



Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board

Quality Assurance Framework

AUGUST 2025

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This document sets out a multi-agency approach to the quality assurance processes for adult safeguarding arrangements in Cumbria. The framework applies to all Cumbria Safeguarding Adult Board partners and members.

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Section 43(3) of the Care Act 2014 requires Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what each of its member does in helping and protecting individuals from abuse and neglect and delivering the outcomes that enhance their wellbeing.

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (DH, October 2014) states Safeguarding Adults Boards should

“establish ways of analysing and interrogating data on safeguarding notifications that increase the SAB’s understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect locally that builds up a picture over time; establish how it will hold partners to account and gain assurance of the effectiveness of its arrangements; determine its arrangements for peer review and self-audit; evidence how SAB members have challenged one another and held other boards to account...”

Good practice guidance from the sector suggests that a Performance or Quality Assurance Framework provides a robust mechanism by which the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) can discharge these responsibilities and evaluate whether systems are working effectively to help and protect adults from abuse and neglect.

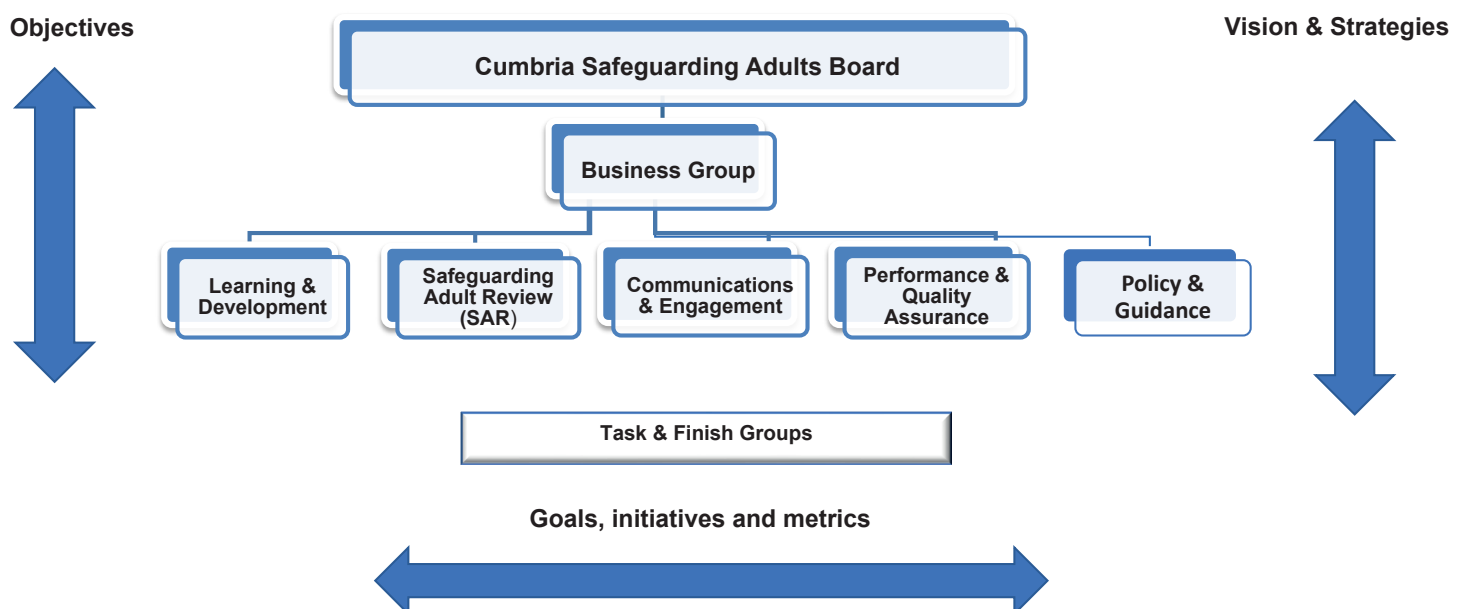
Cumbria SAB continue to develop and adopt varying approaches to quality assurance through the Board and sub-group structures to support the SAB and our individual partner agencies to understand the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements locally, to identify priorities and make decisions on how we improve safeguarding services, and to improve safeguarding of adults at risk of abuse or neglect in Cumbria. The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) has been developed to document the approaches, frequency and structures to ensure transparency and accountability which reflects the Board’s statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 and the latest good practice across the system.

