

# MARS

## Multi-Agency Resource Service

helping keep children safe

Edition 4, July 2010

### Communities of expertise

*The MARS is now receiving submissions from individuals across agencies wishing to be part of the communities of expertise. If you are interested in joining, the submission form can be downloaded from our website. The information you include will enable us to match your experience as closely as possible to the needs of any agency asking for help.*

#### Membership

We welcome submissions from people from all backgrounds working in child protection. Being part of the community should not be an onerous task and if you are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) membership can contribute to your post registration training and learning (PRTL). A community member can decline to take on a particular task or devote as much, or as little, time as they wish. We understand that members may not always be available or may feel they do not have the right experience.

#### Launch of marstalk.org.uk

We are pleased to announce the launch of marstalk, the new online space for the wider child protection community where you can raise issues, ask questions and discuss topics of interest. Marstalk will replace our current forum and if you are already registered with [marscp.ning.com](http://marscp.ning.com) you will be redirected to the new site.

If you would like to join the community you will need to provide three pieces of information – your name, organisation and reason for wishing to join. Access to the site will be governed by the MARS using guidelines about how community members should conduct themselves in discussion forums or groups, and the content of blogs. The MARS will have the authority to suspend members from the site.

#### The work of new members

Some potential members have raised concerns about liability and accountability – for instance what happens to any advice given if the circumstances for a child or family change? The responsibility for acting on the advice and support provided lies entirely with the commissioning organisation or agency. The work of the community member begins when they, the MARS and the commissioning organisation have discussed the issues fully and the objectives, work plan and timetable are agreed. This is recorded in the Memorandum of Understanding.

#### National Child Protection Committee coordinator post

Catriona Laird joined the MARS team on 28 June. Catriona will be liaising with the incoming Chair of the National CPC forum to help take forward specific thematic pieces of work on behalf of child protection committees.



You can contact Catriona on 01786 466428 and at [catriona.laird1@stir.ac.uk](mailto:catriona.laird1@stir.ac.uk).

#### FAQs: advice and support

Recently, some of you have asked how, and in what circumstances, to contact the MARS.

##### Q. Who can request support?

Any professional who works in child protection can request support but to simplify communication your link person to the MARS is your CPC lead officer, the chair of your CPC, or both. Please approach the relevant link person and ask them to contact us on your behalf. You can contact us if you are unsure who your contact is.

##### Q. How do I get information about practice development or research?

If you require signposting to research, information or practice developments, you can contact the MARS at any time. We ask that you complete our online request form and this can be emailed through to us at the MARS. Please just ensure that you keep your MARS link person informed of any requests for help.

##### Q. What do I do if I need help with a specific case?

If you require support or advice about a specific case you can complete and submit our online request form. You can fill this in with your MARS lead contact or ask them to do this and submit it for you.

**For more FAQs please visit our website.**

#### One-day SCR conference

On 11 November 2010 *Making SCRs fit for purpose?* – a one-day conference jointly organised by the SCCPN, MARS and CLICP – will address many issues faced by professionals working on significant case reviews across the UK. Find out more, and book your place, on pages two and three.

MARS ■ Department of Applied Social Science ■ Room 4S16  
Colin Bell Building ■ University of Stirling ■ Stirling  
FK9 4LA ■ [www.mars.stir.ac.uk](http://www.mars.stir.ac.uk) ■ 01786 466320

# Making SCRs fit for purpose?

A one-day conference to promote best practice in significant case reviews  
Thursday 11 November 2010 • Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

## The conference

Recent high profile cases have once again brought into sharp focus the question of how best to review child deaths and serious cases and effect learning from their findings in a way that does not blame or demoralise professionals.

This conference – jointly organised by MARS, SCCPN and the Centre for Learning in Child Protection (CLiCP) – provides professionals with an opportunity to learn from research and practice across the UK and contribute to the development of best practice in Scotland. Drawing on previous work by CLiCP, the conference will explore the processes used in all four UK countries and consider what needs to be done to make them an effective tool for learning. In particular, it will focus on the proposals for developing best practice in Scotland.

