



# **Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board**

## **Safeguarding performance and quality assurance framework**

### **Final V1**

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## 1 Introduction and Principles of this Framework

The Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) Performance and Quality and Assurance (P&QA) subgroup has developed this Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to provide assurance that the WSAB and its constituent partner agencies have effective systems, structures, processes and practice in place to improve outcomes and experience in the context of safeguarding adults at risk. The terms of reference of the PQA subgroup are available upon request.

The QAF is the key mechanism by which the WSAB holds local agencies to account for their safeguarding work, including prevention and risk management.

The framework is underpinned by the six safeguarding principles:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention** - It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** - The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** - Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** - Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

### 1.1 The national context

The [Care Act 2014](#) provides a statutory framework for adult safeguarding, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities, their partners and those with whom they work, to protect adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) offers the following guidance to SABs in relation to quality assurance:

The SAB should seek assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding activity and that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life for adults with care and support needs and carers in its area, in line with Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). This should address issues of quality as well as quantity, particularly from the perspective of those who have experienced safeguarding services.

This framework is intended to help leaders in all organisations under the WSAB to answer two main questions:

- ✓ how effective are we at keeping adults safe.
- ✓ how we can embed learning to prevent issues from reoccurring

By asking these questions, and understanding the answers, we will help to safeguard those adults at risk of harm, manage the risk inherent in this area of work, and drive improvement in outcomes for adults and their carers.

This framework doesn't denote individual audit exercises, but rather provides a system of principles and processes that can be used and adapted to explore the effectiveness of service provision for adults in Worcestershire.

## **1.2 Confidentiality**

All quality assurance and performance reporting activity will be undertaken in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and any personal information will be securely stored and processed in line with the WSABs and each agency's information governance policy (or equivalent). No personally identifiable information will be published by WSAB as a result of any QAF activity.

## **1.3 Local context**

WSAB is a multi-agency partnership, made up of statutory and voluntary partners as well as lay-members, established under the Care Act 2014 to promote well-being and oversee safeguarding adults work countywide. The three core statutory partners are Worcestershire County Council's Adult Social Care, West Mercia Police (WMP) and Hereford and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (H&WICB).

The WSAB, through its Performance & Quality Assurance (P&QA) subgroup, uses a range of performance improvement and quality tools to monitor work across the WSAB partner agencies to ensure there is continued evaluation of the quality of services being provided and outcomes achieved. The WSAB structure can be found on the WSAB website via the following link [WSAB website - About the WSAB page](#)

## **1.4 Practice Improvement**

The WSAB is committed to a culture of continuous improvement and the purpose of our QAF activity should be to improve outcomes for adults, carers and families living in Worcestershire. It is therefore important that we take account of and are influenced by current safeguarding themes within the County.

The focus of all QAF activity will be linked with learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Rapid Reviews (RR) (see section 1.5). The findings from assurance work will be used to

- Make recommendations to individual organisations as appropriate. This will include recommendations regarding any identified and evidenced need for further action or escalation.

- take a lead in developing policy and procedures to ensure a culture of continuing improvement from lessons learnt.
- Share best practice by bringing together expertise across different agencies ensuring learning from experience.
- Oversee development and action plans through its subgroup.
- Identify opportunities for multi-agency training opportunities so that findings from reviews and audits make a real impact on improving outcomes for adults.

### **1.5. Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)**

A SAR may be undertaken when an adult at risk of abuse dies or is seriously injured and abuse and / or neglect is suspected or known to be a factor, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult. These reviews are a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014, and the outcomes and lessons learnt should be published.

The WSAB Rapid Review and extended SAR Protocol includes details of the referral process, methodologies and templates, which can be found on the following page of WSAB website page [Link to SAR Protocol webpage](#) Locally published SARs and Learning Briefings can be found on the following page. [Link to SARS published in Worcestershire](#)

When a Rapid Review (RR) or extended SAR is completed a Multi-Agency Action Plan (MAAP) is produced which identifies learning and subsequent actions identified through the recommendations of the RR or extended SAR. The Case Review Sub-group, which oversees this process, allocates the actions to the relevant sub-group. which require assurance are referred to the P&QA Sub-group who ensure that they are implemented through the most appropriate approach.

### **1.6 Assurance Panels**

WSAB Assurance Panels bring greater transparency in the implementation of SAR recommendations, whilst also providing expert support and advice to P&QA. Their role is to review the submissions from organisations providing information on the actions they are taking to address review recommendations. They are also utilised to examine actions taken to address reoccurring themes in SARs.

An Assurance Panel is chaired by a member of the P&QA sub-group and includes representatives from the sub-group, alongside People with Lived Experience (PWLE) and representative organisations who have a stake in the recommendations made in the SAR. The Assurance Panel will assess responses and provide feedback to the P&QA sub-group on whether:

- The action is sufficient, and assurance has been provided.
- Where they feel that the response is insufficient the Panel provides advice on actions they would expect to see taken before they would be satisfied to recommend the action closed.

Where the assurance panel recommend that further work is required the P&QA sub-group will decide whether to uphold this recommendation.

Where both the Assurance Panel and the sub-group agree that no further action is required, P&QA will recommend that the WSAB sign off this action from the MAAP.

Where there is a divergent view on whether the action should be closed this will be noted and fed back to the WSAB when the MAAP and plans (SAAP) are signed off at Board level.

