

Principles of Engagement within the Safeguarding Adults Process

These principles have been agreed by the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board and should be adopted by practitioners across all agencies in Gateshead

1	Find out the best way to communicate with each other
	<p>Knowing how the person prefers to be communicated with will improve the chances of them actively being involved. Take into account factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's ability to read and write • What is the person's first language? Is it possible to provide information in a different language or format? • Does the person have a sensory impairment? If so, what support does the person require to help them feel involved? For example, this could include the use of an interpreter • Safety first – are there any factors that need to be considered when getting in touch with the person e.g. sending out post / meeting in certain areas • Consider who else the person has in their network that can support the relationship you are building with them e.g. a parent, a friend, a relative or a trusted worker
2	Recognise a person's vulnerability might impact upon engagement
	<p>Always consider what you and other agencies might know about a person's vulnerability – this should impact upon how you engage with the person. It's useful to look at vulnerability and ask <i>"What else could be happening here?"</i>, work to challenge assumptions.</p> <p>Take into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disability • Mental Health • Substance misuse • Capacity • Historical abuse / trauma • Previous negative experience of involvement with services
3	Use the Mental Capacity Act (MCA)
	<p>Remember to use the Mental Capacity Act to empower people to make decisions and support people who may lack the capacity to make some decisions. Remember to consider the extent to which a person's capacity to engage with services may have been affected by threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour.</p> <p>When considering a person's capacity in relation to engagement it is really important to consider whether the person understands what could happen if they don't get involved. The risks might relate to areas such as the persons health, access to benefits, offers of care and support.</p>
4	Don't assume that someone else is dealing with the problem
	<p>When a person's circumstances change, or concerns arise about their lack of engagement, don't presume that other professionals are aware of what you know. Build up good relationships with professionals from other agencies and ensure that information is shared appropriately, using safeguarding adult procedures if required.</p>

5	<p>Coordination of engagement is key – where possible, identify a lead worker</p>
	<p>Whilst this may not always be possible, it is really helpful for the person if they have an identified lead worker. The lead worker will be in a vital position for monitoring trends of engagement, sharing information and assisting the person through service navigation. The lead worker can be from a statutory or non-statutory service and may change depending on the circumstance of the case. The management of risk should remain a shared responsibility.</p> <p>To help with engagement, regular coordinated check-ins with agencies and the person’s network should be planned. Coordinating a collective response ensures the support provided is person centred and everyone involved is kept up to date around next steps. Working in a coordinated way also reduces the risk of a staff member in the discussions being absent whilst holding all the information around next steps.</p> <p>Where possible, ask the person how they would like the agencies to work together and if they have someone that can be alongside them in this – whether it be a relative or trusted staff member. As part of the safeguarding adults process consideration must also be given to whether the adult may benefit from support of an independent advocate.</p>
6	<p>Ensure recording is accurate - Fact vs. Opinion</p>
	<p>Of course, all engagement or lack of should be accurately and recorded in a timely manner, but remember 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 person. Again consider <i>“What else could be happening here?”</i></p> <p>All opinions and judgements should be removed. Recording opinions can affect the way another professional may approach the case. Where possible, verify all information sources.</p>
7	<p>Remember, engagement may fluctuate</p>
	<p>Just because a person has not engaged with services in the past, does not mean that this will always be the case, this time it might be different. Show that you care, keep lines of communication open with the person and their network. Strive to work within the person’s world. Actively listen to the person - what are they trying to tell you, or sometimes not tell you. Past experiences could affect how the person chooses to involve themselves, this needs to be acknowledged.</p>
8	<p>Involve the person to Make Safeguarding Personal</p>
	<p>The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) programme emphasise that the safeguarding adults process should be person centred and outcomes focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the person – what do they want from the safeguarding process? • Are we working alongside the person to achieve what they want? • Talk through risk, what do they understand this to be? • How do you know if the persons understands what we say and what we do? <p>Throughout the safeguarding process, work with the person and their network so that they feel heard and enabled to make decisions.</p>