

Solihull safeguarding adults risk assessment

The governing principle behind good approaches to choice and risk is that people have the right to live their lives to the full as long as that does not stop others from doing the same. Fear of supporting people to take reasonable risks in their daily lives can prevent them from doing the things that most people take for granted.

What needs to be considered is how 'happy' a person is with the situation and how safe they feel/how safe are other adults with care and support needs. By taking account of the benefits in terms of independence, wellbeing and choice, it should be possible for a person to have a support/care plan which enables them to manage identified risks and to live their lives in ways which best suit them.

The emphasis must be on sensible risk appraisal, not striving to avoid all risk, whatever the price, but instead seeking a proper balance and being willing to tolerate manageable or acceptable risks as the price appropriately to be paid in order to achieve some other good – in particular to achieve the vital good of the elderly or vulnerable person's happiness. What good is it making someone safer if it merely makes them miserable?

Lord Justice Munby (Local Authority X v MM (By the Official Solicitor) and KM [2007] EWHC 2003 (Fam))

What is reasonable risk?

- Everyone perceives risk differently.
- It is often viewed negatively and can prevent people from doing things that most people take for granted.
- It is about striking a balance between empowering people to make choices, while supporting them to take informed everyday risks.
- The governing principle behind good approaches to choice and risk is people have the right to live their lives to the full as long as that doesn't stop others from doing the same.
- In the decision-making process we should help people to identify areas that might be potentially unsafe/harmful to them and what makes them unhappy so that together measures that reduce the risk and promote independence can be identified together.

Important things to consider:

- **Harm** – always take account of the individual's perception. What impact has it had on the person?
- The individual's **capacity** to understand what has happened and to make decisions in relation to the Safeguarding Adults concerns.
- Whether **duress** or **coercion** is an influence.
- Whether the incident is one of a **pattern or trend** in respect of the adult with care and support needs, the person causing the harm, the location of the abuse or the nature of the abuse. Consider whether it is indicating a systemic abuse issue.
- The **relationship** between the adult at risk and the person causing the harm. Does it involve a person in a position of trust?
- Whether any measures or actions have been put in place to minimise risk and protect the individual or other adults at risk.
- How likely is it that the abuse may **re-occur**?
- Is there a likelihood others were exposed or could be exposed to the harm or abuse?
- What evidence and information you have to inform your decisions.
- Ensure everything is fully recorded.
- Has a crime been committed against the adult at risk?

In order to put these principles into practice, risk assessment and safeguarding planning need to take place in the context of an open conversation and negotiation with the person who may be experiencing the risk.

The following tools are designed to support conversations with people who have care and support needs, their representatives, carers and other professionals. Rather than focusing solely on the impact and consequence of the potential harm, they also focus on how happy the person is with the situation and how content they are to take the risk.

How to use the risk assessment tools

There are two risk assessment tools in this guide. The first is entitled **Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool**. It should be used as soon as a Safeguarding Concern is received and throughout the decision making and enquiry process, and may be done with or without the person being physically present. Whether or not the person is there, it is essential that their views (or those of their representative if they lack capacity to make the relevant decisions) shape the outcome of the risk assessment. The second part is entitled **Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment for Safety Tool** and is designed to be used with the person and anybody else who is supporting them. It is intended to help the person weigh up the different options available to them and choose one that they feel most comfortable with.

Safeguarding duties under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014

- (1) This section applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) -
 - (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
 - (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
 - (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.
- (2) The local authority must make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken in the adult's case (whether under this Part or otherwise) and, if so, what and by whom.
- (3) "Abuse" includes financial abuse; and for that purpose "financial abuse" includes—
 - (a) having money or other property stolen,
 - (b) being defrauded,
 - (c) being put under pressure in relation to money or other property, and
 - (d) having money or other property misused.

