



# Title: Adult Safeguarding – Self-Neglect

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**1. Why Does it Matter?** Reasons for self-neglect can be complex and may impact on a person's health, wellbeing or living conditions and there can also be a negative impact on others. Without early intervention, existing health problems may worsen. Neglect of personal hygiene may mean that the person suffers social difficulties and isolation, or physical/mental health breakdown. Dilapidated property or excess rubbish can become infested and can be a fire risk, which is a risk to the adult, family, neighbours and others. Local Safeguarding Adult Reviews ([Terry & Kieran](#)) identified learning for professionals around providing support and assessing risk and capacity for people who may be self-neglecting.

**2. What is the Legal Framework?** The following legislation may be helpful: **Care Act 2014** - statutory guidance which places duties on the Local Authority (LA) regarding assessment, enquiry and advocacy. **Human Rights Act**, Articles 2, 3, 8. **Mental Health Act 2007**. **Mental Capacity Act 2005**. **Public Health Act 1984**. **Housing Act 1988**.

**3. What is Self-Neglect?** Care Act (2014) definition: '*... covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding*'. Such as, **Lack of self-care**: e.g. neglect of personal hygiene, nutrition, hydration, health, thereby endangering safety/well-being. **Lack of care of one's environment**: e.g. squalor and hoarding, **Refusal of services** that would lessen the risk of harm. Further useful information: Social Care Institute for Excellence - [self-neglect](#). Also [what is self-neglect](#)

**4. What are some of the Indicators?** *Not an exhaustive list*. Living in very unclean circumstances and/or hoarding. Poor nutrition and diet. Failing to provide care for him/herself, to maintain social contact &/or manage finances. Declining to accept support and/or attend appointments and missed appointments.

**Why do adults neglect themselves?** Sometimes self-neglect results from physical or cognitive difficulties but at times the reasons for it are not clear. Research suggests that it may also be the result of loss, fear of losing control, pride in self-sufficiency, a sense of connectedness to the places and things in the person's surroundings or a mistrust of professionals / people in authority, personality traits, traumatic histories and life changing events.



**7. What are my Responsibilities?** Try and find out what the adult wants **but also to assess risk and report concerns** on the same day you become aware/informed of concerns.

Refer to the [Threshold E-guidance & Adult Safeguarding Referral form](#). **Think family**. Share concerns with other agencies involved.

Refer also to the [SSP Multi-agency policy and guidance on responding to self-neglect](#).

**Consider a referral to the Risk Enablement Panel.**

Be aware of the [SSP resolution of multi-agency professional differences](#).

**6. When is self-neglect a safeguarding issue?** Consider a safeguarding referral when the person who self-neglects has care needs and experiences, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect (*including self-neglect*), but consult the [Self Neglect policy](#) and the [SBC Threshold document](#) for each case to see if other processes are more suited to what the person needs and wants. Also: **Think family – is anyone else at risk because of the self-neglect?**

**5. What needs to be considered?** Balancing autonomy and protection is important. **Assessing mental capacity is crucial**. Even if the person has the capacity to make a specific decision you should also consider whether ‘coercion or control’ impacts on the individuals decision-making, for example in domestic abuse cases. [See SAR Honor](#).

An adult has the right to make their own choices about their life but they also have a right to be protected where life and well-being are at risk. Support and protection can in the long-term improve an adult’s autonomy, so no professional should stop support on the basis that the adult has made a ‘life style choice’ which threatens their health and well-being. For those adults who lack capacity to make the relevant decisions, professionals can make decisions in their best interests.

**Professionals can find working with people who self-neglect very challenging.** Key to effective interventions is building relationships to effectively engage with people without causing distress and reserving use of legal powers to where they are proportionate and essential. Safeguarding processes may be required when working with people that self-neglect, but much of the work is long-term work, which happens under other frameworks. This 3 minute [animation video](#) from Lambeth SAB highlights the challenges faced.



# Risk Enablement Panel (REP) for those over 18 years



To report a concern about an adult at risk of, or experiencing harm please [click here](#)

## Criteria for Risk Enablement Panel

### When to consider a REP?

When all other interventions have not produced an improvement in outcomes, **for example** multi agency meetings have not reduced the high risk for the individual(s) of concern. Consult the [Self Neglect policy](#).

A small number of individuals are deemed to have mental capacity, multiple needs and may be at risk of significant harm but fall outside of the criteria for Adult Safeguarding investigations (Section 42 Criteria not met).

The majority of the cases have had a community safety focus.

Where multiple high risks have been identified following an assessment and evidence that all other interventions have not produced an improvement in outcomes for the individual adult. Panels will be for one case (or linked cases) meeting as and when required.

For those who are deemed to have capacity and;

- Section 42 Care Act 2014 Safeguarding criteria not met.
- Who are at risk due to self-neglect/self-harm (*Fall outside Safeguarding S42 Criteria*)
- With risk taking behaviours;
- Who are change resistant;
- Who refuse to engage with services;
- Who are 'frequent callers' to services and
- Where the agency is struggling to maintain a high-risk situation as a single agency.



# Purpose of the Risk Enablement Panel

To facilitate, develop engagement and risk management plans and monitor their effectiveness:

- Share information to identify, clarify and agree on risk
- Promote safety and wellbeing of high-risk adults in Swindon
- Improve multi-agency communication pathways
- Utilise the resources in Swindon more efficiently
- Develop a Risk Management Plan
- For those who are not engaging, co-ordinate a Risk Management Plan to seize the opportunities that can enable engagement and/or monitor the well-being of the person e.g. outreach opportunities, support from the community and locality input
- Ensure any actions are covered by a legal framework or are lawful
- Improve agency accountability
- Identification of a lead/key worker
- Share risk across agencies
- Consider options that will enhance the range of possibilities available to professionals to improve the outcome for the individual

For further information contact [RiskEnablementPanel@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:RiskEnablementPanel@swindon.gov.uk).