

The role of the Safeguarding Adults Board chair

Introduction

This guide explains the role of the Safeguarding Adults Board chair, including the functions of the role, the knowledge and skills needed and how chairs can develop their knowledge and skills.

It supports adult social care employers and other agencies which are represented on Safeguarding Adults Boards, to develop a chair's role (including writing a job description), recruit a chair and support their continuing professional development and learning requirements.

It's been developed by Skills for Care in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Independent Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards Network.

It brings together information and documents from local Safeguarding Adults Boards and other relevant bodies. You can find a list of these at the end.

How can you use the guide?

Safeguarding Adult Boards can use the guide to:

- assess potential candidates for the role of Safeguarding Adults Board chair
- inform the selection and appointment of Safeguarding Adults Board chairs
- agree the role of Safeguarding Adults Board chairs
- ensure that other board members have a clear understanding of the role, knowledge, skills and expectations of their chair
- ensure that local Safeguarding Adults Board chairs access the right learning and development to develop the knowledge and skills they need to fulfill their role
- support Safeguarding Adults Boards to carry out effective supervision and give constructive feedback to their chairs (see appendix one for a model of 360 degree feedback for Safeguarding Adult Board chairs).

You can adapt it to meet local and specific needs.

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1. Background

The Care Act 2014 made all local authorities responsible for ensuring that any adult who needs care and support, who is at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect, and as a result of their needs is unable to protect themselves, is protected by the local authority.

It also required them to set up a Safeguarding Adults Board to coordinate local work to safeguard adults who need care and support.

Each board has an independent chair who is accountable for the effective working of the board.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that any adult who needs care and support (even if the local authority is not meeting those needs), who is at risk of, or experiencing, abuse or neglect, and as a result of their needs is unable to protect themselves, must be protected by the local authority.

The Care Act 2014 introduced a requirement for Safeguarding Adults Boards to be set up by all local authorities.

The Safeguarding Adults Board is required to investigate abuse or neglect when a person who meets the above criteria has died, or where certain other specific circumstances arise.

The board is formed of a partnership between local commissioners and providers. They are led by the local authority, with statutory involvement of the police, local clinical commission groups and other organisations involved in supporting vulnerable adults such as NHS providers, probation and community rehabilitation companies, prisons, social housing, fire service and the voluntary and community sector.

The chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board is ultimately responsible for taking the decision to investigate and conducting the enquiry.

The **purpose** of the board is:

- **preventative** in contributing to the development of cultures, systems and processes that support adults at risk of abuse or neglect, ensuring that wherever possible, harm does not arise to them
- **reactive in** instigating **Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR)** following a death, or other situation that meets the criteria set out in the Act
- **developmental** in drawing out and disseminating the learning from reviews, keeping local organisations up to date with national developments, and building and nurturing interagency networks that support the safeguarding agenda

- **co-coordinating** by adopting a whole-systems approach to safeguarding, working with multiple agencies and perspectives, providing leadership and coordination.

In their work, the board must:

- follow the guidance of and undertake recommendations arising from the Care Act 2014 and other relevant guidance and good practice
- work in partnership to improve the wellbeing and safety of vulnerable adults in their area and prevent abuse and neglect
- champion the safeguarding adults agenda across their local area
- participate in the national development of best practice
- develop an annual Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Delivery Plan
- publish an annual report on the effectiveness of adult safeguarding within their area
- undertake safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) when required
- act in accordance with the principles in Making Safeguarding Personal, including taking a proactive approach to community involvement.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a sector led initiative which aims to develop an outcomes-focus to safeguarding work, and a range of responses to support people to improve or resolve their circumstances. It's about engaging with people about the outcomes they want at the beginning and middle of working with them, and then ascertaining the extent to which those outcomes were realised at the end. It takes both a person and community-centred approach and is led by the Local Government Association and ADASS.

