



OLDHAM SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD

Quality Assurance Framework



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With Thanks to Cheshire East and Cheshire West Safeguarding Adults Boards

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Overview	3
1.2	OSAB Role and Duties	3
1.3	National Context	4
1.3.1	Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA)	4
1.3.2	NHS	4
1.3.3	Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)	4
2.	What is Quality Assurance? What is the Quality Assurance Framework?	5
3.	Types of Data and Information	5
4.	Quality Assurance Framework Principles	5
5.	Information Sources	6
5.1	Overview	6
5.2	Organisational Performance and Activity Data	6
5.3	Case Records	6
5.4	People's Experiences	6
5.5	Practitioner Experience and Feedback	6
6.	Components of the Quality Assurance Framework	7
6.1	Data and Performance Reporting and Analysis	7
6.2	Biennial Self-Assessment	7
6.3	Single Agency Assurance Requests	7
6.4	Risk Register and Duty Of Candour	7
6.5	Single Agency Audits	7
6.6	Multi-Agency Audits	7
6.7	Safeguarding Adult Reviews	8
6.8	Feedback About People's Experiences	8
6.9	Complaints And Compliments	8
6.10	Feedback About Practitioner Experiences	8
6.11	Practitioner Training/Competency	9
6.12	Annual Report and Single Agency Statements	9
6.13	Strategy And Business Plans	9
7.	Learning and Improvement	9
8.	Roles and Responsibilities	9
8.1	Single Agencies	9
8.2	OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup	10
8.3	Other OSAB Subgroups	10
8.4	OSAB Board	10
	Appendix 1: Multi-Agency Audits	10
A1.1	Overview	10
A1.2	Information Sharing	10

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Quality Assurance Frameworks are a key mechanism by which Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) hold local agencies to account for their safeguarding work, including prevention and risk management.

This Quality Assurance Framework has been developed by the Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup of Oldham Safeguarding Adult Boards (OSAB) to provide assurance that OSAB and its constituent partner agencies have effective systems, structures, processes, and practices in place to improve outcomes and experiences in the context of safeguarding adults at risk.

1.2 OSAB Role and Duties

OSAB is an independent statutory body established to safeguard adults who are at risk of experiencing abuse, harm, or neglect. Formed under the [Care Act 2014](#), OSAB has a statutory duty to ensure that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Oldham work effectively and keep people safe and promote the safety and wellbeing of adults at risk. Effective work in this area will contribute towards achieving better outcomes for adults at risk and protect from significant harm. This means working collaboratively to prevent abuse, helping people to recognise and understand risks and make informed choices, and protecting those who lack the capacity to make their own decisions.

OSAB provides the strategic leadership for safeguarding work and is committed to partnership working. The Board needs to assure itself that:

- local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and associated [statutory guidance](#)
- safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- agencies are working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect
- agencies and individuals are providing a timely and proportionate response when abuse or neglect have occurred
- safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults.

The remit of OSAB is not operational but one of coordination, planning and influencing commissioning and contributes to the wider goals of improving the wellbeing of adults. All partner agencies in Oldham prioritise safeguarding with an approach based on promoting dignity, rights, respect, helping all people to feel safe and making sure safeguarding is everyone's business.

This framework has been developed taking account of the Care Act 2014 and is underpinned by the six safeguarding principles:



Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.



Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need



Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.



Proportionality: Proportionality and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.



Partnership: Local solutions through services working with communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, identifying, and reporting abuse and neglect.



Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding practice.

1.3 National Context

1.3.1 Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA)

This framework reflects the [Standards for Adult Safeguarding](#) and also reflects messages in relation to Safeguarding Adults Boards set out in [Safeguarding Adults: Advice and Guidance to Directors of Adult Social Services](#). ADASS provides ten tips in relation to [Safeguarding Adults Boards effectively using data and information to improve safety and quality](#):

1. Spend time on making sure data and information supplied is useful
2. Interrogate the data and information presented
3. Beware of overwhelming people with data and information
4. Use and develop the mechanisms you have
5. Have sound protocols in place to share data and information
6. Establish a method to share concerns about regulated health and social care services
7. Use community safety data and information
8. Route concerns to the right place
9. Find ways to support staff that may need it
10. Make data and information, like safeguarding, everybody's business.