2. WHAT IS A QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK?

A Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) provides the assurance supported by evidence of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Cumbria and enables the use of information to secure greater impact and effectiveness.

CSAB's QAF consists of a rolling programme of activity, assessment and reporting in respect of the quality and effectiveness of systems and arrangements. This assurance is provided across the SAB structure (see fig 1) and enables the Board and sub-groups to triangulate a variety of information, both about quantity and quality, from different sources to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements, rather than relying on a single means of assessment.

Figure 1.



The QAF is part of a wider approach to quality and performance which utilises mechanisms for sharing lessons and good practice with the Board through our Learning & Development sub-group and other mechanisms such as multi-agency learning and Practitioner Forums.

The QAF will enable Cumbria SAB and our constituent partner organisations to gain assurance that single and multi-agency systems, structures, processes and practice are effective in improving.

The approach in Cumbria will support us to;

- ➡ evidence and gain assurance that safeguarding arrangements in Cumbria are effective
- ➡ identify priorities and make decisions on how we improve safeguarding services
- ➡ hold local agencies to account for their safeguarding work and arrangements; and help us be more accountable to residents of Cumbria.

3. UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Good quality safeguarding adults' arrangements are underpinned by the six safeguarding key principles which apply to all settings (Statutory guidance 14.13). The principles should inform the way in which professionals work to safeguard adults at risk. They also support SABs and partner organisations to examine and improve local arrangements.

Empowerment

People being supported and encourage to make their own decisions and give informed consent



Prevention

It is better to take action before harm occurs

Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented



Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need

Partnership

Local solutions through services working with their communities – communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse



Accountability and transparency

In safeguarding practice



The QAF is also underpinned by the following principles:



Openness and transparency;

Each agency within CSAB can identify good practice, areas for development and risk in its own organisation.



Risk & areas for development;

CSAB needs to be assured agencies have identified and acted upon risk and areas of development, or to be enabled to do so as a multi-agency Board.



Learning from Good Practice;

All partners should highlight good practice, areas for development and risks through the assurance processes so the Board can agree how they can support or risks be mitigated. It is acknowledged that some will be single agency actions and some will require multi agency collaborative response and action.



Outcomes;

Good quality safeguarding arrangements should be person-centred, outcomes- based and making a difference, in line with Making Safeguarding Personal.



Triangulation;

Different qualitative and quantitative information are compared and contrasted to cross-verify data and validate any conclusions being drawn. This will enable the Board more confidently to understand whether arrangements are effective and making a positive difference.