To do their role effectively, Safeguarding Adult Boards should develop and promote a culture that recognises the underpinning principles from Making Safeguarding Personal (which draw heavily on the principles from the Care Act 2014). Here's how involving people who need care and support can support boards to implement the principles.

- **Empowerment**
People who need care and support should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions.
Safeguarding Adult Boards can ensure this by supporting people who need care and support to get involved in the work of the board, and ensuring their lived experiences contribute to it.
- **Prevention**
Organisations should work together to stop abuse or neglect before it happens by raising awareness of it, training staff and ensuring information about where to get help is accessible and easy to understand.

Safeguarding Adult Boards should include people from different communities and in different roles, to ensure the safeguarding message is widely heard and understood.

They should also use language that is jargon free and work with people who need care and support to ensure that information is easy to understand.

- **Proportionality**

When dealing with abuse or neglect, services should ensure that they think about the risk and what's best for the person, and only get involved where needed – this ensures that they take a proportionate and the least intrusive response to the issue.

Safeguarding Adult Boards should involve people who need care and support in their work, including quality assurance, to help them understand balancing and managing risk.

- **Protection**

Organisations must ensure that they know what to do when abuse has happened. For this to happen, the wider community needs to understand what abuse is and how they can support people to report it.

People who need care and support and advocacy groups can help Safeguarding Adult Boards to raise awareness in the community.

- **Partnership**

Organisations should work in partnership with each other and their local communities to prevent, detect and report abuse.

Safeguarding Adults Boards should work with people who need care and support, local people, advocates and community groups in its' decision making. This will ensure effective partnership working that's built on strong and trusting relationships

- **Accountability**

Safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone (individuals, services and organisations) should be accountable. This also means that everyone needs to be clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding Adults Boards should involve people who need care and support across their work, rather than 'tokenistic' involvement or on specific small projects. This ensures that their work is both transparent and accountable.

Accountability and the chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board

The chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board is accountable to residents in the area covered by the board through; the statutory annual report and strategic plan, which is presented to council members and relevant partnership boards; through reporting to the chief executive of the local authority for that area; and to the partners of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

2. Safeguarding Adults Board chair: Sample job description

2.1 Functions of the chair

The Safeguarding Adults Board chair is required to:

- provide effective leadership to the board, ensuring that they complete all tasks and responsibilities to a high standard, in a timely and proportionate manner, and in accordance with the requirements of the Care Act (2014) and other relevant legislation
- lead the quarterly¹ board meetings including setting the agenda, approving and distributing minutes and following up on decisions taken by the board
- ensure sound governance and due diligence is in place at all times
- take the lead in producing and publicising the board's strategic plan and annual report, and monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the plan
- where individuals meet the criteria, instigate SARs, ensuring that current guidance and processes are followed and that all learning is appropriately shared
- promote collaborative work and a culture of learning, constructive criticism and support within the board
- provide advice, support and encouragement to board members and other colleagues
- work with any conflicts or concerns within the board, supporting members to reach a positive resolution
- contribute to developing a culture where the prevention of abuse and neglect is paramount, including sharing learning from SARs within the local area, regionally and nationally (where appropriate)
- ensure that the work of the board and the outcomes from SARs inform wider training plans and learning and development priorities
- develop and maintain constructive links and effective communication with partners across the local area, promoting the safeguarding agenda and working together to develop best practice

¹ Boards are required to meet a minimum of three times a year however most meet quarterly.

- champion and promote the prevention of abuse and neglect to adults across all relevant agencies, contributing to the broader safeguarding preventative agenda
- act as a spokesperson for the board with other agencies and the media as appropriate
- hold regular meetings to update the local authority chief executive and the director of adult social services about the board's activities
- ensure that the voices of people who need care and support and their families, are heard and acted upon within the board's work
- ensure that all partners to the board provide assurance, are accountable and challenge partners if required
- ensure that the principles of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' are embedded in all relevant policies, procedures, actions and plans of the board
- act as the link between the board and all relevant local, regional or national groups, ensuring that learning and development is shared
- ensure that the board has clear policies, processes and appropriate protocols in place to support information sharing and that they are monitored
- keep themselves and the board up to date with good practice and act upon developments in national policy, case law and research.

