enquiry are received for the same provider/organisation and/or for the same type of abuse, or where a service has made no safeguarding referrals and adults are found to be at risk of abuse.
- A provider has failed to engage with other safeguarding actions to date resulting in continued harm or continued risk of harm to one or more individuals.
- A combination of concerns are received from a provider/organisation that are potentially higher risk and appear systemic e.g. poor moving and handling with inappropriate techniques or equipment, nutritional needs not being met, skin integrity needs not being met etc.
- ShEP or the Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker identifies concerns about Organised Networked exploitation or Organised Crime Groups and Gangs

### **Decision not to proceed to LSE**

If a decision is taken that there is insufficient evidence to proceed to an LSE, the Head of Service must record the reasons not to proceed and document any further actions to be taken to address the concern(s) raised and who will take responsibility for ensuring the agreed actions are completed. The written record may be an email or more formal response. A copy of the decision should be sent to Safeguarding Admin Office for appropriate storage.

## **7. TIMESCALES**

If initial information gathering indicates an urgent response is needed, the Safeguarding Team Manager or Exploitation Reduction Lead should convene and chair an urgent planning meeting with key agencies. This should be undertaken within 1 working day.

In all other situations LSE planning meetings should be undertaken within 10 working days of the decision to initiate LSE procedures.

If the planning meeting is likely to be delayed by the unavailability of agencies, the Chair of the LSE should review the need for that agency to attend and/or ask for a deputy if their attendance is crucial to the purpose of the meeting.

It is suggested that the first LSE review meeting is held within 25 working days of the planning meeting.



The LSE meetings will continue until it is clear that adults with lived experience are safe from abuse or neglect. This process can be as short or long as is necessary, LSE should however always be closed at the earliest opportunity.

## **8. LSE CO-ORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Safeguarding Team Manager or Exploitation Reduction Lead will be assigned the responsibility of leading the coordination and monitoring of the LSE. Where an institution or organisation is identified as a potential source of risk. A communication plan for informing those using the service and their families at the start and end of the process is also required and should be discussed and agreed at the planning meeting and at LSE meetings thereafter.

The allocated Safeguarding Admin Officer will support with letters, minute taking, and co-ordination of meetings, reports, monitoring and dissemination of information.

Where other agencies are requested to undertake part of the investigation, the agency should be provided with a clear remit by the Chair of the LSE meeting detailing their specific roles and responsibilities. Agreement should be reached on the desired outcomes of the enquiry, how progress will be monitored, who will report to the meeting and within what timescales.

Written reports from agencies contributing to the LSE should be returned to the Safeguarding Admin Office [sao.workload@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:sao.workload@solihull.gov.uk) within agreed timescales and will be shared at the Planning Meeting or any subsequent LSE review meetings so that the findings can be discussed, and outcomes agreed.

## **9. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

The LSE process should be proportionate and only involve agencies whose roles and responsibilities will support the objectives of the LSE. The Chair should consider how each agency's expertise could contribute to the enquiry.

It would not be appropriate for individuals with lived experience or their representatives to attend an LSE meeting. This is because of the practicalities of managing attendance of multiple interested parties and the need to maintain confidentiality.

The Chair must consider how Advocacy can support the views and outcomes of any individuals and or their family representatives either in relation to individual safeguarding enquiries or in response to the LSE process itself.

### **SMBC Operational Representatives**

Whilst the Safeguarding Team Manager or Exploitation Reduction Lead will coordinate the LSE, the process is still dependent on Safeguarding Enquiry Officers to undertake timely statutory S42 enquiries. The Team Manager or Managing Officer in the relevant social work team will oversee the individual safeguarding enquiries and must be invited to report the findings to the planning meeting. Enquiry Officers may be invited at the Chair's discretion.

### **Key stakeholder agencies.**

Key stakeholder agencies are signatories to the West Midlands Safeguarding procedures and must send a representative to the LSE meetings if invited unless there is a valid reason for non-attendance which is agreed with the Chair prior to the meeting.

- West Midlands Police
- Children's Services where there is potential abuse to under 18's
- University Hospitals Birmingham
- Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Commissioning Board
- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust
- Support to Care Homes Team (if related to a care or nursing home)
- Solihull Community Housing
- Barnardos
- Care Quality Commission (for regulated services)
- Solihull Action Through Advocacy
- Solihull Commissioning.
- Other Authorities who work with or fund the care of individual Adults

## **10. LSE PLANNING MEETING**

The LSE Planning meeting will need to consider and/or agree:

- The immediate safety of all adults at risk and whether immediate action is required.
- The action plan for the enquiry; to consider the level of the enquiry required, specifically the proportionality of the response and identify the lead agency.
- Timescales and framework for ensuring all actions are completed.
- How the LSE will interface with any individual safeguarding enquiries that are ongoing.
- What other enquiries, investigation or inspection are required or are in process.
- Whether individual reviews or assessments of any other adults are needed and who should undertake these.
- LSE in relation to institutions or organisations - Review and confirm the

commissioning status and inform Care Quality Commission and neighbouring local authorities as appropriate.