How to use the tools

Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool - This is the standard tool to use when determining the type of safeguarding response to take, and may be used:

- To determine whether or not to raise a safeguarding concern, with the person's consent wherever possible.
 - Minimal Harm should not be reported as a safeguarding concern.
 - Low Harm – should be discussed with Adult Social Care.
 - Moderate Harm and Severe Harm **MUST** be reported as a Safeguarding Concern – with the person's consent wherever possible.
- To determine what alternative response may be required if safeguarding action is not the appropriate response.
 - Other actions to address concerns may include, for example, police complaint, disciplinary investigation, support to make a complaint to the local authority, signposting, referral to Care Quality, advocacy.
- To determine whether or not an enquiry under Section 42 of the Care Act is required (local authority only).

Stage 1: First use the **Example Harm Descriptors** to establish the level of harm someone is at risk of experiencing, related to the type/s of abuse which the concern is about. *Be aware there may be more than one category of abuse – one type of harm may impact on another – e.g. repeated small incidents of physical/financial abuse may lead to emotional distress*

Stage 2: Then ascertain the persons understanding of the risk, and what their view is about this, using the **Happiness/safety risk matrix**. Make a record of each area where there is a risk. **The person's views must be obtained either directly or indirectly by the person raising the concern or someone acting as their representative.**

Safeguarding Adults Planning for Safety Tool

This tool is designed to be used when somebody is unsure which options to pursue to keep themselves safe, or when carrying out a safeguarding plan. To use the Safeguarding Adults Planning for Safety Tool:

Stage 1: Discuss the concerns, desired outcomes and all available options with the person, making it clear where there are any differences of opinion, and record each on the **Safeguarding Adults Planning for Safety Tool** in the table.

Stage 2: Use the **Happiness/Safety Risk Matrix** to discuss how happy the person is with each option. The risk rating will give an indication of whether the proposed option is likely to be safe, and whether or not it is likely to make the person happy. This can be used to discuss and agree the best options for the person.

The person's views (or those of their representative) must always be obtained.

NOTE: These tools replace the previous Safeguarding Risk Assessment tool (Solihull Local Practice Guidance 14).

Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool

Example Harm Descriptors – to help to determine level of harm

	Abuse Type Safety	Physical	Psychological	Neglect	Sexual	Financial	Discriminatory	Organisational	Domestic Abuse	Self-neglect	Modern Slavery
NOT SAFEGUARDING	<p>“I am currently safe”</p> <p>There is MINIMAL harm to the person or others and there is no indication that the harm will re-occur.</p>	Minor injury with explanation that does not require a skilled medical response e.g. surface wound, bruising.	No psychological harm.	Single omission, not impacting on overall safety and wellbeing.	Single incident with no lasting emotional or physical harm.	Sum of money lost, no lasting impact on wellbeing.	Single incident with no lasting emotional or physical harm.	Single incident concerning more than one individual, but not impacting on overall safety and wellbeing.	Isolated incident which does not amount to a pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour.	The person has unmet care and support needs or risky behaviours but these can be met via information and advice, signposting or assessment, care and support planning.	Not applicable – indicators of modern slavery are serious and will always require police intervention.
SCREEN FOR SAFEGUARDING – refer/proceed to happiness/safety matrix	<p>“I am currently quite safe”</p> <p>There is LOW harm to the person or others. There is some indication that low-level harm may re-occur.</p>	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	Intermittent psychological distress linked to individual incidents but not causing persistent impact on wellbeing.	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	As minimal harm but with a risk of re-occurrence or emergence of a pattern which causes concern.	Not applicable – indicators of coercive and controlling behaviour will always require safeguarding consideration.	Behaviours that result in risk to wellbeing, but this risk is not considered significant. The person may be accepting of limited support.	Not applicable – indicators of modern slavery are serious and will always require police intervention.
	<p>“It is not currently certain whether I am safe”</p> <p>There is MODERATE harm to the person or others, either one-off or with some indication that harm may re-occur in future.</p>	Injury requiring a skilled medical response (possibly requiring an inpatient admission to hospital) but where the person is expected to fully recover.	Psychological wellbeing is persistently affected.	Several omissions causing distress and having impact on overall safety and wellbeing of the person.	Emotional or physical harm requiring medical/psychological treatment or support.	Sum of money lost, impacting negatively on wellbeing in the longer term.	Emotional or physical harm requiring medical/psychological treatment or support.	Several incidents causing distress and having impact on overall safety and wellbeing of multiple individuals.	Coercive and/or controlling behaviour resulting in emotional or physical harm requiring medical/psychological treatment or support (even if this is not sought).	Behaviours that result in significant risk to wellbeing and the person. They may be accepting of limited support.	Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour or domestic servitude resulting in emotional or physical harm requiring medical/psychological treatment or support.
	<p>“I am currently not very safe”</p> <p>There is MODERATE harm to the person or others. There are indications that harm is currently ongoing.</p>	Injury resulting in disability or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Severe psychological trauma requiring ongoing support and/or treatment, possibly lifelong.	Ongoing and frequent neglect that is causing serious and imminent risk to safety and wellbeing.	Severe physical or emotional trauma requiring ongoing medical/psychological treatment resulting in disability or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Major financial loss resulting in person not being able to meet their basic needs in the longer term.	Severe physical or emotional trauma requiring ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Persistent practices which result in significant and serious impact to the safety and wellbeing of multiple individuals.	Coercive or controlling behaviour resulting in severe physical or emotional trauma. The person requires ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Behaviours that result in serious and imminent risk to own safety and wellbeing and where the person has persistently refused support.	Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour or domestic servitude resulting in severe physical or emotional trauma. The person requires ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.
SCREEN FOR SAFEGUARDING – refer/proceed to happiness/safety matrix	<p>“I am currently not safe at all”</p> <p>There is SEVERE, ongoing harm to the person or others (resulting from one-off or re-occurring severe incidents).</p>	Injury resulting in disability or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Severe psychological trauma requiring ongoing support and/or treatment, possibly lifelong.	Ongoing and frequent neglect that is causing serious and imminent risk to safety and wellbeing.	Severe physical or emotional trauma requiring ongoing medical/psychological treatment resulting in disability or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Major financial loss resulting in person not being able to meet their basic needs in the longer term.	Severe physical or emotional trauma requiring ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Persistent practices which result in significant and serious impact to the safety and wellbeing of multiple individuals.	Coercive or controlling behaviour resulting in severe physical or emotional trauma. The person requires ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.	Behaviours that result in serious and imminent risk to own safety and wellbeing and where the person has persistently refused support.	Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour or domestic servitude resulting in severe physical or emotional trauma. The person requires ongoing medical/psychological treatment or ongoing significantly increased care and support needs.

Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool
Happiness/Safety Risk Matrix – to determine the overall level of risk

***N.B. If the person lacks capacity to understand the risk of harm and make a decision about how this should be managed, then their advocate/representative(s) should be consulted in order to make a best interest determination.**

