

Guidance Where the Individual or Family are Not Engaging with Services

Individual/Family is not engaging with services

Am I concerned just because they are not engaging or do I have evidence that non-engagement increases risk?

Ask Yourself

- Do I feel at risk?
- Am I colluding to avoid conflict i.e. taking the word of family members rather than speaking to the individual themselves?
- Am I minimising negative information in order to avoid provoking a reaction?
- Am I hesitant to share my concerns to avoid confrontation?
- Am I keeping concerns to myself or am I sharing them with my manager?
- 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?

Strategies to Consider

- Calls
 - Home Visits / Joint Visit
 - Letters
 - Appointments
 - Other agencies
 - GP Contact
 - Trusted Family Member
 - Carer's assessment
 - Line Manager Discussion
 - Take action
- DO NOT CLOSE THE CASE*

Concerns/Issues Raised

- Mental Capacity Act
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding Alert
- Family Pressure
- Family acting as gatekeeper?
- Capacity but still vulnerable?
- Situational Capacity
- Duress?

Next Steps

- Do not close the case
- Discuss with your Line Manager
- Complete a Risk Assessment
- Consider a Mental Health Assessment
- Consider a Mental Capacity assessment
- Do not assume that someone else is doing something, communicate with colleagues and partner agencies
- Seriously consider a Team Around the Adult (TAA) meeting. Practitioners from different partner agencies need the opportunity to share information and discuss the best way forward
- Seek legal advice
- Seek advice from partner agencies
- Safeguarding Referral?

Inaction could lead to...

Risk to Individual

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Injury
- Death

Risk to Agencies

- Safeguarding Adult Review
- Organisational reputation issues
- Negative Media Coverage
- Compensation / Damages

Risk to Practitioner

- Disciplinary Action
- Dismissal

Important Reminders:

- Risk assessments should be routinely completed when a case is to be closed because of a failure to co-operate/engage or keep clinical appointments. As part of this there is a requirement to actively check with other partner agencies known to be in contact with the individual.
- You are able to share information about clients in a safeguarding situation. Please check the [OSAB Data Sharing Agreement](#) and/or ask advice if you have any queries.

The Key Principles of Engagement

1	<h3>Preferred Communication Methods</h3> <p>Ask the individual what their preferred method of communication is. Knowing how the individual prefers to be communicated with will improve the chances of them being able to engage. Take into account factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual's ability to read and write• Language - what is the individual's first language? Is it possible to provide information in a different language/format?• Does the individual have a sensory impairment? If so, what support do they require to help them engage? For example, this could include the use of an interpreter.• Safety, for example, if the person is experiencing Domestic Abuse, is it safe to send a letter to their address?
2	<h3>Impact of Vulnerabilities on Ability to Engage</h3> <p>Recognise the extent to which an individual's vulnerability may impact on their ability to engage. Consider factors such as Learning Disability, substance use and capacity. Always consider what you know about an individual's vulnerability and the extent to which it may impact on their ability to engage.</p>
3	<h3>Mental Capacity Act</h3> <p>Remember to use the Mental Capacity Act to empower individuals to make decisions and support individuals who may lack the capacity to make some decisions. Remember to consider the extent to which an individual's capacity to engage with services may have been affected by threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour.</p>
4	<h3>Consequences of Non-Engagement</h3> <p>When considering an individual's capacity in relation to engagement it is really important to consider whether they understand the consequences of non-engagement. The risks might relate to areas such as their health, access to benefits or offers of care and support.</p>
5	<h3>Trusting Relationship with the Lead Professional</h3> <p>Where possible, identify a Lead Professional to build up a trusting relationship with the individual. It is really helpful for the individual if they have an identified lead worker. The Lead Professional will be in a vital position for monitoring trends of engagement, sharing information and assisting the individual through service navigation. The Lead Professional may change depending on the circumstances of the case and the management of risk remains a shared responsibility. See the OSAB Lead Professional Guidance. As part of the safeguarding adults process consideration must also be given to whether the individual may benefit from the support of an independent advocate.</p>
6	<h3>No Assumptions</h3> <p>When an individual's circumstances change, or concerns arise about their lack of engagement, don't presume that other practitioners are aware. Build up good relationships with practitioners from partner agencies and ensure that information is shared appropriately, using safeguarding procedures if required. Where a Safeguarding Protection Plan is in place, it should be clear how information will be shared between all agencies involved, including how concerns will be escalated if the individual's lack of engagement continues to be a risk factor.</p>
7	<h3>Careful and Accurate Record Keeping</h3> <p>The language used in your recording can make a big difference. Terms like "failed to attend" and "difficult to engage with" place the emphasis solely on the individual, there may be external factors impacting on their ability to engage. Recording of this nature can also affect the way another practitioner may approach the case.</p>
8	<h3>Fluctuating Engagement</h3> <p>Just because an individual has not engaged in the past, it does not mean that this will always be the case, this time it might be different. Be tenacious and always let them know that services are available should they need them.</p>