

Safeguarding Quality and Effectiveness Assurance Framework

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1. Introduction

The Care Act, 2014 and statutory guidance, (updated,2024) sets out the core purpose of Safeguarding Adults Boards in ensuring that local safeguarding arrangements are effective, person centred, and outcome focused.

Safeguarding is one of the most complex tasks carried out across all services and all sectors, however, the increased vulnerabilities of adults at risk provides exacerbated and significant safeguarding risk and complexity.

The Bolton Safeguarding Adult Board recognises that safeguarding adults at risk cannot be achieved in isolation, an ambition of the BSAB is to secure commitment from all staff, across all sectors including leaders, commissioners, managers, students' bodies, agency staff, volunteers, and contractors, to work together effectively to deliver the very best safeguarding practice. At the heart of any good safeguarding system is the ability to question, challenge and provide assurance of the effectiveness of the systems, policy, and practice. Therefore, the Bolton Safeguarding Adult Board has developed a Safeguarding Quality and Effectiveness Framework that sets out the safeguarding arrangements, of the Board, how it is currently performing, and how it delivers assurance, with a sharp focus on real-time learning and embedding a learning and improvement culture.

The Framework has been developed into five clear parts:

- A. Structure**
- B. Processes**
- C. People**
- D. Strategic Plan and Business Plan (separate document)**
- E. Assurance Toolkit (including summary of methods and sources of evidence, separate Document)**

The Framework will apply across the whole of the BSAB, it will clearly connect the following:

- Strategic Partnership Safeguarding - the effectiveness and impact of the BSAB.
- Single agency safeguarding - the effectiveness of each member of the BSAB and wider organisations working with adults at risk and their carers.
- Multi-agency safeguarding practice and workforce development.
- Amplifying the voice of adults at risk and their carers.

The Framework emphasis will be on:

- Clearly articulating the current system.
- Describing how the system will be checked to ensure it is working.
- Describing how it continually improves service provision and practice, not simply describe or criticise it.

The Framework supports and directs the BSAB Strategic Plan, Business Plan, and the Assurance Toolkit, this document should be read in conjunction with those documents.

The framework will be reviewed annually and in conjunction with any new legislation and key national and local drivers. Documents and tools that sit within the framework will be updated as and when changes are required.

Methodology

This framework is based upon an outcomes-based accountability model and findings from ¹research into the governance of Safeguarding Adults Boards and Safeguarding Children's partnerships.

¹ Braye, Suzy, Orr, David and Preston-Shoot, Michael (2012) The governance of adult safeguarding: findings from research. Journal of Adult Protection, 14 (2). pp. 55-72. ISSN 1466-8203

- [Policy Paper: Safe Care at Home Review](#)
- [Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews: April 2017-March 2019](#)

1.1 Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board Safeguarding Vision, Values and Principles

Based upon best practice in reducing serious harm, and fatalities caused by abuse and neglect, as outlined in ²research, this Framework is underpinned by a shared vision and a number of key principles and best practice themes:

One Vision	Two Key Practice Values	Six Principles	Six Practice Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The voice of the adult at risk and their Carers are at the centre of all we do. Trauma-Informed Practice: Services are informed and shaped by understanding the impact of trauma. Recognising that behaviours are a symptom of trauma. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment: Supporting and encouraging people to make their own decisions with informed consent. Prevention: It is better to act before harm occurs. Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. Protection: Support and representation for those in the greatest need. Partnership: Working with all agencies, and their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting safeguarding issues. Accountability: Accountability and transparency in all safeguarding practice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the lived experience of adults at risk, their carers/representatives: considering the impact of intersectionality, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, and other societal factors such as poverty that impact adults at risk and their carers and the reality of their daily life. Team around The Adult: Ensuring all agencies working with adults at risk and their carers are clear on their role, legal frameworks and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and share information in a timely way. The importance of a whole family and a trauma informed approach to risk assessment and support: Changing risks and needs. Culture: Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture that supports critical thinking, where professional challenge is promoted for good outcomes.

². Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews , April 2017 – March 2019 Findings for sector-led improvement
 Authors: Michael Preston-Shoot, Suzy Braye, Oli Preston, Karen Allen and Kate Spreadbury, Adi Cooper, Care and Health Improvement Programme

2. Aim

This Framework is intended to drive the following strategic functions:

- Create a shared vision of what good safeguarding practice looks like in Bolton and set standards for safeguarding against which all services can assure their quality practice.
- Support the BSAB to create a culture where good safeguarding practice is standard practice.
- Develop prevention strategies that are delivered through the strategic plan.
- Ensure robust and systematic reporting of a range of information where there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats.
- Support the BSAB to be accountable, and evidence the effectiveness of its work to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk.
- Enable respective challenge and call to account those areas where practice or safeguarding arrangements are not robust or effective, to identify and celebrate success.
- Ensure the Adult workforce is skilled in safeguarding to an exceptional standard.
- Work effectively and in partnership as a collective.

