

Our Approach to Communicating with Adults and Families During the SAR Process

Adults are the experts in their own lives. They - alongside their families - hold valuable insight into lived experiences and system involvement. Effective communication with the adult and/or their family:

- Fosters trust and transparency throughout the SAR process.
- Results in meaningful learning.
- Consolidates ethical safeguarding practice.

Timely	Clear	Caring	Honest	Respectful	Consistent
Adults and families are informed at an early stage in the process and are updated accordingly.	Information is provided in a clear and jargon-free way, avoiding technical or procedural language.	Communication with adults and families is compassionate and trauma-informed.	Information shared with adults and families is honest and transparent, including information on the limitations of the process.	The adult and family's wishes and boundaries are prioritised and respected throughout the process.	There are established points of contact; adults and families remain informed throughout the process.

Poor communication can cause further harm and distress, and undermines confidence in the process.

Points of Communication During the SAR Process

Adults and their families are partners in learning, not observers of the process. Strengthening safeguarding outcomes relies upon compassionate, clear and consistent communication with those at the heart of the SAR process.

Post-Publication

Adults and families are provided with:

- Information about how learning and actions will be implemented.
- Ongoing contact, if requested.

Publication

Adults and families will be offered:

- Opportunities to meet and discuss findings.
- Signposting to appropriate support mechanisms if the content of the SAR may be distressing.



Initial Contact

Adults and families are given information on:

- What a SAR is.
- Why a SAR is taking place or being considered.
- The purpose of a SAR, which is to focus on learning rather than blame.

During the Review

Adults and families are given opportunities to:

- Share their views, concerns and experiences.
- Highlight what they feel could have been done differently.
- Discuss how their contributions will be used.

Before Publication

Adults and families are provided with information about:

- Process timescales.
- How anonymity and confidentiality will be managed.
- What they will and will not see, and why (where possible).

Key Considerations for Effective Communication with Adults and their Families

Managing Expectations

It is important to be clear with adults and families about:

- What a SAR can/cannot do.
- The differences between learning reviews, complaints processes and legal/disciplinary routes.
- Timescales and potential delays.
- Why some information cannot be shared.

Roles and Responsibilities

All involved in the process should be clear about:

- Who is responsible for liaising with the adult and their family.
- Who is responsible for ensuring that messages are consistent across agencies.
- Who is responsible for recording and responding to feedback.
- Pathways if adults and families raise concerns during the process.

Learning and Assurance

Engagement with adults and families must be:

- Clearly documented, monitored and considered alongside agency information.
- Reflected in learning and recommendations where appropriate.
- Reviewed as part of the SAR quality assurance process.

Policy and Practice Guidance

Adults and families should be aware of:

- The GSAB's SAR Protocol.
- Principles of the Care Act (2014).
- The GSAB's duty of transparency.

Provision of Support

The circumstances of a SAR require adults and families to be offered:

- Emotional support and signposting.
- Advocacy/interpretation services.
- Flexibility in how they engage.