## The background

Scotland has had national guidance in relation to significant case reviews (SCRs) since 2007. Prior to this each local authority had its own process for reviewing and learning from child deaths and serious cases of abuse and neglect. The Scottish guidance contains principles similar to England, Wales and Northern Ireland but there are also key differences in the arrangements. Reform or discussion about reform of these processes is currently underway in each of the four countries.

## Recent developments in Scotland

A working group, chaired by Beth Smith, Director of the MARS, recently considered the options for enhancing skills and the capacity to undertake significant case reviews. Bringing together members with practice and research expertise, the group considered:

- » how can we best inform learning and practice development as a result of reviews
- » what training might be required for review teams, including identifying a skill set for the lead reviewer or chair

- » what practical aids could help local child protection committees undertaking SCRs
- » what would be the scope and purpose of an analysis of reviews undertaken since 2007

*This conference will include consideration of the work of the group in addition to subsequent developments in Scotland.*

## Understanding child death review processes

### Learning for practice and policy

Child death reviews are a key priority for the University of Edinburgh/ NSPCC's Centre for Learning in Child Protection. Work includes a review of high-profile child death and serious abuse cases in Scotland; an analysis of cases for a local safeguarding children's board in England; and a briefing paper comparing child death review processes across the UK. In March 2009, CLiCP hosted the seminar Learning from review of child deaths and serious abuse cases in the UK bringing together policy makers and academics from across the UK to identify key themes emerging from reviews.

## The speakers

- » **Marian Brandon**  
*University of East Anglia*
- » **Wendy Rose** *Open University*
- » **John Devaney**  
*Queen's University, Belfast*
- » **Anne Lazenbatt**  
*Queen's University, Belfast*
- » **Sharon Vincent** *CLiCP*
- » **Anne Black**, *Independent consultant*
- » **Moira McKinnon**  
*Glasgow Social Work Services*
- » **Philip Raines** *Scottish Government*

Whilst there is a wealth of information on child deaths and significant abuse cases in England and Wales, there is far less published information available in Scotland. *Learning from child deaths and serious abuse* by Sharon Vincent, addresses this gap. Drawing on findings from a review of high profile child death and abuse cases in Scotland, it extracts the key themes from cases including Caleb Ness, Kennedy McFarlane, Carla Nicola Bone and Danielle Reid, considers what we can learn from such cases and compares the findings with those from research undertaken in other parts of the UK.



## Delegate information

The delegate rate has been set at £99 to enable as many professionals working in child protection as possible to attend. There are a limited number of places at the conference so please book early to secure your place. The delegate costs include access to a full programme of seminars and breakout sessions plus all catering. The event content will qualify for CPD and PRTL.

## How to book

- » book online at [www.mars.stir.ac.uk](http://www.mars.stir.ac.uk) or [www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk](http://www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk)
- » fill out the booking form below (enclosing your cheque or purchase order number if applicable) and send it to **MARS Conference 2010, c/o The Publishing Bureau, Suite 102, Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2 6HJ**
- » make a booking over the phone by contacting Andrew Miller on 0141 332 7067

If your payment requires a purchase order number please ensure that you include this on your booking form so that we can send you an invoice.  
If you are paying by cheque please make this payable to 'University of Stirling'.

### Contact information

Title ..... First name ..... Last name.....

Organisation/authority.....

Email address ..... Contact telephone number.....

### Delegate names

**Delegate 1** Same details as above

Title ..... First name ..... Last name.....

Job title .....

**Delegate 2** Title ..... First name ..... Last name.....

Job title .....

**Delegate 3** Title ..... First name ..... Last name.....

Job title .....

**Total amount (£99 per delegate): £ .....**

### Payment information

I enclose a cheque for the total amount (above) made payable to 'University of Stirling'

Please send an invoice to the following address (institutional bookings only)

Title ..... First name ..... Last name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Purchase order number (if required).....

### Additional information

Do any of the delegates have any special dietary/accessibility requirements?

