**Safeguarding Adults Review – Information for families and carers**

**Introduction**

When an adult who needs care and support either dies or suffers serious harm, and when abuse or neglect is thought to have been a factor, Merton Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) may need to review what has happened. This is called a Safeguarding Adults Review or SAR for short. Safeguarding Adult Reviews are part of the Care Act 2014 and became a legal requirement for boards from 1 April 2015.

A SAR is to consider whether there are any lessons which may be learnt about the way organisations have worked with you and your family. Sometimes MSAB will also arrange for a SAR to take place in other situations where they feel that there is learning to be done.

It is completely separate from any investigation being undertaken by the police and/or coroner and it concentrates on the work of the professionals, organisations and agencies who have been involved with your family.

A SAR is focused only on lessons to be learnt. The review process will produce a report to be agreed and accepted by the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board. This will set out the learning and recommendations.

We acknowledge this will have been a very difficult time for you and we do not want to add to your distress but it is important we inform you the review is taking place and to give you an opportunity to be involved.

The Merton Safeguarding Adult Board would like you to contribute your views and experiences to the review if you feel able as families are often in a position to really help us understand what it is agencies need to do better so that future professional practice is able to improve.

The information in this document has been designed to explain what happens in a

Safeguarding Adult Review and what support we offer.

**What is the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board?**

The Safeguarding Adults Board is a partnership of the main organisations in the Merton area that work with adults and their families. This includes the police, Fire Brigade, NHS organisations, social services, and voluntary organisations as well as the probation service, and housing services. The partnership works to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect.

**What a Safeguarding Adult Review is not**

A Safeguarding Adults Review is not

- an enquiry into the cause of an individual death or injury

- looking for someone to blame

- looking to hold any individual or organisation to account. There are other processes for that such as criminal proceedings, disciplinary procedures, employment law and service and professional regulation, such as the Care Quality Commission, Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Health and Care Professions Council and the General Medical Council.

**Who will undertake the SAR?**

The review will be overseen by a panel formed of members of local statutory and voluntary bodies. The panel will not include any individuals who have been directly involved in the case. The Safeguarding Adults Board will also appoint a lead independent reviewer with the appropriate skills and experience to join the panel.

The panel and lead reviewer will make contact with the family members, professionals and organisations who were involved with the adult. An independent chairperson, who had no involvement in the case, will chair the panel.

**How do we carry out a SAR?**

There are different ways in which a SAR can be done, but they all involve gathering as much information from as many sources as possible. The review panel can then try to work out exactly what happened, and why. They will consider whether things could or should have been done differently and ask how things could be done better in the future.

The findings are then summarised in a written report, normally published by the MSAB. It is, therefore, a public document. However, no individuals are named in it and no information is included that could lead to the people involved being identified.

A SAR will often find there have been lots of agencies involved in the person’s life. Sometimes the best way forward is to ask the people who were directly involved in the case to sit round a table together and discuss face-to-face what went on.

The panel will then consider whether we have found out what we needed to know, before the final report is written.

Another approach we sometimes take is to ask each agency to separately write their own detailed written reports about their involvement in the person’s life. The panel of

professionals then considers what these reports are telling us and an independent author writes a summary of events and lessons in the final written report.

MSAB will choose the best approach. You will have the opportunity to see the final report written by someone independent of the case, identifying what has been learnt, and what recommendations for change have been made.

**How long will the review take?**

The review should be completed within six months of the decision being taken to start the review. Sometimes this timescale needs to be extended.

**How do we involve you?**

Wherever possible, an important part of undertaking a SAR is to ask you and other family members (where appropriate), for your view and to comment on the services received.

If appropriate, a person nominated by the MSAB (usually the chair of the review and the author) can arrange to meet with you to discuss the SAR process. A suitable date, time and venue will be arranged for this.

Having support during this meeting is encouraged, this could be another family member or a family friend, an advocate or any other professional you think appropriate. Home visits will be agreed if you wish, alternatively, a venue of your choice will be considered.

If appropriate, the chair of the panel and report author will meet with you to outline the findings, lessons learnt and recommendations from the review.

**What happens to the information you share?**

The information you share will help the independent reviewer to build a comprehensive picture of what happened and help to develop meaningful recommendations. These recommendations will then be put into an action plan. You and your relative will not be named in the review report, unless this is something that you may wish.

Your contribution will be valuable and will help to change the way organisations respond to serious situations in the future.

**Publication of the SAR**

The final overview report will normally be published on MSAB's website. The report will be fully anonymised and will not contain any identifying details. It will be available to all professionals to ensure that the lessons learned, and recommendations are put into practice.

**Further information**

If you have any queries about the review, please contact the MSAB Board Manager or email msab@merton.gov.uk. All emails will be treated with sensitivity.