

1 | What Is A Sexual Risk Order?



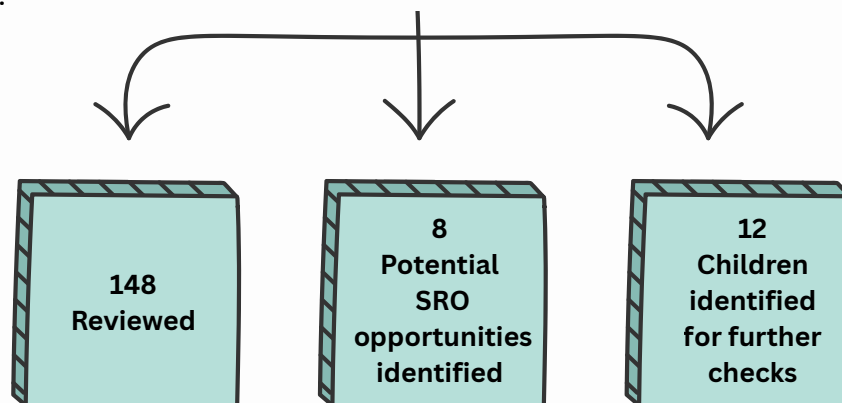
A Sexual Risk Order (SRO) is a civil order applied for by the police or the National Crime Agency (NCA) against an individual who has not been convicted of a sexual offence, but whose behaviour poses a risk of sexual harm.

An SRO can place enforceable restrictions, such as banning contact with specific people (such as children), restricting internet use, or prohibiting travel to certain geographic areas. It can also support specialist police units to conduct regular risk assessments and monitor the individual's compliance in the community.



2 | What Did We Look At?

Staffordshire Police supplied information about individuals investigated for child sexual abuse concerns where the outcome was No Further Police Action. Children's Social Care records were reviewed alongside this information to identify potential opportunities for Sexual Risk Orders, and whether relevant information was visible across systems.



3 | Why Does This Matter?

A police outcome of No Further Police Action (NFA) does not necessarily mean that risk has reduced or disappeared. Criminal investigations and safeguarding assessments operate to different thresholds. There may still be significant concerns about an individual's behaviour, access to children, patterns of risk or wider family circumstances, even when the evidential threshold for prosecution has not been met. The focused review found that safeguarding information held by partners can provide important context that is not always visible through the criminal investigation alone.

We tested this out
within our audit!

**Think: Does the end of a police investigation
mean the end of safeguarding concern?**



4 | What Are The Headlines?

The review showed that when police information was considered alongside safeguarding information held by Children's Social Care, a more complete picture of risk emerged - demonstrating the importance of partnership information sharing and risk assessment beyond the criminal justice outcome.

Of the 148 records reviewed, eight cases contained information that warranted further police exploration of a possible Sexual Risk Order.

The key message is simple:

No Further Police Action does *NOT* mean No Further Safeguarding Action.



5 | Children Investigated for Sexual Harm Need a Safeguarding Response Too

One of the most important findings related to cases involving children and young people who had themselves been investigated for child sexual abuse offences or harmful sexual behaviour. Twelve records required further exploration because corresponding safeguarding information was not readily visible within Children's Social Care records.

The review reminds us that these young people should be considered:

- As **children** who may pose a risk to others.
- As **children** who may have unmet needs or vulnerabilities.
- As **children** who may require assessment, intervention and specialist support.



Without timely information sharing, opportunities for assessment, support and protection can be missed.

6 | What Did We Learn About Information Sharing?

The review highlighted the value of bringing together information held across agencies. Children's Social Care records provided important context about:

- Historical safeguarding concerns
- Family relationships
- Current access to children
- Protective capacity within the family
- Patterns of concerning behaviour over time



Think: Is the information held by your agency being used to inform the wider assessment of risk?

7 | What Do I Need to Consider?

When safeguarding concerns remain following a police NFA outcome, you should ask:

- What risk remains for the child or children involved?
- What information does my agency hold that may add context to the risk assessment?
- Are there other children who may be affected?
- Are current safety arrangements sufficient?
- Has an SRO been considered?
- Has information been shared with the right agencies to support safeguarding assessment and planning?



Think: Are all available protective options being considered when concerns remain?



Closing Message

This review showed the importance of looking beyond the outcome of a police investigation. Effective safeguarding relies on agencies bringing information together, understanding the wider context of risk and remaining focused on children's safety, even when criminal proceedings do not progress.

The review identified important opportunities to strengthen information sharing, improve understanding of ongoing sexual risk, and consider protective measures such as Sexual Risk Orders where appropriate.

Most importantly, it reinforces a central safeguarding principle:

The conclusion of a police investigation must not lead to safeguarding drift. Regardless of criminal justice outcomes, partner agencies retain a shared responsibility to assess ongoing risk, respond to unmet need and ensure children receive appropriate protection and support.



Additional Resources

To learn more about Sexual Risk Orders (SROs), practitioners can access the following resources, which provide information on the legal framework, operational application and practical use of SROs as a preventative safeguarding measure.

[Home Office: Guidance on Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(including Sexual Risk Orders\)](#)

[College of Policing: Sexual Risk Orders \(SROs\)](#)

[Legislation.gov.uk: Sexual Offences Act 2003 - Sexual Risk Orders \(England and Wales\)](#)