



Keeping Adults Safe  
in Shropshire  
Board

Guidance on risk assessment and risk  
management  
within the Adult Safeguarding process

<b>Team</b>	Shropshire Council Adult Safeguarding Team	<b>Author(s)</b>	Sarah Hollinshead-Bland <i>(with grateful thanks to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership Board)</i>
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		Ivan Powell



In any potentially abusive situation, the level of harm the abuse has posed to an adult will be assessed and identified; good risk assessment supports proportionate intervention.

Risk assessment of **future** danger is integral to the Safeguarding process. This assessment of danger is built into each level of the process and the documentation reflects this.

The initial judgement will be about the harm that is known to have occurred as a result of the alleged abuse or neglect.

Once the level of harm has been established, the likelihood of future harm (danger) must be considered and this will inform future action. The assessment of danger will guide decisions on interventions and the priority of the response.

The definitions in the tables below will be used at every stage in the process to establish the **current** level of danger posed to the individual. This enables the adult and others involved to develop a Safeguarding Plan that is proportionate to the level of danger for the individual. Enquiries will recognise all protective factors and ensure that safeguarding measures do not cause greater disruption or distress to the adult than was caused by the alleged abuse or neglect. Protective measures must offer **better choices and opportunities than those that previously existed**.

No assumptions should be made because of an adult's disability or mental disorder that the harm associated with abuse or neglect will be less serious than if they might not have a disability or mental disorder.

Consideration will also be given to assessing the danger to other adults. For example, when it is alleged that a staff member, volunteer or organisation has abused or neglected an adult, the level of harm to others should always be assessed and fully recorded in the relevant documentation.

In the course of carrying out Section 42 enquiries and creating safeguarding plans, safety outcomes will be identified and these will be key measures in determining the effectiveness of the process both from the point of view of the adult and for the local authority.

The danger to the adult will be reviewed throughout any enquiry. A key principle and success measure of the Safeguarding process is to demonstrate that the danger to the adult/s has been reduced and that desired safety outcomes have been achieved.

The assessment of the danger will include balancing the protective factors (e.g. supportive relationships, insight, the ability to seek help and plan for the future) and those that could cause harm. This ensures the assessment of risk will become personalised to the individual.

Consideration will also need to be given to the following:

- The level of threat to independence.
- The impact of the alleged abuse or neglect on the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the adult.
- The duration and frequency of the alleged abuse or neglect.
- The extent and degree of the alleged abuse or neglect.
- The level of personal support needed by the adult and whether that support is normally provided by the potential source of risk.
- The apparent extent of premeditation, threat or coercion.
- The context in which the alleged abuse or neglect takes place.
- Potential risks to other adults or children.

The danger will be recorded in line with the scoring levels shown below, using the impact and likelihood shown in the following table **after** taking into account any protective aspects that might mitigate the impact or likelihood of the abuse.

Safeguarding staff and others will work together to ensure that they share information to arrive at a considered assessment of the danger that takes account of the views of the adult and of the other agencies involved. The greater the shared ownership of the assessment, the better the chance of real protection to the adult.

It is not acceptable for any agency to base its own decision-making about the risk of harm purely on the assessment of risk provided by another agency, for example, the fact that the harm may have been insufficient to sustain a criminal prosecution cannot be used to justify a failure to act in respect of other processes for example disciplinary processes. Each agency is accountable for ensuring that they identify the levels of danger relevant to the presenting concerns.



**LEVELS OF HARM – TO BE USED IN RELATION TO BOTH HARM THAT HAS OCCURRED AND HARM THAT IS ANTICIPATED**

None	To be used when abuse is disproved, not substantiated or removed.
Low level of harm (A)	Misuse or theft of small amounts of money or property  Lack of care leads to discomfort or inconvenience but no significant injury  Occasional harassment, taunts or verbal outbursts  Isolated assaults that cause temporary marks, minor injury or no lasting distress
Medium level of harm (B)	Injury causing lasting marks, temporary discomfort or incapacity or requiring a period of treatment or care  Repeated assaults that cause distress and injury  Misuse / misappropriation of benefits, properties and possessions leading to short or medium term difficulties in budgeting or income  Continued neglect that has caused a limited period of distress and/or physical harm requiring clinical intervention  People other than the alleged victim (e.g. children, relatives, other residents or service users) are disturbed or distressed by the abuse.
High level of harm (C)	Serious physical harm, risk to life or permanent injury  Rape or serious sexual assault  Life threatening neglect or negligence  Harassment and/or threats leading to lasting psychological harm  Major financial loss leading to significant changes in lifestyle and autonomy  Risk to life or lasting psychological harm to others.



## ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF DANGER

		Severity of Impact			
		No Impact	Low Impact (A)	Medium Impact (B)	High Impact (C)
Likelihood	Unlikely	None 0	Low 2	Low 3	Medium 7
	Possible	Low 1	Low 2	Medium 6	High 9
	Likely	Low 1	Medium 4	High 8	High 10
	Certain	Low 1	Medium 5	High 8	High 10

Example: X has been raped and a Safeguarding Concern has been raised. The level of harm is *High*. The alleged rapist has not yet been arrested and X continues to be distressed and fearful. Some protective measures are in place and so the likelihood of further harm is *Possible*. On the matrix this shows as:

*High Impact + Possible = score of 9* and the danger continues to be *High*.

Example: A Safeguarding Concern has been raised about Y. £14,000 has allegedly been stolen from the person's account by their daughter. The person has a significant estate and the loss of this amount does not pose a threat to their independence. The level of harm is *Medium*. Effective protective measures are in place and so the likelihood of further harm is *Unlikely*. On the matrix this shows as:

*Medium Impact + Unlikely = score of 3* and the danger continues to be *Low*.