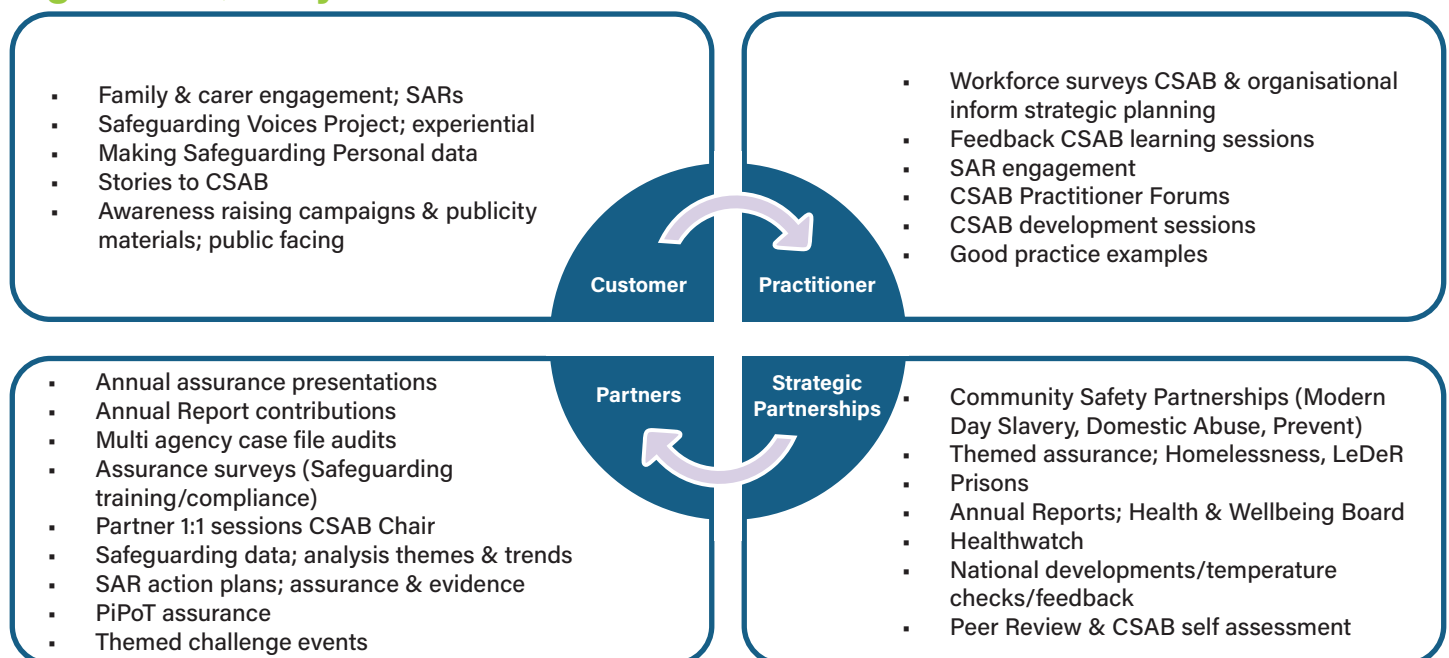
4. CSAB QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

In order to measure and seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements in Cumbria are effective, the QAF seeks through a range of mechanisms to be assured that;

- ➔ Adults with care & support needs at risk are safeguarded
- ➔ Partners are working well together to respond to safeguarding concerns
- ➔ Safeguarding arrangements improve outcomes for adults at risk

The QAF is based on a quadrant model of evidence collation and analysis activities that brings together a variety of quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources – fig. 2 below. Each quadrant aims to provide assurance in respect of the quality and effectiveness of arrangements when considered and triangulated with other sources of information to provide a holistic picture as to the effectiveness of safeguarding services in Cumbria.

Figure 2: Quality Assurance Framework



The aim of the approaches contained in the quadrant model Figure 2 is to;

