

# WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

## SECTION 1 AND 8

<b>Title of proposal:</b>	<b>Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) – Integrated Impact Assessment review</b>
<b>Official(s) completing the Integrated Impact Assessment (name(s) and name of team):</b>	<b>SUSR Team - Sarah Lamberton, Liane James, Louise Fradd</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Enabling People</b>
<b>Head of Division/SRO (name):</b>	<b>Alistair Davey</b>
<b>Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:</b>	<b>Minister for Social Care</b>
<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>Sept 2022 (Refreshed Post Consultation Jan 2024, then pre-publication July 2024)</b>

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## SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

(Please note that this Section will be published)

The Welsh Government has developed new Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) statutory guidance to be issued under section 139 of *The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*<sup>1</sup>.

The development of the SUSR in Wales has been undertaken to:

- a) Build on good practice that emerged from the creation of the Adult Practice Review and Child Practice Review processes which replaced the former Serious Case Review guidance in April 2016. The processes enable a greater understanding of what happened during an incident and why it happened. Their approach improves the understanding of impacts that actions of organisations and agencies had and whether different actions may have resulted in different outcomes for the child or adult at risk. The overall aim is to create a learning environment.
- b) Implement the findings of the 2018 academic review led by Professor Amanda Robinson (2018)<sup>2</sup> from Cardiff University and a Welsh Government practitioner's review by Assistant Chief Constable Liane James (2018)<sup>3</sup>. The reports analysed the existing safeguarding review landscape alongside a sample of Domestic Homicide Reviews, Adult Practice Reviews, Child Practice Reviews and Mental Health Homicide Reviews. These reports highlighted the need for co-ordination, collaboration, communication, and governance to be improved when conducting reviews in Wales. The reports made recommendations based on their findings which are reflected in the new SUSR process. The reports also exposed the complexity of devolved and non-devolved bodies undertaking reviews in isolation and in some cases without Welsh Government knowledge or involvement. This ultimately resulted in the recommendation for a single review process.

The combined evidence from both the academic and practitioners' reviews mentioned above, provided Welsh Ministers with powerful evidence to support the need for change in relation to the review processes in Wales. Consequently, the SUSR has been developed to strengthen the review landscape within Wales. The SUSR will:

- create a single review process which incorporates a multi-agency approach where

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<sup>1</sup> Section 139 *The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*. Section 139

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, A., Rees, A. and Dehaghani, R. (2018) '*Findings from a thematic analysis of reviews into adult deaths in Wales: Domestic Homicide Reviews, Adult Practice Reviews and Mental Health Homicide Reviews*'

<sup>3</sup> James, L. (2018) '*Domestic Homicide Reviews in Wales: Illuminate the Past to Make the Future Safer*'

the criteria for **one or more** of the following reviews is met:

- Adult Practice Review;
  - Child Practice Review;
  - Domestic Homicide Review;
  - Mental Health Homicide Review; and
  - Offensive Weapons Homicide Review<sup>4</sup>.
- eliminate the need for families to take part in an onerous and traumatising cycle of information-giving and waiting for the conclusions of multiple reviews;
  - ensure the subject and family are at the heart of the process;
  - use the insight and learning gained from the Review process to deliver positive change in practice to prevent future harm;
  - provide an improved support network, ensuring Welsh Government oversight of recommendations for both devolved and non-devolved services in Wales, via the escalation of issues to the Ministerial Board;
  - provide support via the SUSR Co-ordination Hub to the Safeguarding Boards that manage the SUSR process;
  - ensure clear linkages between local, regional, and national bodies while respecting regional and local variations in arrangements;
  - retain the final SUSR reports in a central repository (the Wales Safeguarding Repository) and facilitate pan-Wales training and local, regional, national, and international learning; and
  - use the Wales Safeguarding Repository and associated learning to support any changes to practices, processes and cultures which will prevent future harm.

The SUSR process and associated Statutory Guidance has been developed as a result of substantial cross-sector collaboration with partners including Safeguarding Boards, Community Safety Partnerships, the Home Office, Police and Crime Commissioners, Health and third sector organisations. This engagement has continued throughout the five year development process and has culminated in the creation of the SUSR Support Network to ensure the right partners are around the table to help deliver the SUSR process.

Victim and family voice has been a key consideration throughout this engagement process. As a result of feedback from stakeholders engaged in development of the SUSR a Victim and Family Reference Group was established. This Group now forms a key component of the new Support Network and will continue to shape and inform future direction of SUSRs and related learning dissemination. See Appendix 1 for a list of partners involved in SUSR development and an overview of the SUSR Support Network.

In Spring 2023 a Welsh Government public consultation was undertaken on the draft SUSR Statutory Guidance. The consultation exercise targeted over 315 individuals and resulted in the submission of 48 responses. In September 2023 a [summary of responses](#) on the

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<sup>4</sup> Offensive Weapon Homicide Reviews are to be piloted (2023) using the SUSR process in Wales and therefore may be subject to change.

consultation was published and changes have now been made to the Statutory Guidance as a result of the consultation feedback and analysis.

The SUSR ties into our wider aspiration for One Welsh Public Service. In line with the Five Ways of Working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, we know that we can only deliver the best outcomes for current and future generations if we support an integrated and collaborative approach to policy and delivery which breaks down silos, draws together insights from different spheres of expertise, and encourages partnership working across the whole of the public service as well as with wider social partners.

The SUSR lays out a framework for how Safeguarding Boards should work in partnership with Community Safety Partnerships and other partnerships in the area such as Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Boards to protect people from harm - sharing lessons and ensuring we work together to secure the wellbeing of every person in Wales.

