



# SAR Quality Markers Guidance for Board Offices

Overview of Role and Responsibility of the Board Office in relation to SARs:

- Project manage SARs to ensure that they are completed to a sufficient standard within an appropriate timeframe
- Provide practical day-to-day support for the SAR
- Provide administrative support during the review process
- Provide a means of access to the data used in SARs
- Act as a link between staff members involved
- Liaise with the LSAB Chair during the SAR, to provide updates on the process

Not all Quality Markers are relevant to the Board Office, as not all link in with the Group's role and responsibilities. The relevant Quality Markers and the questions to be asked for each are listed on the following pages.

## Setting up the Review – Relevant Quality Markers

### Quality Marker 2: Decision making – what kind of SAR, if any?

**Quality statement – 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**

Questions to ask:

- Have all key agencies provided information about their involvement?
- Have neighbouring SABs been asked for information, if the person lived outside the SAB area?
- Has single and multi-agency intelligence from other quality assurance and feedback sources, that is relevant to practice in this case, been gathered .e.g. audits/benchmarking, complaints and previous SARs?

# Setting up the Review – Relevant Quality Markers

## Quality Marker 3: Informing the person, their family or other important network

Quality statement – The person, relevant family members, friends and network are told what the SAR is for, how it will work and the parameters, and are treated with respect.

### Questions to ask:

- Has the person, relevant family members, friends and network of the SAR been informed at the earliest stage possible?
- Have the purpose, process and parameters of the SAR been communicated in the most appropriate setting or method to ensure that these can be understood and convey respect to those involved?
- Are opportunities being offered to discuss any queries or clarifications about the SAR purpose, and do they give them a realistic chance of doing so?

## Quality Marker 4: Clarity of purpose

Quality statement – The Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) is clear and transparent, from the outset that the SAR is a statutory process, with the purpose of organisational learning and improvement, and acknowledges any factors that complicate this goal

### Questions to ask:

- Is all standard correspondence clear, that when the SAB decides to arrange a SAR, it is a statutory process both when the case meets the statutory criteria for a SAR, and when the SAB has made the decision to use its power to arrange a SAR for other reasons?

## Quality Marker 5: Commissioning

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

### Questions to ask:

- Does the process allow the reviewer(s) appointed to influence the scope, nature and approach for the review?
- Do the scoping document or terms of reference clearly explain the rationale for decisions about proportionality, with reference to case and contextual features as relevant?
- Is the scoping process set up to confirm requirements about the breadth and depth of the investigation, any specific areas of focus, the method or approach for assembling and analysing information, the knowledge and skills needed of reviewers and the agencies to be involved?

# Running the Review – Relevant Quality Markers

## Quality Marker 6: Governance

Quality statement – the SAR achieves the requirement for independence AND ownership of the findings by the SAB and members agencies

### Questions to ask:

- Have governance arrangements and who is responsible for what been set out clearly from the start?
- 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

Quality statement – The SAR is effectively managed. It runs smoothly, is concluded in a timely manner and within available resources

### Questions to ask:

- Is there a clear plan with allocated roles and responsibilities for the transmission of information?
- Are mechanisms in place to inform the SAB Chair of any delays and reasons for them?

## Quality Marker 8: Parallel processes

Quality statement – When 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 relevant family members

### Questions to ask:

- Are notes of interviews and meetings and copies of reports that might be considered relevant to criminal proceedings retained?
- Is an index being maintained, of material generated by the SAR which might be disclosable?

# Running the Review – Relevant Quality Markers

## Quality Marker 9: Assembling Information

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

## Quality Marker 10: Practitioners involvement

Quality statement – the SAR enables practitioners and managers to have a constructive experience of taking part in the review

### Questions to ask:

- Has guidance been provided to participating organisations about what information is requested at the beginning of the review, and the level of detail required, and why?
- Has access been arranged for the reviewer(s) and relevant others to all the different sources of information deemed relevant?

### Questions to ask:

- Are participants being provided with clear information about the SAR and their role in it?
- Are there plans to gather feedback from participants about their involvement?

## Quality Marker 11: Involvement of the person and relevant family members and network

Quality statement – The SAR is informed by the person and relevant family and network members' knowledge and experiences relevant to the period under review

### Questions to ask:

- Has it been agreed who is best positioned to communicate with the family and how this will be facilitated?

# Outputs, Outcomes and Impact from the Review – Relevant Quality Markers

## Quality Marker 13: The Report

Quality statement – the report identifies clearly and succinctly the analysis and findings of the SAR, while keeping details of the person to a minimum. Findings reflect the casual factors and systems learning the analysis has evidenced

## Quality Marker 14: Improvement Action

Quality statement – the Board enables robust, informed discussion and agreement by agencies of what action should be taken in response to the SAR report.

### Questions to ask:

- Is legal advice necessary to inform decisions about publication?
- Have you reminded people to cross-reference the report with the commissioning specification?
- If the person and/or family have the opportunity to comment on the report, what arrangements need to be made?

### Questions to ask:

- Can you help with making accessible intelligence from other sources, that is relevant to findings in the report?
- Has a clear, considered process been planned, to avoid a last minute rush to agree responses?