

One Minutes Guide to SARs

1. What is a Safeguarding Adult Review?

A Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is a multi-agency review of an individual case which fits the following criteria:

The case involves an adult with needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority has been meeting any of those needs) AND:

- (a) There is reasonable cause for concern about how the SAB, members of it or other persons with relevant functions worked together to safeguard the adult, **AND**
- (b) Condition 1 or 2 is met.

(2) Condition 1 is met if:

- (a) The adult has died, AND
- (b) The SAB knows or suspects that the death resulted from abuse or neglect (whether or not it knew about or suspected the abuse or neglect before the adult died).

(3) Condition 2 is met if:

- (a) The adult is still alive, AND
- (b) The SAB knows or suspects that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect.

A SAR is commissioned by the Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) SAR Sub-group, which is a multi-agency group with representatives from the police, CCG, NHS Trust, Adult Social Care, Community Safety, Housing sector and Nursing and Residential Homes Sector. Commissioning a SAR is a statutory responsibility of the Board under Section 44 of the Care Act.

The purpose of a SAR is not to hold any individual or organisation to account as there are other processes available for that purpose; they are specifically about learning lessons for the future. SARs ensure that SABs get the full picture of what happened, so that all organisations involved can improve as a result. The goal is to move beyond the specifics of the particular case – what happened and why – to identify the deeper underlying issues that are influencing practice more generally.

2. How do I make a referral if I feel a case may fit the criteria?

If you have an individual case which you feel may fit the criteria, you will need to make a referral to the SAR Sub-group via the LSAB Referral Form (page 6). You will need to give an outline of the case, and include why you think it may meet the SAR criteria.

3. What happens if I am contacted for information?

There are 2 stages at which the SAB may request information from you:

- When a referral is received, you may receive a 'referral response form' to complete for your agency. This requires you to look at your records and analyse your involvement with the individual, and give your professional opinion on whether or not the above criteria are met

from your agencies perspective. This information is essential to ensure the SAR Sub-group can make a decision on whether or not a SAR needs to be commissioned.

- If a SAR is commissioned, you may then be asked to provide a full chronology of your agencies involvement with the individual over a set time period. This information will allow the independent reviewer to piece together the individuals journey.

4. What is the SAR process, and who is involved?

This flowchart (page 25) shows the SAR process up to the point of commissioning a SAR. Once a SAR has been commissioned with an independent reviewer, the reviewer may use several methods to gain the information needed to complete the review. As well as analysing individual agency chronologies, they may speak with professionals individually, or they may bring professionals together in a workshop. They will also speak to the individual's family and friends (where possible) in order to gain the full picture.

If the case does not meet the criteria for a SAR, but the Board feels there is still learning from the case, they may decide to commission a discretionary piece of work in the form of a learning review, a workshop, an audit or a training course.

4. I've been invited to a Professionals workshop – what do I need to know?

Sometimes, in order to gain the perspective of professionals linked to the case and gain a full picture of events, an independent reviewer will call a professional's workshop with the members of staff involved, together with safeguarding leads from that organisation. This independently led workshop is part of the process of learning together from the case. This is an opportunity to reflect on the events that happened and consider what, if anything, could have been done differently. It is also an opportunity to discuss the rationale behind practice processes and decisions. Learning reviews are about learning lessons from cases and making recommendations for future practice – they are not there to apportion blame, and are not an investigation. Any product from the meeting will only reflect the learning, and will be unattributable to individual professionals contributing.

5. What are my responsibilities once the review is complete?

Once a review is complete and has been presented to the full SAB, the recommendations from the review will be entered into an action plan. Each agency with actions will be responsible for completing those actions within the timeframe set on the action plan, and progress will be reported to the Board.

Each agency, as Board members, also has a responsibility to promote and use the SAR as a learning tool within their own teams.

6. Long term benefits from SARs

SARs are around making changes to improve processes long term. Many of the SAB policies and procedures which you use in your own agency have been written and put in place as a result of recommendations from SARs (<https://www.iowsab.org.uk/information-for-professionals/>). It's common for SARs to bring up similar themes in practice, which also result in the SAB commissioning training courses to help meet some of the learning needs of the workforce. These multi-agency courses are fully funded by the SAB, and are free for any professional to attend.