The evolution of practices in this way will ensure that they remain fit for purpose in an ever-changing society. This will help to prevent similar incidents taking place, and ultimately reduce harm going forward.

## SECTION 8. CONCLUSION

(Please note that this section will be published)

### 8.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

The SUSR has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders and practitioners who work with children, young people and adults at risk. They have been able to advise Welsh Government on how to develop the process to ensure that it is fit for purpose and effectively engages with these groups. We were careful to avoid re-traumatisation for the individuals, by working with advocates and third sector organisations to provide their perspectives (this included third sector organisations who represented/worked alongside people with protected characteristics). This ensured that their voices were heard as their experiences were captured.

SUSR pilots were undertaken by Safeguarding Boards in Wales and feedback used from engaging with the adults and children involved in the cases (either as victims, or family members of the subject of the review) to further refine SUSR processes.

The Task and Finish groups and Steering Group which guided the development of the SUSR included stakeholders whose first language is Welsh. These groups ensured that all public materials (i.e templates, training and learning resources) created for the SUSR would be made available in Welsh.

As set out in Section 1a, Welsh Government public consultation was undertaken including a range of engagement events. Easy Read and Youth Friendly consultation documents were provided. All consultation materials were produced in Welsh and English and opportunities provided to engage through the medium of Welsh. All web-based resources accessed through GOV.Wales are being created accessibly.

As set out in Section 1a a dedicated SUSR Victim and Family Reference Group is now supporting the implementation of the SUSR process.

### 8.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

The measures within this proposal will have a positive impact on the children and adults at risk that the SUSR process seeks to protect. In line with the *Safeguarding Boards (Functions and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2015*<sup>5</sup>, the SUSR process will generate learning through reviews which will inform and improve practices and services going forward. In turn, this will protect and safeguard communities from harm. The SUSR

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<sup>5</sup> *Safeguarding Boards (Functions and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2015*.  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2015/1466/contents/made>

process will ensure that this learning is disseminated across Wales. The proposal will help services to adapt and change their practices based on the ever-changing communities in Wales.

The SUSR process has been requested by and created with practitioners to develop a more effective and efficient process that will be detailed, but more streamlined in its approach, by:

- delivering a single review and not multiple reviews on an incident;
- creating a simplified yet concentrated approach to reviews which reduces trauma to families, duplication of effort, utilises resources and achieves best value;
- producing a SUSR report that is about improving service delivery with a clear Action Plan which will be monitored by the relevant Safeguarding Boards and the SUSR Co-ordination Hub (and the Offensive Weapon Homicide Oversight Board where relevant);
- ensuring the victim/family impacted is at the heart of the review process; and
- enabling the sharing of information, recommendations, and thematic learning to safeguard future generations.

The SUSR is a new process which will contribute to the prevention of serious incidents across the whole of Wales by generating and sharing multi-agency learning. For the first time it will provide Welsh Government with clear national oversight of reviews being conducted in Wales and how action and learning resulting from SUSRs is being implemented. With this oversight, and by working through the SUSR Support Network, Welsh Government will be able to tackle barriers that are preventing public sector organisations from delivering the positive changes identified.

### 8.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**
- **A prosperous Wales** – The SUSR has the potential to have a minimal positive impact on economic well-being for individuals and a minimal positive impact for communities. A reduction in trauma for the victim or family as a result of only carrying out one rather than multiple reviews will have a positive impact on their educational opportunities.
- **A resilient Wales** – The proposals will have a positive impact on the resilience of Welsh services. The information sharing between multi-agencies will ensure that services and agencies are properly prepared for supporting individuals based on their different needs.
- **A healthier Wales** - The proposals have the potential to have a significant positive impact on mental and physical well-being outcomes for individuals. The multiple review system that is currently in place may re-traumatise victims or families and therefore have a negative impact on their well-being. The SUSR process will eliminate

the need for multiple reviews and will therefore impact well-being positively. The long-term effects of this proposal also mean that more children and adults at risk will be protected from harm and therefore has a positive impact on their mental and physical well-being.

- **A more equal Wales** – The proposals have the potential to have a moderate positive impact on equality. The proposals impact on people with protected characteristics including mental health, disability, age, gender and ethnicity.<sup>i</sup> The SUSR statutory guidance offers advice on how to engage with people with different protective characteristics and ensures that the process is adaptable based on their needs. The SUSR Co-ordination Hub will monitor and respond to any emerging equality issues throughout implementation and beyond.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** – The proposals have the potential to have a minimal positive impact on participation in arts, sports and recreation. People who are not subject to abuse or neglect are more likely to participate in these opportunities. The advice in the guidance includes advice on meeting people’s language needs through an active offer of Welsh language services.
- **A globally responsible Wales** – Neutral impact

#### **8.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?**

Implementation of the SUSR will be reviewed by the Co-ordination Hub and the IIA will form part of that review. This will help to ensure that the process works for everyone. Actions resulting from the IIA will be added into the Co-ordination Hub Work Plan.

Once the SUSR is implemented there will be continuous monitoring of the review process, and regular evaluation points to ensure consideration of those issues identified are addressed or work continued where necessary. After the first 12 months of delivery the SUSR Statutory Guidance will be reviewed and amendments made where required. The Co-ordination Hub will also ensure that those most affected by and those engaged with the SUSR process continue to provide a voice and inform future development of the SUSR, particularly through the Victim and Family Engagement Reference Group.