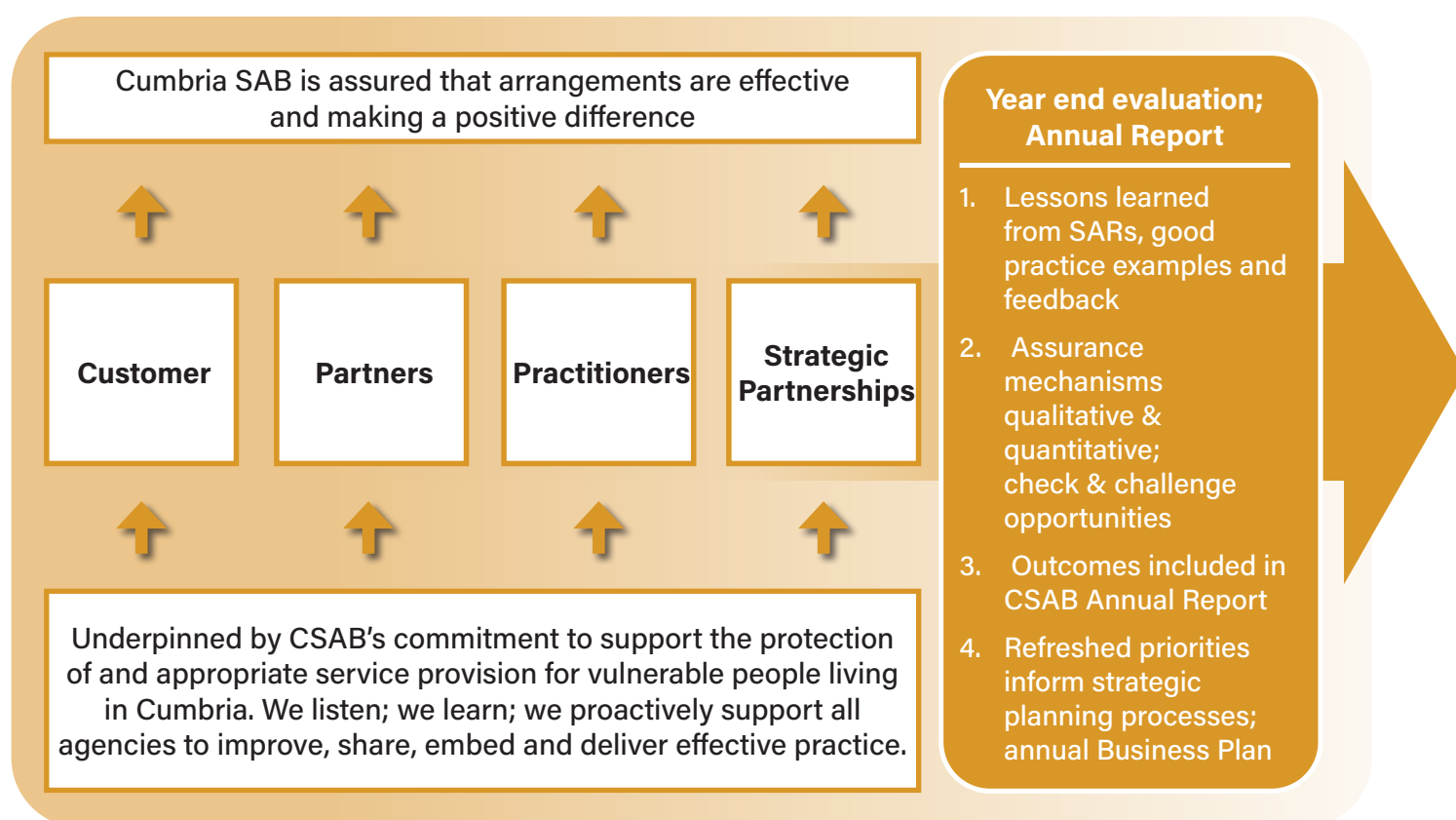
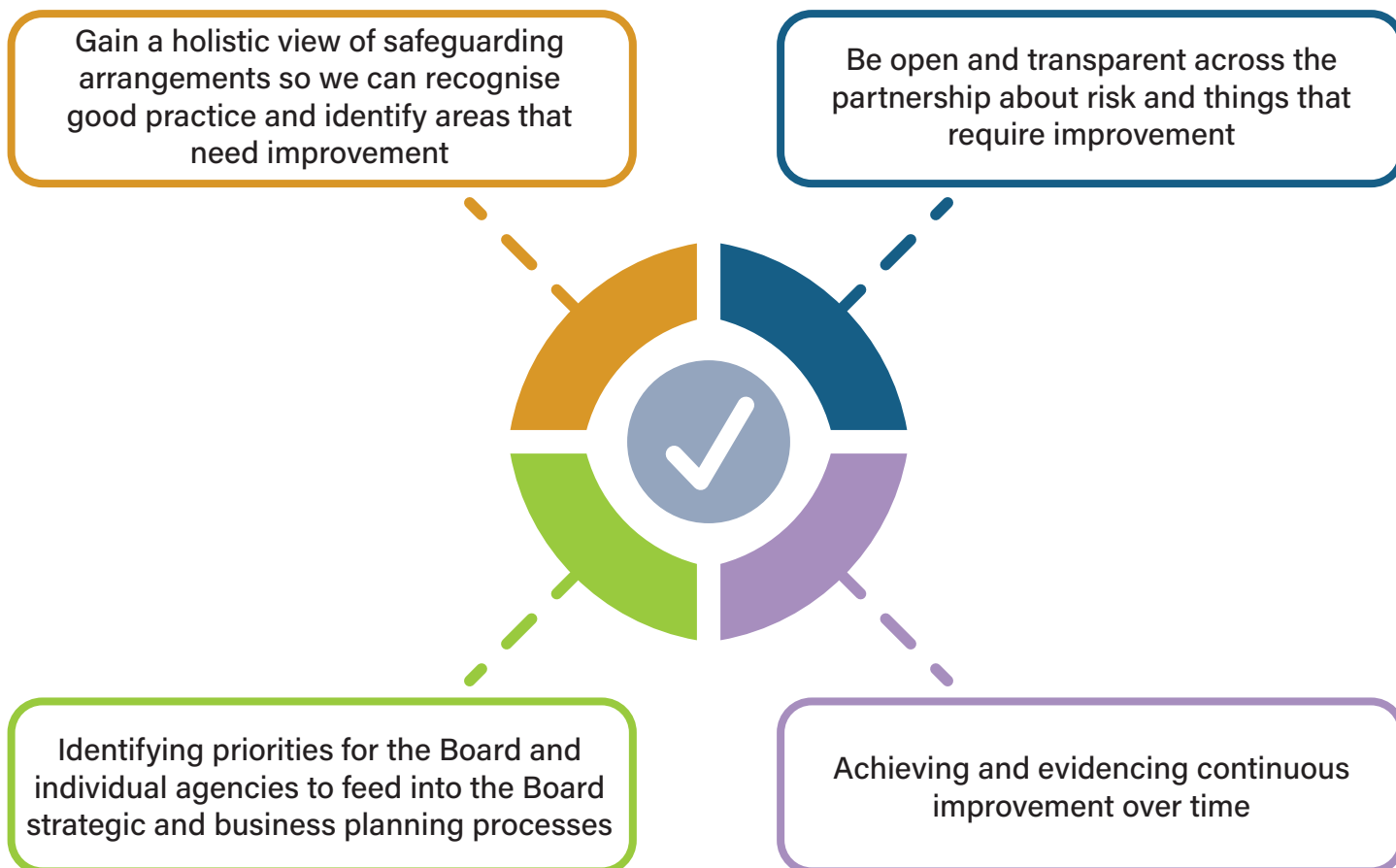
- ➔ Bring together quantitative and qualitative multi-agency information, trends, nature and types of abuse including multi-agency responses and outcomes for adults at risk.
- ➔ Opportunities are utilised to gather and collate views/ feedback from customers, carers, families, and staff to understand if safeguarding arrangements are working, delivering the outcomes people want and making a difference.
- ➔ Examine how well the Board and constituent partners fulfil statutory duties to understand if partners are working effectively together to keep people safe.
- ➔ Evaluate the quality of individual agency safeguarding arrangements and identify opportunities for improvement through a Signs of Safety model to examine; 'What is working Well' and 'What needs to Improve' including partner collaboration and support.