### **1.7 Adults' experience**

All partner agencies are expected to have processes in place to gain insight into adults' experiences of their services. The WSAB is particularly interested in adults' experience of the safeguarding process. The WSAB Adults Safeguarding Network and Reference Groups have been developed to strengthen the involvement of PWLE. This framework places an expectation on agencies and organisations to ascertain people's safeguarding experience and report them to the Board, via the P&QA subgroup, so that their experiences can inform the Board's work.

## **2 WSAB Performance Quality Assurance Processes**

### **2.1 WSAB Risk Register**

The QAF encourages openness and transparency from all partner agencies and organisations. There is an expectation that all partner agencies and organisations will notify the Board of any issues of concern, such as poor regulatory inspection outcomes, serious incidents, issues that might attract media attention, safeguarding risks on their organisation's risk register etc.

The WSAB regularly identifies and reviews any risks at Operational Board meetings. Issues identified are then registered on the WSAB Risk Register, and details of actions to mitigate the risk are recorded. This is then shared with the Executive Board. When the Executive Board are satisfied that any risks are being managed appropriately or the risk has been reduced then future oversight of this risk is managed through P&QA. If the risk increases, then P&QA will escalate it back to a Board level.

## 2.2 SAB strategic self-assessment

The WSAB, together with other SABs and Children's Partnerships across the West Midlands region, has adopted an online self-assessment framework which provides a consistent framework for partner agencies to monitor, assess and improve their adult safeguarding arrangements. The framework can be used by a wide range of organisations and includes key considerations of the Care Act 2014 and the principles of [Making Safeguarding Personal](#).

The process is set out below:

- Statutory members of the WSAB are required to complete the self-assessment.
- Organisations who deliver health, social care and support services for people who have care and support needs are requested to complete the self-assessment.
- The organisation is required to make a judgement as to how well it is achieving a set of safeguarding standard questions based on the following RAGB rating:
  - **Outstanding (blue)** the service is performing exceptionally well
  - **Good (green)** the service is performing well and meeting the required expectations stated in this tool
  - **requires improvement (or that standard is partially met) (orange)** the service is not performing as well as it should and/or inconsistently delivering services and has identified actions as to how it can improve
  - **inadequate (red)** the service is performing badly and there is widespread failure to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults with care and support needs

Each agency is required to develop an action plan for any improvements required, which are monitored by the WSAB through the P&QA subgroup.

## 2.3 Performance data

Mechanisms have been developed in Adult Social Care to monitor safeguarding activity within the County, providing information on the volume of safeguarding concerns and enquiries, source of referral, types of abuse and other data. Much of this information is used to inform the county council's statutory safeguarding return as part of the NHS Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC).

The P&QA subgroup receives this data, alongside other relevant data from agencies, on a quarterly basis. The P&QA sub-group provides oversight and analysis of multi-agency data on behalf of the WSAB. This enables them to:

- Identify trends in abuse category reporting and responses required.
- Evaluate the impact of safeguarding interventions.
- Identify and target training in a more informed manner.

- Allow more robust decision making through the provision of timely, accurate intelligence.
- Improve engagement and understanding between partner agencies to develop a better understanding of the work undertaken by each agency and their processes.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency in the management of and reporting of concerns.

## **2.4 Single agency audits**

Each partner agency should have in place auditing arrangements to assess the quality of their day-to-day safeguarding adults work. The P&QA subgroup may ask partner agencies to share findings from such audits or ask partners to review arrangements for these.

## **2.5 Multi-agency audits**

Each year the P&QA subgroup will agree a work plan which includes a program of multi-agency audits. The P&QA subgroup aims to complete two themed audits per business year. These are predominantly identified through reoccurring findings from SARs. However, they may also be identified through the self-assessment framework or surveys.

## **2.6 Complaints and Compliments**

Each partner agency must have in place arrangements for monitoring complaints and a system for cross-referencing with safeguarding records. The SAB may ask partners to share complaints data.

The information obtained from complaints and compliments received is reviewed regularly. This information is used to identify strengths and areas for development in safeguarding enquiries.

## **3 Audit Methodology**

The methodology and boundaries for an audit will be agreed at the start of the process by the multi-agency partners involved. Typically, this will involve cases being identified from specified criteria related to the focus of the audit.

The methodology for each audit will specify what is expected of the agency representatives taking part and will consider the following general principles in its approach:

- Relevant practitioners to be involved in the audit unless there are exceptional circumstances precluding this.
- Engagement of People with Lived Experience in the design and audit review process (confidentiality must be considered and addresses as part of this approach)
- Representatives from relevant services, interested groups as applicable
- Active and live safeguarding cases will not form part of multi-agency audit processes.

#### **4. Learning from audits**

Learning outcomes from the WSAB multi-agency audits will be disseminated to all partner agencies through a written summary of the key findings of the audit, actions for improvement and learning outcomes.

The P&QA subgroup will liaise with the WSAB Learning Development, Practice and Communication (LDP&C) subgroup to ensure that learning outcomes inform the development of appropriate training and practice. The P&QA subgroup will work with the WSAB Operational Board to agree and implement changes to effect improved outcomes for adults and to measure the impact of such changes.

Learning from audits may also be shared through:

- training,
- team meetings,
- workshops and / or interagency forums,
- specific learning events, including joint events with other SAB or local Partnerships and forums.