

Guidance for working with Non-Engaged Adults

This guidance should be considered by all organisations, to include in their own single agency policies and procedures when working with adults aged 18 or over, who are not engaged with services leading to professional concern about unknown or emerging risk. This guidance should be taken to assess if non-engagement from the adult, or family increases risk. This guidance does not replace organisational policies and procedures. If a safeguarding risk is identified, [Joint Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](#) should be followed and [report a concern](#) to Gateway to Care. If you suspect a crime has been committed it should be reported to the Police.

What methods have you used to try to engage with the individual?

- Establish if the adult is still living at the known address and contact details are up to date.
- Calls / Letters to the [adult at risk](#) or their [carer](#)/ Appointments – consider if these are in an accessible format for the adult.
- Home visits/ Joint visits with other services who the adult is engaged with.
- Consider relationship factors – is there anything that you could do to build your relationship with the individual? Where might be the best place to meet with the person? Would the person work better with a colleague from another background e.g. different gender, sexuality, ethnicity?
- What do you know about the person's previous experience of trauma and how might this change your approach to avoid re-traumatisation?
- Are there other agencies or Family members who can help? Does anyone have a good relationship with the individual who may be able to assist? e.g. another professional, trusted family member
- Consider other ways to gain access to the person / property e.g. fire risk assessment, safe and well check, gas safety check?
- Is there another route to engage with the adult? e.g. Carers Assessment

What are the concerns / issues?

- Consider what the potential barriers to engagement are and how you may overcome these?
- Is there potential coercion or control from a carer, family member or other person that is preventing engagement with services?
- Consider whether it is appropriate to contact a carer, as it could increase risk.
- Is the person making decisions under duress that may be contrary to their health / wellbeing?
- Is the person suffering poor physical / mental health?
- Safeguarding concerns of abuse / neglect

Next Steps:

- Do not close a case without discussing with line manager or in supervision
- Consider the risks of the adult not engaging with the service - complete a risk assessment*
- Consider the individual's rights to refuse support - do they understand the risks?
- Consider completing a [mental capacity \(re\) assessment](#)/ [mental health \(re\)assessment](#) relating to the risk identified. Consider executive functioning.
- Consider arranging a [multi-agency professionals meeting](#) to risk assess and plan with other relevant agencies
- Do not assume another professional is already doing something – communicate and share information with relevant agencies**
- Seek legal advice and advice from partner agencies.
- Consider [reporting a Safeguarding Concern](#) -
- Consider using the [escalation procedure](#) if there is professional disagreement between agencies

**Risk assessments should be routinely completed when a case is to be closed because of limited or no engagement or missing clinical appointments. As part of this there is a requirement to actively check with other agencies known to be in contact with the person. Use your own organisational risk assessment.*

***You should proportionately [share information](#) about clients in a safeguarding situation.*

Inaction could lead to:

- Risk to the adult including abuse, neglect, injury, or even death
- Risks to neighbours and others in the neighbouring community
- Risk to your professional status
- Risk to the organisation you work for: Organisations reputation, Negative media coverage, compensation/damages.

Have I used professional curiosity?

- Am I avoiding conflict? Taking the word of the family member rather than speaking to the adult themselves?
- Am I minimising negative information in order to avoid provoking a reaction?
- Am I hesitant to share my concerns in order to avoid confrontation?
- Am I keeping my concerns to myself or am I sharing them with my line manager or others in my circle of support?
- Am I relieved when there is no answer at the door?
- Am I focussing on the family needs not the needs of the adult at risk?

With acknowledgement and thanks to Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board who produced the original version