

Safeguarding Adult Reviews: Information for families, friends and carers

Introduction

When an adult who needs care and support either dies or suffers serious harm, and when abuse or neglect is thought to have been a factor, the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board may need to review what has happened. This is called a Safeguarding Adults Review or SAR for short.

These reviews are to see whether any lessons can be learned about the way organisations worked together to support and protect the person who suffered harm. We understand this is likely to be a very difficult time for families, friends and carers, but we also want to learn as much as possible about how to do things better in the future.

We would welcome your involvement in the process as much as possible. We believe families, friends and carers should have the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have and to share your thoughts and opinions.

This leaflet tells you what happens when a SAR is required to be undertaken, and what you should expect.

What are Safeguarding Adult Reviews?

Safeguarding Adult Reviews are one way to improve responses to keep adults who need care and support safe from abuse or neglect and aim to prevent what happened, happening to others.

They will try to ensure that organisations providing public services like councils, the NHS, police and other organisations that provide services understand what happened and identify where responses to the situation could be improved.

From this, we hope to learn all the right lessons including those which impact how organisations work together. These reviews will not seek to lay blame but to consider what happened and what could have been done differently. They will also recommend actions to improve responses to keep adults with care and support needs safe from abuse or neglect in the future.

Safeguarding Adult Reviews are part of the Care Act 2014 and became law from 1st April 2015. They do not replace, but may be in addition to an inquest or any other form of inquiry or review.

How will we undertake the review?

There are different ways in which a SAR can be done, but they all involve gathering as much information from as many sources as possible, usually under the oversight of someone who is independent. We can then try to work out exactly what happened, and why. We will consider whether things could or should have been done differently, and ask how things could be done better in the future.

If the person who died or suffered serious harm had services arranged or paid for by an organisation outside of Somerset, for example another council or NHS organisation, we will normally involve that organisation and ask them to keep in contact with you.

Your involvement in this review

We think family, friends and carers are the best people to help us understand what happened. Your contribution will be valuable and may help change the way organisations in Somerset respond to keeping adults with care and support need safe from abuse or neglect.

We acknowledge this will have been a very difficult time for you and we do not want to add to your distress, but it is important we inform you the review is taking place and to give you an opportunity to be involved. If you do decide to take part in the review, we will ask you to share your understanding of what happened and why.

You can give your thoughts and views in all or some of the following different ways:

- Face-to-face meeting with us
- Via a telephone conversation
- In writing or via a recording

What happens to the information you share?

The information you share will help us to build a comprehensive picture of what happened and in turn will help us identify recommendations for change. These recommendations will then be put into an action plan. Your input will be confidential and you will not be named in the final report.

How long will the review process take?

The review should be completed within about six months, but could be longer depending on the outcomes of other inquiries or reviews.

What does the review produce?

The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board has made a commitment that all SARs will be published in full unless there is good reason not to, for example where doing so is considered likely to cause further harm to someone who has been abused or neglected. A report identifying the findings will normally be published on the Safeguarding Adult Board's website and shared nationally. The report will be anonymised and will not contain any identifying details. The findings will also be detailed within Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board's annual report that is published on its website.

Next Steps

The decision to take part in this review is entirely yours and if you do not wish to take part your decision will be respected. We will notify you when the review is completed and the report is available. If you would like to take part or have any further questions about the review process please contact the person who has signed the letter attached to this leaflet. They will either answer your questions or direct you to someone who can.

Further information and support

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