

NORTH EAST SAR QUALITY MARKERS CHECKLIST

SAR Quality Markers are a benchmarking tool to support those who commission, conduct and quality assure SARs. They cover the whole process with the aim of providing a consistent approach to producing good high-quality SARs.

The Markers assume the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal as well as the Six Principles of Safeguarding that underpin all Adult Safeguarding work: Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionate, Protection, Partnership, Accountability.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAR SUB-GROUP*

- Scrutinise and analyse information provided, to support the group in making recommendations to the SAB Independent Chair
- Coordinate additional information from own agencies as required, to make a recommendation about whether to commission a SAR
- Coordinate chronology from own agency
- Determine SAR methodology
- Agree draft Terms of Reference
- Agree draft scoping period
- Confirm organisations to be involved in the review. Confirm initial membership of panel or learning event etc (dependant on the review methodology)
- Approve any changes to Terms of Reference and scoping period
- Approve any changes to panel membership
- Ensure that relevant members of own organisation (including Board Member, IMR author, SAR Panel Member) are updated about commissioned SARs (including sharing review timeline, terms of reference, emerging learning as appropriate)
- Quality assure final draft of Overview Report, Executive Summary and Action Plan, ensuring that the review is of a sufficiently high standard and that wherever possible, multi-agency actions are SMART and have allocated action owners
- Ensure own organisation is adequately represented at relevant meetings (i.e. Case Review Sub Group meetings, SAR/IMR panel meetings, SAR publication meetings) and in key discussions
- Ensure that individual agency learning from SARs is shared within own organisation and that assurance is provided to the Case Review or Training Sub-Group, and the SAB
- Be the main point of contact within own organisation for single agency SAR actions updates

***Each Board / Partnership use different terminology for their SAR Sub-Group**

Setting Up the Review

Quality Marker 1: Referral

The case is referred for a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) consideration with an appropriate rationale and in a timely manner

- *Does the referral explicitly identify how the SAR criteria has been met?*
- *Does the referral specify clearly any other reason why a SAR is needed?*
- *Does the information provided evidence the rationale given for why the case is being referred?*
- *Are explanations provided for any delays in the referral?*

Quality Marker 2: Decision Making – What kind of SAR / Enquiry

Factors related to the case AND the local context inform decision making about whether a SAR is needed and initial thinking about its size and scope

- *Is the rationale for the decision clear and defensible, paying close attention to the **Care Act 2014** and **Making Safeguarding Personal principles**?*
- *Have all key agencies provided information about their involvement? (Consider other SAB areas)*
- *Has intelligence from other quality assurance and feedback sources been gathered e.g. audits/benchmarking, complaints and previous SARs? Has this been used to identify outstanding learning needs locally, as well as what is already known and does not need to be re-learned?*
- *Have other review pathways been considered/discounted (e.g. DHRs), and have parallel processes been identified (e.g. complaints)?*
- *Have SAB member agencies had the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process and recommendation to the Chair?*
- *Are the decision-making processes and outcomes transparent, and has independent challenge been considered?*
- *Are explanations provided for any delays in decision making?*

Quality Marker 3: Informing the Person, their family and other important networks

The person, relevant family members and any other important personal networks are told what the SAR is for, how it will work, the parameters, how they can be involved, being mindful of treating them with respect.

- *Has the person, relevant family members, friends/network been informed of the SAR at the earliest opportunity?*
- *Has the purpose, process and parameters of the SAR been communicated in the most appropriate way to promote understanding?*
- *Have you agreed with the family their preferred methods and timeliness of communication throughout the process (verbal, written)?*
- *Are opportunities being offered to discuss any queries about the SAR?*

Quality Marker 4: Clarity of Purpose

The Safeguarding Board / Partnership is clear and transparent from the outset that the SAR Process is statutory with the focus on learning and improvement across organisations and acknowledges any factors that complicate this

- *Have you communicated with all relevant parties (SAB members, involved agency/provider/commissioner leaders, practitioners, Legal advisors) about the statutory purpose of the SAR with a focus on learning and organisational development?*
- *Has there been a multi-agency discussion regarding any tensions and complications?*
- *Is the decision-making rationale clearly documented on all records?*

Quality Marker 5: Commissioning

Decisions about the precise form and focus of the commissioned SAR take into account a range of factors in order to make the learning and improvement proportionate. Decisions are made with input from the SAB Chair, members and reviewers.