By doing so, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

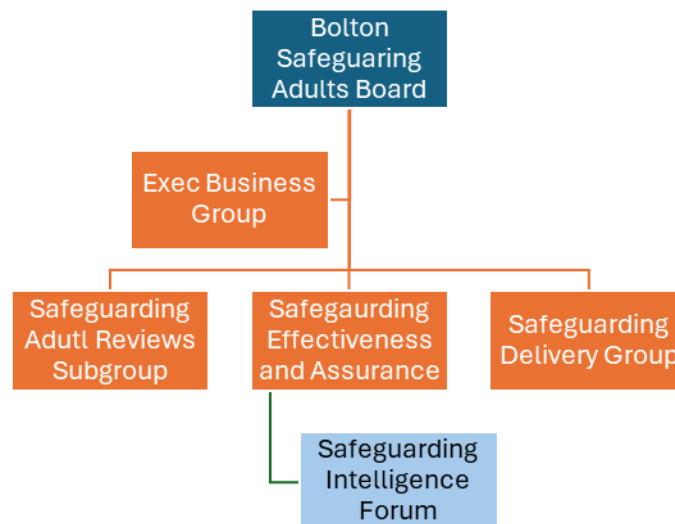
- Every adult at risk and their carers are safe, well able to meet their full potential and live happy, healthy, and independent lives.
- The BSAB can demonstrate assurance that all parts of the system are working effectively both individually and collectively to safeguard adults at risk and their carers.
- Across all organisations, the BSAB collaborate, share, and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for adults at risk and their carers.
- The BSAB fulfils and exceeds its statutory obligations.
- A learning culture is cultivated, promoted, and embedded in a way that all organisations and individuals can become more reflective and implement changes to practice, with a focus on embedding learning from reviews.
- Information is shared and disseminated across agencies effectively to facilitate more accurate and timely decision making for adults at risk and their carers.

A. Structure

Key Practice Theme	Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture
Principle	Partnership and Accountability

Understanding that effective leadership is the single most important factor in the delivery of excellent safeguarding practice, that creates the organisational and partnership culture within which it takes place, is a key aspect of this Framework. Effective safeguarding takes place when cultures are open and transparent, where informed senior leaders are close to and sighted on front-line issues, where those senior leaders are accessible and visible and where risk is owned throughout the organisation. BSAB governance structures ensure that the safeguarding arrangements provide strong collaboration, scrutiny, assurance, accountability, and drive safeguarding activity, across the BSAB as a collective.

The below diagram outlines our governance structure and accountability for the board;



Bolton Safeguarding Adult Board

The Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) is a partnership of key agencies in Bolton. The Board are a key decision-making body and has strategic focus. Membership comprises of Senior Management for each agency that deliver services with adults at risk. A constitution is in place but in summary, the Board meet, and using an evidence-based approach, agree on the strategic wide safeguarding priorities, arrangements; develop a Quality assurance and effectiveness framework, that includes a schedule of assurance activities, develop the BSAB Strategic plan and Business Plan. The Board monitors the progress of each sub-group against the Strategic and live Business Plans. The role of the Board member is outlined within the constitution, however, in brief, each Board member, contributes to assure themselves that their local arrangements are effective and keep

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Adults at Risk safe. This includes systems of assurance and accountability within each of their respective organisations, including inspection findings.

This is achieved by:

Culture: Effective Leadership and an inclusive organisational Culture that supports critical thinking, where professional challenge is promoted for good outcomes, this is achieved by:

Supporting to set the strategic direction, vision, mission and culture of the local safeguarding arrangements, including agreeing and reviewing shared priorities and the resource required to deliver services effectively.

Clear partnership intent: Ensuring clear and balanced partnership working by:

Leading their organisation's individual contribution to the shared priorities, ensuring strong governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms to hold their organisation to account for the delivery of agency commitments.

Reviewing and signing off key Board documents by:

Publishing and reviewing the strategic plan, multi-agency safeguarding policies and any required multi-agency policy and procedures, including the quality assurance framework, and toolkit that outlines plans for independent scrutiny, shared annual budget and a yearly annual report.

