

Overview

Safeguarding Adult Reviews in Oxfordshire, and other areas of the country have consistently identified a lack of effective multi-agency working and understanding of professional roles and responsibilities.

Therefore, the aim of this briefing is to revisit the benefits of shared responsibility, improving outcomes, problem solving and working in a holistic framework. **(SAR Adult V)**

What can you do?

- Maintain open communication with other professionals, especially during times of change.
- Do not over complicate the language used with other professionals, service users and families.
- When assessing, utilise information from multiple agencies, not just one source.
- Follow the '7 Golden Rules' for information sharing (see Resources).
- Share information in a timely manner.
- Fear of risking the relationship with the service users and/family members should not be barrier to information sharing.
- No professional should refrain from sharing information on the assumption that someone else will do it when they judge it to be critical for the safety/well-being of an adult.
- Maintain respect and a willingness to be open to challenge, in order to maintain effective safeguarding.
- Professionals should increase their knowledge of other agencies escalation routes and polices. To ensure, that where necessary, challenges to decisions are robust and appropriate.

Multi-Agency Working

All organisations and agencies are responsible for safeguarding adults and holding each other to account.

Three common principles for multi-agency working:

- **Information sharing**- with the right people at the right time
- **Joint decision making**- based on information from all relevant agencies and the individual involved.
- **Coordinated intervention** – Including relevant agencies and professionals in safeguarding meetings

Research has identified challenges to multi-agency working e.g., it can be time consuming and hard to co-ordinate.

However, this does not take away that well- coordinated multi-agency working can lead to earlier action and the reduction of harm.

Understanding Professional Roles & Responsibilities

It is important that professionals prioritise the service users' needs whilst understanding different agencies ways of working, policies, and procedures. Especially when deciding to challenge any decisions made.

Working across these boundaries is critical to planning and providing appropriate support to vulnerable people.



What have we learnt?

- Sharing relevant information of an individual's history is helpful in identifying patterns of behaviour that can establish an overall picture of the individual's needs. Consequently, identifying an approach for each agency offering support. **(SAR Adult V)**
- Simply holding multi-agency meetings are not enough, they need to produce a clear plan, and for that plan to be actioned and reviewed. Including a well- constructed assessment of risk informed by information from all agencies. **(SAR Alan)**
- Communication between services, service users and their families are a pre-requisite to any care and is a core factor when things go wrong. Mapping the individuals and their personal networks strengths can significantly lower risk. **(SAR Claire)**

- Informal or inconsistent safeguarding structures are dangerous as professionals become unclear who is leading the process, where roles and responsibilities lie and the adult at risk may not be afforded the protection they require, resulting in significant harm. **(SAR Carol)**

*SAR = Safeguarding Adults Review

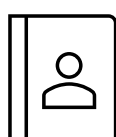
Source: [Join the Safeguarding Adults Reviews \(SARs\) Library network - SCIE](#)

Contact details:

OSAB@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Worried about an adult?

[How to report concerns - Oxford Safeguarding Adults Board \(osab.co.uk\)](#)



Resources:

[Safeguarding adults: sharing information | SCIE](#)
[Working-in-Partnership-Oxfordshire-Procedures.pdf \(osab.co.uk\)](#)
[MARM- Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework](#)

