

Guidance Name	The Safeguarding Enquiry and the Safeguarding Risk Enablement Risk Assessment
Version No.	V1
Approval Date	
Category	Operational
Classification	Internal

Practice Guidance - The Safeguarding Enquiry and the Safeguarding Risk Enablement Risk Assessment	
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Quality Statement

We work with people to understand what being safe means to them as well as with our partners on the best way to achieve this. We concentrate on improving people’s lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm, and neglect. We make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately.

- **I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage risk.**

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of a safeguarding enquiry is to establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect and if so, by who. Risk assessment and risk management is an important part of any safeguarding enquiry and supports the person to achieve the outcomes that matter to them and promote their individual wellbeing.

Risk is:

The likelihood that an event will occur with beneficial or harmful outcomes for a particular person or others with whom they come into contact.

Risk assessment is:

A product of the likelihood that an event will occur and the impact that it will have if it does occur.

Risk management is:

Weighing up the potential benefits and harms of exercising one choice of action over another, by identifying the potential risks involved and developing plans and actions that reflect the desired outcomes or the person.

1.2 It is important to clearly document the enquiry, including undertaking the risk enablement risk assessment and particularly documenting evidence associated with the experience or risk of abuse or neglect. The Safeguarding Enquiry Report and the Risk Enablement Risk Assessment will be used for this purpose.

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2. Safety Plan

2.1 A safety plan is put in place by the Safeguarding Early Response and Triage Team and reviewed by the Safeguarding Advanced Professional based on the information available prior to the completion of the enquiry to keep the person safe whilst the enquiry is in progress.

2.2 A safety plan will be in place when the enquiry is passed to the Enquiry Officer and is recorded at the top of the enquiry report. ***The Enquiry Officer is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the safety plan whilst completing the enquiry.*** The Enquiry Officer should record any additions or amendments to the safety plan at the top of the enquiry report and inform the Safeguarding Advanced Professional of any additions or amendments made.

3. Review of Need for Advocacy and Mental Capacity

3.1 The safeguarding enquiry should be completed with the person.

When the Enquiry Officer has met the person, they need to consider whether the person would have substantial difficulty in being fully involved in the enquiry. Substantial difficulty is defined in the Care Act 2014 and chapter 7, paragraphs 7.10 to 7.16 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance. It means that they have difficulty understanding relevant information, retaining information, using, or weighing the information as part of engaging and communicating their views, wishes and feelings. If the Enquiry Officer feels that the person would have substantial difficulty, the Enquiry Officer needs to consider whether they have an appropriate individual(s) to facilitate their involvement. This cannot be an involved professional, somebody the person does not want to support them, somebody who lives at a distance or only has occasional contact, somebody who finds it difficult to understand the safeguarding process, or anybody implicated in the alleged abuse or neglect. In these circumstances, a referral for an independent advocate should be made. Any decisions made or action taken should be recorded in the Enquiry Report.

3.2 The Enquiry Officer should also review whether there is reason to doubt the person's mental capacity to understand the risk to their safety and any immediate decisions that need to be made on the following grounds:

The person's behavior or circumstances cause doubt as to whether they have the capacity to understand the risks and make a decision.

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Somebody else says they are concerned about the person’s capacity, or
The person has previously been diagnosed with an impairment or disturbance that affects the way their mind or brain works, and it has already been shown they lack capacity to make other decisions in their life.

3.3 Where there is a reason to doubt the person’s capacity, an assessment of capacity should be completed by a professional who has the appropriate training and skills and knows the person best. Details of assessments undertaken, and best interest decisions should be recorded in the Enquiry Report.

3.4 Where a person lacks capacity or their ability to engage fluctuates, decisions should be made with as much involvement from the person as possible.

4. The Enquiry and Risk Enablement Risk Assessment

The enquiry and risk assessment cover the following stages, but it is not a linear process.



