Quality Assurance

Framework

2020

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1. Introduction

The Quality and Performance Sub-Group of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adult Board have developed this Quality Assurance Framework to give assurance that the Board 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.

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) has a duty to ensure the effectiveness of what organisations and agencies do in order to Safeguard and promote the safety and wellbeing of Adults at Risk across Buckinghamshire. Effective work in this area will contribute towards achieving better outcomes for Adults at Risk and protecting them from significant harm.
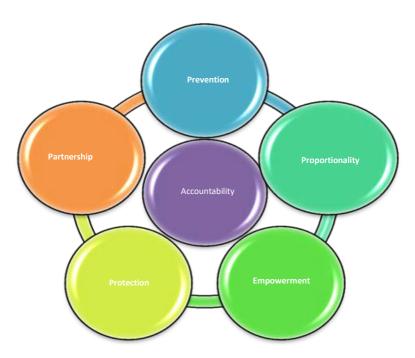
This Quality Assurance Framework is also a key mechanism by which the Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) holds local agencies to account, for their Safeguarding work, including prevention and risk management.

This framework has been developed taking account of the Care Act 2014 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance, March 2015.

2. National Context

The Government's policy on Safeguarding Adults was set out in May 2011 and re-issued in 2013, when 6 principles were identified for local authorities, housing, health, the police and other agencies to follow and use for monitoring Safeguarding arrangements.

Good quality Safeguarding arrangements are underpinned by the following key principles:

Empowerment:

People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent.

I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the Safeguarding process, and this directly informs what happens.

Prevention:

It is better to take action before harm occurs. I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs, and what I can do to seek help.

Proportionality:

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. I am sure that the professionals will work in my interests as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.

Protection:

Support and representation for those in greatest need. I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the Safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.

Partnership:

Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only having what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.

Accountability:

Accountability and transparency in delivering Safeguarding. I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.

- ### Care Act 2014

  The Care Act 2014 has provided a statutory framework for Adult Safeguarding, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners and those with whom they work, to protect Adults with care and support needs from abuse and or at risk of abuse and neglect.

- ### Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA)

  This framework reflects the *Standards for Adult Safeguarding* (ADASS; LGA, Dec 2012) and also reflects messages in relation to Safeguarding Adults Boards set out in the ADASS paper *Safeguarding Adults: Advice and Guidance to Directors of Adult Social Services* (ADASS; LGA, March 2013).

  In June 2013 ADASS published *Making effective use of data and information to improve safety and quality in Adult Safeguarding* which provides 10 tips in relation to Safeguarding Adults Boards effectively, using data and information to improve safety and quality in Safeguarding Adults:

  1. Spend time on making sure data and information supplied is useful.

  2. Interrogate the data and information presented.

3. Beware of overwhelming people with data and information.

4. Use and develop the mechanisms you have.

5. Have sound protocols in place to share data and information.

6. Establish a method to share concerns about regulated health and social care services.

7. Use community safety data and information.

8. Route concerns to the right place.

9. Find ways to support staff that may need it.

10. Make data and information, like Safeguarding, everybody's business.

- **NHS**

In March 2013 the NHS Commissioning Board produced a document ***Safeguarding Vulnerable People in the Reformed NHS Accountability and Assurance Framework***, which states NHS organisations – whether as commissioners or providers of NHS funded care – must demonstrate strong local leadership, work as committed partners and invest in effective co-ordination and robust Quality Assurance of Safeguarding arrangements.

- **Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)**

Post Care Act 2014 the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) offered guidance to SABs to support them to seek assurance of the effectiveness of Safeguarding activity and ensure Safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life for Adults with care and support needs and carers, in line with '**Making Safeguarding Personal'**.

The guidance identified the following mechanisms for Quality Assurance:
1. Data recording, analysis and reporting, case audits and SAB and agencies' self- audits and peer review.
2. Safeguarding Adults' reviews.
3. Pactitioners' forums to share lessons from case audits and local good practice, from research and from Safeguarding Adults' reviews.
4. Holding member and partner agencies to account.
5. The management of large-scale investigations, serious incidents, complaints, grievances, disciplinary proceedings, whistleblowing and allegations of professional malpractice or unfitness to practice.

6. The implementation of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' at a local level and its impact on engagement and outcomes.