1.3.2 NHS

The NHS England [Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework 2022](#), states that NHS organisations – whether as commissioners or providers of NHS funded care – must demonstrate strong local leadership, work as committed partners, and invest in effective coordination and robust quality assurance of safeguarding arrangements.

1.3.3 Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

[SCIE guidance](#) identifies the following quality assurance arrangements Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) should utilise:

- data recording, analysis and reporting.
- case audits and SABs multi-agency and single agency audits and peer reviews.
- Safeguarding Adult Reviews.
- practitioners' forums to share lessons from case audits and local good practice, from research and from Safeguarding Adult Reviews.
- holding partner agencies to account.
- the management of large-scale investigations, serious incidents, complaints, grievances, disciplinary proceedings, whistleblowing and allegations of professional malpractice or unfitness to practice.
- the implementation of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' at a local level and its impact on engagement and outcomes.
- use of data collection analysis for a quantitative perspective.

- self-audit tools.
- qualitative reviews and audits.

2. What is Quality Assurance? What is the Quality Assurance Framework?

- 2.1 Quality assurance is about assessing the quality of the work we undertake to safeguard adults at risk and understanding the impact of this work in terms of its effectiveness in helping to keep adults at risk safe. Effective quality assurance will contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement. The primary role of quality assurance is to improve the quality of practice and safeguarding outcomes for adults at risk.
- 2.2 This framework is for OSAB and individual organisations with safeguarding adults' responsibilities in Oldham and is based on an 'Outcomes Based Accountability' approach which will help those with leadership, senior management, or scrutiny responsibility for safeguarding adults to gain a better understanding of how safe adults at risk are in their services and communities by considering:
- What we do
 - How well we do it – are partners working well to respond to safeguarding concerns?
 - What difference or impact we have made - do our safeguarding arrangements improve outcome for adults at risk and make a positive impact?

3. Types of Data and Information

- 3.1 There are three types of performance information and associated measures:
- **Quantitative Information** - This helps to inform 'What we do'. It answers the questions: 'How much?' and 'How many?'.
 - **Qualitative information** - This tell us more about 'How well we do it' and is concerned with the functioning of agencies and the quality of what is done.
 - **Outcome information** - This tells us 'What difference or impact we have made' through services, strategies, and interventions, to the lives of adults at risk.
- 3.2 Traditionally, quality assurance information in safeguarding has focused on quantitative information, with some qualitative information and little outcome information. The challenge is, over time, to increase the proportion and importance of outcome information as this constitutes what really matters, supported by qualitative information and then quantitative information.

4. Quality Assurance Framework Principles

- 4.1 The OSAB Quality Assurance Framework is underpinned by the following principles:
- **Openness and transparency** - each OSAB partner agency is likely to know where good practice, areas for development and risks lie within their own organisations. There is a need for agencies to assure OSAB that they have identified and acted upon risk and areas of development, or to inform OSAB where they believe action is required as a multi-agency partnership.
 - **Outcomes** - safeguarding arrangements should be person-centred, defined by the individual, outcomes-based and make a difference, in line with Making Safeguarding Personal. Specifically, safeguarding arrangements should deliver what is important to adults at risk and their desired outcomes.
 - **Triangulation** - different qualitative and quantitative information sources need to be compared and contrasted to verify the data and validate any conclusions being drawn. This enables OSAB to confidently understand whether arrangements are effective and making a positive difference.
 - **Learning and improvement** - What is done with information collated is as important as the quality of information collected, therefore, the learning from quality assurance activity is shared with partner

agencies and used meaningfully to change practice and improve outcomes for service users and carers.

