

Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI)

Information on SAIs for Service Users, their families and/or carers.

This is written for people who use our services, their families and/or carers.

Introduction

In some circumstances events are reported to the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) as Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs) to help identify learning, even when it is not clear something went wrong with treatment or care. For example we are required to report the death of any child receiving health or social care services (up to the age of 18 years), regardless of the cause of death.

When things do go wrong in health and social care it is important that we identify this, explain what has happened to those affected and learn lessons to ensure the same thing does not happen again. Investigation of SAIs is an important way of doing this.

What is a Serious Adverse Incident?

An SAI is an incident or event that must be reported to the HSCB and, in some cases, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and investigated. It may be:

- A clinical incident resulting in serious harm
- An unexpected or unexplained death
- An unexpected serious risk to wellbeing or safety, for example an outbreak of infection in hospital
- When a child has died
- Serious self-harm or serious assault
- Serious cases of theft, fraud, information breaches or data losses

The incident or event may affect service users, members of the public or staff.

Can a complaint become an SAI?

Yes, if during the investigation of a complaint we believe a SAI has occurred it will be reported to the HSCB. You will be informed of this and updated on progress.

How is the SAI investigated?

The investigation will take between 8 to 12 weeks. Depending on the circumstances of the SAI an appropriate level of investigation will be undertaken. If more time is required you will be kept informed of the reasons.

We will discuss with you how the SAI will be investigated and who will be involved. You may also wish to contribute. We will welcome your involvement as we believe your experiences may give vital insight into improving care.

Our goal is to find out what happened, why it happened and what can be done to prevent it from happening again and to explain this to those involved.

What happens once the investigation is complete?

We will seek to share the investigation findings with you. This will be done in a way that meets your needs and can include a meeting facilitated by Trust staff if that is acceptable to you.

How is the service user or their family / carers involved in the investigation?

A link person will be identified to provide contact with you throughout the investigation process. This person will ensure as soon as possible that you:

- Are made aware of the incident, the investigation and what this will entail
- Have the opportunity to express any concerns
- Will know how you can contribute to the investigation, for example share your experiences
- Are updated and advised if there are any delays
- Are offered the opportunity to meet and discuss the investigation findings
- Are offered a copy of the investigation report
- Are offered media advice, should the media make contact

How will learning be used to improve safety?

By investigating an incident we aim to find out what happened, how and why. By doing this we aim to identify appropriate actions which will prevent circumstances occurring again.

We believe that this process will help to restore the confidence of those affected by an SAI.

For each completed investigation:

- Recommendations may be identified and included within an action plan

- The implementation of any agreed actions will be monitored by the Trust's Quality & Safety Accountability Forum which is chaired by the Chief Executive.

We will always preserve your confidentiality while also ensuring that opportunities to do things better are shared throughout our organisation and the wider health and social care service.

Further Information

If you require any further information or have comments regarding the process the nominated link person will be happy to discuss these with you.

If not yet provided, the link person's name and contact details will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

Patient and Client Council

The Patient and Client Council offers independent confidential advice and support to people who have a concern about a Health and Social Care Service. This may include help with writing letters, making telephone calls or supporting you at meetings.

Contact details:

Free phone number: 0800 917 022

E-mail address: complaints.pcc@hscni.net

Generic SAI Information

As part of our process to improve quality and share learning, we may share the anonymised content of the SAI report with other Health & Social Care organisations.