



Warwickshire
Safeguarding

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR)

Protocol and Guidance

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1. Introduction

Warwickshire Safeguarding's Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup is responsible for recommending the commissioning of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR), managing the process and assuring Warwickshire Safeguarding Executive Board (WSEB) that recommendations and associated actions have been addressed by the multi-agency partnership and individual agencies.

This document has been produced referencing the West Midlands Adult Safeguarding SAR guidance¹ and The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance, s.44². It sets out the criteria for conducting a SAR and provides a menu of options for conducting those reviews, mandates when they must be arranged and gives Warwickshire Safeguarding flexibility to choose a proportionate methodology. The associated guidance is designed to ensure governance of the process and to provide a local process for achieving a complex and challenging task more effectively. The process flowchart illustrated in Appendix.1 provides an overview of the different stages of a SAR and how these will be managed by Warwickshire Safeguarding.

2. The Purpose of a SAR

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) provide an opportunity to:

- improve inter-agency working, for onward dissemination of lessons learnt to partner agencies,
- share best practice; and
- ultimately, better safeguard adults at risk of abuse and neglect so that lessons can be learned from the case and those lessons applied in practice to prevent similar harm occurring again.

SAR's should help to achieve understanding for individuals, families, friends of adults who have died or been seriously abused or neglected.

Agencies will have their own internal procedures to review practice and raise standards, such as complaints, audits and serious incident investigations; a SAR is not intended to duplicate those processes, or to investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, other processes exist for that including criminal proceedings, disciplinary procedures, employment law and systems of service and professional regulation. SARs are not enquiries into how an adult died or who is culpable; that is a matter for Coroners or Criminal Courts to determine, as appropriate.

¹ West Midlands Adult Safeguarding SAR Guidance

² The Care Act 2014, s.44

The purpose of a SAR is to:

- ***Learn from cases where there are clear concerns that agencies have not worked as well together as they might; and which demonstrate areas of practice that could have been delivered more effectively and additionally***
- ***Consider whether or not serious harm experienced by an adult, or group of adults at risk of abuse or neglect, could have been predicted or prevented, and use that consideration to develop learning that enables the Safeguarding Adult's Partnership in Warwickshire to improve its services and prevent abuse and neglect in the future***
- ***Agree how this learning will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result***
- ***Identify any issues for multi or single agency policies and procedures; and***
- ***Publish a summary report, which is available to the public***

3. Legal Context

From April 2015, Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on local Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) to arrange SARs

- When an adult, with needs for care and support, (whether or not the local authority was meeting any of those needs) in its area dies as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult; OR
- If an adult in its area has not died, but the SAB knows or suspects that the adult has experienced serious abuse³ or neglect and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult.

SARs can also be used to explore examples of good practice where it is likely that lessons can be applied to future cases.

4. Criteria for Conducting a SAR

A SAR is not restricted to occasions where the safeguarding procedures have not been followed and can be applied where this has not been the case.

On receipt of receiving a SAR referral Warwickshire Safeguarding (WS) will ensure that the referral references which of the statutory criteria the case has met and /or how the case features practice issues to be pro-actively reviewed before abuse or neglect has occurred in order to pro-actively tackle them.

³ Serious Abuse: considered to be life threatening which requires intervention to prevent death and/or where there is significant psychological impact of the abuse on the individual

Warwickshire Safeguarding Executive Board will consider undertaking a SAR when it is known or suspected that:

- 1. Actions or omissions in a number of agencies involved in the provision of care, support or safeguarding of an adult, or group of adults, at risk of abuse or neglect have caused (or are implicated in) the death or serious harm of that individual or group of individuals; OR**
- 2. An adult or group of adults at risk die or experience serious harm and there are concerns about how agencies have worked together to prevent, identify, minimise or address that harm and there are concerns about how this may place other adults at risk of serious harm; AND**
- 3. There are clearly identified areas of learning and practice improvement or service development that have the potential to significantly improve the way in which adults at risk of abuse and neglect are safeguarded in the future.**

The Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup will consider the issues raised within the case and will carefully examine the potential for learning across agencies/services.

5. Identification and referral for a SAR

Any agency or professional body, elected members, MPs, the Coroner or the individual concerned, or a family member may refer cases to Warwickshire Safeguarding Executive Board for consideration of a SAR.

Referrals must be made in writing using the SAR referral form illustrated in **Appendix.2**.

6. Deciding whether a SAR should be held

Since 2019, Warwickshire Safeguarding has adopted an initial screening process for the management of all new referrals received by the partnership seeking a SAR or Child Safeguarding Practice Review. This involves the Business Manager undertaking cross checks with relevant partners and then sharing and discussing any new SAR referrals with the Chair of Warwickshire Safeguarding's Review Subgroup to determine next steps. This process can conclude with one of three of the following outcomes with the agreement of the WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer:

- a) There is sufficient evidence to progress the SAR referral to a Rapid Review, or
- b) More information is needed to decide whether or not to progress the SAR referral to a Rapid Review, or
- c) There is no evidence of abuse or neglect and therefore, neither element of the SAR statutory test criteria (refer to section 3 above) is met and the referral is closed, and the referrer notified of this decision

Warwickshire Safeguarding has adopted the [Rapid Review](#) process introduced within Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) for all new SAR Referrals which are to be progressed for further scoping and information gathering from partner agencies. The Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup will use this information to inform their decision making.

If the decision is to proceed with a SAR, the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup can use this information to consider the type of review to be undertaken and the scope of the review.

7. Recommendation to the WS Chair

The Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup will hold a Rapid Review meeting to consider the referral for a SAR taking into consideration any initial case information provided by agencies involved with the adult, in respect of whom the referral has been made.

The Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup will make its recommendation to the WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer in writing detailing the basis for its decision.

The WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer will confirm acceptance of the recommendation or, advise the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup otherwise.

8. Relationship to other Reviews

When a case meets the criteria for a SAR, Warwickshire Safeguarding will seek to identify what other reviews and processes are taking place, or envisaged in relation to the same case, such as:

- Child Safeguarding Practice Review (formerly known as Serious Case Review)
- Domestic Homicide Review
- Police investigation/criminal proceedings
- Health and Safety Executive investigation/charges Coroner's inquest

Early contact will be made with the Chair of any parallel process in order to

1. determine how the reviews can be effectively managed to maximise learning for individuals and organisation; and
2. avoid duplication for families and professionals.

Consideration will be given to –

- ***Whether the actions of all agencies and all aspects of the case could be effectively covered by one of the reviews;***
- ***Whether it would be appropriate for related reviews to be chaired by the same person***
- ***Whether some aspects of related reviews could be commissioned or undertaken jointly***
- ***Ensuring that the terms of reference for related reviews effectively cover all aspects of the case***
- ***How to engage with adults, families and/or advocates to enable involvement and contribution to reviews, and how their expectations can be managed appropriately and sensitively.***

9. Recommending the Overall Approach to the SAR

Once a decision has been taken by WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer to proceed with a SAR the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup Chair, in consultation with the WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer and Business Manager will determine what review methodology is to be used for the SAR. The following points will also be taken into consideration as part of this process:

- *Which agencies should be asked to participate in the SAR*
- *Whether the agencies concerned are required to secure their files*
- *Which methodology should be used to facilitate learning in the case • The Terms of Reference for the SAR and outline timescales*
- *The required output from the SAR (e.g. a report)*
- *The timescales for completion of the SAR*
- *The appointment of an independent Reviewer and agreement of their terms of reference*
- *How and when to communicate the key messages of the review with the public/media*
- *How the adult and/or their family or advocate will be involved in the review and the level of their involvement and how they will be informed*
- *Whether or not to communicate with the person who is alleged to have caused the abuse or neglect*

All reviews will establish a Review Panel who will be responsible for overseeing and contributing to the SAR process on behalf of their respective organisations and have decision making authority.

10. SAR Methodologies

Warwickshire Safeguarding is clear that there are many ways for the Partnership to achieve learning, but the review must be proportionate in the approach it takes.

Listed below are some examples of review methodologies which could be considered. This is not an exhaustive list, and the SARs Subgroup may wish to use its collective expertise to recommend an alternative approach, if and where appropriate:

- SCIE Learning Together Model
- Individual Management Reviews (IMRs)
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
- Peer Review (PR)
- Significant Incident Learning Process (SILP)
- Root Cause Analysis (RCA)
- Multi-Agency Combined Chronology

Regardless of which methodology is used, contributing agencies need to be mindful that there may be public scrutiny of information provided by agencies to the SAR and, in particular, HM Coroner

may request information. All agencies should therefore ensure their senior managers approve any written submissions to a SAR, and where they consider it appropriate, seek legal advice prior to submission.

Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Manager will write to agencies to confirm their knowledge of the review and request them to secure files.

11. Information Sharing

This SAR Protocol and Guidance needs to be viewed alongside Section 45 of The Care Act 2014, Supply of Information, and be fully compliant in those circumstances where information is required from other persons to enable Warwickshire Safeguarding to exercise its functions.

