



Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board Quality Assurance Framework

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Foreword – Dr. Suzanne Smith

Independent Chair Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board

Quality is at the heart of the Wigan Safeguarding Adults Boards work. That means ensuring the quality of the safeguarding services our partners deliver are the best that they can be in order to protect the people we serve. The challenge is to ensure we do this as a system where each initiative to improve quality fits with all services.

This Quality Assurance Framework will help demonstrate the assurance that our strategic priorities are on track by drawing on a range of data including those from people with lived experience of abuse and exploitation.

With adults at risk at the heart of our approach, this framework will provide evidence as to whether the right things are being done for the right reasons in the right way and enables the use of information to secure greater impact, effectiveness and efficiency.

It will enable board to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of organisational arrangements and by doing so, fulfil our statutory obligations.

At the end of each year our impact on outcomes for adults at risk will be demonstrated in our annual report aligned with the imperatives set out in this framework providing a cohesive partnership approach to quality within safeguarding services.

1. The Why: The importance of quality

The importance of quality is absolute, and among organisations that recognise this, business-wide quality assurance is fundamental. The statement 'quality matters' is unarguable. The aspiration of learning organisations in the 21st century is to develop quality assurance as a shared, whole-system task. We believe the public, including children and vulnerable adults, deserve good quality services. For WSAB this means making good quality safeguarding decisions as partners including the adults and families we are here to protect.

Positive change, and continuous improvement, are supported through understanding what we are doing as an organisation and reflecting on why we are doing it and how it might be done better.

2. The What: Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) approach to quality

- For the purpose of this document, a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is defined as a programme of activity, assessment and reporting, of the quality and effectiveness of the safeguarding partnership organisations systems and services. It enables the board to triangulate a variety of information, both about quantity and quality, from different sources to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements.
- This QAF draws together data and information from a variety of sources within the Board's delivery framework and across all its constituent organisations to provide the Board with assurance that the objectives within our strategy are current, relevant and are being met.
- The QAF provides a whole-system approach that will keep vulnerable people at the centre of partnership activities, recognising the Board's function and position within the safeguarding environment and:
 - establishes ways of analysing and interrogating data on activity that increases WSAB's understanding of its safeguarding function, effectiveness and user experience that builds up a picture over time
 - establishes how WSAB will hold organisations to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of their arrangements, policy, practice and processes
 - determines its arrangements for peer review and audit
 - identifies quality measures from floor to board and includes expert input
 - is driven by a comprehensive suite of quality metrics which will be presented in an annual quality report to be included with the WSAB Annual Report
 - shows how the findings from quality measures will feed back into a learning framework
- The QAF outlines an approach that provides holistic oversight of WSAB partners activity and the functioning of the Board activity, addressing the three imperatives of:
 - Safeguarding
 - Effectiveness and efficiency
 - Service user experience

- The QAF evidences whether the right things are being done for the right reasons in the right way and enables the use of this information to secure greater impact, effectiveness and efficiency.
- It will enable board to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of organisational arrangements by facilitating:
 - quarterly monitoring of integrated performance data covering for example prevalence, nature and outcomes of cases, effectiveness and speed of responses
 - feedback from individuals on their experience of - safeguarding services
 - an annual gap analysis of board arrangements against statutory responsibilities, established best practice, national priorities, intelligence and relevancy and trajectory of strategic objectives and milestones
 - the quarterly self-assessment of quality metrics across organisations, priorities and objectives
- Gathering and triangulating quality intelligence within an overarching QAF will support the board in:
 - gaining a holistic view of progress and outcomes of strategic objectives, enabling recognition of good practice
 - being open and transparent across the partnership about risk, mistakes and areas that require improvement
 - achieving and evidencing continuous improvement/improvement initiatives over time
 - improving value for money, through increasing the effectiveness in which people and processes generate the desired quality of output enhancing the progression of a quality culture through a responsive learning framework
 - creating a positive culture which is open, just and informed and in which reporting and learning from error is regarded as the norm
- These activities will dovetail with existing performance monitoring and review processes to identify quality improvement priorities and initiatives to feed into strategic, business and directorate plans.

3. Underpinning Principles

Developing a quality culture

The underpinning principles of the QAF will serve to hold the partnership to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of their arrangements within a 'quality culture' that is open, just and learning.

