

# Principles of Engagement

These principles have been adapted by Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board and should be adopted by practitioners across all agencies in the county.

It's our responsibility to reach out to people, to make it easier for them to engage with us and to remove barriers to them being able to engage.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Ask the person what their preferred method of communication is</b>
	<p>Knowing how the person likes to be communicated with could improve their engagement. Take into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person's ability to read and write.</li> <li>• Is English their spoken language? If not, is it crucial to provide information in a different language/format? This would include translating, involving interpreters, using Makaton etc.</li> <li>• Does the person have a sensory impairment? If so, what support does the person need to help them engage, e.g., use of an interpreter, Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), electronic communication aids?</li> <li>• If the person is experiencing domestic abuse, is it safe to send a letter to their address or is it safe for them to speak on the phone?</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Use the Mental Capacity Act (MCA)</b>
	<p>Remember to use the Mental Capacity Act to empower people to make decisions and to support people who may lack the capacity to make some decisions. Consider the extent to which a person's capacity to engage with services may have been affected by threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Consider the person's mental capacity to engage</b>
	<p>When considering a person's capacity in relation to engagement it is really important to consider whether the person understands the consequences of non-engagement. In order to do this, we must explain to the person the consequences of non-engagement. The risks might relate to areas such as the person's health, access to benefits, offers of care and support.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Where possible, identify the lead professional who may already have a trusting relationship with the person</b>
	<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 vital for monitoring trends of engagement, sharing information and assisting the person through service navigation. The lead worker may change depending on the circumstances of the case and the management of risk remains a shared responsibility. As part of the safeguarding adults process, consideration must also be given to whether the adult may benefit from the support of an independent advocate. Check with your relevant local authority for advocacy provider information.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Don't assume that someone else is dealing with the problem</b>
	<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 procedures if required. Where a Safeguarding Adult's Plan is in place, it should be clear how information will be shared between all of the agencies involved, including how concerns will be escalated if the person's lack of engagement continues to be a risk factor.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Be careful what you record around engagement or lack of</b>
	<p>The language used in your records can make a big difference. Terms like "failed to attend" and "difficult to engage with" place emphasis solely on the person when there may be external factors impacting a person's ability to engage. Recording of this nature can also affect the way another professional may approach the case.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Remember, engagement may fluctuate</b>
	<p>Just because a person has not engaged with services previously, does not mean that this will always be the case. Try to find out why the person felt that they couldn't engage as you may be able to support them to overcome these barriers. Be tenacious with people and let them know that services are available should they need them.</p>

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