

“ we’re
supporting
people who
use services,
and carers ”

Keeping risk person-centred

November 2011



The government's *Vision for adult social care, capable communities and active citizens* (DH 2010) is that social care becomes more personalised, more preventative, with services that are more focused on delivering the best outcomes for those who use them. This direction of travel requires renewed and refreshed creative thinking about who will be providing adult social care, as well about support for people who use services to take informed risks.

The move to self-directed support and personal budgets includes the option for people to have a direct payment to purchase their own support. Some commentators have been concerned about potential challenges for practitioners in balancing risk enablement with their professional duty of care for self-directed support and personal budgets. Personal budgets have sometimes been misunderstood, leading to the idea that people will be left unsupported in organising their own services and will have to take full responsibility for managing their budgets and risks alone.

Other concerns are:

- the possibility of increased risk to those already shown to be at risk of abuse or neglect
- the possibility that people using services, and their carers, may be reluctant to take advantage of new opportunities for choice and control because of fear of potential risks
- organisational and professional risk aversion which can hinder choice, control and independent living.

Policy on safeguarding

The key statutory guidance in England is *No secrets: Guidance on developing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse* (DH 2000). *No secrets* is currently under review (DH 2009). In addition *Safeguarding adults* (ADSS 2005) provides a safeguarding good practice framework used by many local authorities.

Safeguarding arrangements for many agencies have been influenced by the Dignity in Care campaign, equalities and human rights legislation, Fair Access to Care Services guidance, mental health legislation and wider debates about child protection systems. All support for decision making in relation to self-directed support should be in line with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Practice issues

Traditionally, risk assessment has been seen as an essential part of adult social care initial assessment and not a continual live process.

The assessment of risk has often raised difficult questions for practitioners balancing empowerment with duty of care. The rights of adults to live independent lives and to take the risks they choose need to be weighed carefully against the likelihood of significant harm arising from the situation in question, and on budgetary requirements on access to services. But in the past the views of people who use services were largely absent, and there were few evaluations of risk management systems and interventions.



Involvement, information and joint participation are essential, and shared risk ownership is crucial if risk aversion is to be avoided.

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) is the sector-wide commitment to transform adult social care through personalisation and community-based support. *Making it real* (TLAP 2011) committed over 30 national organisations to work together and to develop, as one of the key priorities, a set of 'markers'. These markers will be used to support all those working towards personalisation. This will help organisations check their progress and decide what they need to do to keep moving forward to deliver real change and positive outcomes with people.

It is in this context that Skills for Care is publishing these *Keeping risk person-centred* notes. In particular this work focuses on the *Making it real* marker no.5, **Risk enablement: Feeling in control and safe:**

- People who use services, and carers, are supported to weigh up risks and benefits, including planning for problems which may arise.
- Management of risk is proportionate to individual circumstances. Safeguarding approaches are also proportionate and they are co-ordinated so that everyone understands their role.
- Where they want and need it, people are supported to manage their personal budget
- Good information and advice, including easy ways of reporting concerns, are widely available, supported by public awareness-raising and accessible literature.

- People who use services and carers are informed at the outset about they should expect from services and how to raise any concerns where necessary.

Skills for Care's *Keeping risk person-centred* support products emphasise a person-centred approach to risk. A person-centred approach seeks to focus on people's rights to have the lifestyle that they choose, including the right to make 'bad' decisions. The approach described here uses person-centred thinking tools, to help people and those who care about them most think in positive and productive ways about how to ensure that they can achieve the changes they want to see while keeping the issue of risk in its place.

This in essence is a process to gather, in partnership with the person, the fullest information and evidence to demonstrate that all those providing care and support have thought deeply about all the issues involved. Decisions are then guided by what is important to the person, what is needed to keep them healthy and safe and on what the law says.

Skills for Care has developed a range of *Keeping risk person-centred* resources, comprising

- this introduction document
- a PowerPoint presentation
- practice scenarios for discussion
- handouts to support presentation
- A web-based catalogue of resources for further reading.

These products are free from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/risk to all those working to give the people they support the greatest possible freedom and choice in taking informed risks.

References

- ADSS 2005 Assoc of Directors of Social Services, *Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for good practice and outcomes in adult protection work*, <http://www.adass.org.uk/old/publications/guidance/safeguarding.pdf>
- DH 2000 Dep't of Health, *No secrets - guidance on developing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse* (ref HSC 2000/007) http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Healthservicecirculars/DH_4003726
- DH 2009 Dep't of Health, *No Secrets consultation: responses from professional, educational and regulatory bodies*, http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/DH_102783
- DH 2010 Dep't of Health, *Vision for adult social care, capable communities and active citizens*, http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_121508
- TLAP 2011 Think Local, Act Personal, *Making it Real: New citizen-led approach for councils, organisations and people to check progress with personalisation and community-based support*, <http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Resource/?cid=9091>