



Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Referrals Briefing Note

This briefing has been produced to raise awareness of the criteria for Safeguarding Adults Reviews and to support practitioners around the key considerations when making a referral.

What is a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) and what difference do they make to safeguarding?

A SAR is a multi-agency review to determine what agencies involved could have done differently that could have prevented harm or death from taking place.

It is important to note that the aim of a SAR is not to apportion blame – it is to promote effective learning and improvement to prevent future deaths or harm occurring and to improve how agencies work together to supporting adults with care and support needs, and their families, to achieve positive outcomes.

SARs are important because the findings and recommendations are used to drive forward improvements to services across the safeguarding partnership and the learning is used to support continuous development.

When is a SAR required?

The Safeguarding Adults Case Review Group (SACRG) is a subgroup of the Safeguarding Adults Executive Board (SAEB) which has delegated responsibility for making decisions on SAR referrals and for overseeing SARs as well as monitoring progress of learning actions and improvements to systems, procedures and practice which arise from such reviews.

Cases should be referred to the SACRG for consideration for any case in which it appears the criteria for a SAR are met.

Section 44 of the Care Act 2013 and the accompanying [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#) sets out that Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) have a mandatory duty to carry out a SAR when:

- An adult in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected;

or

- Where 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 as a result of abuse or neglect;

and

- There is concern that partner agencies could have worked together more effectively to protect the adult.

The Care Act also states that SABs can arrange for a SAR to be commissioned in any other situation where the criteria are not met, but it is clear that there are valuable lessons to be learnt with the aim of improving how agencies work together to promote the wellbeing of adults and their families and to prevent abuse and neglect in the future. This is known as a discretionary SAR.

Who can make a referral for a SAR?

Any professional or agency representative can make a referral for consideration of a SAR for any case in which they believe the criteria above are met by completing the completing the SAR referral form.

If a member of the public wishes to raise a SAR referral, they should approach the SAEB Business Manager or SAEB partner agency to discuss further. It will be the responsibility of that body to identify the most appropriate route to take this request forward. This may result in a SAEB partner agency completing a SAR referral form on behalf of the member of the public or may also involve advising them why the request does not meet the criteria for a SAR and that it would not be appropriate to raise this.

Referrals should be sent via secure email to:
makingsafeguardingpersonal@rbkc.gov.uk

What are the key considerations when making a referral?

When making a referral please ensure the following points are considered:

1. You understand what a SAR is and consider the Section 44 criteria:

- What is the abuse or neglect that has contributed to the death or caused serious harm?
- Did or does the adult have care and support needs?
- Is there an indication for multi-agency learning?
- Are there any other current processes taking place – such as a safeguarding enquiry, police investigation or coroner's inquest?

2. You discuss the referral with a senior manager / safeguarding lead:

- Confirm that you are satisfied that the criteria are indicated and can evidence this within the referral.
- If there was a view that multi-agency working was problematic, it is good practice to ensure that discussion has taken place with partner agencies affected so that the referral process is transparent and where possible sent in on the basis of a consensus of what the issues in the case were.

3. Consider contacting the SAEB Business Manager:

- If you have any queries or require further consultation, contact the SAEB Business Manager via details at the end of this briefing.

4. Complete the SAR referral form:

- Complete as fully and with as much detail as possible.
- Provide a clear rationale as to how you feel the criteria are met.
- Where other internal investigations or reviews have taken place, such as a Section 42 enquiry or Root Cause Analysis, please provide copies of reports and / or an overview of the learning, recommendations and actions already taken forward.

What happens next?

The referral will be triaged by the SAEB Business Manager who may contact you for further information and discussion.

If the referral clearly does not meet the criteria or has been submitted inappropriately in place of a safeguarding concern, the referrer will be signposted to the safeguarding referral pathway.

The Safeguarding Adults Case Review Group (SACRG) of the Safeguarding Adults Executive Board (SAEB) meets every six weeks and considers every SAR referral in accordance with the SAEB SAR Protocol and Guidance, the London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the SCIE SAR Quality Markers. The Quality Markers provide a checklist to support good practice in the SAR process and to ensure the approach is consistent and robust.

The professional who has made the SAR referral will be invited to a SACRG meeting to present the referral and contribute to the discussion and decision making on the case. The presentation should concentrate on how the criteria are met, and consideration of what learning there is for multi-agency systems and processes - not on apportioning blame.

The SACRG will make a recommendation to the SAEB Independent Chair, who makes a final decision on whether to commission a SAR. The decision-making process will include consideration of the best approach to achieve the maximum learning in each case, and the best way to involve the adult and/or their family/friends/carers in the review process. If the referral does not meet the SAR criteria, a discretionary review or another course of action may be taken instead, for example a Single Agency Review.

Questions to consider and discuss

- Are you aware of the SAR criteria and do you feel confident in raising SAR referrals?
- Do you know what action to take if you have a case that might meet the SAR criteria?
- What further support or training do you think you / your team need?

Further information and useful resources

For any further information please contact Trish McMahon, SAEB Business Manager at makingsafeguardinpersonal@rbkc.gov.uk

[SAR Protocol and Guidance](#)

[SAR Referral Form](#)

[SAR Guide for Families and Carers](#)

[London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)

[SCIE Guidance on SARs](#)

[SCIE SAR Quality Markers](#)

[SCIE: User involvement in adult safeguarding](#)

[SCIE: Safeguarding adults and sharing information](#)

[Analysis of Safeguarding Adults Reviews \(SARs\) April 2017 – March 2019](#)

[Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews: April 2019 – March 2023](#)