

# Section 5

**Managing risk:  
things to think  
about**

## Section 5: Managing risk – things to think about

Self Directed Support is a good way for people to have more choice and control in their lives. It helps people (sometimes with support) to think about what their needs are, know what money and support is available to them and make a plan for how to make it happen.

Having choice and control over your life is great. However, it does come with responsibilities, one of which is to think about risk factors. When planning your support and living life day-to-day it is very important to be aware of risks to:

- Yourself
- To other people
- From other people

### What is risk?

Risk is the chance that an **event** will happen with harmful outcomes for you or other people you come into contact with.

An event can happen because of:

- risks due to impairment or disability: such as falls
- health conditions or mental health problems
- accidents, for example, when you are out in the community or at a social care service
- risks, linked with everyday activities, that might be increased by your impairment or disability
- the use of medication
- the misuse of drugs or alcohol
- behaviours resulting in injury, neglect, abuse and/or exploitation by you or by others
- suicide or self-harm
- aggression and violence

The type of event depends on the type of person you are, your relationship with others and the circumstances you find yourself in.

Risk is usually thought of in terms of danger, loss, threat, damage or injury. But as well as negative things, risk-taking can have positive benefits for you. You will need to think about the dangers linked to risk as well as the benefits of risk-taking ('nothing ventured, nothing gained'). This should involve everyone affected – you, your family and workers.

## What does the council do to consider risk?

The council currently has several ways to consider and monitor risks. These include:

- Social Workers/Care Managers complete a contact assessment and assess the risk factors to find out a person's needs and eligibility.
- A team manager will look over the person's care/support plan to see how they are planning to meet their needs and manage their support.
- A review will be carried out 6 weeks after receiving the budget and living life in this new way.
- A finance officer will receive information on how the money is being spent from the individual/their supporters on a monthly basis to track how things are going.
- An outcomes focused review will take place at 6 months to assess what is working well and what, if anything, needs changing.

## What are the areas of risk that you might need to think about and plan for?

### **Health and Safety associated risks**

For example – hazards in your home or garden such as trailing wires, loose rugs, old or faulty electrics, help you might need with being lifted or moved or transport related risks.

### **Risk of abuse**

(these include emotional, physical, sexual, financial, neglect, discrimination and institutional)

For example – you should always talk to someone you trust if you feel at risk or in any way made to feel uncomfortable about the care you receive. If you feel exploited or subjected to any treatment or unwanted activity you should speak about it. Financial security, always keep records and keep your PIN number private.

**Do not keep any worries to yourself – speak to someone you trust**

### **Employment related risks**

Get advice about tax, national insurance and any other employment issues. Keep written records and be clear about employment arrangements from the start.

### **Risks of accidents**





Think again about your health and safety and that of your carer/s. Are there any areas of your home or garden that might cause an accident such as steep steps or slippery surfaces? Tell your carers about these risks so you can both decide if you need advice and how you are going to deal with them.

### **Are you being supported by the best people?**

Speak to people about the care you receive: to friends, family, neighbours or (if you have one) an advocate. Tell people what sort of support you want.

## Some practical ways you can manage risk

- Think about what the risks might be in advance (eg, risks from financial abuse).
- Consider ways to reduce risk in advance (eg, asking staff to sign money in and out with the support of a third person).
- Inform people about the risk factors and ways of reducing risk by giving people good information (eg, train staff and give them information to read).
- Ensure people are aware of their responsibilities.
- One way of confirming responsibility with people is to ask them to read and agree to support you according to your support/care plan and then sign and date the time they agreed to do this.
- Keep records (eg, ask staff to sign up to codes of conduct such as 'General Social Care Council's Codes of Practice' as part of their employment contract and then get staff to sign for reading and agreeing to work to the guidance).
- Make a plan about what you are going to do and ask people who are supporting you to monitor this (eg, include how you are going to manage key risks in your support plan).
- Seek advice from people such as Social Workers, Care Managers, community nurses, criminal justice workers, etc or use other resources such as:

<p><b>Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)</b></p>	 0845 1203710  <a href="http://www.brightonhovecab.org.uk/">www.brightonhovecab.org.uk/</a>
<p><b>General Social Care Council</b></p>	 0845 070 0630  <a href="http://www.gsc.org.uk">www.gsc.org.uk</a>

<b>Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)</b>	 0845 014 0120  <a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a>
<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>	 0845 353 0055  <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk">www.hse.gov.uk</a>
<b>Mencap</b>	 020 7454 0454  <a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk">www.mencap.org.uk</a>

## IMPORTANT

If your Social Worker or Care Manager has any concerns about risks to you, risks to others or risks from other people or the support systems you have in place to help you direct your own support you may be asked to come and talk through your plan at the **Risk Enablement Panel**.

This panel will be made up of Social Workers/Care Managers and safeguarding experts to help to consider the best ways of reducing risks and ensure you have the right people involved to help you direct your own support.

The council believes that risks should not limit your choice or control over what you want to do. Understanding and considering risk is a helpful part of planning how you want your needs met. However, in order to properly understand risk we must be willing to at least consider what might be unpleasant or even frightening things. Thinking the unthinkable can protect you from harm. Taking risks is a part of everyone's life and is a right that we all have, so take risks whilst staying safe.

The council has expertise in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and continues to provide a Safeguarding service to all vulnerable adults in the City.

**To find out more information about Safeguarding you can call the Community Learning Disability Team on 01273 295550, or look on the council's website.**

You can also alert this team if you or anyone you care for is being harmed. You will receive advice and support and, where necessary, we will investigate and provide a protective plan.

We welcome people thinking about and reporting risk.

If you need help to think through a particular risk you can request the support of the Risk Enablement Panel yourself by calling Nichola St George on: 01273 292309.

**If you have any concerns and need to report any risk issues please do not hesitate to contact the Community Learning Disability team on: 01273 295550.**

**In Control** has produced a guide which considers all of the above areas and provides some great practical steps which can be used to help minimise risk. It is called:

**'Supporting Safely – a guide for service providers, individuals receiving support and their families and friends'**

It is available to download from the In Control website at: [www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)