Safeguarding and quality-focused

The focus of quality assurance will be on the experiences, progress and outcomes of our service users/ partners and stakeholders and the impact we have on our joint responsibility to protect adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

Our Purpose

The overarching purpose of WSAB is to help and safeguard adults with care and support needs. We do this by:

- assuring ourselves that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance
- assuring ourselves that safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome-focused
- working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible
- ensuring agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect have occurred
- assuring ourselves that safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life of adults in its area.

Our Vision

Our Vision and priorities are fluid and linked to our strategy which can be found on our website [here](#).

Equality and diversity

Our approach to quality assurance will consider at every stage of each of our functions, how our current service activities and procedures affect people drawn from the different sections of society we provide services to and interact with.

Restorative

Quality assurance will be restorative. Instead of a top-down approach, quality assurance work will be based on working with staff and managers within partner organisations and building relationships at Executive Board and Board level. As a restorative process, quality assurance will be characterised by both high support and high challenge.

Outcome-based

The proper focus of quality assurance will be on outcomes rather than processes. All action plans should be able to address the 'so what' question in terms of how completion of this action contributes to meeting our strategic objectives and ultimately, to the protection of children and adults at risk.

Positive

Our approach to quality assurance will be positive - looking at informing and encouraging improvement, and supporting the development of staff and services in alignment with our agreed values and behaviours:

- We are positive and take pride in all that we do
- We are accountable and responsible for making things better
- We are courageous and open to doing things differently
- We are kind, helpful, generous and thoughtful towards others.

Reflective

Our quality assurance framework is designed to be about promoting reflective practice and shared learning including learning from error and ensuring a feedback loop back into practice.

3. The How: The framework



It is everybody's responsibility adopting a tiered quality assurance approach from floor to board.

Quality control and assurance is everybody's responsibility from floor to board; from the individual worker taking care to check their work, to everyone in the organisation ensuring they access relevant training and understanding how their input helps us protect adults at risk.

Central to this is the development of leadership capacity and capability within the workforce. The diagram above intends to identify examples of quality assurance measures that can be adopted and demonstrates how ways of analysing and interrogating data on activity will increase WSAB's understanding of its safeguarding effectiveness.

Gathering evidence

The evidence required to undertake a meaningful self-assessment is diverse. Quality assurance involves promoting critical thinking and encouraging professional curiosity to understand:

- what does this tell us?
- what might this feel like to service users?
- what else do we need to know?

The WSAB model of quality improvement involves organisations taking responsibility, not only for their own quality and performance, but for quality and performance of the partnership as a whole.

This requires Board members to critically analyse their own and each other's performance with a focus on the above three questions and aligning how they may answer these focusing on the strategic priorities of the WSAB found on our website.

Types of evidence partners may bring to Board

Qualitative	Quantitative	Impact / Outcome
Performance indicators and metrics	Audits	Annual Reports
Complaints / Compliments	Root Cause Analysis (case reviews)	EDI measures
Genuine voice of the individual	Service User feedback	Evaluation / audit / research / insight analysis
NHS Framework / PSIRF Reporting	Staff feedback	Performance measures
Partner Self-Assessment	Peer Review	Customer satisfaction
	Training/Competency	

Measuring outcomes

Quantitative information alone cannot fully determine the impact of the QAF or the quality of the activities. Since not everything that counts can be counted, WSAB draws together both quantitative and qualitative information as a lever for evidence-informed practice and improvements. The type of information used within the QAF can be seen above. Bringing together the range of evidence gathered through these elements is essential to be able to draw a more robust view of 'How well are we doing?'. This includes opportunities for discussing and analysing qualitative and quantitative information with a range of stakeholders. Synergy between the QAF and the WSAB Strategic Partnership Plan is a fundamental ingredient to successful quality assurance.

Learning and improving

At year end, this will inform the organisation of the lessons learned and outcomes from quality assurance activities and will be considered alongside the review of progress against the WSAB strategy. The combined output will inform the direction setting that influences development of safeguarding adult services across the system.

Plans will include priorities to improve quality, metrics to measure and monitor the success of this, and will inform objective-setting that will cascade priorities and targets to organisations/ delivery groups responsible for delivering them.

Leadership

The success of the QAF depends on the leadership culture and visibility within and across the partnership and its constituent organisations. The WSAB recognises individual organisations and the partnership as a whole's commitment to investment in our staff so that they have the capacity and capability to drive through improvements identified through the quality and learning initiatives. Programmes within each partner organisation that allow individuals who want to pursue a safeguarding career pathway, which is supported by and enhanced by WSAB, is fundamental to a safeguarding quality culture.