Across the partnership, the QAF will facilitate a range of activities detailed on Fig 3.

Figure 3.

Frequency	Assurance Activity
Routine	Gathering feedback from individuals (or their advocates) on their experience of safeguarding and whether it made a difference to their wellbeing, safety and achieved their outcomes. Was the adult informed and did they feel included in safeguarding processes. Further enhanced by Healthwatch gathering experiential feedback.
	Feedback from practitioners participating in learning, SAR processes and Practitioner Forums to evaluate and inform continuous improvement.
Quarterly	Monitoring of multi-agency performance data to provide an understanding of the prevalence and nature of abuse, activity and effectiveness of responses, and making safeguarding personal. Analysis of performance data will also identify themes/trends and areas for further exploration.
	Learning from SARs and assurance in relation to delivery of SAR Action Plans including supporting evidence will be reported to SAR sub-group for regular reporting and assurance to CSAB.
	Themed multi-agency case file audit programme seek assurance following learning from SARs; impact of learning in practice themed approach with auditor analysis and presentation. Themed audits also informed by analysis of trends in performance data; deep dive exercises. Opportunity to identify areas for collaboration and continuous improvement.
	Assurance and reporting to the Board from sub-groups in respect of the progress made to delivery and achievement of activity in the Annual Business Plan – highlight reports RAG rated to include any risks, issues or decision for escalation to CSAB.
	Assurance meetings with CSAB Chair with all partners and constituent members of the Board.
Annual	Assurance programme and presentation from partners to include self-assessment in relation to the effectiveness of organisational safeguarding arrangements including what is working well, areas for improvement and support from partners. Template provided for consistency of response.
	Assurance and update from our partners in respect of what organisationally they have achieved to support delivery of CSAB 5-year Strategic Plan – informs Annual Report process. Opportunity to celebrate single agency achievements, promote organisational strengths, reflect learning and note any risks/issues or areas where partnership/CSAB support is required.
	Assurance in relation to concerns relating to Persons in Position of Trust and application of CSAB PiPoT Framework.
	CSAB Annual Report provides assurance the SAB continues to meet statutory responsibilities, constitution and operations. Presented to strategic partnerships including Health & Wellbeing Boards.
	Partner attendance at meetings; performance reports RAG rated attendance to flag any gaps and lack of engagement .
Bi-annual	CSAB Workforce Survey to gain understanding of barriers and challenges across system for frontline practice; inform strategic planning and continuous improvement.
	CSAB self assessment & development sessions to ensure partnership is fulfilling its statutory duties and working effectively. Contribute to and inform strategic planning processes. Can include opportunities for peer review or gap analysis against best practice if/as required.

Through the mechanisms above delivered across the CSAB structures, gathering and triangulating this quality intelligence will support us to;



5. LEARNING & TAKING ACTION

Learning will be identified through the QAF associated processes to inform continuous improvement and appropriate action across the partnership. Action will be taken where necessary to inform CSAB Strategic and annual Business Planning processes. This may also include;

- ➔ Commissioning and requiring further areas of exploration and assurance
- ➔ Action and improvement plans; partnership & single agency
- ➔ Review and update policy, procedures and processes
- ➔ Learning and development activities
- ➔ Themed case file audits
- ➔ Publicity campaigns and other awareness raising and communications materials
- ➔ Learning from partners to drive improvement across agencies

Assurance and actions will be reported through the CSAB Annual Report.

6. GOVERNANCE & REPORTING

The QAF will fall under the remit of the Performance & Quality Assurance sub-group with the support from other sub-groups with delegated areas as defined in CSAB annual Business Plans.

All sub-groups will report quarterly to CSAB in relation to delegated areas of assurance and activity through sub-group chair's highlight reporting. Issues and risks should be escalated as appropriate to CSAB. Reports will be shared across all sub-groups for connectivity and through sub-group Chair discussions at CSAB Business Group.

Regular reporting will support;

- ➔ Triangulation of available data and intelligence to provide a holistic view of safeguarding arrangements so that we know how effective they are in Cumbria.
- ➔ Identification of areas of good practice and areas for improvement.
- ➔ Information on trend and themes in Cumbria's safeguarding practice.
- ➔ Opportunities to challenge and address areas for development, and agree actions
- ➔ Priorities for individual agencies or for inclusion in the safeguarding strategy.

The Board may ask the chair of sub-groups to report more frequently as is needed.

The Performance & Quality Assurance Group will keep this framework under review and may change it to reflect changes in legislation, best practice and to ensure the continuous improvement of safeguarding adults in Cumbria. The P&QA sub-group will formally review this framework every 3 years in line with CSAB standards for policy review.

Thanks and acknowledgment to the National Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Network, elements are based on frameworks used by other SABs.