

Questions to Adult Social Care Select Committee – 5 September 2013

A response from Surrey Police to a Freedom of Information request submitted by me on 29 May but not responded to until 19 August states that their Individual Management Review (IMR) as part of a Serious Crime Review (SCR) (sic) into the death of Gloria Foster who died in February, over 6 months ago, was commissioned by the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) in March 2013. It goes on to state that the SCR is still ongoing.

I am informed by Surrey County Council officers that the new Independent Chair of the SSAB was appointed on 17 May 2013, after the previous Chair resigned in April 2012, 13 months earlier.

1. Who Chaired the SSAB from April 2012 to 17 May 2013?
2. Which meetings of the SSAB have taken place between April 2012 and May 2013?
3. At which meetings of the SSAB has the Gloria Foster case been discussed?
4. Has the Serious Case Review Group (SCRG), chaired by Adam Colwood of Surrey Police, met to consider the Gloria Foster case? If so how often and when?
5. At which meeting and by whom was the IMR commissioned?
6. Has the lack of a Chair for the SSAB resulted in delays in the investigation into Gloria Foster's death?
7. When is there likely to be a report on the findings of the the Serious Case Review?
8. What is the process for appointing the Independent Chair of the SSAB?
9. Who appointed the present Chair of the SSAB?
10. I am informed that the Independent Chair of the SSAB can only be contacted via officers of the County Council. Why is it thought necessary to gatekeep access to the Independent Chair, which could lead to serious concerns about the independence of access given the sensitivity of safeguarding cases?

Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)

Response

The existence of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) is not currently a statutory function. The board was chaired from April 2012 to May 2013 by Sarah Mitchell, Strategic Director for Adult Social Care, until an appropriate independent chair was found.

During this period, SSAB meetings took place on 28 June 2012, 18 October 2012, 24 January 2013 and 16 May 2013. The minutes of all these meetings are available on request. Further information on the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/protecting-adults-from-harm/surrey-safeguarding-adults-board>

The current independent chair, who is happy to be contacted directly by anyone, was appointed after making a presentation and attending an interview by a panel made up of key partner agencies.

The board's Serious Case Review (SCR) Group looks at cases and makes a recommendation to the SSAB chair conducting an SCR. In this case, the chair had already decided one was needed. Members of the board were advised about this at the meeting on 24 January 2013.

An SCR panel was set up and all the agencies involved were asked to complete IMRs in a letter from the independent chair. The SCR is being completed and will be published shortly.

Keith Witham
Chairman – Adult Social Care Select Committee