



Cross-Boundary Safeguarding Adult Reviews Guidance for Safeguarding Adults Boards Business Units in the East Midlands

This guidance has been based and adapted from the North East SAR Champions Network Cross-Boundary guidance.

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Introduction

The Care Act 2014 states that Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) must arrange a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) when an adult with care and support needs in its area dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is reasonable cause for concern that its partner agencies could have worked together more effectively to protect the adult.

There is growing recognition nationally that where a SAR involves more than one SAB (a cross-boundary SAR), the 'Host SAB' (where the adult has been seriously harmed or died), may not always be best placed to co-ordinate the SAR as the adult may not be known or have minimal involvement with services in its area. Therefore, the Host SAB may identify learning that is not wholly relevant or applicable to its partners and would be seeking assurance from agencies that are not within its partnership.

For people with no fixed abode or those who are more transient and travel regularly across local authority boundaries, or individuals who self-neglect and the neglect essentially moves with the person. It can pose some challenges for SABs as the place of residency, location of abuse/neglect and location of death may all be different areas.

The [SCIE SAR Quality Markers](#) state: *"In a review involving other SABs, have you achieved clarity and agreement from the outset about who leads the SAR (e.g. area for whom most learning is likely to emerge) and governance arrangements?"*

ADASS' Guidance for Out of Area Safeguarding Arrangements 2016 (currently under review) states: *"If a SAR is being considered, the SAB of the Host authority (where the abuse has taken place) will be responsible for liaising with all those involved, including the SAB in any placing authorities. The relevant Board Managers and Independent Chairs should agree how the SAR will be undertaken. Boards and organisations should cooperate across borders and requests for the provision of information should be responded to as a priority..."*

Purpose

To provide guidance and a set of key principles for Business Units to agree a consistent, proportionate and practical approach to co-ordinating SARs that involve multiple SABs.

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the SAB's own SAR Policy and Procedures, Information Sharing Agreements and [SCIE's SAR Quality Markers](#).

This guidance can be used flexibly and is case dependent. It is not intended to be a definitive approach.

Key considerations

1. Where did the person live?
2. Where did the abuse/neglect take place?

3. Where were the services who provided support from?¹
4. Who is the learning most applicable to?

SAB Business Unit guidance

SAR notification is received and it is identified that another SAB is involved:

1. The Host SAB will follow its initial screening process at this stage, as appropriate.
2. The Host SAB's Business Unit to notify other SAB(s) of the case.
3. If needed, the Host SAB can arrange a virtual meeting with other SAB area(s) Business Manager(s) and/or SAR Co-ordinator(s) to discuss:
 - The key considerations listed above.
 - Any further information required to decide whether the Notification progresses to the next stage (for consideration of a SAR). Any Notifications screened out at this stage should be recorded with clear rationale.
 - If the Notification will progress, to agree scoping dates for information requested.
 - Who will be asked for information?
 - Agreed deadline for agencies to submit information.
 - Who should be invited to the Host SAB's² SAR Sub-Group/Panel Meeting? (SAB Business Units to consider what agencies are involved and who needs to attend at the appropriate senior level to make a recommendation in line with its own governance requirements). Attendance may be case specific. These meetings should take place virtually wherever possible, to make it easier for colleagues from other areas to attend.
 - Based on the information known at the time, and considering the four key principles above, agree who will be the Lead SAB (i.e. which SAB is likely to benefit most from any learning identified).³

Actions from the Business Unit meeting should be clearly recorded and shared with relevant Business Units, so it is clear who has responsibility, with clear deadlines.

Note: For high profile/urgent cases, the Host SAB may need to act swiftly to address any immediate safeguarding issues and, therefore, internal SAR/Safeguarding processes may need to take priority.

¹ To also take into consideration whether there is a health or social care commissioner and/or placing authority.

² Unless it is agreed at this stage that the Host SAB will not be the Lead SAB.

³ If an agreement cannot be reached between Business Units at this stage as to who the Lead SAB will be, a discussion should be held between the relevant SAB Chairs to determine next steps. If agreement is not reached between the SAB Chairs, a joint SAR Sub-Group/Committee meeting should be convened to ensure that a joint recommendation is made to the relevant SAB Chairs. If agreement is still not reached, a SAR Sub-Group/Panel/Committee Meeting should be convened by the Host SAB; this will allow further discussion informed by additional information gathered to determine which SAB is likely to benefit most from the learning from the SAR.

Information sharing/gathering

Information should be shared in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR regulations. It is the responsibility of recipients to ensure confidentiality is maintained and information deleted when it is no longer needed.

Once a Lead SAB has been agreed, they should be responsible for maintaining all records in line with their own Information Governance policies and procedures.

When invites are sent to out of area colleagues, Business Units will make clear the purpose of the meeting and in what capacity they are invited. The supporting SAB will support in ensuring contact details are correct and the right people are invited.

The Lead SAB should request information (using their own templates) from local and out of area agencies with assistance from supporting SAB(s).

SAR Sub-Group/Panel Meeting

- All SABs should be represented (in line with their own governance requirements).
- The Lead SAB Business Unit should use their own information gathering forms and processes at this stage.
- All colleagues attending should have the opportunity to ask questions and contribute to discussions.
- Collectively a recommendation should be made as to whether the criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review is met:
 - If the Lead SAB has already been agreed prior to the meeting, the Lead Business Unit should follow its own processes for a Recommendation for consideration to its SAB Chair and inform the supporting SAB Business Unit(s) and partner agencies of the outcome.
 - At this stage it may not be clear as to who will benefit most from the learning. For example, if there are multiple SABs involved, and the individual was quite transient across geographical boundaries. SABs may also want to take into account proportionality, practical issues linked to geographical locations (such as staff who may need to travel for meetings), where family live, previous learning from SARs. If an agreement for the Lead SAB has not yet been reached, the group should discuss which SAB is likely to benefit most from the learning and jointly make a recommendation as to who the 'Lead SAB' should be. A joint recommendation should be made to the relevant SAB Chairs for discussion and to agree any potential commissioning implications⁴. SAB Chairs should communicate their decision to Business Managers/SAR Coordinators. The SAB who coordinated the meeting should communicate the decision to all who attended the meeting.