Strategy to delivery: Ensuring strategy is carried through to frontline practice by:

Providing shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents and safeguarding adult reviews, regional and national reviews, ensuring recommendations are implemented and have a demonstrable sustained impact on practice (as set out in the yearly annual report and strategic plan).

Getting upstream: Ensuring learning feeds into prevention, early intervention, and the commissioning of services by:

Ensuring all agencies, working with adults at risk and their carers are clear on their role and contribution to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and the safeguarding requirements for the commissioning of services are robust.

Assessing effectiveness: Evaluating impact of the safeguarding system by:

Development of an assurance framework, that includes a schedule of assurance activity.

This includes, ensuring multi-agency arrangements have the necessary level of business support, including intelligence and analytical functions, such as an agreed data dashboard providing oversight and a robust understanding of practice.

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Independent Scrutiny

An Independent Chair provides safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support, and challenge at both a strategic and operational level. The role of the Independent Chair is set out in the BSAB Constitution, in brief the role:

1. Provides assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
2. Ensures that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that Safeguarding Adults Reviews are commissioned, and regional and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system, and a cycle of sustained impact from reviews is in place.
3. Ensures that the voice of the adult at risk and their carers is at the heart of all of the work of the BSAB and permeates at every level of the Board, including scrutiny activity through direct feedback, that shapes policy and practice.
4. Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline members of the adult workforce and leaders. To encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
5. Provides independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitates escalation procedures.
6. Evaluates and contributes to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

B. Processes - Developing a Shared Vision

Key Practice Theme	Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture
One Vision	Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility
Principle	Partnership

The first stage in the Safeguarding and Quality Effectiveness Framework is to have a shared understanding and vision of **'what good safeguarding looks like'**. In order to have assurance that the BSAB is doing the right things, it needs to be clear, as a Board about the vision and how it will be achieved. The table below is based upon Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) definition of what good safeguarding practice looks like, a benchmark by the Safeguarding effectiveness subgroup will be completed to consider how the board performs.

SCIE Definition
A 'values-led' Safeguarding Adult Board that is supported by a Clear Vision, Mission and Ambition & scope of activity that creates a 'culture' that puts the adult at risk and their carers at the heart of all we do.
Innovation, strategic leadership and a strong focus on assurance that takes ownership and accountability of BSAB performance and evidences the effectiveness of its work in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk and their carers.
Well defined governance structures across strategic Boards and partnerships to ensure synergy in strategic priorities.
Triangulation of a range of local, regional, and national intelligence and evidenced based research that informs the practice and policy landscape, in responding in real time to emerging threats and safeguarding issues across Bolton.
Creating a shared vision of what good safeguarding practice looks like in Bolton across all organisations and setting standards for safeguarding against which all services can assure their quality practice.
Embedding a learning and improvement culture by learning from the most serious and tragic events.
Ensuring the 'lived experience' of the adult at risk, their carers, and the adult's workforce are actively listened to and shapes every element of our work.
Empower the Bolton community and citizens to recognise safeguarding concerns and to know what to do when concerns arise. Supporting adults at risk, their carers in taking responsibility for their own safeguarding and safety.

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Raise public and professional awareness so that communities across Bolton as a collective, play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect.
A robust, clear, and succinct communication strategy is in place that supports articulating key safeguarding messages that meets the diversity of adults at risk, their carers and the wider community in Bolton.
Respective challenge and calling to account those areas where practice or safeguarding arrangements are not robust or effective.
Support to build an excellent adult workforce by developing a competency-based learning and development strategy.
Effective multi-agency Safeguarding policies and procedures that underpin practise and regularly reviewed and tested to ensure application and rigor.

B. Processes: Intelligence and Evidence Led Practice

Key Practice Theme	Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture
Principles	Prevention

In order to have assurance that the BSAB are doing the right things, it needs to be clear, as a Board, about the standards and impact to achieve assurance from a number of perspectives. The Board adopts an outcomes-based accountability approach and focus on the difference all organisations are making to the lives of adults at risk and their carers and in keeping them safe. This means considering and critically analysing how the Board as a collective assures that it safeguards, cares, supports, and educates the adults at risk and their carers to live happy, healthy, successful, and independent lives, and how they assure themselves that all organisations working with adults at risk and their carers are meeting the same quality standards in safeguarding practice. To achieve this, the BSAB need to routinely capture a range of intelligence and evidence to gather quantitative and qualitative information about adults at risk and the interventions in safeguarding, care, support, and whether their agreed outcomes are being achieved.