5. Information Sources

5.1 Overview

Organisational performance and activity data and case records have traditionally been the main sources of information used in safeguarding quality assurance. It is recognised that these are important and valuable, however in order to obtain a holistic view, it is important to capture the experiences of people who partner agencies support, carers, frontline staff and managers. All partner agencies need to consider how they collate quantitative, qualitative and outcome-based information to inform improvement activity in respect of their safeguarding practice.

5.2 Organisational Performance and Activity Data

A clear, comprehensive range of performance information supports understanding of effective safeguarding practice. It is at the heart of the drive to secure continuous improvement and delivery of high-quality services. This includes quantitative information such as the number of safeguarding adult concerns and enquiries and qualitative information such as assurances that organisations have specific policies in place or how they are embedding a way of working or specific learning.

5.3 Case Records

Case records held by an agency, in whatever format, are a rich source of information. Case record 'auditing' involves the systematic analysis of records by practitioners with relevant professional expertise and experience, in order to glean the required information from a sufficient sample of cases to provide a view of safeguarding practice at any one time through the collation of case findings.

5.4 People's Experiences

It is important to know how people feel they are treated by the practitioners and agencies they interact with. If their experience of such interactions is negative, this is likely to have an adverse impact on outcomes. Understanding what matters to people in terms of engagement and interaction with services, and whether this is achieved in reality can only be achieved through gathering the experiences of adults at risk, families and carers. Their views help clarify what practitioners and agencies need to get right.

5.5 Practitioner Experience and Feedback

Practitioners will often have the relevant knowledge about the quality and impact of their own services, and those of partner agencies they work with. Safeguarding Adult Reviews highlight gaps between what is meant to happen in terms of policy and procedure, and what actually happens in operational practice. It is important to receive regular feedback from frontline practitioners to inform senior management and those with governance responsibilities of what is or is not working and to assist with driving forward improvements and systemic change.

6. Components of the Quality Assurance Framework

1	DATA AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OSAB partner agencies are required to provide a range of data on a quarterly basis to inform the OSAB Data Dashboard. The aim is to interrogate and analyse this information to enable OSAB to understand the prevalence of abuse and neglect, highlight themes and trends in safeguarding activity, and provide strategic multi-agency responses. Data from across the safeguarding partnership that is already collected and used by single agency management teams to monitor the effectiveness of their individual safeguarding arrangements is well utilised.
2	BIENNIAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OSAB partner agencies are asked to self-assess their strategic and organisational arrangements to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of adults at risk through single agency completion of a self-assessment template every two years. This process allows agencies to assess, monitor and improve their safeguarding adults arrangements and provides essential assurance to OSAB. Returned self-assessment templates are reviewed and in addition to identifying good practice, challenge activity is undertaken through discussions about issues or the need for further evidence with agency leads.
3	SINGLE AGENCY ASSURANCE REQUESTS Where the need for specific assurances from OSAB partner agencies are required following, for example, learning from audits, feedback or Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and the assurances are not covered through the self-assessment process or are needed in a timely manner, requests are sent to all relevant OSAB partner agency lead representatives.
4	RISK REGISTER AND DUTY OF CANDOUR As part of the OSAB governance arrangements, the Statutory Leadership Group is responsible for gaining assurance regarding measures in place across all partner agencies in relation to identified and new and emerging risks in relation to safeguarding adults. The OSAB Risk Register is in place to allow the Statutory Leadership Group to monitor safeguarding risks associated with agencies core business as well as new and emerging areas of concern. The OSAB Risk Register is shared with OSAB Board quarterly and key risks and mitigating actions are added to the OSAB Board agenda for discussion. The OSAB Terms of Reference and this Quality Assurance Framework places a duty of candour on all partner agencies; there is an expectation that they will notify OSAB of any issues of concern or risk, such as poor regulatory inspection outcomes, issues that might attract media attention, and any other pertinent information.
5	SINGLE AGENCY AUDITS Each OSAB partner agency must have auditing arrangements in place to assess the quality of their day-to-day safeguarding adults' work. The OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup receive the findings from single agency audits in relation to key safeguarding themes, for example, application of the Mental Capacity Act. These are shared in the interests of quality assurance, transparency and learning.
6	MULTI-AGENCY AUDITS The OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup undertake thematic audits. Wherever possible the experience of adults at risk are a key consideration. For more information about multi-agency audits see Appendix 1.