SCIE advised Safeguarding Adults Boards need a range of approaches to Quality Assurance to monitor the effectiveness both of their own work and that of their partner agencies. These should include:

1. Use of data collection analysis for a quantitative perspective.
2. Self-audit tools.
3. Qualitative reviews and audits.

3. Local Context

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adult Board (BSAB) is a group of statutory, private, voluntary, and independent organisations across Buckinghamshire who work together to empower and protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The BSAB provides the strategic leadership for Safeguarding work and is committed to partnership working. The Board needs to assure itself that:

- Local Safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance.

- Safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused.

- Agencies are working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.

- Agencies and individuals are providing a timely and proportionate response when abuse or neglect have occurred.

- Safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of Adults in the area.

The remit of the Board is not operational but one of co-ordination, planning and commissioning and contributes to the wider goals of improving the well-being of Adult.

All partner organisations in Buckinghamshire prioritise Safeguarding with an approach based on promoting dignity, rights, respect, helping all people to feel safe and making sure Safeguarding is everyone's business.

4. What is Quality Assurance?

Quality Assurance is about assessing the quality of the work we undertake to Safeguard vulnerable Adults and understanding the impact of this work in terms of its effectiveness in helping to keep vulnerable Adults safe. Effective Quality Assurance will contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Quality must be considered from multiple angles in order to understand its richness and complexity. This includes the subjective views and experiences of the public, service users, learners, service providers, commissioners, partners, voluntary sector and external and monitoring organisations.

The primary challenge of Quality Assurance is to improve the quality of practice and Safeguarding outcomes for vulnerable Adults.
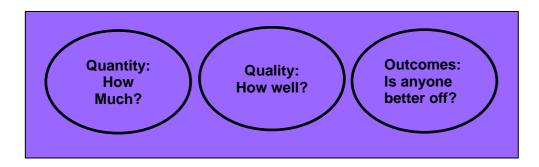
5. What is the Quality Assurance Framework?

The framework is for strategic partnerships and individual organisations with Safeguarding Adults' responsibilities in Buckinghamshire.

The framework is based on an 'Outcomes Based Accountability' (OBA) approach which will help those with leadership, senior management or scrutiny responsibility for Safeguarding Adults to gain a better understanding of how safe Adults at Risk are in their services and communities by considering:

- What we do?
- How well we do it – are partners working well to respond to Safeguarding concerns?
- What difference we have made/is anyone better off?   Do Safeguarding arrangements improve outcome for Adults at risk.

Types of data:

There are three types of performance information/measures as follows:

Quantitative information:

This will help to inform *what* we do. It answers the questions: 'How much/how many?'

Qualitative information:

This will tell us more about *how well we do it.* It is concerned with the functioning of the organisation, the quality of what was done.

Outcome information:

This tells us *what difference* we have made (through our services, strategies and interventions) to the lives of vulnerable Adults, namely 'is anyone better off.' For example, the percentage of cases in which domestic violence has ceased.

Traditionally, Quality Assurance information in Safeguarding has focused largely on quantitative information, with some qualitative information and very little outcome

information. The challenge is, over time, to increase the proportion and importance of outcome information as this constitutes what really matters, supported by qualitative information and then quantitative information.

6. Principles Underpinning the Framework

The Quality Assurance Framework is also underpinned by the following principles:

Openness and Transparency:

Each agency within the SAB is likely to know where good practice, areas for development and risk lies in its own organisation. The SAB needs to be assured agencies have identified and acted upon risk and areas of development, or to be enabled to do so as a multi-agency Board. All partners must bring good practice, areas for development and risks to the table so that the Board can agree how they can be mitigated. Some will be single agency actions and some will require multi-agency actions.

Outcomes:

Good quality Safeguarding arrangements should be person-centred, defined by the individual, outcomes-based and making a difference, in line with Making Safeguarding Personal – i.e. to what degree do our Safeguarding arrangements deliver what is important to Adults at Risk and the outcomes they want to achieve.

Triangulation:

That different qualitative and quantitative information sources need to be compared and contrasted to cross-verify the data and validate any conclusions being drawn. This will enable the Board more confidently to understand whether arrangements are effective and making a positive difference.

Support Learning and Improvement:

What we do with the information collated is as important as the quality of information we collect. Therefore, the learning from Quality Assurance will be shared with partners and used meaningfully to change practice and improve outcomes for clients and carers.