4.1 Understanding the Person’s circumstances

The Enquiry Officer must take the time to understand the person’s circumstances to inform the enquiry. The alleged abuse and neglect and associated risks should be considered within the life-context of the person and their circumstances. This will enable the impact on quality of life and individual wellbeing to be fully understood.

The Enquiry Officer should consider whether there are any factors which make the situation more complicated for the person and professionals. This could include issues like substance

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use, physical and mental illness, isolation, disputes between the family, difficulty in engaging the person and professionals not working together. This should be recorded in the Understand the Person’s Circumstances box on the Enquiry Report.

The understanding of the person’s circumstances should be included in all aspects of completing and recording the enquiry.

4.2 Identifying Risks and Protective Factors

The Enquiry Officer should ensure that following the Enquiry Planning discussion/meeting, they understand the details of the safeguarding concern. The Enquiry Officer should contact the Safeguarding Advanced Professional if they are unclear about the safeguarding concern.

The Enquiry Officer’s should support the person to identify, define and explore harmful outcomes associated with the safeguarding concern. This will allow consideration of the likelihood and impact of any risks and identify what actions need to be taken to support the person to feel safer and understand and manage any risks.

The Enquiry Officer should work with the person with or without the support of another person (appropriate person or independent advocate) to understand:

- The safeguarding concern – who is concerned and what they are concerned about?
- What is important to the person and what they want from the safeguarding response?
- What is working well, what strengths the person has and what is in place to support their safety?
- What impact the abuse or neglect will have on their wellbeing.

It may be necessary to have more than one interaction with the person to ascertain all the risks involved.

The Enquiry Officer then needs to identify risk perspectives from all the other people involved, including, but not limited to, family, friends, and other professionals. The Enquiry Officer needs to understand the level of concern and how much they believe the risk of abuse or neglect is mitigated by the areas of strength and protective factors that the person

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has identified.

The Safeguarding Risk Enablement Risk Assessment is used to consider the different areas of historic and current risk within a person’s situation. The Enquiry Officer will find a list of previous and current safeguarding concerns and enquiries listed at the top of the risk enablement risk assessment form. The Enquiry Office should review each area of risk listed, consider the views of all involved and record whether there is a past or present risk. They should then consider and record the person’s strengths, skills, and support networks in relation to each area of risk recorded. This will help the Enquiry Officer to be open to seeing new potential and possibilities using collective knowledge. The Enquiry Officer should then record the person’s view of the risks relating to risk of abuse or neglect. The Enquiry Officer should support the person to explore the risks that they are facing or are likely to face and the impact on them now or in the future. This should be recorded for each area of risk identified.

4.3 The Enquiry and Making Safeguarding Personal – Understanding the Desired Outcomes

Risk is part of everyday life for everybody including people with care and support needs. Promoting a Making Safeguarding Personal approach to safeguarding means that the Enquiry Officer needs to consider what is important to the person alongside the elements of risk present. The aim is to support the person to feel safe and to understand and manage any risks, not to eliminate any risk regardless of the consequences for the person.

The discussion about what is important to the person and what outcomes they want from the enquiry may take place alongside the identification of risks and protective factors as the person will need to understand the safeguarding concern and the identified risks in order to consider what is important to them and what they want from the enquiry, but it is very important that there is dedicated time for this discussion. The outcome of the discussion should be recorded in the Making Safeguarding Personal section of the enquiry report.

The Enquiry Officer has now identified the potential areas of risk and what the person wants from the enquiry. With this in mind, the Enquiry Officer should consider what action is needed to determine what has happened and / or what may happen in the future in relation to the safeguarding concern reported. This could involve completing interviews

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with those involved with the safeguarding concern, consulting records, completing visits and any other actions required. The actions taken should be recorded in the enquiry methodology section of the enquiry report.

The Enquiry Officer can contact the Safeguarding Advanced Professional at any time if they require support with the enquiry.

