



# Tools to support SABs achieve the SAR Quality Markers

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## Tool I - considering different audiences for publication and dissemination of SARs

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### Background

The first national analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) presented some qualitative data on SAR outputs and dissemination activities. These showed that in 82% of cases SABs published a SAR report in full. A variety of other publication methods were also used to disseminate findings and learning, most notably executive summaries, staff briefings and SAB responses. Attached to staff briefings in some instances were short questionnaires for practitioners and managers to complete to indicate how they would act upon the findings and learning for best practice in the SAR. Other means of disseminating SAR findings were principally publishing details in annual reports, PowerPoint presentations for seminars and conferences, and press releases.

### This tool

This tool aims to support SABs in thinking about the range of possible audiences for SAR outputs and their different needs. The goal is to support SABs in their publication and dissemination planning, and help maximise the value of every SAR.

## Recognising multiple audiences and purposes of published SAR outputs

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### What kind of learning do we need from SARs?

SCIE briefing on commissioning a systems-based approach to learning for your SARs <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/reviews/quality-markers/practical-tools/strategic-commissioning/> supports SABs with clarity about the learning outcome sought through a systems-based SAR.

With reference to the national standards for SARs **Safeguarding Adults Review Quality Markers** (<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/reviews/quality-markers>) it emphasises the need for SARs to move beyond identifying what went well or badly in a case and why (case findings), to draw out the wider significance. The kind of learning needed to drive improvements is that which identifies generalisable learning about barriers and enablers to good practice that have influence beyond the single case, in the present and potentially into the future. In the SAR Quality Markers, these are referred to as ‘systems findings’. They can be organisational but also social and cultural patterns and norms.

### Who can tackle which kinds of systems findings?

Systems findings are like the diagnostic results of a SAR process. Systems findings can relate to a range of different factors and levels of a system hierarchy, such as:

- National issues of policy and legislation.
- SAB arrangements and governance.
- Organisational arrangements and the management systems that create the environment and conditions within which work takes place.
- The nature of tasks and interfaces whether intra- or inter-agency.
- Ways of working that have built up over time becoming professional norms and culture.
- The design of tools and equipment.

How to tackle any particular systems issue may not be either obvious or straightforward. They may involve competing priorities, and conflicting demands. There may be a number of options. As the list above indicates, many systems findings will not be within the gift of operational staff to address or rectify.

### Distinguishing operational from strategic audiences for SAR systems findings

#### SAR Quality Marker number 14

(<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/reviews/quality-markers/>), captures good practice concerning publication and dissemination. The Quality Statement reads as follows (with emphasis added):

Publication and dissemination activities are timely and publicise the key systemic risks identified through the SAR, as well as features supporting high reliability of single and multi-agency working relevant to safeguarding. **Compelling and engaging means of circulating the findings are used, adapted as necessary for different operational and strategic audiences.** Decisions about what, when, how and for how long to publish and disseminate findings are made with sensitive consideration of the

wishes and impact on the person, family and other families; professionals who participated are kept informed and supported as needed. Publication and dissemination foster active responsibility and public accountability for addressing barriers identified to good practice or progressing improvement work.<sup>1</sup>

Prompt questions to support SABs know if they are on track to meet this quality marker include:

- Are you satisfied that dissemination plans engage all the right audiences given the learning of this SAR, in compelling and engaging ways? (14.1.3)
- Does the communications plan secure the right level of engagement from senior leaders of all relevant partners, regionally and nationally? Has active engagement with the media been considered? (14.1.16)
- Are all those who have a responsibility in addressing issues raised in the SAR, included in dissemination plans? Has adequate consideration been given to disseminating 'up' to strategic leads in relevant organisations locally, regionally and nationally? (14.2.8)
- Have the additional products, mediums and activities needed from this SAR for different audiences been discussed and agreed? Do they add up to a compelling and engaging means of circulating the findings? (14.2.9)
- Is the learning being made as accessible as possible to all relevant audiences through the range of products and extent of dissemination and engagement plans? How well are they designed to foster active responsibility for addressing systemic issues identified in the SAR? (14.2.10)
- Have relevant champions, forums and/or networks been identified that can support dissemination to the range of different audiences?(14.4.2)
- Do the proposed responses by agencies and the SAB genuinely tackle the systemic risks identified by the SAR and at the right levels of a system hierarchy, and avoid assuming that disseminating SAR outputs to operational staff is adequate? (15.2.1)
- Have you considered who is best placed to decide what an effective response to each of the findings would be, and how to engage them in these discussions? (15.2.3)

