



## **A 'SAR' Guide for Families & Loved Ones**

### **What is a Safeguarding Adults Review?**

Safeguarding Adult Boards (SAB) must arrange a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) when an adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult. A SAB 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.

Something can be considered serious abuse or neglect where, for example the individual would have been likely to have died but for an intervention, or has suffered permanent harm or has reduced capacity or quality of life (whether because of physical or psychological effects) as a result of the abuse or neglect.

### **Purpose of the SAR**

SARs should seek to determine what the relevant agencies and individuals involved in the case might have done differently that could have prevented harm or death. This is so that lessons can be learned from the case and those lessons applied to future cases to prevent similar harm occurring again.

Its purpose is not to hold any individual or organisation to account. Other processes exist for that, including criminal and disciplinary procedures, employment law and professional regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health and Care Professions Council for example.

SARs are completely separate from other investigations that may be occurring, for example by the Police, CQC or Coroner, although they can still take account of the findings of those investigations.

### **Who is involved in a SAR and what happens?**

Whilst Safeguarding Adults Boards lead SARs, they commission consultants who are called 'independent authors', who have no connection with any of the organisations or personnel involved in the review.

The organisations involved in the care and treatment of the person under review must co-operate with the SAR. Typically, these include agencies who are already

board members, such as adult social care, the police, health services (including Integrated Care Board and hospitals), probation, the DWP and local fire and rescue and ambulance services. However, agencies who are not board members, such as care homes, home care providers and housing associations, may also be involved.

Once a SAR has been agreed, an independent author is commissioned and terms of reference and key lines of enquiry are established. Next, requests for information, including chronologies of events and documentation are made to the agencies involved. Sometimes, interviews or learning events are held where all the key individuals involved gather together to discuss what happened in detail. Finally, the independent author begins writing their report, consulting on and sharing drafts until a final version is agreed.

### **Your involvement**

It is important that the Safeguarding Adults Boards hear the voice of the person who has been abused or neglected, as well as those voices of family members and loved ones if the person has died because of abuse.

If you are invited to take part in a SAR, the independent author will ask you to share your thoughts on what happened leading up to, including and after the event under review. However, the decision to take part in a SAR is entirely yours and if you do not wish to do so, your decision will be respected.

Dependent upon circumstances, and what you feel most comfortable with, you can be involved in several ways. Typically, these include in writing, over the phone, via a teleconference call (such as 'Zoom') or face-to-face. Discussion will be informal but professional and can last as long as needed, though typically 1 to 2 hours is enough. You can also be consulted more than once.

### **What happens to the information you share?**

The information you share will help the independent author build a comprehensive picture of what happened before the death or abuse or neglect occurred, and will help to shape the findings and recommendations of the report. Your contribution can be anonymous or you can decide to be identified in the report. Any copies of pictures or documents you provide will only be reproduced with your agreement.

It is important to remember that the independent author has final say over the contents of the report and they might not include all that you tell them or agree with your view of what happened. You should consider this carefully when deciding whether to participate in a SAR.

### **How long do Safeguarding Adults Reviews take?**

A SAR should be completed within a reasonable period of time and in any event within 6 months of initiating it, unless there are good reasons for a longer period being required. If there are ongoing court proceedings the report typically will not be published until court proceedings have concluded.

### **What happens when the SAR is completed?**

Once the independent author has finished their report – and you will be shown a draft version beforehand to comment upon – [it is usually published on the board's

public website. However, where there is sensitive information that could adversely affect others (for example, if there are children involved), a redacted summary may be published, or the decision made not to publish a report at all.] [a summary of the report will be published on the SAB's website, which will not contain any sensitive information but will include the recommendations made in the full report.]

Once the report is published, the board draws up a plan so that all agencies involved ensure that the lessons learnt are implemented and monitored until completed. Change can be slow and some recommendations involve requests to make changes at a national level, which are not always possible. SARs are a legal report but their recommendations are not and agencies do not have to agree to implement all of the changes listed.

### **Further Information**

If you have any further questions about SARs, please contact

- Nottingham City Safeguarding Adults Board at [safeguarding.partnerships@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:safeguarding.partnerships@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board at [Safeguarding1.adults@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:Safeguarding1.adults@nottscc.gov.uk)