7

SAFEGUARDING ADULT REVIEWS

Safeguarding Adults Reviews are an OSAB statutory duty and allow partner agencies to review the effectiveness of procedures and identify lessons learnt and areas for improvement. The OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup have delegated responsibility to ensure actions from statutory Safeguarding Adult Reviews are implemented and to monitor progress against action plans. Assurances are provided to OSAB Board on completion.

8

FEEDBACK ABOUT PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES

All partner agencies should have processes in place to understand the adult at risks experience of their service. OSAB are interested in adults with care and support needs experiences of local safeguarding adults' processes, therefore this framework places a duty on agencies to ascertain people's safeguarding experience and report them to OSAB via the Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup, to enable their experiences to inform the work of OSAB.

To date, multi-agency audits; co-produced communications campaigns, training and learning events; research projects and Safeguarding Adult Review Panels have ensured adults at risk, or their family members have been given every opportunity to share their views. OSAB seek to better establish links with existing, established groups and fora where adults with care and support needs can have their say, share their views, challenge and support the work of OSAB and partner agencies.

9

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Each OSAB partner agency must have in place arrangements for monitoring complaints and compliments to ensure safeguarding issues are identified and responded to early and quickly. As above, there is an expectation that they will notify OSAB of any issues of concern or risk.

10

FEEDBACK ABOUT PRACTITIONER EXPERIENCES

The perspective of operational practitioners is gained via several methods:

- The annual OSAB workforce confidence survey gathers views about confidence in relation to key safeguarding practice areas as well as offering the opportunity to share anonymised feedback with the partnership.
- The OSAB Safeguarding Adult Review Policy provides the option for methodologies to include Practitioner Learning Events which seek to determine what agencies and individuals involved in the case might have done differently that could have prevented significant harm or death. These are designed to be trusted and safe experiences for practitioners and encourage honesty and transparency.
- Published multi-agency policies, procedures and guidance include statements encouraging multi-agency practitioners to provide OSAB with comments or to suggest changes.
- OSAB 7-Minute Briefings are often produced in collaboration with practitioners with relevant experience of the topic and all are published alongside the Team Discussion Feedback Form encouraging teams to discuss the briefing and share their key learning and planned actions with OSAB as well as any associated feedback, system challenges or recurring issues.
- The contribution and engagement of operational practitioners as part of OSAB task and finish groups focused on developing specific areas of safeguarding practice is encouraged wherever possible.

11	PRACTITIONER TRAINING/COMPETENCY The Policy, Procedure and Workforce Development Subgroup is responsible for ensuring multi-agency training is sufficient, positively impacts on practice and in turn improves outcomes for adults in Oldham, as well as ensuring that practitioners working with adults are skilled and competent. This is achieved through multi-agency discussion about training needs, multi-agency development of training courses and careful consideration of practitioner feedback requested from each participant following completion of a multi-agency training session or Learning Hub event. The Subgroup also receive assurance from single agencies about their individual learning, workforce development and training compliance including successes in each agency.
12	ANNUAL REPORT AND SINGLE AGENCY STATEMENTS OSAB have a statutory duty to publish an Annual Report detailing how effective their work has been, highlighting achievements, objectives, strategies, and priorities throughout the year. The annual report also includes the findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews concluded during the year. In addition to the OSAB annual report, partner agencies are invited to provide highlights of their own safeguarding work for publication as Single Agency Statements.
13	STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLANS SABs have a statutory duty to develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they will meet their objectives and how their partner agencies will contribute. OSAB publish a Strategy every three years including strategic objectives for the period. In addition, every year OSAB publish a Business Plan setting out its annual priorities under each strategic objective.

