

North Wales Safeguarding Board



North Wales Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance Framework

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1.1. **Introduction**

- 1.2. North Wales Safeguarding Board 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/ children at risk in North Wales. Effective work in this area will contribute towards achieving better outcomes for adults/children at risk and protect them from significant harm.
- 1.3. This framework has been developed taking account of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and Safeguarding Board Regulations Wales (2015)

2.1. **Regional Context**

- 2.2. The North Wales Safeguarding Board (NWSB) is a group of statutory, voluntary, and independent organisations across North Wales who work together to empower and protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community
- 2.3. The NWSB 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 Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and statutory guidance,
 - safeguarding practice is person-centered 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, and
 - Safeguarding practice is continuously improving & enhancing the quality of life of children/adults in the region.
- 2.4. 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 adults/ children.
- 2.5. All partner agencies/ organizations in North Wales prioritize safeguarding with an approach based on promoting dignity, rights, respect, helping all people to feel safe and making sure safeguarding is everyone's business.

3.1. **What is Quality Assurance?**

- 3.2. Quality assurance is about assessing the quality of the work we undertake to safeguard vulnerable children and adults and understanding the impact of this work in terms of its effectiveness in helping to keep vulnerable children and adults safe. Effective quality assurance will contribute to a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- 3.3. The primary challenge of quality assurance is to improve the quality of practice and safeguarding outcomes for children and adults.

4.0. **What is the QA Framework?**

- 4.1. The framework is for strategic partnerships and individual organisations with safeguarding children and adults' responsibilities in North Wales.
- 4.2. The framework is based on an 'Outcomes Based Accountability' (OBA) approach which will help those with leadership, senior management or scrutiny responsibility for safeguarding children and adults to gain a better understanding of how safe children and 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 children and adults at risk

Types of data:



- 4.3. 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 children and adults, namely 'is anyone better off.' For example, the percentage of cases in which domestic violence has ceased.

4.4. 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.

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

- **Openness and transparency:**

Each agency within the Board is likely to know where good practice, areas for development and risk lies in its own organisation. The Board 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 action.

- **Outcomes:**

Good quality safeguarding arrangements should be person-centered, defined by the individual, outcomes-based and making a difference, in line with **Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014** – 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 & 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.

4.6. **Sources of information**

Information will come from the following sources:

- Organisational performance / activity data
- Case Records
- Experiences of Frontline Staff and Managers
- Experiences of clients /carers

4.7. By and large, organizational performance / activity data and case records have been the two main sources of information used in safeguarding quality assurance. Whilst it is recognized that these are important and valuable sources, to get a full picture of what is really happening, it is important to capture the experience of client /carer/s, and the experience of frontline staff and managers.

4.8. All partner organizations will need to consider how they collate quantitative, qualitative and outcome- based information from the four sources to inform improvement activity in respect of their safeguarding practice.

4.9 **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.

4.10. **Children's / Adults case records**

4.1. The case records held by an organisation, in whatever format, will be a rich source of information.

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

The experience of clients/ Carer/s



- 4.13. 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.
- 4.14. It's important to know how clients/ and carer/s 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 carer/s can tell us.
- 4.15. 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 managers.

5.0. The Quality Assurance Framework

5.1. Elements of the Framework

- 1. Partners Agency Annual Report** of strategic and organisational arrangements to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of Children/ Adults at Risk. This tool has been developed to provide all partner agencies in the Region with a consistent framework to assess monitor and improve their Safeguarding Children/ Adults arrangements and can be used by a wide range of organisations.

- 2. Data/Performance** – a range of data will be required from partner agencies/organisations to inform Board Quality Indicators/ Data/ Performance Report. The aim is to use this information to enable the Regional Children/ Adults Board 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 utilised.
- 3. Memorandum of Understanding / Duty of Candour** – the Board Quality Assurance Framework places a duty of candour on all partner agency/organisation – this in practice will mean there is an expectation that all partner agencies and organisation will notify the Board 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.
- 4. User experience** – understanding their journey. All partner agencies should have processes in place to understand the service user experience of their service. Safeguarding Board is particularly interested in children/ adults' experiences of the safeguarding process – therefore this framework places a duty on agencies/ organisations to ascertain people's safeguarding experience and report them to the Board, so that their experiences can inform the work of the Board.
- 5. Training/Competency** – ensuring training is sufficient, positively impacts on practice and in turn improves outcomes for children/ adults with care and support needs in North Wales, and staff working with children/ adults with care and support needs are skilled and competent across all sectors. The Workforce and Training Sub Group will lead in this area.
- 6. 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 Local Practice Delivery Group will ask partners to share findings.
- 7. Multi-Agency Audits** - Each year the Board will review and update a Quality Assurance Programme. Twice a year the Local Practice Delivery Groups will undertake themed audits, as proposed in the Programme. Where ever possible the experience of children/ adults at risk will be a key factor which may be ascertained through case tracking or direct feedback.
- 8. 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 Board reserves the right to ask partners to share complaints data.

9. Child/ Adults Practice Reviews - (to establish whether there are lessons to be learned from the case in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard child/ adults at risk). Practice Reviews will also review the effectiveness of procedures and identify lessons for improvement. The Child/ Adult Practice Review Sub Group will monitor progress against action plans.

10. Annual Report – The North Wales Safeguarding Board will publish, each 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 Child/ Adults Practice Reviews concluded in that year,
- and
- (e) the reviews arranged by it under that section which are on-going at the end of that year.