2.2 Knowledge and understanding requirements of the chair

Local contextual awareness

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge of and understand:

- local networks
- the role of the different safeguarding leads (local authority, police and others)
- local political systems
- local resources and organisations that support or contribute to the safeguarding agenda
- relevant Safeguarding Adult Board policies, procedures, underpinning values and mission statement, including equality and diversity policies.

Legal frameworks and statutory duties

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge of and understand:

- The Care Act (2014), in particular: safeguarding standards and procedures including raising a safeguarding concern and clarity about when safeguarding concern meets the threshold for investigation and review
- Mental Capacity Act (2005), amendments (2009) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Data Protection Act (1998), including an understanding of information sharing protocols and appropriate use of information sharing, and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- up to date knowledge of safeguarding developments, legislation and research underpinning safeguarding work.

Understanding of abuse and neglect, risk management and safeguarding

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge of and understand:

- different kinds of abuse and neglect and the ways in which it occurs
- thresholds for identifying and investigating abuse and neglect, including when a SAR should be triggered
- appropriate risk management and harm reduction strategies, including different approaches to working with adults who need care and support (such as strength-based approaches)
- how to do research and develop an understanding of abuse and neglect, good practice and legislation specific to any SAR being undertaken.

Management and organisational theory and practice

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge of and understand:

- whole systems leadership
- change management
- organisational culture and behaviour
- participative leadership
- conflict resolution
- management styles, including approaches to chairing
- group behaviours and culture.

Research methods, quality assurance, planning and evaluation

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge and awareness of:

- qualitative and quantitative research methods, including participative approaches
- quality assurance systems, including outcomes-focused approaches, monitoring and evaluating
- different approaches to project and programme management.

Learning and development

Safeguarding Adults Board chairs need to have knowledge of and understand:

- national developments and ongoing learning specific to Safeguarding Adults Boards
- different learning opportunities, styles and where to find high quality learning providers.

2.3 Skills requirements of the chair

Organisational management skills

- Strong leadership skills evidenced through working in a senior role in a relevant organisation.
- Managing governance arrangements in a large organisation and across partnerships.
- Know how to hold organisations to account.

Interpersonal skills

- Able to develop and maintain good working relationships with people from different organisations and professional backgrounds, including local services.
- Good team work skills with a range of different stakeholders, including people who need care and support and their families.
- Strong facilitating skills and able to work sensitively with complex group dynamics and manage and resolve disputes.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including being able to communicate using plain English and use adapted communication systems when needed.
- Strong negotiation skills.
- Active listening skills.
- Ability to understand when confidentiality must be respected, and when and with whom information sharing is necessary.
- Good interviewing skills, including questioning, reflection and summarising.

Other skills to support the role

- Strong report writing skills to develop strategic reports and plans, with a good understanding of setting and monitoring outcomes.
- Understanding and reviewing appropriate data and information for sharing with others.
- Assessment and evaluation skills with experience of using evidence-based approaches.
- Decision making skills.
- Researching skills and the ability to understand complex information and legislation and how it applies in real life.
- Time management and able to manage competing priorities, with excellent organisational skills.
- Problem solving skills.
- Strong analytic and reflective skills, taking a solution-focused approach.

2.4 Personal qualities, values and attitudes

Attitudes

- Has a passion for and commitment to the safeguarding agenda locally, regionally and nationally.
- Shows a person-centred approach at all times, promoting empowerment and an inclusive attitude.
- Is committed to preventing paternalistic and risk-averse cultures.
- Enthusiastic about innovation and change where appropriate, whilst preserving existing good practice.
- Takes a professional approach.