This Framework will support the BSAB and organisations to improve its understanding of measuring the impact of the safeguarding practice in improving outcomes for adults at risk and their carers as well as the processes and intervention and the quality and impact of safeguarding practice.

The diagram below identifies the range of intelligence and evidence used to understand and inform the work of the BSAB.

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How is the BSAB doing? Is everyone assured?

Processes – How will we do it?

Implementing the Quality and effectiveness framework can be summarised in three statements.

Statement 1: The BSAB learns from every opportunity and ensures there is a skilled workforce who have access to up to date, relevant information to help them keep adults at risk and their carers safe and happy.

Key Practice Theme	Team around The Adult
Principle	Prevention

Policies, legislation, structures, and procedures are, of course, of immense importance, but they serve only as the means of securing better life opportunities for each adult at risk and their carers. It is the robust and consistent implementation of these policies and procedures which keeps adults at risk and their carers safe. It is essential that there is a sustained commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk at every level of the BSAB and across each organisation.

The Framework ensures that there is a direct link between safeguarding effectiveness and workforce development. Learning needs are captured through the workforce and development sub-group and any safeguarding assurance process are reported to the Quality Assurance and Performance sub-group, as well as an annual learning needs analysis. Opportunities for professionals to develop knowledge and skills are varied, such as training courses, conferences, newsletters, briefings, Podcasts, Webinars learning events, social media and the website which form part of the communications strategy to ensure there are opportunities for learning.

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The BSAB will ensure there are strong links between single agency performance, subgroups, and multi-agency performance, learning and communications so that it knows how it is doing, what can it do better, and provide knowledge and skills to the staff.

The Board will also develop the skills of the workforce in undertaking their duties within the framework in relation to undertaking good quality audits, understanding performance, critical analysis, and triangulation, and identifying what needs to happen next.

Statement 2: The BSAB review and evaluate practice and its impact to ensure that all staff including leaders and managers and all professionals throughout the whole organisation, adults at risk and their carers are safe.

Key Practice Theme	Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture
Principle	Prevention

The BSAB will evaluate practice and its impact through a range of evidence and quality assurance activities as set out in the Assurance Toolkit. Quality Assurance aligns all activity that contributes to service improvement and understanding the quality of practice. Quality Assurance activities monitor compliance with policies and procedures and evidence strengths and good practice; identifies gaps and areas for development; drives learning and service improvement with a key focus on how this contributes to the ambition to develop an excellent safeguarding adult workforce. The Quality Assurance and Performance sub-group will triangulate all quality assurance activities and provide a summary report to the BSAB.

At Board level, through the Quality Assurance and Performance sub-group, the safeguarding system as a collective, and the impact on outcomes for adults at risk and their carers will be monitored, to provide an assurance that the safeguarding systems and all staff are working as effectively and efficiently as they can. The BSAB will constantly work to identify and achieve improvement; to celebrate success; and to test out the vision, values, principles, and practice themes as well as the current priorities of the BSAB and 'business as usual' in terms of legislative duties and best practice.

The Senior Manager from each agency will be represented at the Board to ensure a direct route for any lessons and actions from the Safeguarding effectiveness subgroup activity to be fed directly back to each organisation. This will ensure that single agency development can be directly informed by evidence about what is and is not working or through the identification of service gaps.

A regular programme of Quality Assurance activity will be established each year, and priorities will be identified in accordance with issues affecting the practice themes and areas raised through routine performance monitoring.

The table below provides methods of Quality Assurance Activity, a detailed description of how quality assurance activity is undertaken is provided in the Assurance Toolkit.

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Methods of Quality Assurance

<p>External validation Be subject to external audits and inspection from regulatory and commissioning agencies, to use any identified areas from inspections for improvement to develop action plans to monitor progress addressing any significant continuing safeguarding risks.</p>	<p>Listening Hearing from a range of people including, the workforce, adults at risk and their families, to contribute towards qualitative information.</p>
<p>Single agency Review All leaders in organisations monitor the performance of their area and to determine the impact of the work and report at Quality Assurance and Performance Sub-Group.</p>	<p>Visibility Conducting observational activities with a focus on safeguarding to ensure embedded policy and procedures. These include peer visits, quality department visits, etc.</p>
<p>Reviews of Practice The SAR Subgroup has the remit of monitoring and evaluating all safeguarding Adult Reviews, including cases of good practice for moderation and to share learning. Including peer review.</p>	<p>BSAB Surveys Surveys are conducted annually and routinely to inform key priorities and the quality strategy.</p>
<p>Performance data Data is captured through a range of reporting systems including a multi-agency data dashboard that is aggregated to present information in a form that can be analysed to identify trends and patterns that can indicate areas that may need attention.</p>	<p>Quality and Audit/Peer review activity A range of audits are undertaken that seek to establish whether services are delivering the expected high standard of safeguarding practice.</p>