Safety	Happiness				
	A "I am happy with the situation" OR "I don't have any concerns about my wellbeing" OR "I do not wish to take further action"	B "I am mostly happy with the situation but have some concerns" OR "I have some minor concerns about my wellbeing" OR "I would like one or more minor issues addressed"	C "I am unhappy about aspects of the situation" OR "I have concerns about my wellbeing" OR "I would like some one or more significant issues addressed"	D "I am unhappy with the situation" OR "I have significant concerns about my wellbeing" OR "I would like one or more serious issues addressed"	E "I am very unhappy with the situation" OR "I feel that my wellbeing is severely compromised" OR "I would like one or more very serious issues addressed"
1 "I am currently safe" There is MINIMAL harm to the person or others and there is no indication that the harm will re-occur.	No further action required under safeguarding.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider what other actions may address the person's concerns*.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider what other actions may address the person's concerns*.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider what other actions may address the person's concerns*.	No further action required under safeguarding. Ensure that action is taken to address the person's concerns*.
2 "I am currently quite safe" There is LOW harm to the person or others. There is some indication that low-level harm may re-occur.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider whether risk of re-occurrence can be lowered by straightforward actions*.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider what other actions may address the person's concerns*.	No further action required under safeguarding. Consider what other actions may address the person's concerns*.	No further action required under safeguarding but other action should be taken*.	No further action required under safeguarding but other action should be taken*.
3 "It is not currently certain whether I am safe" There is MODERATE harm to the person or others, either one-off or with some indication that harm may re-occur in future.	Consider the impact on others. Safeguarding action may be necessary if there are capacity issues or other people at risk. Other actions may also be needed*.	Consider the impact on others. Safeguarding action may be necessary if there are capacity issues or other people at risk. Other actions may also be needed*.	Safeguarding action should be considered if immediate actions are unable to minimise likelihood of repeat harm. If safeguarding not undertaken, consider other actions*.	Safeguarding action should normally be taken. If not, other actions should be taken to address concerns*.	Safeguarding action is likely to be necessary in the first instance. If this is not appropriate, other action must be taken and a clear rationale given*.
4 "I am currently not very safe" There is MODERATE harm to the person or others. There are indications that harm is currently ongoing.	Consider the impact on others. Safeguarding action is likely to be necessary if there are capacity issues or other people at risk. Other actions may also be needed*.	Consider the impact on others. Safeguarding action is likely to be necessary unless harm can be minimised by means of other immediate actions. Other actions may also be needed*.	Safeguarding action is likely to be necessary unless harm can be minimised by means of other immediate actions*.	Safeguarding action is likely to be necessary in the first instance. If this is not appropriate, other action must be taken and a clear rationale given*.	Take action under safeguarding and consider whether there is a need for an interim safeguarding plan*.
5 "I am currently not safe at all" There is SEVERE , ongoing harm to the person or others (resulting from one-off or re-occurring severe incidents).	Safeguarding action will be necessary in the first instance. Work with the person to help them accept support and understand the risk. Consider the need for an interim safeguarding plan.	Safeguarding action will be necessary in the first instance. Work with the person to help them accept support and understand the risk. Consider the need for an interim safeguarding plan.	Take action under safeguarding and consider whether there is a need for an interim safeguarding plan.	Take action under safeguarding and consider whether there is a need for an interim safeguarding plan.	Take action under safeguarding and consider whether there is a need for an interim safeguarding plan.

* Other actions to address concerns may include, for example, police complaint, disciplinary investigation, support to make a complaint to the local authority, signposting, referral to Care Quality, advocacy.

Safeguarding Adults Risk Assessment and Threshold Tool

How to record the risk assessment

The following are suggested prompts to provide consistency of approach:

1. How safe is the person?

- a) Provide harm statement from matrix (e.g. "I am currently not very safe" - *Refer to harm level descriptors for guidance*).
- b) Describe the level of harm which the person is experiencing/at risk of experiencing (severity of the harm or potential harm, impact on person's wellbeing and any other relevant factors) and explain why you think the harm/potential harm is minimal, low, moderate or severe (*Refer to harm level descriptors*).

2. How happy/unhappy is the person with their situation?

- a) Provide "happiness" statement from matrix
Use the letter and select the statement which the person would be most comfortable with, e.g. "B - I am mostly happy with the situation but have some concerns", "D - I have significant concerns about my wellbeing" or "E - I would like one or more very serious issues addressed".
- b) Describe the person's views about their situation – how happy/unhappy are they and/or to what extent do they want action to be taken? If you did not speak to the person, please explain how their views or perspective were obtained (*Refer to happiness/safety matrix*).