- A communication strategy including:
  - How the provider will be informed (if not invited to the planning meeting)
  - How other adults or families potentially affected by the LSE are informed.
  - How any media enquiries will be dealt with?

Where there are concerns about a service provider, the planning meeting can be held without the provider being present if there is a potential risk of harm to those who receive their services. A duty of candour does apply, and consideration must be given at the meeting (or before) as to how the provider will be communicated with and included. It is important that all agencies are open and honest with the provider about their concerns as they will need to be supported to address the issues raised.

## 11. LSE REVIEW MEETINGS

The LSE Chair should convene a first LSE review meeting within 25 working days. Further LSE Progress/Review meetings will be arranged by agreement.

The purpose of LSE review meetings is to:

Review information gathered since the last meeting and the outcomes of any S42 enquiries.

- Provide feedback on the different strands of investigation.
- Plan further actions.
- Evaluate progress of previously agreed actions.
- Evaluate ongoing risk.
- Obtain an update from the Police as to the status of any criminal prosecutions.
- Consider any variations to the Action Plan.

All those who attend the LSE meeting are required to ensure that they have completed the actions agreed at the LSE Planning meeting and have provided the Chair with a report prior to the meeting, or as a minimum requirement have the information available to share at the meeting.

### **LSE meeting in relation to institutions or organisations**

If not involved at the LSE Planning Meeting, the relevant provider manager should be invited to attend the LSE review as it is vitally important that they are fully engaged and take an active role in the progression of any improvement/action plan.

## 12. CLOSURE OF LSE PROCESS

- How and by whom the closure of the LSE will be communicated to adults affected and their families (where appropriate) key stakeholders and partner agencies.
- The ongoing monitoring of any improvement or disruption plan outside of the safeguarding process.
- How learning from this LSE will be taken forward.
- Whether practitioners and professionals involved in this LSE need an opportunity to de-brief.
- Chair of the LSE will ensure that the Head of Service or Assistant Director is informed of the final outcome of the enquiry process and advise them of any continued risks identified regarding the service.
- Closure of the LSE in relation to institutions and organisations - A copy of the Enquiry minutes should also be sent to the Assistant Director of Commissioning of ACS and where relevant the ICB. This is to ensure that relevant actions are built into contract monitoring arrangements with the Service Provider.
- Closure of LSE in relation to Exploitation - A copy of the Enquiry minutes should also be sent to the Chair of the Solihull Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group. This is to ensure that relevant actions are built into future exploitation strategies, policies and procedures.
- Closure of the LSE in relation to institutions and organisations - a concluding letter will be sent by the Chair to the Service Provider outlining the outcome of the LSE.
- Closure of LSE in relation to institutions and organisations - Any ongoing restrictions on admissions may be monitored by Commissioning and reviewed with the Provider.

It is possible that the LSE may be closed but other processes may continue, for example, a disciplinary or professional body investigation or Police enquiry into a person no longer involved or in contact with those placed at risk. Consideration may need to be given as to how this will be monitored if the LSE is closed.

### 13. RETENTION OF MINUTES, REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION

A Minute Taker will be designated to the LSE process and will (where possible) remain with the enquiry for continuity until the enquiry closes.

Minutes approved by the LSE Chair will be circulated to representatives within 10 working days with a request that any suggested amendments are requested to the LSE Chair within 5 working days of that date.

The LSE Chair is responsible for oversight of secure storage of the LSE documentation. LSE documentation may be used for future profiling, background information and monitoring. Records of all LSE's will be stored on a shared drive and will be disposed of in line with SMBC retention processes.

Sharing LSE Documentation is only with the permission of the LSE Chair. Any breaches of confidentiality must be reported to SMBC Information Governance.

### 14. APPENDIX.

West Midlands Multi Agency Safeguarding procedures: [West Midlands Regional Safeguarding Information Hub \(safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](https://safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk)

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR guidance): [SAR-Process-and-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf \(safeguardingsolihull.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/SAR-Process-and-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf)

SSAB Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) 2023-25:  
<https://www.safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/ssab/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/Information-Sharing-Agreement-2023-25.pdf>

SSAB Website: [Home - Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board \(safeguardingsolihull.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingsolihull.org.uk)

SAO Workload email address: [sao.workload@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:sao.workload@solihull.gov.uk)