*You will be sent a receipt and confirmation once your payment has been processed.  
If you have any queries, please phone 0141 332 7067.*

**Terms and conditions.** Bookings are non-refundable, but delegates may be substituted at any stage. In the event of cancellation by the organisers, liability will be restricted to a refund of the fees paid. For reasons beyond the control of the organisers it may be necessary to make changes to speakers, content or timing of the programme.

# SCCPN Scottish Child Care and Protection Network

SCCPN, Department of Applied Social Science, Colin Bell Building, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA  
01786 466434  
sccpn@stir.ac.uk  
www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk

Connecting research and practice

Edition 4, July 2010

## What can research do for you?

*Nearly 400 practitioners responded to the SCCPN's survey about priorities for research which will aid day-to-day practice.*

Professionals in Scotland are clear about what they see as assisting them to access and use research in practice. Just under 400 practitioners, including a number working as social workers, social care workers, health practitioners, teachers, and police, responded to a consultation that we circulated to a range of agencies across Scotland. They told us about what they see as priorities for research; about their use of research; and about what helps and hinders their access to and use of research.

### Priorities for research

Research priorities for practitioners include studies which:

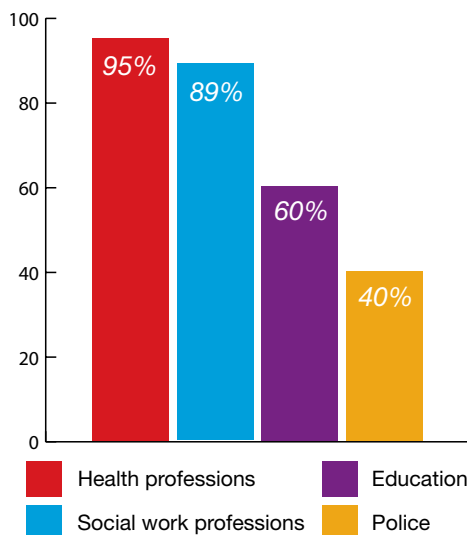
- » understand or explore the existence, development, or operation of particular practice approaches or services (39.5 per cent)
- » understand or explore the existence, development, or effect of a particular issue on people's lives (27 per cent)
- » measure the impact of practice approaches, services and interventions on the lives of children and young people, and/or their families (27 per cent)
- » understand service users' views and experiences of practice approaches, services and interventions (6.5 per cent)

### Consulting research evidence to assist practice

An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they did consult research to assist practice – just over three quarters said that they did. Higher proportions from health professions and the

social work profession reported that they consulted research than from the education and police professions. Interestingly, a higher proportion of respondents within the voluntary sector reported that they consulted research than within the public sector – almost all of those who were working within the voluntary sector compared with three quarters of those working within public agencies.

### Current use of research across professions



### Topics for research

The highest number of responses related to:

- » child abuse and neglect
- » parental substance misuse
- » parenting styles and approaches
- » family support
- » the accessibility of services
- » interagency working

### Gaining access to research findings

A clear message to emerge from the responses received is that practitioners find interactive events the most helpful resource to access and explore research findings. On 11 November 2010 *Making SCRs fit for purpose?* – a one-day conference jointly organised by the SCCPN, MARS and CLiCP – will address many issues faced by professionals working on significant case reviews across the UK. Find out more, and book your place, on pages two and three.

### What helps and hinders using research evidence in practice

Key themes emerging from practitioners' pointers on what helps and hinders research use in practice are: the nature and communication of research; organisational contexts and cultures; and individuals' attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Organisational context and culture appears to be most critical issue in the use of research in practice. It emerges as a key facilitator for those who reported that they used research in practice. But it is also most frequently reported as the main barrier to using research in practice and in particular, there is an issue of how professionals can allocate time to access, read and reflect on research and then relate this to practice.

### Further information

If you would like to read more about practitioners' views on how research and knowledge brokering can assist child care and protection practice in Scotland, you can download the full report from [www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk](http://www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk).