

What you should expect in relation to a Serious Adverse Incident Review in a Health and Social Care setting

Introduction

A Serious Adverse Incident is when something happens with someone's treatment or care which could have or did lead to harm. That harm may be unexpected or unexplained and could lead to serious injury or death.

Events which are reported as Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs) help to identify learning even when it is not clear something went badly with the treatment or care provided. The purpose of a SAI review is to understand what occurred and to share learning across the relevant services. We recognise that this may be a very difficult time for you and your family and communicating effectively with you¹ is a vital part of the review.

We would like to be open about what happened and discuss the SAI fully, honestly and compassionately promoting a fair and open culture and a person-centred approach to patient safety by placing you at the centre of all that the service does.

The aim of a SAI review is to identify and address the factors that contributed to the incident so as to learn from what went badly and share this within the health and social care system. This may include concerns

¹ ***You – this term refers to patient, service user, family** (of a service user and/or family of a victim), carer or nominated representative

which relate to personal / professional responsibility and in such instances such concerns will be referred to the relevant department or professional body and will be dealt with outside the SAI review process.

You can add valuable information to help identify any contributing factors and you are important to the review process, unless you wish otherwise.

Your rights in the SAI Process

During the course of the review:

1. You have the right to actively engage with the SAI review, have your views listened to, respected, responded to and addressed in a timely manner.
2. You have the right to experience openness, honesty, empathy, kindness, dignity and respect in all communication and interaction with the HSC Organisation.
3. You have the right to be assigned a nominated link person to facilitate communication between you and the Chairperson of the Review Team, and to advice on access to support.

4. You have the right to access relevant information relating to the SAI review and for this information to be provided in an accessible format.
5. You have the right to independent advice and support.
6. You have the right to approach the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO).

Each of these are explained in further detail below.

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HSC organisations will:

- Acknowledge, apologise and explain to you that the organisation wishes to review the care and treatment of the patient / service user;
- Explain to you why the incident has been categorised as a SAI and if any immediate action has been taken;
- Describe the review process to you including timescales, reviews of those timescales and the make-up of the Review Team;

- Provide you with information on the SAI process and advise you of support and advocacy services available to you;
- Advise how you can contribute to the review process:
 - Seek your views on how you wish to be updated on the review process;
 - Respect your rights and choice not to engage in the review;
- Advise on the level of review to be conducted, the membership of the review team and, depending on the level of the review, give you the opportunity to comment and/or become involved in setting the Terms of Reference (which will explain how the review will be carried out);
- Continue to actively engage with you throughout the review process and to inform you of any key developments as the review progresses;
- Communicate the findings of the review and share the final draft review report with you. This will include:
 - An apology in line with NI Public Service Ombudsman guidance for the harm / distress suffered;
 - Relevant factors that contributed to the incident;
 - Information on learning and outcomes from the review together with actions required;
 - Advising that the final draft report still requires approval by the HSCB/PHA and you will be advised of any changes;
 - Feedback on completion of the recommendations in the action plan arising from the SAI.
- Ensuring you are provided with the opportunity to respond to the findings of the review report prior to the final report being issued to the HSCB/PHA; and

- Ensuring you are facilitated to provide feedback on your experience of the review process and where areas for improvement are identified, the HSC Organisation takes action to address the issues raised.

You have the right to be assigned a nominated link person to facilitate communication between you and the Chairperson of the Review Team, and to advise on access to support.

A nominated link person with the necessary skills and experience will be the point of contact between you and the Chairperson of the Review Team.

The nominated link person will remain the main point of contact for you and will ensure that you:

- Are provided with information as soon as possible and in a way you will understand;
- Have an opportunity to engage with the Review Team, in accordance with your wishes;
- Receive regular updates on the progress of the review, as agreed between you and the link person (including when there are delays);
- Have the opportunity to provide feedback on:
 - Terms of Reference, depending on the level of review
 - The timeline of events
 - Findings or recommendations of the final draft report

- Receive a copy of the final report and given the opportunity to receive ongoing feedback on any recommendations/actions that have not already been implemented;
- Are facilitated to raise any concerns with the review process;
- Are facilitated to access support and advocacy services; and
- Are advised of your right to complain to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) at the end of the review process where you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the review. NIPSO impartially and independently investigates complaints about health and social care. The service is free. Details of how to contact them are included later in this document.

You have the right to access relevant information relating to the SAI review and this information is provided in an accessible format

You will be given information on the review process in a way you will understand.

You will be provided with assistance and support to access and understand information on the review process and, if required, arrangements put in place so that the process is modified to meet your individual needs. Assistance can be provided for:

- Person(s) with mental health issues;
- Person(s) with cognitive impairment;

- Person(s) with learning disabilities;
- Person(s) with different language or cultural considerations; and
- Person(s) who have communication needs such as hearing impaired and reduced vision.

In the case of children – where a child is judged to have the cognitive ability and emotional maturity to understand the information provided, he/she should be involved directly in the communication process.

You will be facilitated to access all relevant documentation in relation to the SAI review process in line with relevant data protection legislation and The Access to Health Records (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

There may be some occasions when we will not be able to share information with you. If this is the case we will explain the reasons for this.

You have the right to independent advice and support

The Patient and Client Council offer support to families involved in Serious Adverse Incident Reviews. The service is independent, confidential and free to use. You may contact the service at any stage during the SAI process. The Patient and Client Council offers practical support with letter writing, agreeing questions you may wish the review

to address, reviewing any written report with you and accompanying you to any meetings.

The Patient and Client Council can also assist you if you are unhappy with the outcome of the review or the way in which it was conducted and can assist you to make a complaint to a Health and Social Care organisation or a submission to the Ombudsman.

The purpose of Patient and Client Council support is to assist you through the process.

Patient Client Council can be contacted on:

Telephone: 08009170222

Email: complaints.pcc@hscni.net

Letter: Freepost Patient and Client Council

You have the right to approach the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

Your involvement in the review does not stop you pursuing any of your own concerns via another process including the Health and Social Care (HSC) Complaints process. In instances where concerns relate to personal or professional responsibility, these will be referred to the relevant department or professional body and will be dealt with outside the SAI review process.

If you remain dissatisfied with the HSC organisation's attempts to resolve any concerns regarding the SAI process, you have the right to approach NIPSO.

In doing so, the HSC organisation is required to notify you that the SAI review process has concluded. Once a case is under investigation but NIPSO, an SAI that is subject of that complaint may not normally be reopened. A NIPSO investigation can look at the SAI process and the original care and treatment that may lead to a SAI.

You can approach the NIPSO within six months of this notification.

NIPSO can be contacted on:

Telephone: 0800 343424

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Letter: Freepost NIPSO

How can you help?

As there will be an opportunity to improve services as part of this review you can help us by responding to any communication in a timely manner.

We hope you would like to be involved. However, if you choose not to be involved, we will respect your decision and should you change your mind you can contact us at any time.

We trust you will understand in exceptional circumstances it will not be possible for you to be part of the process. Where this is the case we will explain and record the reasons.