Personal qualities and values

- Creative and innovative - able to "think outside the box".
- Team work – able to work collaboratively, valuing the contributions of others, able to create a supportive and safe environment for others to work in.
- Personal resilience and stamina with experience of working in difficult situations.
- Willing to make 'unpopular' decisions and take personal responsibility for own actions.
- Empathic and able to see things from other people's perspectives.
- Commitment to ongoing learning and development.

3. Learning and development needs of chairs

It's important that Safeguarding Adults Board chairs do learning and development to ensure they have the right knowledge and skills to do the role effectively.

They can use section two to assess any gaps in their knowledge and skills, and use the 360 feedback method to monitor and reflect on this annually.

You can download a model of 360 degree feedback for Safeguarding Adults Board chairs in appendix one.

Chairs can do ongoing learning and development through:

- mentoring
- coaching
- working alongside other chairs or groups of chairs
- reading
- attending seminars
- attending chair's networks
- shadowing opportunities.

4. Supporting information and acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all of the organisations who allowed their work and resources to be used in the development of this framework.

ADASS (2005), [Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work](#)

Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (2017), [Independent Chair of Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board - job description](#)

Bournemouth University (2010), Towards a National Competence Framework for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - Consultation Document

Bournemouth University (no date), Vulnerable Adult Serious Case Review guidance

Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board (no date), Requirements for members of the board, including independent chair

Croydon Council (2016), [Independent Chair job description](#)

Dorset for you (2017), [Safeguarding Adults: Safeguarding Adults Reviews](#)

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (1995), [The seven principles of public life \(the Nolan Principles\)](#)

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Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (no date), Independent Chair job description and person specification

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Local Government Association (2017), [Making Safeguarding Personal: Supporting increased involvement of service users](#)

Kensington and Chelsea (no date), Adult social care commissioning (tri-borough) professional standards and safeguarding consultant's brief and job profile

National Network for Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards (2017), [Annual Report 2016-2017](#)

National Network for Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards (2017), [Auditing the Impact of Becoming Statutory](#)

National Network for Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards (no date), Draft 360 feedback

National Network for Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards (2016), PowerPoint presentation delivered Dr Adi Cooper and Jane Lawson

NHS England (2017), [Safeguarding Adults: a guide for health care staff](#)

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board (2016), [Training Strategy for Safeguarding Adults 2016 - 2019](#)

Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services (no date), Independent Chair job description

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Skills for Care (2014), [Briefing: Care Act implications for safeguarding adults](#)

Skills for Care (2015), [A guide to adult safeguarding](#)

Skills for Care (2014), [The principles of workforce integration](#)

Social Care Institute for Excellence (2016), [The membership of Safeguarding Adults Boards](#)

Social Care Institute for Excellence (2016), [Role and duties of Safeguarding Adults Boards](#)

Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (no date), Safeguarding Adults Reviews: Investigating Officer skills and experience

Appendix one: Model of 360 degree feedback for Safeguarding Adults Board chairs

360 degree feedback is designed to gather feedback about a colleague from the people working most closely with them, not just their manager. It provides feedback from all angles including their views about that person's skills, behaviour and impact on the rest of the team.

It's one form of appraisal you can use to review and evidence how Safeguarding Adult Board chairs are performing, and can inform their development needs or priority areas for action.

You should assign an administrator who will conduct the review. They should work with the chair and the board executive, chief executive, director of adult social services and relevant employer to decide who should complete the 360 degree feedback, how often, how they'll complete the feedback and whether it will be identifiable or anonymous – this should be made clear at the start.

You can use tools such as Survey Monkey to collect the feedback and analyse the results.

Here's how you might structure a 360 degree feedback review. There are four main areas and we've given ideas about how you could present them:

- introduction
- areas for feedback
- options for scoring
- comments and open text boxes.

1. Introduction

In the introduction you should introduce the 360 feedback model including things like:

- how the information will be used
- what mechanism will enable feedback to contributors of the key messages from the 360
- what actions might come out of the review
- where the feedback might be used to evidence the impact of it for example a report to the board chief executive.