7. Learning and Improvement

- 7.1 It is anticipated that learning obtained through the various components of the Quality Assurance Framework will be associated with numerous areas of multi-agency and single agency safeguarding adults work including, but not limited to, the impact of OSAB; workforce development, planning and training; policy and procedure; commissioning; partner agency action plans; and the OSAB Business Plan and Strategy.
- 7.2 Responses to the learning are determined by various multi-agency fora as appropriate, and can include, but are not limited to, the seeking of assurances; development of guidance and briefings, development of or revisions to policies, procedures and protocols; the convening of Learning Hub events; and the development or commissioning of training sessions. The Public Relations and Communications Subgroup are responsible for distributing all relevant resources and promoting all relevant events across partner agencies.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Single Agencies

Individual agencies including statutory members of OSAB are responsible for:

- their own quality assurance activity in relation to safeguarding adults
- supplying information and data as required
- participating in multi-agency audits
- notifying OSAB of any areas of concern
- making referrals for Safeguarding Adult Reviews, as appropriate

- ensuring appropriate representation at the OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup.

8.2 OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup

The OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup are responsible for the coordination and management of the Quality Assurance Framework and for highlight and exception reporting to OSAB Board.

8.3 Other OSAB Subgroups

Each of the subgroups has a specific remit with the consistent theme of understanding and achieving better outcomes for adults at risk. Each subgroup is expected to work within this Quality Assurance Framework and provide data, information and reports as required and participate in quality assurance activity.

8.4 OSAB Board

OSAB oversee the effectiveness of the arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider partnership to safeguard adults from abuse and is responsible for challenging all relevant organisations on their performance in ensuring that adults at risk are kept safe in Oldham. The OSAB Board membership is responsible for:

- overseeing their respective agency's contributions to the Quality Assurance Framework for example, responses to assurance requests, participation in audits and completion of self-assessments
- receiving highlight and exception reports from the OSAB Safeguarding Review, Audit and Quality Assurance Subgroup
- receiving and scrutinising the OSAB Data Dashboard
- participating in OSAB Annual Development Events and Learning Hub events with a focus on quality assurance
- ensuring the Quality Assurance Framework informs the OSAB Business Plan and Strategy.

Appendix 1: Multi-Agency Audits

A1.1 Overview

OSAB have a vital role in quality assuring safeguarding practice in Oldham. To achieve this, OSAB undertake auditing of safeguarding cases involving multi-agency working to ensure practice is effective, improving outcomes, focused on adults at risk and that any learning is identified and acted upon to improve service delivery and the outcomes for local adults. Audit themes are identified through partner agency practice findings; data analysis; the Safeguarding Adult Review process; subgroups discussions; and/or through OSAB Business Plans.

A1.2 Information Sharing

As part of the multi-agency audit process, OSAB monitors and enables sharing of personal information between agencies working with adults at risk. This information is only be shared with agency representatives nominated and accredited by OSAB and kept secure at all times, including use of electronic information systems. In line with the [OSAB Data Sharing Agreement](#) the following apply:

- Statutory provisions will often provide a legal gateway that will permit the sharing of personal information; however, the specific circumstances of each particular case should be taken into account when considering whether to share personal data.
- The sharing of personal information is not justified if the legal responsibilities could be met by the provision of anonymised information.

- Any information shared and the processes used to share such information will be compliant with the relevant Human Rights legislation.

Where it is deemed appropriate, achievable, and timely, consideration will be given to conducting joint audits between SABs or with other local multi-agency boards such as Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Oldham Domestic Abuse Partnership.