

Stanbridge Earls School

Hampshire LSCB commissioned a Serious Case Review (SCR) published in 2015.
[library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/retrieve2?SetID=709BA26E-69A3-452D-8424-](http://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/retrieve2?SetID=709BA26E-69A3-452D-8424-BDA96E5CD4ED&LabelText=Case%20review&searchterm=%2A&Fields=%40&Media=SCR&Bool=AND&SearchPrecision=20&SortOrder=Y1&Offset=49&Direction=%2E&Dispfmt=F&Dispfmt_b=B27&Dispfmt_f=F13&DataSetName=LIVEDATA)

[BDA96E5CD4ED&LabelText=Case%20review&searchterm=%2A&Fields=%40&Media=SCR&Bool=AND&SearchPrecision=20&SortOrder=Y1&Offset=49&Direction=%2E&Dispfmt=F&Dispfmt_b=B27&Dispfmt_f=F13&DataSetName=LIVEDATA](http://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/retrieve2?SetID=709BA26E-69A3-452D-8424-BDA96E5CD4ED&LabelText=Case%20review&searchterm=%2A&Fields=%40&Media=SCR&Bool=AND&SearchPrecision=20&SortOrder=Y1&Offset=49&Direction=%2E&Dispfmt=F&Dispfmt_b=B27&Dispfmt_f=F13&DataSetName=LIVEDATA)

Stanbridge Earls School was an independent day and boarding school for 189 pupils aged between 10 and 20 years, who had differing levels of learning disability and autistic spectrum disorders. 159 children boarded.

Child F was 14 years old in 2010 and there were indications that she was involved in sexual activity. The SCR writes that the school's response to this was "ad hoc", as was the local Children's Social Care, when F's mother asked for help. F made the school GP aware that she was involved in sexual activity but asked the GP not to inform her family – they were therefore not informed, and no action was taken. There were concerns from the Special Educational Needs and Disability First Tier Tribunal (SENDIST) for disability discrimination towards Child F, as allegations had been made that she had been subject to sexual assaults by other children. SENDIST concluded that the school did not do all it should have to keep Child F safe.

This SCR considered how the school had dealt with allegations and complaints regarding Child F being bullied and sexually assaulted at school, and the events that led to the school's closure in September 2013. Hampshire County Council investigated the safeguarding concerns raised by SENDIST, particularly as previously Ofsted inspections had found the school to be outstanding, including for safeguarding. Ofsted carried out emergency inspections and reviewed its previous involvement with the school; the Police investigated some criminal matters. The LSCB Chair commissioned an independent review to consider how allegations of bullying and sexual abuse were dealt with, the roles of agencies involved, how professionals worked together, and this informed her whether a SCR should take place. That review reported in April 2014 – it did not recommend a SCR as responses from key agencies during 2013, including the LSCB had been satisfactory.

The SCR found that there were concerns regarding the leadership of the school; use of the safeguarding procedures; understanding of each child's diagnosis, and no individual risk assessments for children were being carried out. There were concerns for record keeping, recognition of sexual activity, and parents were not informed of incidents. The SCR recommended local guidance is developed around relationships between health providers and safeguarding in the independent school sector. The HSCB decided in July 2014 to initiate a "second stage" independently led review. The report from the review was to have a clearer narrative and evaluation of the part played by public bodies in these events. It should also consider more closely issues relating to safeguarding in independent educational establishments. The review would seek to draw out the learning points from these events, some of which might have national significance, and it would be published.

Whilst the criteria in terms of significant harm had not been met, the Chair took into account the possibility that opportunities to bring important issues to public attention might be enhanced by an SCR. She also noted the views of many families involved, who, for a range of reasons, felt that these events should be more widely publicised and understood. The LSCB Chair therefore judged that it was in the public interest that the work in train should continue and be completed as an SCR. Families and agencies were advised and given the opportunity to contribute further. The DfE was approached and agreed to make a submission to the SCR considering its own role in the events. It was decided that the work carried out to that point did not contain a sufficient emphasis on health provision at the school, having concentrated principally on the actions of police and the local authority, so further reports were commissioned from health services.