You should also explain a bit more about the role of the chair to give people some context around what they're feeding back on.

You might refer to the **core statutory duties** of the chair, the **core objectives of the local board** or the **duties and responsibilities of the chair** as set out in their contract.

e.g. Care and support statutory guidance, chapter 14 paras 14.133-196

The Safeguarding Adults Board chair is responsible for ensuring that the board meets its core statutory duties (14.136).

- Publish an annual strategic plan (see 14.152-154).
- Publish an annual report showing how the board has achieved the annual strategic plan (14.155-161).
- Conduct a safeguarding adults review (SAR) where appropriate (14.162-186).

Additionally (14.150):

- to lead collaboratively, give advice, support and encouragement, constructive challenges and hold main partner agencies to account
- be a spokesperson for the board
- keep up to date with and promote good practice, developments in case law and research
- ensure the board has clear policies and processes that promote multi-agency training to ensure a common understanding of abuse and neglect and develop preventative strategies to reduce the instances of abuse and neglect
- maintain effective communications with other key partnerships and scrutiny functions (14.140 and 14.220).

e.g. Purpose of the Safeguarding Adult Board

- To ensure that the Safeguarding Adult Board operates effectively and exercises its functions according to the duties described by the Care Act (2014) and other related guidance and good practice.
- To ensure that there is a board annual strategic delivery plan.

- To publish an annual report on the effectiveness of adult safeguarding in [location] in delivering the annual plan.
- To undertake SARs when required.
- To ensure partners work together to improve the wellbeing and safety of adults in [location] and effectively safeguard adults.
- To champion the safeguarding adults agenda in the local area.

e.g. Performance management agreement

The competency measures in the feedback form are taken from the performance management agreement with the Safeguarding Adults Board chair. Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree that the chair has demonstrated them over the past year – your responses will form part of the overall evidence about their performance.

The chair is accountable to [insert job title] and we will use your feedback to provide them with an update on their performance and help us to shape future priorities for work and personal development.

2. Areas for feedback

Depending on the purpose of the feedback, you might ask for feedback around different areas of the chair's role – these might be tailored to a specific role or your local needs.

Here are some examples of areas for feedback including around:

- core areas for feedback
- performance appraisal
- competency-based approach.

If you're doing a regular review, here are some examples of **core areas of feedback** you might want to review.

1. The chair ensures that the Safeguarding Adults Board functions effectively.
2. The chair ensures that effective local governance arrangements are in place.
3. The chair ensures that the board has effective monitoring and reporting processes for sub-groups and partner agencies (including around training, prevention and performance).
4. The chair ensures that the annual strategic plan is developed with partners, delivered throughout the year and progress is reported in the annual board report.
5. The chair ensures that all SARs are carried out to a high standard.
6. The chair ensures that all partner organisations are involved, to an appropriate level, in the work of the board and its sub groups.
7. The chair ensures that the board implements the Care Act (2014) statutory guidance such as Making Safeguarding Personal.
8. The chair ensures that the board adopts and contributes to the implementation of regional and national policy and initiatives.
9. The chair ensures that there are appropriate links with other partnerships e.g. LSCB, HWB, CSP and QSG.

If you're doing a **performance appraisal**, here are some examples of feedback you might want to review.

1. The chair shows evidence of preparing for meetings in liaison with the board manager.
2. The chair ensures that they identify clear actions in order to progress the board's business.
3. The chair ensures that they and the board clearly agree and follow up actions, decisions and timescales.
4. The chair engages with board members to achieve a balanced and collaborative approach.
5. The chair ensures that the minutes of the board meetings accurately reflect discussions and agreed actions before they are sent out.
6. In consultation with key partners, the chair ensures that the board knows about key national, regional and local issues.
7. The chair maintains good liaison throughout the board structure and visibly supports the work of sub-groups.
8. The chair determines when SARs and other reviews need to be done, with appropriate advice.
9. The chair ensures that the work of the board is focused on improving outcomes for adults who access care and support.
10. There is evidence the chair attends, and where appropriate contributes to, national and regional events.
11. There is evidence the chair attends local groups and activities to help promote and support safeguarding throughout the board partners.
12. The chair contributes to regulation, inspection and corporate assessment processes as required by all agencies within the board partnership.
13. The chair contributes to, and provides leadership on, inter-agency co-operation in safeguarding and meets with individual members when required.