Have discussions about the form and focus of SAR to be commissioned considered the following:

- *Are there any system conditions leading to poor safeguarding practice or communication?*
- *Do other quality assurance and feedback sources (e.g. audits/complaints) suggest the practice issues and/or their systemic causes are new, complex or repetitive?*
- *Are any of the issues relevant to the SAB strategic plan and current/future priorities?*
- *Has similar learning been identified previously, and has this been implemented or is there new learning to be identified?*
- *Is there evidence of good practice and supportive system conditions, which can be shared across the partnership?*
- *Are there any issues regarding the capacity of practitioners, SAB and member agencies, and experienced/qualified reviewer(s)?*
- *Does the process allow the reviewer(s) to influence the scope, nature and approach of the review?*
- *Is there media interest or serious public concern around the circumstances of the case?*
- *Principles of Making Safeguarding Personal and the six core safeguarding principles?*

Running the Review

Quality Marker 6: Governance

The SAR achieves the requirement for independence AND ownership of the findings by the Safeguarding Board / Partnership and member agencies

- *Are senior managers being kept up to date about the learning being identified?*
- *Are there mechanisms in place to allow challenge to the information and analysis of the review, so that the findings/ recommendations have been thoroughly considered before the report is finalised and taken to the SAB?*
- *Are there clear governance arrangements in place from the outset of the process?*
- *Has the system for quality assurance of the process and sign-off of the report been set out clearly from the start?*

Quality Marker 7: Management of the Process

The SAR is effectively managed. It runs smoothly and is concluded within a timely manner and within available resources.

- *Are there any issues in relation to key personnel, administrative support or reviewer capacity, that may impact on quality and timings of the SAR?*
- *Are mechanisms in place to inform the SAB Chair of any delays and reasons for them?*

Quality Marker 8: Parallel Processes

Where there are parallel processes the SAR is managed to avoid as much as possible; duplication of effort, prejudice to criminal trials, unnecessary delay and confusion to all parties, including staff, the person and their family.

- *Have you agreed the most appropriate process for the circumstances?*
- *Can parallel processes be utilised for TOR's and scoping to avoid any duplication and repetition?*
- *Is there defined agreed ownership of SAR documents?*
- *Is there an index of SAR material and agreement on arrangement for disclosure?*
- *Where necessary, are there early discussions with the police, CPS, coroner to consider any information relevant to criminal proceedings?*

Quality Marker 9: Gathering Information

The SAR gains sufficient quality information to underpin the analysis of the case in context of normal working practices and relevant organisational factors

- *Are the aims of the SAR clear?*
- *Have all avenues of information gathering been considered?*
- *Does the SAR allow for full inclusion and engagement (person, families, practitioners, multi-agency partners)?*
- *Are there clear expectations in respect of gathering information – what specific information and level of detail is needed from people and paperwork and why?*
- *Is there an escalation pathway in respect of non-engagement by participating agencies?*

Quality Marker 10: Practitioner Involvement

The SAR enables practitioners and managers to have a constructive experience of taking part in the review.

- *Does the SAR process express the value and importance of practitioner input and promote an open learning culture to all?*
- *Is the purpose of practitioner input clear and understood?*
- *Are practitioners and managers provided with adequate support and protections within their organisations to take part in the SAR Process?*
- *How will you gather feedback from all those involved in relation to the process?*
- *What arrangements are in place to thank people for their involvement once the SAR is complete?*

Quality Marker 11: Involvement of the Person, Family and relevant network

The SAR is informed by knowledge and experience of the person, family and relevant network regarding the period under review.

- *Is there a clearly documented decision process for involvement / non-involvement of the person / family?*
- *Who will be the specific point of contact with the person / family and what are the arrangements to support them throughout the process?*
- *Is there clarity about what the family will be asked?*
- *How are the family to be represented in the final report and how do they provide feedback?*
- *Where there are criminal proceedings, has a discussion taken place with the police (Senior Investigating Officer) around the family involvement with the SAR Process?*

Quality Marker 12: Analysis

The SAR analysis is transparent and rigorous. It evaluates and explains professional practice in the case, highlighting challenges, themes and learning in relation to practitioners' efforts to safeguard adults.