7. Sources of Information

Organisational Performance / Activity Data:

Clear, comprehensive range of performance information supports an understanding of effective Safeguarding practice. It is at the heart of the drive to secure continuous improvement and delivery of high-quality services.

Case record 'auditing' involves the systematic analysis of records by staff with relevant professional expertise, in order to glean the required information from sufficient sample of cases to provide a picture of what is going on through aggregating the case finding.

The Experience of Clients/ Carers:

Did I listen to you and take account of?
Did I treat you with respect?
Did I make a difference to your life in terms of keeping you safe and well?

Obtaining the views of clients/ carers in Safeguarding work is underdeveloped because it is hard to do, especially in what can be the fraught nature of Safeguarding work. Yet it is clearly a rich seam, not just in terms of understanding the quality and impact of services now, but as a source of learning and organisational development.

It is important to know how clients and carers feel they are treated by the professionals and agencies they interact with. If their experience of such interactions is negative, this is likely to have an adverse impact on outcomes. Understanding what matters in terms of engagement and interaction, and whether this is something they experience in reality (and therefore identifying what professionals and agencies need to get right) is something only clients and carers can tell us.

The Experience of Front-line Staff / Managers:

Staff and frontline managers will often know about the quality and impact of their own services, and those of partner agencies they work with. Safeguarding Adult Reviews have highlighted the false assurance between what is meant to happen in terms of policy and procedure, and what actually happens. It is important to have a constant feedback loop from the frontline to keep senior management and those with governance responsibilities 'reality-based'; not just in terms of what is or is not working, but to assist with ideas for improvement so that changes can be made systematically.

8. Quality Assurance Mechanisms

BSAB Self:

Assessment of Strategic and Organisational arrangements to Safeguard and promote the wellbeing of Adults at Risk. This tool has been developed to provide all organisations in the county with a consistent framework to assess, monitor and improve their Safeguarding Adults arrangements and can be used by a wide range of organisations.

Data/Performance:

A range of data will be required from partner agencies/organisations to inform Safeguarding Adults Board e.g. Quality Indicators/Data/Performance Report. The aim is to use this information to enable The BSAB to understand the prevalence of abuse/ neglect, highlight themes and trends in Safeguarding activity, and identify issues that need addressing in Safeguarding arrangements. The information should cover trends in reported abuse, partnership working to respond to Safeguarding concerns, and outcomes (whether clients feel safer as a result). As far as possible data from across the Safeguarding partnership, that is already collected and used by individual agency management teams to monitor the effectiveness of their individual Safeguarding arrangements, will be utilized.

Memorandum of Understanding / Duty of Candour:

The Quality Assurance Framework places a Duty of Candour on all partner agencies/organisations – this in practice will mean there is an expectation that all partner agencies and organisation will notify the BSAB of any issues of concern – such as poor regulatory inspection outcome, serious incidents, issues that might attract media attention, Safeguarding red risks on their organisations risk register etc.

User Experience:

Understanding their journey. All partner agencies should have processes in place to understand the service user experience of their service. BSAB is particularly interested in Adults' experiences of the Safeguarding Adult's process – therefore this framework places a duty on agencies/ organisations to ascertain people's Safeguarding experience and report them to the Board, via the Quality and Performance Sub-Group, so that their experiences can inform the work of the Board.

Training/Competency:

Ensuring training is sufficient, positively impacts on practice and in turn improves outcomes for Adults with care and support needs in Buckinghamshire, and staff working with Adults with care and support needs are skilled and competent across all sectors. The Learning and Development Sub-Group will lead on this area of work.

Single Agency Audits:

Each partner agency must have in place auditing arrangements to assess the quality of their day to day Safeguarding Adults work. The Quality and Performance Sub-Group will ask, annually, to review such arrangements or ask partners to share findings.

Multi-Agency Audits:

Each year the Quality and Performance Sub-Group will review and update a Quality Assurance Programme for approval by the BSAB. Twice a year the BSAB Quality and Performance Sub-Group will undertake themed audits, as proposed in the Programme. Wherever possible the experience of Adults at Risk will be a key factor which may be ascertained through case tracking or direct feedback.