Information shared as part of the SAR process is confidential and therefore the following information security precautions will be taken for information shared:

- ***A confidentiality statement will be signed at each SAR in any meeting where a review is being discussed***
- ***Information pertaining to a SAR will be marked as 'SENSITIVE'***
- ***Information will be transferred by email only when there is a secure email available. In all other circumstance's information will be transferred via recorded delivery or hand delivery marked for the attention of the addressee only. A return address should be included on the outer envelope to avoid the need for it to be opened should it not be delivered.***
- ***Information relating to a SAR should not be stored alongside a person's normal records. They should be stored separately, with limited access to those identified as requiring access.***

The documents and information produced for a SAR are the property of Warwickshire Safeguarding. Any individual IMRs submitted by agencies will be returned to the respective agency by the report author, upon the completion of the SAR process. Requests for copies of documents of information produced for a SAR should be directed in writing to Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Manager, detailing the purpose of the request. The request will be discussed with the WS Independent Chair & Scrutineer, the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup Chair, the Director of Adult Social Care and a legal advisor before any disclosure is made.

12. Communications

Effective communications are a key part of the SAR process. It is important, that whenever a SAR is to be conducted, the communications professionals in the different organisations are alerted.

Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Team will work with Warwickshire County Council Communications Team who will be the lead organisation in guiding Warwickshire Safeguarding communication requirements. This will include liaising with communications leads in Warwickshire Safeguarding's member organisations and initiating and implementing a communications plan.

The Communications plan for each SAR will take account of communication requirements for a range of audiences / stakeholders including:

- ***The family***
- ***Between member organisations of Warwickshire Safeguarding***
- ***Within the different organisations***
- ***With the public***
- ***With the media***

All communications will need to take account of any legal issues e.g. requirements for information to be published, constraints relating to identification of individuals involved in SARs, on-going legal action and Coroner Court proceedings.

WSEB will be kept informed regularly throughout the SAR process. This will be achieved by:

- Agreeing a timetable and protocol at the outset of all SARs
- Regular updates at WSEB meetings
- Presentation of final reports and briefings for sign-off ahead of publication.

13. Implementation of the learning from SARs

Warwickshire Safeguarding will ensure that the findings, recommendations, and action plans from SARs are endorsed at a senior level by each agency.

SARs action plans will be constructed in the following way:

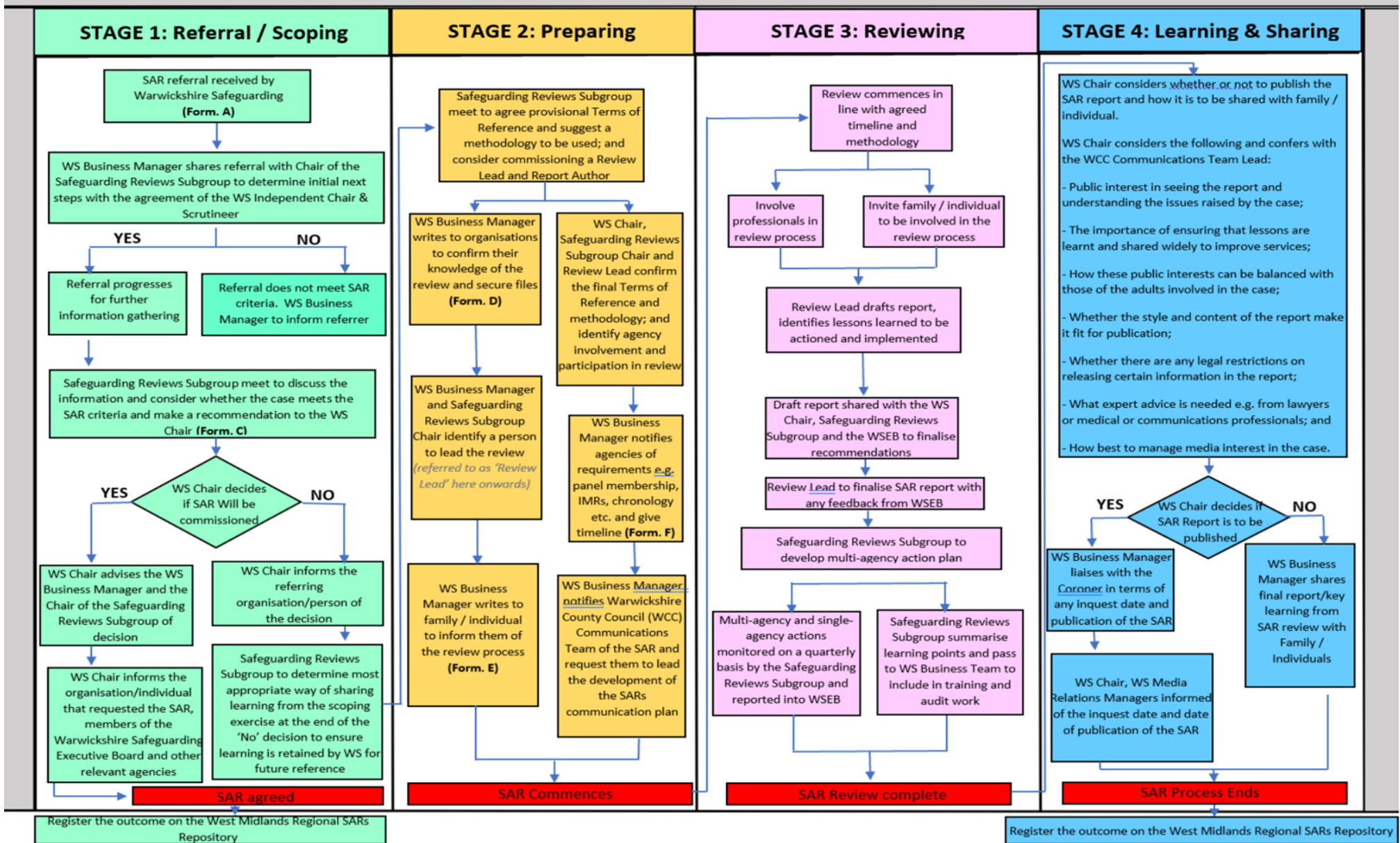
- Who will be responsible for the actions
- The timescale for completion of the actions
- The intended outcome of the various actions and recommendations
- The means of monitoring and reviewing the intended improvements in practice and systems

The Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of actions arising out of all safeguarding reviews.

Warwickshire Safeguarding will ensure that learning from SARs is shared across the wider partnership to improve frontline practice. Lessons Learned Briefings will be published to help cascade the learning from completed SARs, as well as learning from initial scoping exercises where cases did not meet the criteria for a formal review but did identify key learning points.

Appendix. 1

WS Safeguarding Review Flowchart





Appendix.2

SAR

REFERRAL FORM (SAR Form A)

Please provide as much detail to Warwickshire Safeguarding as possible to enable the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup to agree an appropriate and proportionate response to the referral.

Please share this referral with your organisational Safeguarding Lead prior to submission to ensure that internal governance has been applied.

If you have any questions, please contact Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Manager via email: WSAB@warwickshire.gov.uk

(Electronic versions preferred)

1. Referrers Details	
Date of Referral	
Name of Referrer	
Designation	
Organisation	
Address	
Tel. No	
Secure Email Address	

2. Details of Adult			
Full Name(s)		Gender	M / F
Date of Birth			
Date of Death <i>(if appropriate)</i>			
Address			
Ethnicity			
Faith/Religion			
Disability			
Next of Kin			
Contact Details <i>(inc tel no)</i>			
Name and contact details of any formal/informal carers for the adult			
Details of any Dependents			

3. Other Organisations / Service Providers Involved (If known)

Organisation	Contact Person	Tel. No	Email

4. Details of Adult Death / Serious Incident

Please provide as much detail as possible, including the location / address where alleged incident or incidents occurred.

5. Please state why you think this case may meet criteria for a SAR

Please state which of the following Care Act s44 criteria does this case meet? Tick all that apply. Please see Warwickshire Safeguarding SAR guidance for further information:

<https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk>

- ☐ The adult has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority has been meeting any of those needs)
- ☐ There is reasonable cause for concern about how the Safeguarding Adult Board, members of it or other persons with relevant functions worked together to safeguard the adult
- ☐ The adult has died and you know or suspect that the death resulted from abuse or neglect (whether or not it knew about or suspected the abuse or neglect before the adult died)
- ☐ The adult is still alive and you know or suspect that the adult has experienced serious abuse or neglect

Further information:

6. Is there a legal case pending?	Y / N / Don't Know
7. Is this case undergoing a Police investigation?	Y / N / Don't Know
8. Is the case awaiting a Coroner's Inquest?	Y / N / Don't Know

9. Your Manager's Details

Full Name(s)	
Job Title	
Organisation	
Address	
Secure Email Address	
Tel.No	

10. Where to send this form

Please return this completed form to:

WSAB@warwickshire.gov.uk and title your email '***SENSITIVE: SAR referral F.A.O
Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Manager***'

This form must only be sent by secure email. Please contact Warwickshire Safeguarding Business Team at WSAB@warwickshire.gov.uk for advice if you do not have access to secure email.

FOR WARWICKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING OFFICE USE ONLY

Date referral received by Warwickshire Safeguarding	
Date referred to Safeguarding Review Subgroup Chair	