⁴ If the Independent Chairs are unable to agree on next steps, in the first instance a meeting should be held with the Independent Chairs, SAR Sub-Group Chairs, Business Managers and SAR Coordinators (where applicable). In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached, consideration will be given to escalate the case to the Regional SAB Chairs Network for discussion, independent views and agree next steps. These steps for escalation are intended as a guide and can be used flexibly and on a case by case basis. Thought should be given regarding timeliness of decision making.

- The Business Unit who coordinated the meeting should follow their own internal process for informing organisations (including out of area agencies) who provided information for the Sub-Group to consider.

Ultimately, it is for individual SABs to consider whether the case meets the SAR criteria when applied to its own SAB partners and to ensure clear rationale for any decisions made.

Next steps

- The Lead SAB should be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all aspects of the SAR, with support from other SAB Business Units where appropriate.
- Where required, any commissioning decisions in respect of the SAR will be discussed and agreed by the SAB Chairs.
- Where the adult or family lives in another Local Authority area to the Lead SAB, a practical approach should be taken to consider which professional is best placed to liaise with family (considering geographical location, who knows them best and any potential conflict of interest, e.g., where families have raised concerns/complaints about a specific agency). In addition, considering how the adult/family prefers to be communicated with. The supporting SAB would only liaise with the adult/family in exceptional circumstances where all other options by the Lead SAB to engage with them have been explored, or in exceptional circumstances where it is deemed to be more appropriate for the supporting SAB to liaise with family as they already have a positive and established relationship with the adult/family.
- Supporting SAB agencies involved will be invited to contribute as part of the SAR process.

Terms of reference

- Lead SAB to liaise with supporting SAB Business Unit(s) to invite key partners to draft the Terms of Reference.
- The terms of reference should:
 - Clearly identify the Lead SAB, who will coordinate the SAR and oversee the action plan.
 - Clearly identify supporting SABs who will assist with information sharing and holding their own organisations to account.
 - Contain a Methodology for the SAR.
 - Detail the focus/KLOEs for the SAR (considering previous learning from each SAB) and what each SAB area wants to achieve from the SAR.
 - Detail clear outputs (i.e., how will the learning be published? Would this be via a report, learning briefing, training resource etc.)
 - Identify which SAB will publish the learning
 - Contain clear responsibilities regarding engagement with the adult(s)/families

Ongoing communication

The Lead SAB should provide updates to the supporting SAB Business Units at key points throughout the SAR process. Minutes of meetings can be shared with Business Units for information where appropriate.

Recommendations

At the point in which the recommendations are being drafted, the Lead SAB should liaise with supporting SAB Business Units so that key individuals can be involved. This is helpful to consider learning from previous SARs or work that is already taking place linked to learning from the SAR.

Legal checks

Depending on the nature of the case, some SABs may wish to share the final draft report with their legal teams. The Lead SAB should make contact with supporting SABs once the report is in its final draft so that any legal checks can be carried out.

Sign off

When the report is in its final draft (and checked by Legal Teams if required). The Lead SAB should enquire with supporting SABs the best way to seek approval from supporting SAB members. This may be an email circulation, or a presentation delivered by the Independent Reviewer. For more complex SARs an Extraordinary Board meeting with key partners from all SABs may need to be convened.

Timescales for seeking approval from other Boards will need to be factored into any communication with the adult/family.

Note: SABs may have different processes for when to share the report with the adult/family therefore this may also have an impact on timescales for publication.

Publication

Once the SAR has been formally approved by all SABs, the Lead SAB should liaise with supporting SABs to coordinate a media strategy or pre-emptive 'if asked' press statement prior to publication with relevant Communications Leads.

A realistic timescale should be given for publication, and the adult/family will be informed of this date.

The Lead SAB should publish the report on its website (unless there are special circumstances where it has been agreed by SABs not to publish). Supporting SABs can include a weblink on their website to the Lead SAB's webpage.

Action plan

The Lead SAB should liaise with supporting SABs to seek appropriate representation/ written feedback to assist in drafting the action plan. Depending on learning that has already taken place in a SAB area, actions may differ for each SAB to meet a recommendation.

The Lead SAB should be responsible for overseeing the action plan and collating evidence. The supporting SABs should liaise with partners to meet the requirements of the action plan within their SAB area and feed this information into the Lead SAB. Each SAB will be responsible for holding their own organisations to account.

Annual report

The Lead SAB should count the case as part of their data around SARs. Supporting SABs may wish to reference any cases where they were involved but it will not be included as part of their SAR data.

East Midlands document approval

Safeguarding Adults Board area	Date agreed
Derby	October 2025
Derbyshire	June 2025
Leicester	September 2025
Leicestershire and Rutland	December 2025
Lincolnshire	March 2026
Northamptonshire	October 2025
Nottingham City	December 2025
Nottinghamshire	October 2025

Document version control

The Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board holds the primary copy of this guidance, email derbyshiresab@derbyshire.gov.uk

Version	Date	Updates made
1.0	07/10/2025	Not applicable as this is the first version.

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