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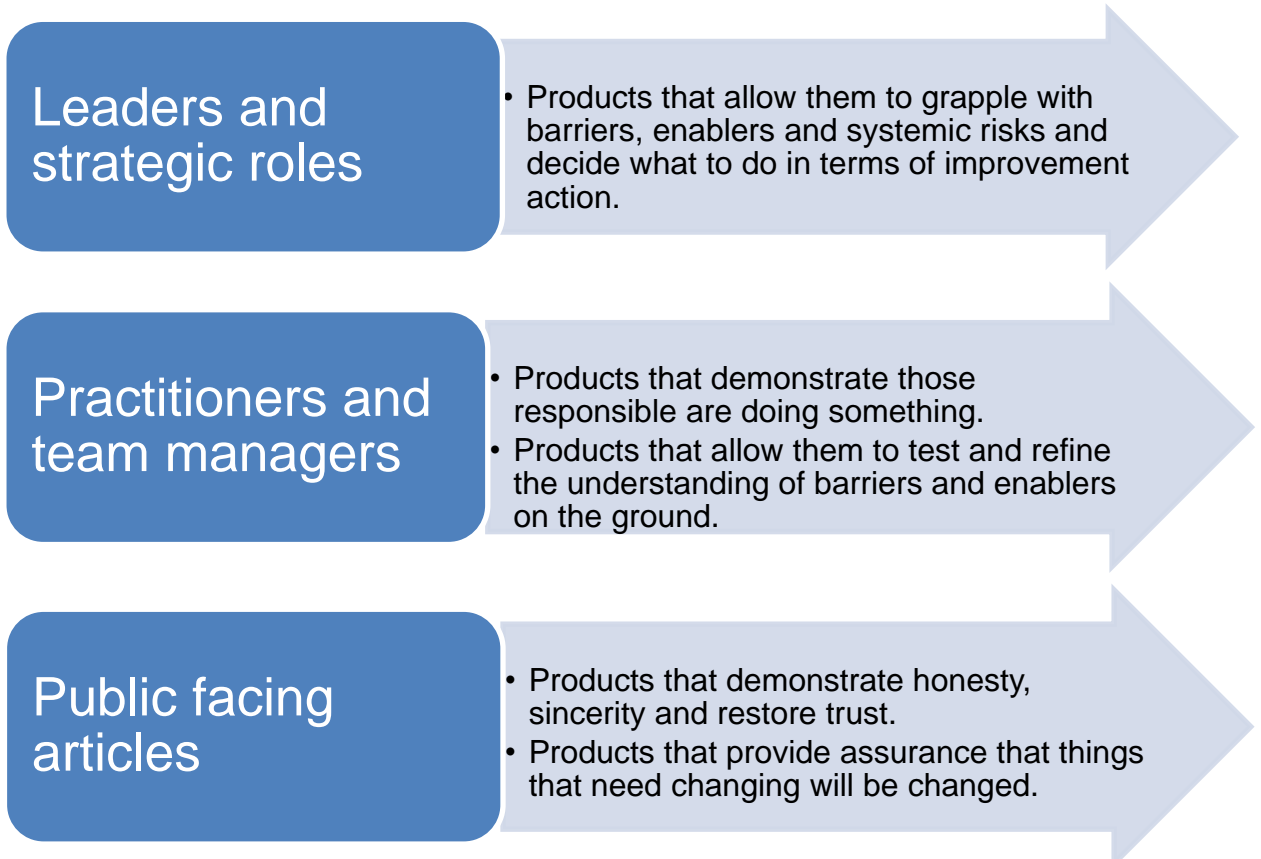
<sup>1</sup> Fish, S. (2022) SCIE SAR Quality Markers check list. London: SCIE. See: <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/reviews/quality-markers/>.

**Point for reflection:** Do your current approaches to publication and dissemination planning adequately recognise that some learning points from SARs will require the engagement of people in strategic roles, to consider how improvement action will be progressed. Other systems findings will benefit from operational staff groups taking a lead in determining how best a current barrier to timely, effective practice can be addressed. The most suitable way of conveying the findings may be different for these different audiences.

### Other purposes to sharing systems findings of products

One important purpose of products, dissemination and engagement activity, therefore, is to share the diagnostic results of the SAR so the right improvement action can be determined and progressed. Taking a systems-based approach to learning through SARs, will challenge assumptions that operational staff are the prime target audience for the learning. Often systemic vulnerabilities that make it more likely things will go wrong, are not within the control of practitioners and clinicians, though of course, some will be.

There are also other audiences, with other needs requiring products designed for different purposes.



A published SAB response to a SAR, for example, often constitutes a public-facing article, designed a) to restore trust through an acknowledgment of what has happened and the learning that has been identified through the SAR, and b) to provide assurances and public accountability for how any barriers to effective practice identified are being grappled with and addressed.

Articulating the audience(s) and purpose(s) of any SAR product and dissemination activity, gives a useful clarity to the planning process.

There may be ways that we have not addressed for operational staff and managers, that would be useful for ongoing learning and improvement?

Do we create SAR products that allow operational staff and managers to further test and refine any systems learning from SARs? Would that look significantly different from more typical seven-minute briefings?

Do staff and managers also have a need for assurances from system leaders about what is happening in response to a SAR? Do our products demonstrate to operational staff that those responsible are doing something to address the learning?

### **Multiple audiences, multiple purposes**

This document makes no claims to have captured all the audiences and purposes of SAR-related documents and products. The aim of this briefing is to support acknowledgement that multiple audiences and purposes exist, as a useful step to developing our practices of publication and dissemination in order to maximise the value of SARs.

## **References**

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Fish, S. (2022) SCIE SAR Quality Markers check list. London: SCIE. See: <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/reviews/quality-markers/>.



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