

What is a Safeguarding Adult Review? When is one Completed?

A Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is a multi-agency process that considers whether or not serious harm experienced by an adult at risk of abuse or neglect, could have been predicted or prevented.

Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 sets out the statutory responsibility that SABs must arrange a Mandatory SAR when an adult in its area with needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority has been meeting any of those needs) if there is reasonable cause for concern about how the SAB, members of it or other persons with relevant functions, worked together to protect the adult, and Condition 1 or 2 is met:

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 or suspected the abuse or neglect before the adult died). 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.

More Information A SAB may also arrange a SAR of any significant case involving an adult with needs for care and support. Such cases, that do not meet the Mandatory threshold are referred to as 'Discretionary'. The learning and recommendation from all reviews, Mandatory and Discretionary are treated in the same way.

Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 covering SARs is available online [here](#). Statutory Guidance in relation to SARs is also available [here](#).

There is also more information available on the OSAB Website [here](#) including local published SAR reports. It is not currently a statutory requirement to publish SAR reports however, it is recognised good practice to demonstrate the level of transparency and accountability needed to enable lessons to be learned as widely and thoroughly as possible and to ensure that agencies adopt learning.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has produced guidance in relation to SARs [here](#).

How are Practitioners or Managers Who Worked with the Adult Involved?

As part of a SAR, all practitioners and managers from each partner agency that had involvement with the adult and their family will typically be asked to attend a Practitioner Learning Event. The key aim of the event is to collaborate with all the practitioners from all the different agencies who knew the adult and their family and give them the time and safe space to reflect on their involvement and reflect on professional practice and decision making. The information collated at the event enables the independent author to understand in greater depth whether there are any lessons that can be learnt to improve practice in the future and it also enables good practice to be identified and shared.

A Practitioner Learning Event will aim to:

- Hear first-hand accounts of agency involvement
- Provide an opportunity to ensure the accuracy of the case 'story'.
- Provide an opportunity to consider and analyse interventions in a safe, reflective environment.
- Consider the context within which practitioners were working at the time.
- Explore what information, activity or circumstances which might have influenced decision making.
- Consider recommendations for the SAR.
- Provide an opportunity for practitioners to shape future policy and practice.

A Practitioner Learning Event will not aim to:

- Attempt to apportion blame.
- Single out individual practitioners.
- Be critical of specific agencies.

What is the Purpose of a Safeguarding Adult Review?

SARs are conducted to establish whether there are any lessons to be learnt from the circumstances of the case, about the way in which local professionals and agencies worked together to safeguard adults at risk.

SARs seek to determine what agencies and individuals involved might have done differently that could have prevented harm or death. This is so that lessons learnt can be applied to future cases to prevent similar harm occurring again. The purpose is to promote learning and improve practice.

The objectives of a SAR include establishing:

- lessons that can be learnt about how agencies work together
- how effective safeguarding procedures are
- learning and good practice issues
- how to improve local inter-agency practice
- service improvement or development needs for agencies.

It is important to stress that the SAR process is not designed to hold any individual or organisation to account or apportion blame, but to try and understand what happened and the wide range of factors that affected the way people responded to the circumstances of the case at the time and to identify good practice.

Making a SAR Referral

The SAB is the only body that can undertake a SAR. Any professional can make a referral for a SAR if they believe a case meets the threshold. Professionals may find it helpful to discuss their concerns with their agency's safeguarding lead initially. Discussions regarding the appropriateness of referring a case are welcomed by the [SAB Business Manager](#). The referral should be made as soon as it is recognised the criteria may be met. Requests for a SAR must be made by completing the [OSAB SAR Referral Form](#) as fully as possible and returning it to the email address given. A referral can be made at any stage of a Safeguarding Enquiry, even if the enquiry remains ongoing. A SAR referral does not replace Safeguarding Adult Enquiries, which look at immediate safeguarding and protection.

Who decides when to hold a SAR? How is a SAR carried out?

Oldham SAB has a Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Sub Group made up of representatives from several different local agencies that considers all referrals for SARs. The Sub Group makes a recommendation to the OSAB Independent Chair on whether a Mandatory or Discretionary SAR should be held or if other steps could be taken to respond to the issues that a case has raised. The OSAB Independent Chair will consider all available information and the Sub Group's recommendation however, the final decision is ultimately theirs to make.

Oldham SAB will aim to complete a SAR within six months of the decision being undertaken. There is no set methodology that must be followed when undertaking a SAR. In many cases, if the final decision is to proceed with a SAR, an independent author is usually appointed to conduct the process appropriately. The independent author will be an experienced individual who is not directly associated with any of the agencies involved in the case.

Once completed, the findings are reported back to the SAB with any action plans identified. The SAB then monitors the implementation of these plans with the help of the multi-agency Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Sub Group.



How are Agency Representatives Involved?

SAR cases are always very sad and worrying for all concerned. SARs are not disciplinary proceedings, and are conducted in a manner, which facilitates learning. SARs are not enquiries into why an adult has died (or has been significantly injured), or who is culpable. These are matters for criminal courts and Coroner's courts. With this in mind, each partner agency member of the SAB must cooperate in and contribute to the carrying out of a SAR under the Care Act 2014, with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the adult's case and applying those lessons to future cases.

As part of a SAR, representatives from each agency that has been involved in the case are asked to join a Review Panel. The representative themselves will not have been directly involved in the case but will have sufficient knowledge of their agency and practice within it. Review Panel members are expected to facilitate the gathering of agency information; attend and contribute to Review Panel meetings; share any learning within their agency as it is determined; analyse information and support the development of recommendations; and quality assure drafts of the final report.

Website: www.oldhamsafeguarding.org

Email: OldhamSafeguardingAdultsBoard@Oldham.gov.uk

