



Vulnerable Adults Risk Management (VARM)

Wendy Holehouse & Mat Lee



Case Study



- Three bedroom mid terraced privately let home
- Overgrown front garden
- Dirty & Broken windows
- Visible evidence of hoarding
- Nervous, unkempt occupier
- Dogs and Cats
- Extreme odour



Case Study



- 3 Adult Occupants
- 1 Angry dog
- Several invisible Cats
- Insanitary Conditions
- Large quantity of items stored around home
- Restricted access and egress
- Overloaded electrics
- Questionable safety of utilities

Risk

- Numerous ignition sources
- Abnormal fire loading
- Restricted access and egress routes
- Health and wellbeing of women unknown
- Hygiene and diet
- Pets
- ASB
- Non-engagement

Risk reduction

- Smoke Alarms
- Misting System
- Clean up and clear out
- Electrics/gas checks
- Health and wellbeing check
- Social care support- agencies



Background to VARM



- Self neglect is outside of safeguarding process
- Changing nature of agency eligibility criteria
- Concerns around non-engagement
- Concerns about wider public safety issues



Criteria



- A person **must have capacity** to make decisions and choices regarding their life
- There is a **risk of serious harm or death** by self-neglect, fire, deteriorating health condition, non-engagement with services or where an adult is targeted by local community, is the victim of Hate Crime or Anti-Social Behaviour or the victim of sexual violence and they do not meet the criteria for Safeguarding
- There is a **public safety** interest
- There are a high level of **concerns from partner agencies**

Serious harm means death or injury (either physical or psychological) which is life threatening and/or traumatic and which is viewed to be imminent or very likely to occur.



Local Development of VARM



- Safeguarding leads from the City and County developed VARM principles and process from existing Risk Assessment Guidance and research on national approaches
- Pilot was held in North Derbyshire
- Evaluated pilot and report taken to both Safeguarding Adults Boards
- Has been signed off by both Boards



Benefits of VARM



- Share responsibility
- Share information
- Ensure due process
- Opportunity to test risk management plan with different people trying to engage with the person
- Record a multi-agency risk assessment
- Break down single agency silo-working



VARM Process



- Lead agency can call a VARM if all criteria met
- Lead agency will co-ordinate and convene the VARM
- Lead agency will chair and minute the VARM
- On closing the VARM, all papers to be sent to Adult Safeguarding Teams for collation
- Safeguarding Performance Sub-Groups will quality assure and report into the Boards
- VARM process will be reviewed September 2014



Holding a VARM



- Who to invite?
 - The Adult concerned
 - Agencies who have expressed concerns
 - Where there are children linked to the Adult or property, Children's Services must be invited
 - Agencies with an identified interest
 - Advocacy
- Consider GP/health, Fire Service, Police, Housing, Social Care, Local Community Groups, Education, Faith Organisations, Drug/Alcohol services
- Who is the most likely to gain access/get engagement



Holding a VARM



- Agenda:
 1. Introductions and Information sharing
 2. Background and circumstances
 3. Views of Adult
 4. Consent and capacity issues
 5. Identify risks
 6. Identify actions
 7. Review
 8. Closure



Level of Risk



- **Low Risk** An action which has an element of risk, but has been assessed as justifiable, with a low probability and which therefore should not prevent the action being carried out.
- **Medium Risk** Measured and controlled risk taking which empowers people to take risks in their day-to-day lives through the effective use of care planning.
- **High Risk** Action which is likely to result in injury to the individual, others or property. Where there is reason to believe that someone's life may be in danger, that major injury or serious physical or mental ill health could result, that the incidents are increasing in severity or the behaviour is persistent and/or deliberate



Likelihood to Occur



- **Low** May possibly occur; may not have been any recent occurrences, but there is evidence to suggest the outcome may happen
- **Medium** Likely to occur; may have been some infrequent recent occurrences which suggest the outcome will happen
- **High** Has already occurred or is very likely to occur. There may have been several recent incidents which suggest the outcome will happen imminently. The frequency of related incidents may be increasing.



Review/Closing the VARM



- The Lead Agency & Chair will need to reconvene the meeting at appropriate intervals to review the risk management plan.
- The review should look at how the actions from the risk management plan have been achieved, or whether any changes in approach are needed.
- If eligibility for other processes developed, the other process takes primacy (ie: Safeguarding, MCA, MHA etc) and would be the exit strategy
- It may be that a decision is made to exit the VARM process as the risks may not be assessed as high enough.
- If all risks have been identified and actions completed and there are no further actions a decision may be made to close the case.
- The adult may not engage, all avenues to reduce risk may have been exhausted, so VARM may be closed with a clear strategy of what changes in circumstance would lead back to VARM



Any Questions?