Statement 3. The BSAB are assured that safeguarding is as effective as possible, using a range of mechanisms to coordinate, monitor, challenge and improve services, and outcomes for adults at risk and their carers.

Key Practice Theme	Effective leadership and an inclusive organisational culture
Principle	Proportionality

The triangulation and scrutiny of ‘how is the Board doing’ as a collective enables ‘testing out’ the assurance or identifying where additional activity or assurance may be required. In addition to quality assurance, practice reviews, data and voices mentioned above, The BSAB will utilise the following to determine its effectiveness:

<p>A multi-agency performance dashboard will demonstrate which areas of practice are improving or are strong as well as those needing strengthening. It will capture the actions from audits to enable a proactive way of ensuring timely completion and oversight of those requiring improvement. The dashboard findings are presented at both BSAB and Safeguarding Effectiveness Subgroup so they can evidence practice improvement and how the improvement plan is influencing front-line practice.</p>	<p>A database of reviews and audits will be maintained by the BSAB Business Team to facilitate monitoring and identification of activity, key learning, and follow up of the impact of recommended actions for improvements. This will also include ‘Good Outcome Reviews’.</p>
<p>A quarterly ‘how is the BSAB’ doing’ – assurance report’ will be produced by the Quality Assurance and Performance Subgroup to draw together an analysis of available evidence and recommendations. This will be shared across to the Business Group and BSAB. All Board members will ensure there is clarity about what is doing well and identify any areas for further exploration and actions for the next period.</p>	<p>Single agency assurance reports (based upon section 11) will be requested and analysed. These reports will provide evidence of what is working well, what is not working well and actions in place to improve where appropriate.</p>
<p>Independent scrutiny will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be based on clear standards. • Be based on evidence, be impartial and not rely on any single person. • Consider the effectiveness for adults at risk as well as for all staff. • Provide respective challenge and a strengths-based approach to additionally recognise good practice. 	<p>Request organisations to carry out safeguarding effectiveness and quality audits or ‘deep dives’ on themes where performance is considered to be a significant risk.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be cost-effective and proportionate. • Include adults at risk and carers as stakeholders. • Be subject to moderation if required, overseen, and reviewed by the Quality Assurance and Performance sub-group. 	
<p>Scrutiny: Across the BSAB there is mechanism to be able to undertake independent impartial or peer scrutiny to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of the BSAB as a collective in safeguarding, adults at risk and their carers. • Support a strength focused culture and environment, conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge. 	

The voice of Adults at risk, their carers and the Bolton community.

Key practise theme	Understanding the lived experience of adults at risk, their carers/representatives
Key Value	The Voice of the Adult at risk and their carer. Trauma-informed practise
Principle	Empowerment

Adult safeguarding reviews that have been carried out as a result of serious harm or death of an adult at risk, consistently highlight that the voice of the adult at risk and their Carer was not heard enough, therefore the BSAB’s commitment is to actively listen to adults at risk and will remain a focus of this framework and in particular their experiences, progress, and outcomes through all BSAB systems.

Each sub-group / work plan will include a challenge of ‘**how do you hear the voice and understand the experiences of the adult at risk**’. Equally each BSAB meeting will comprise reflective practise questions that assures that the Voice of the Adult at risk, and their Carer is ever present in all that the BSAB do. The summary of evidence and methods in the Toolkit provides examples of how the BSAB hears the Voice and will be reported as a standing agenda item at the BSAB.

References

¹ Braye, Suzy, Orr, David and Preston-Shoot, Michael (2012) The governance of adult safeguarding: findings from research. Journal of Adult Protection, 14 (2). pp. 55-72. ISSN 1466-8203

² Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews

April 2017 – March 2019 Findings for sector-led improvement Authors: Michael Preston-Shoot, Suzy Braye, Oli Preston, Karen Allen and Kate Spreadbury. Adi Cooper, Care and Health Improvement Programme

³ The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) [Social Care Institute for Excellence \(SCIE\)](#)