3. Overall risk rating (e.g. Amber 3xC or Amber 4xB, Red 5xD etc)

4. Based on the risk rating, will further action be taken under safeguarding?

5. If no further action will be taken under safeguarding, are any other actions required in order to address any concerns the person has?

What to do if the person's views cannot be obtained at the concern stage

Every attempt should be made to obtain the person's views, or those of their representative, if they lack capacity. The person's views may be obtained via a reliable third party who has spoken to the individual. However, there are sometimes circumstances in which it is not possible to obtain the views of the person at the concern stage. In these circumstances:

1. How safe is the person?

Record how safe the person is believed to be, by providing the harm statement from the matrix that best describes the person's circumstances, e.g. "It is not currently certain whether I am safe". If recording in the first person seems inappropriate, use the descriptors underneath, e.g. "There is MODERATE harm to the person or others, either one-off or with some indication that harm may re-occur in future".

2. How happy/unhappy is the person with their situation?

Record "Not known at this stage".

3. Overall risk rating

Record "Unable to provide risk rating without person's views".

4. Based on the risk rating, will further action be taken under safeguarding?

If the person is currently safe or quite safe (MINIMAL or LOW harm), no further action is needed under safeguarding.. If it is not certain whether the person is not safe, they are not very safe or not safe at all (MODERATE or SEVERE harm), safeguarding procedures must continue to be followed until the person's views can be obtained.

5. If no further action will be taken under safeguarding, are any other actions required in order to address any concerns the person has?

If harm is low or minimal, contact may still need to be made with the person to establish whether other action needs to be taken.

Safeguarding Adults Planning for Safety Tool

Stage 1: Discuss all available options and agree outcomes

<p>What are the person’s or their representative’s concerns?</p>	<p>What outcomes does the person or their representative/s want? <i>What is important to you and/or how you would like things to be in the future in relation to this?</i></p>	<p>What are our (person/organisation leading the enquiry) concerns?</p>	<p>What are the options? <i>How accepting is the person and/or their representative to the options?</i></p>	<p>What are the benefits of this option? <i>How ‘happy’ will this option make the person?</i></p>	<p>What might go wrong with this option? <i>How unsafe could this option leave the person or others?</i></p>	<p>Is the plan acceptable/safe for the person? <i>refer to happiness and safety overleaf – prefer lower scoring options</i></p>
						<p>Example: Amber 3xC or Amber 4xB, Red 5xD etc</p>

Safeguarding Adults Planning for Safety Tool

Happiness/Safety Plan Matrix – to determine an acceptable plan for the person

Happiness/ Safety	Happiness				
	A	B	C	D	E
Safety	"I am very happy with this option"	"I am happy with this option but have some concerns"	"I am not sure about this option"	"I am unhappy with this option"	"I am very unhappy with this option"
1 "This option makes me safe"	These strategies should be taken forward in the first instance	These strategies should be taken forward in the first instance	Attempt to explain the benefits of the option to increase acceptance Consider alternatives?	Find out what the individual is unhappy with and review and revise	Options that someone is very unhappy with should be reconsidered
2 "This option makes me quite safe"	These strategies should be taken forward in the first instance	These strategies should be taken forward	Attempt to explain the benefits of the option to increase acceptance Consider alternatives?	Find out what the individual is unhappy with and review and revise	Options that someone is very unhappy with should be reconsidered
3 "It is not certain whether this option will make me safe"	Identify safety strategies to increase confidence	Identify safety strategies to increase confidence	Find out what the individual is not happy with and why they feel it will not keep them safe and review and revise	Find out what the individual is unhappy with and review and revise	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.
4 "This option does not make me very safe"	Identify safety strategies to increase confidence	Identify safety strategies to increase confidence	Find out what the individual is not happy with and why they feel it will not keep them safe and review and revise	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.
5 "This option does not make me safe at all"	If someone is not feeling safe at all the option should be reconsidered	If someone is not feeling safe at all the option should be reconsidered	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.	The person is unhappy and unlikely to be safe – reconsider plan.