Complaints:

Each partner agency must have in place arrangements for monitoring complaints to ensure Safeguarding issues are identified and responded to early and quickly. The BSAB reserves the right to ask partners to share complaints data.

Safeguarding Adults Reviews:

(To establish whether there are lessons to be learned from the case in which local professionals and agencies work together to Safeguard Adults at Risk). SAR's will also review the effectiveness of procedures and identify lessons for improvement. The SAR Sub-Group will monitor progress against action plans, highlighting any need for Quality Assurance activity to the Quality and Performance Sub-Group.

Annual Report:

The BSAB will publish, each financial year, an annual report to highlight:

(a) What it has done during that year to achieve its objective.
(b) What it has done during that year to implement its strategy.
(c) What each member has done during that year to implement the strategy.
(d) The findings of any Safeguarding Adults Reviews concluded in that year.
(e) The reviews arranged by it under that section which are on-going at the end of that year.

Learning & Improvement:

Learning will be linked to the following areas:

- Training
- Team Meetings
- Workforce Planning and Development
- Safeguarding Adults Board Communication Strategy/Plan
- Policy & Procedure
- Commissioning
- Supervision
- Partner Agency Improvement Plans
- Safeguarding Adults Board Business Plan
- Workshops and/or Interagency Forums

Briefings distilling learning from multi-agency activity will be distributed across the partnership on conclusion of action planning.

Consequently, it is important that the outcomes of the quality assurance activity inform the input of other Safeguarding Adults Board Sub-Groups.

The Quality and Performance Sub-Group will host a Quality Assurance event/s, where the main messages from Quality Assurance are shared and considered. The event/s will allow members of the groups across Buckinghamshire to reflect on the information, determine the story, and agree what immediate action is required to improve practice or Safeguarding arrangements. It will also be an opportunity to review the Quality Assurance programme for the following year and prioritise the themed areas.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Individual agencies and organisations, includes all statutory members of the Board, are responsible for:

- Their own Quality Assurance activity in relation to Safeguarding.
- Supplying information and data as required by this framework.
- Ensuring appropriate representation on the Q&P Sub-Group.
- Participating the twice-yearly multi-agency audits as defined by the Q&P Sub-Group.
- Notifying the BSAB on any areas of concern – poor regulatory inspection outcome with regards Safeguarding.
- Request a Safeguarding Adult Review, as appropriate.

Quality and Performance Sub-Group:

On the BSAB's behalf, this Sub-Group will be responsible for the co-ordination and management of the Quality Assurance Framework see appendix C for the: Terms of Reference.

The Quality and Performance Sub-Group will publish an Annual Report of themes and improvements made as a result of Quality Assurance Activity conducted by partner agencies and through multi-agency processes.

Other BSAB Sub-Groups:

Each of the Sub-Groups has a different remit with the consistent theme of understanding and achieving better outcomes for Adults at Risk.

Each Sub-Group is expected to work within this Quality Assurance Framework and:

- Provide the Quality and Performance Sub-Group with data, information and reports as required by this framework.
- Respond to and receive requests from the Quality and Performance Sub-Group.
- Participate in audits as directed by the Quality Performance Sub-Group.

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board:

The Quality Assurance Framework will, where possible work collaboratively with providers to ensure a pan-Buckinghamshire approach to Quality and Assurance to reduce duplication and work in partnership with other Boards being mindful of localised needs and wider Safeguarding thematics.

Bucks Safeguarding Adults Board oversees the effectiveness of the arrangements made by individual agencies and the wider partnership to Safeguard Adults from abuse and is responsible for challenging all relevant organisations on their performance in ensuring that Adults at Risk are kept safer in the city.

The Safeguarding Adults Board will:

- Receive reports from Quality and Performance Sub-Group.

- Receive and scrutinise agreed performance information.

- Participate in BSAB Development events with a focus on Quality Assurance.

- Work effectively with Bucks Health and Wellbeing Board and other Partnerships to ensure Adults at Risk are Safeguarded from abuse and harm and their wellbeing is promoted.

- In accordance with the provisions of the Care Act, the Bucks Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report will provide a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of Safeguarding within Buckinghamshire. The report, through scrutiny of the evidence gained through the Quality Assurance programme, will highlight good practice and identify where (and how) improvements are to be made.

- Ensure the Bucks Safeguarding Adults Board Quality Framework informs the BSAB Business Plan.