14. The chair ensures the board provides a robust performance framework which extends throughout the partnership, including evaluation of the board's own activity.
15. The chair assists and facilitates discussion on the board's budget.
16. The chair reviews membership of the board and ensures it remains representative and effective.
17. The chair participates in consultation and decision making on appropriate cases as requested.
18. The chair demonstrates a broad knowledge, experience and commitment for improving outcomes for adults who access care and support and their carers.
19. The chair demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the governance arrangements for all statutory partners.
20. The chair is able and committed to working support agencies, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding.
21. The chair demonstrates an ability to work, influence and negotiate at a strategic level.
22. The chair demonstrates effective and comprehensive communication and presentation skills.
23. The chair provides clear challenge in meetings and secures agreed actions as a consequence.
24. The chair is seen by partners to be fair and impartial.
25. The chair can be an effective broker within the partnership, when there may be disagreements or challenges.

If you're **assessing the competency** of the chair, here are some examples of feedback you might want to review.

1. The chair establishes clear accountabilities and identifies risks around the delivery of all elements of the board.
2. The chair communicates the vision of the board with enthusiasm and clarity.

3. The chair acts in an open, honest, and inclusive manner – respecting other people’s culture, beliefs and abilities.
4. The chair identifies opportunities where working collaboratively with others will bring added value to the board.
5. The chair actively seeks contributions and views from others, and promotes the board partner responsibilities.
6. The chair actively engages with agencies beyond board meetings.
7. The chair encourages debate about new ideas with a wide range of people, and is comfortable managing different opinions.
8. The chair analyses information from a range of sources about performance in order to hold partners accountable.
9. The chair uses feedback from people who access care and support and their carers to inform the board’s agenda and priorities.

You might also want to ask questions about their skills, for example:

- leadership skills (delegation, accountability, approachability, decision making and risk taking)
- communication skills (listening, speaking, networking, negotiation and giving feedback)
- team work skills (listening, questioning, peer feedback and reliability)
- organisational skills (understanding values, mission, vision, plans and processes).

3. Options for scoring

There are different ways you might ask people to score the feedback. This will depend on what you decide to ask feedback on (examples in section 2).

Here are some scoring options you might use.

Agree – disagree scale

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the chair demonstrates each of these measures?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not sure

Measuring the extent

To what extent does the chair meet each measure?

- Not aware of this measure being demonstrated/ measure demonstrated rarely; very likely to need development
- Measure is demonstrated at times, but more development is needed
- Demonstrates this measure quite often/ well; little development needed
- Meets this measure well

Rate the chair

Please rate the chair according to each element.

1. Unsatisfactory (major improvements needed)
2. Needs improvement (less than satisfactory, could be doing better)
3. Meets expectations (performing duties as expected with minimal support)
4. Excellent (performs all duties in an effective manner with positive, measurable results)
5. Outstanding (performing at a level above and beyond the duties of the current requirements)

4. Comments and open text boxes

You might also want to use open text boxes to ask for additional comments. This could be after each question to ask for additional information, or at the end of the feedback form to ask for any more feedback.

You could ask questions such as:

- 'do you have any other comments?'
- 'please provide examples to support the rating you've given'
- 'please summarise the reasons for your score in this comments box'
- 'what does the chair do well that you would like them to do more often?'
- 'what would you like the chair to do differently?'
- 'what do you think the chair's greatest strength is as chair?'
- 'what do you think is an area that the chair needs to develop?'