- *Are the Six Core Safeguarding Principles and Making Safeguarding Personal reflected in the evaluation of safeguarding practice of this case?*
- *Does the review take into consideration cultural, organisational and systems practice?*
- *Does the review highlight any issues around service delivery?*
- *Is current, up to date research evidence about good practice used in the analysis?*
- *Does the analysis have clear conclusions in relation this case and the wider safeguarding practice?*
- *Are you promoting the value of identifying the range of learning (whether good or bad practice) that the case reveals?*
- *Is information from contributing agencies fully and fairly represented in the report?*

Outcomes and Impact

Quality Marker 13: The Report

The report clearly and succinctly identifies the analysis and findings while keeping details of the person to a minimum. Findings should reflect causal factors, systems learning, single and multi-agency learning.

- *Does the report meet the requirements of the commissioned specification?*
- *Is the tone and choice of words appropriate and is the report written in a way that is to the point, understandable and useful?*
- *Have the person / family had opportunity to comment and is there any legal advice required about publication?*
- *Does the report sufficiently protect the privacy of the person, family members and practitioners whilst still being accessible and able to support future practice improvement?*
- *Can the report be used to inform the work of the partnership to improve safeguarding outcomes and prevent future abuse and neglect?*

Quality Marker 14: Improvement Action

The Board / Partnership encourages robust informed discussion and agreement from multi-agency partners in respect of action to be taken in response to the SAR Report.

- *How will you promote open and constructive challenge in relation to the findings of the report?*
- *Are there any implications for the SAB / Partnership strategic plan?*
- *What is the most effective response to the findings and how will individuals and organisations be engaged in this?*
- *Are there any findings that can be addressed regionally, nationally or in other forums and how will you do this?*
- *What are the arrangements for sharing, monitoring and evaluating the recommendations in order to ensure learning is embedded and effective?*

Quality Marker 15: Board / Partnership Written Response

The Board / Partnership response is clear, accessible, reflects the process, and takes into consideration the required learning and recommendations. It should include information about what has already been done to improve and enhance services and practice and what remains to be achieved

- *Is there a clear communication plan involving all the relevant agencies and partnerships?*
- *Is there an agreement across organisations around the process for disclosure, publication and timescales in order to minimise any duplication or impact upon other reviews / criminal proceedings?*
- *Where will the Board / Partnership response be shared and is it to the point and easy to understand?*
- *Are the person / family / practitioners aware of the timeline and content of the Board / Partnership response and how will any feedback be recorded and actioned?*
- *Does the Board /Partnership response include reference to what improvements have been made and what learning is still to be progressed and implemented?*

Quality Marker 16: Publication

The Board / Partnership should refer to statutory guidance to evidence the influence of decision to publish or not and take into consideration the risk to the individual's anonymity. Consideration should be given to the use of Executive Summaries and Learning Briefs.

- *Can the Board / Partnership provide the rationale for the decision around publication / non-publication of the review and this is clearly documented?*
- *Has the person / family member been fully involved in the decisions around publication and have their views have been considered and discussed? Have they been informed in advance of the report publication?*
- *Is there a clear multi-agency communications strategy and is there an identified Lead Officer?*
- *Have key questions and responses been considered to enable a consistent response to media interest.*
- *Is there is a clear agreement in relation to content and timeframe for release, ensuring where appropriate, the anonymity of those involved?*
- *Are there any other issues that would prevent publication of the full report? (community tensions, criminal proceedings, media interest)*
- *Does the publication date clash with any other important dates or activities? (anniversaries, criminal trials, media interest?)*
- *Has the SAR Regional Learning Template been completed for the case to be recorded in the Regional SAR Library?*

Quality Marker 17: Implementation and Evaluation

The SAR findings should inform effective implementation of any system changes. The impact of the SAR Findings should be evaluated to ensure they positively influence practice and improve safeguarding of adults.

- *Has the Board / Partnership actioned the findings and recommendations and evaluated the impact?*
- *Have the SAR findings been communicated and embedded in multi-agency training and guidance?*
- *Does the Board / Partnership utilise performance data to evidence and evaluate the impact of learning?*
- *Has any good practice been highlighted and shared?*
- *Has the learning been shared locally, regionally and where appropriate escalated nationally?*
- *Has any regional learning been identified through the North East SAR Library and if so how will this be progressed?*
- *Where learning has been identified previously – is there a clear strategy to embed and revisit this learning?*
- *Is there a process to revisit the learning, and seek assurance this has been embedded in practice at future intervals?*