

Guidance: Referral for case to be considered for Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR)

Introduction:

Following the implementation of the Care Act (2014) statutory duties were placed on local authorities to establish and convene safeguarding adult boards. Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) brings together partner organisations in Sunderland to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk of abuse and neglect and is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of what partner agencies do. SSAB has representation from a number of partner organisations across the City. For further information on the function, structure and responsibilities of SSAB please visit www.sunderlandsab.org.uk

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) are multi-agency reviews of how professionals and organisations have worked together with an adult at risk of abuse and/or neglect and their family/carers when a serious incident has occurred. SARs may also be used to explore examples of good practice where this is likely to identify lessons that can be applied to future cases.

The [Care Act statutory guidance](#) is clear that the purpose of SARs is to 'promote effective learning and improvement action to prevent future deaths or serious harm occurring again'. The purpose of a SAR is not to hold any individual or organisation to account, other processes exist for that purpose, including criminal proceedings, disciplinary procedures, employment law and professional regulatory body proceedings.

Criteria to undertake a SAR:

In accordance with the Care Act (2014) a safeguarding adults board must arrange a SAR when an adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect¹, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult.

Safeguarding adults boards must also arrange a SAR if an adult in its area has not died, but it is known or suspected that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect. Safeguarding adult boards are also free to arrange a SAR in any other situation involving an adult in its area with needs for care and support.

Referring a case for consideration:

Consideration against the SAR criteria

¹ Also included within the definitions of abuse and neglect are self-neglect and self-abuse

Cases should be referred to SSAB for consideration if an adult at risk of abuse and/or neglect has died, or been seriously harmed and abuse and/or neglect are believed to have been a factor.

Consideration for sharing of good/best practice

Cases can also be considered to share learning where staff have worked together effectively to achieve positive outcomes for adults at risk of abuse and/or neglect should also be shared to develop a growing understanding of what works well and to identify lessons that can be applied to future cases.

Completing the Referral

Once an agency has identified that a SAR may be required, the referral form should be completed immediately, in consultation with the agency's safeguarding lead, and should include a brief written outline of the case and the factors and criteria that suggest a SAR is needed.

The data fields which refer to the 'protected characteristics' (as defined in the Equality Act, 2010²) of the individual should be completed as fully as possible by the referring agency. This is to improve Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) data collection and to drive SSAB's understanding of themes and trends in relation to SARs which may indicate the need for targeted pieces of work to address any emerging issues.

Following the receipt of a referral, the Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Sub Committee, on behalf of SSAB, will consider, in light of the information known by agencies, whether the criteria to conduct a SAR are met.

In the event of an application being turned down, or an alternative form of review being undertaken, in accordance with the SSAB's Learning & Improvement in Practice (LIIP) Framework, the Chair of the SAR Sub Committee will record the reasons in writing and share with the agency from whom the request originated.

² Protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.