Governance, monitoring and review

The QAF will fall under the remit of the Wigan Safeguarding Executive (WSE) and WSAB. WSAB will keep the QAF under review and may propose changes to it to reflect changes in legislation, best practice and to ensure continuous improvement and learning within the partnership. WSAB will formally review the QAF every two years. It is the role of WSE to routinely monitor and scrutinise performance, progress and quality of the outputs of the QAF and exception report to WSAB.

The overall findings of the QAF will be set out in an annual report which will be reviewed by WSAB Board. The report will be drafted by the WSAB Safeguarding Service Manager in collaboration with the Independent Chair and with the full participation of the partnership members.

The report will provide:

- a summary of the key messages from the information under each strategic priority
- triangulation and analysis of the available data and intelligence
- a holistic view of the degree to which strategic objectives are met
- identification of areas of good practice and areas for improvement
- information on trends and themes in decision making and service delivery
- opportunities to challenge and address areas for development, and agree actions and priorities for the strategic and business planning for the following year

The WSAB Board may

- commission further research and exploration into specific areas
- agree action plans and monitoring with individual organisations
- inform regional national organisations for consideration of policy/legislation development
- consider findings and use this to inform the direction of current and future strategic and business plans

Changes may be made to:

- policies, procedures and processes
- training and development for staff
- objectives, priorities, projects and the allocation of resources to these, through strategic discussion / agreement

4. Conclusion

The WSAB QAF outlines how the partnership will seek excellent quality within all elements of its services and across its partner organisations. It sets out how it will continuously strive to make improvements to maximise the ability to protect adults at risk of abuse and neglect. It provides the means by which the WSAB Board can assure itself and its partners/service users of the quality, responsiveness and inclusivity of the services it provides and offers a lens through which to assess where remedial action may be necessary.

Appendix One – Legislative Framework and Quality Markers

Legislation and Further Background

Care Act 2014 - The Care Act 2014 provided a statutory framework for adult safeguarding, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners and those with whom they work, to protect adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect.

Association of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) - This framework reflects the Standards for Adult Safeguarding (ADASS; LGA, Dec 2012) and also reflects messages in relation to Safeguarding Adults Boards set out in the ADASS paper Safeguarding Adults: Advice and Guidance to Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS; LGA, March 2013).

In June 2013 ADASS published Making effective use of data and information to improve safety and quality in adult safeguarding which provides 10 tips in relation to Safeguarding Adults Boards effectively using data and information to improve safety and quality in safeguarding adults:

1. Spend time on making sure data and information supplied is useful
2. Interrogate the data and information presented
3. Beware of overwhelming people with data and information
4. Use and develop the mechanisms you have
5. Have sound protocols in place to share data and information
6. Establish a method to share concerns about regulated health and social care services
7. Use community safety data and information
8. Route concerns to the right place
9. Find ways to support staff that may need it
10. Make data and information, like safeguarding, everybody's business

NHS - In March 2013 the NHS Commissioning Board produced a document Safeguarding Vulnerable People in the Reformed NHS Accountability and Assurance Framework. This was updated in 2022 to reflect broader legislative changes regarding the introduction of Integrated Commissioning Boards (to replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups). It states NHS organisations – whether as commissioners or providers of NHS funded care – must demonstrate strong local leadership, work as committed partners and invest in effective co-ordination and robust quality assurance of safeguarding arrangements.

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) - Post Care Act 2014 the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) offered guidance to SABs to support them to seek assurance of the effectiveness of safeguarding activity and ensure safeguarding practice is continuously improving and enhancing the quality of life for adults with care and support needs and carers, in line with 'Making safeguarding personal'. The guidance identified the following mechanisms for QA:

- data recording, analysis and reporting, case audits & SAB and agencies' self-audits & peer review
- safeguarding adults reviews
- practitioners' forums to share lessons from case audits and local good practice, from research and from safeguarding adults reviews
- holding member and partner agencies to account
- the management of large-scale investigations, serious incidents, complaints, grievances, disciplinary proceedings, whistleblowing and allegations of professional malpractice or unfitness to practice
- the implementation of 'Making safeguarding personal' at a local level and its impact on engagement and outcomes. SCIE advised SABs need a range of approaches to quality assurance to monitor the effectiveness both of their own work and that of their partner agencies. These should include
 - use of data collection analysis for a quantitative perspective
 - self-audit tools
 - qualitative reviews and audits