4.4 Assessing Risks: Impact and Likelihood

Once the risks have been clearly defined, the Enquiry Officer should explore with the person the impact and likelihood of each of the areas of risk identified.

The purpose of assessing risk is not to prevent the person from achieving their desired outcomes, it is to support them to make decisions that matter to them and to understand the impact and likelihood of all areas of risk alongside what is important to them.

It is essential that there is an evidence-based analysis of the severity and likelihood of harm.

Use the risk matrix below to determine your overall risk rating for each risk area by looking at the two intersecting factors – likelihood and impact.

4.5 How likely is this to occur?

The vertical likelihood rating is the assessment of how likely it is that the potential risk will reoccur in the future. So, if an incident has taken place and nothing has been put in place to stop it happening again this would be almost certain.

What is the degree of intent, immediacy/frequency of occurrence or re-occurrence? This should be proportionate to the potential consequences specified and must be based on good information and evidence and consider the same factors – is the information up to date? Is it relevant? Can it be evidenced?

What are the protective factors which could reduce the likelihood of the occurrence? Consider the strengths of the person’s current situation, the environment and what their family/friends/other support network are or can contribute.

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4.6 How severe would the impact be?

The horizontal impact rating is the assessment of the severity of the risk so if a further incident would lead to death, then the impact would be catastrophic. It is important to consider both a best-case and worst-case scenario.

What are the protective factors which could reduce the severity of the impact?

4.7 Risk rating

Using the table below, assess the likelihood and impact for each area of risk to determine the overall risk rating e.g., if the likelihood is almost certain and the impact is moderate, then the overall risk rating is high. This should be recorded on for each area of risk on the risk enablement risk assessment.

		Impact			
Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Rare	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Unlikely	Negligible	Low	Low	Moderate	High
Possible	Negligible	Low	Moderate	High	High
Likely	Negligible	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Almost Certain	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme

When individual areas of risk have been rated record the areas of risk identified and the

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overall risk rating for each area. Then using the table above assess the overall risk assessment rating and record this and your rationale for the rating selected in the box.

4.8 Risk Escalation

If during the enquiry and risk enablement risk assessment you feel that the:

- Risk/concerns are higher than originally thought during enquiry planning, or
- More victims or potential victims are identified, or
- The potential for organisational abuse is identified.

Contact the Safeguarding Advanced Professional.

4.9 Enquiry Findings and Managing Risks

When the enquiry is complete the Enquiry Officer should record the information that they have collated in the enquiry findings section of the enquiry report. The recording of the risk of harm in the future should be based on the overall rating and rationale from the risk enablement risk assessment.

In the section marked What needs to happen now, the Enquiry Officer should record their recommendations for actions required to address the risk of future harm and how each recommendation addresses the desired outcomes of the person. The Enquiry Officer should also record how accepting the person is of the recommendations. Please note that the recommendations will need to be confirmed during the Safeguarding Planning so the person needs to be aware that they are only recommendations at this stage and that there will be further opportunity to comment when these are discussed with the person and others involved.

When the enquiry is complete it should be returned to the Safeguarding Advanced Professional.

5. Quality Assurance Feedback

If the Safeguarding Advanced Professional is concerned that:

- The types of harm identified in the concern have not been addressed, or
- The supporting evidence is not sufficient, or
- The analysis is not thorough or legally literate, or
- The person was not supported, or
- The person was not fully involved.

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The enquiry will be returned to the Enquiry Officer. The Safeguarding Advanced Professional will discuss the issues with the Enquiry Officer and will record details in the Quality Assurance Feedback section. The Enquiry Officer should update the enquiry with the additional information required and return it to the Safeguarding Advanced Professional.

Please note – Quality Assurance Feedback will not be visible on the printed version of the enquiry shared with the person and others.

6. Acknowledgement

Worcestershire County Council wishes to acknowledge the work of [SCIE](#) in the development of this guidance.

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Appendix: Safeguarding Model Flow Chart

