



*Safeguarding
is everybody's
business*



EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

VARM PROCESS: PRACTICE GUIDANCE

What is the VARM Process?

VARM stands for Vulnerable Adults Risk Management and it is a formal process for assessing, recording and planning the management of risk in situations where a vulnerable and capacitated adult requires support but will not engage with agencies. This process applies in residential care and in the community.

It consists of the Practice Guidance and the Risk Assessment & Management Tool. It should be used in conjunction with, where appropriate, Safeguarding Adult procedures and Mental Capacity Act 2005 procedures.

When should it be used?

The VARM Process Flow Chart on the following page should be used for guidance. If a person is vulnerable and is at risk of significant harm then safeguarding procedures should be followed in the first instance.

The VARM process should be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where the person is perceived to have the capacity to make the decision(s) that is /are creating significant concern about their safety (risk of significant harm).
- Where there is no perpetrator and the risk arises from the capacitated individual's refusal to engage with services and/or self neglect in one or more areas of their life
- Where there is an alleged perpetrator and the person refuses to engage with risk management
- Where existing care management and health and social care involvement has failed to resolve the issues/risks identified which are causing concern

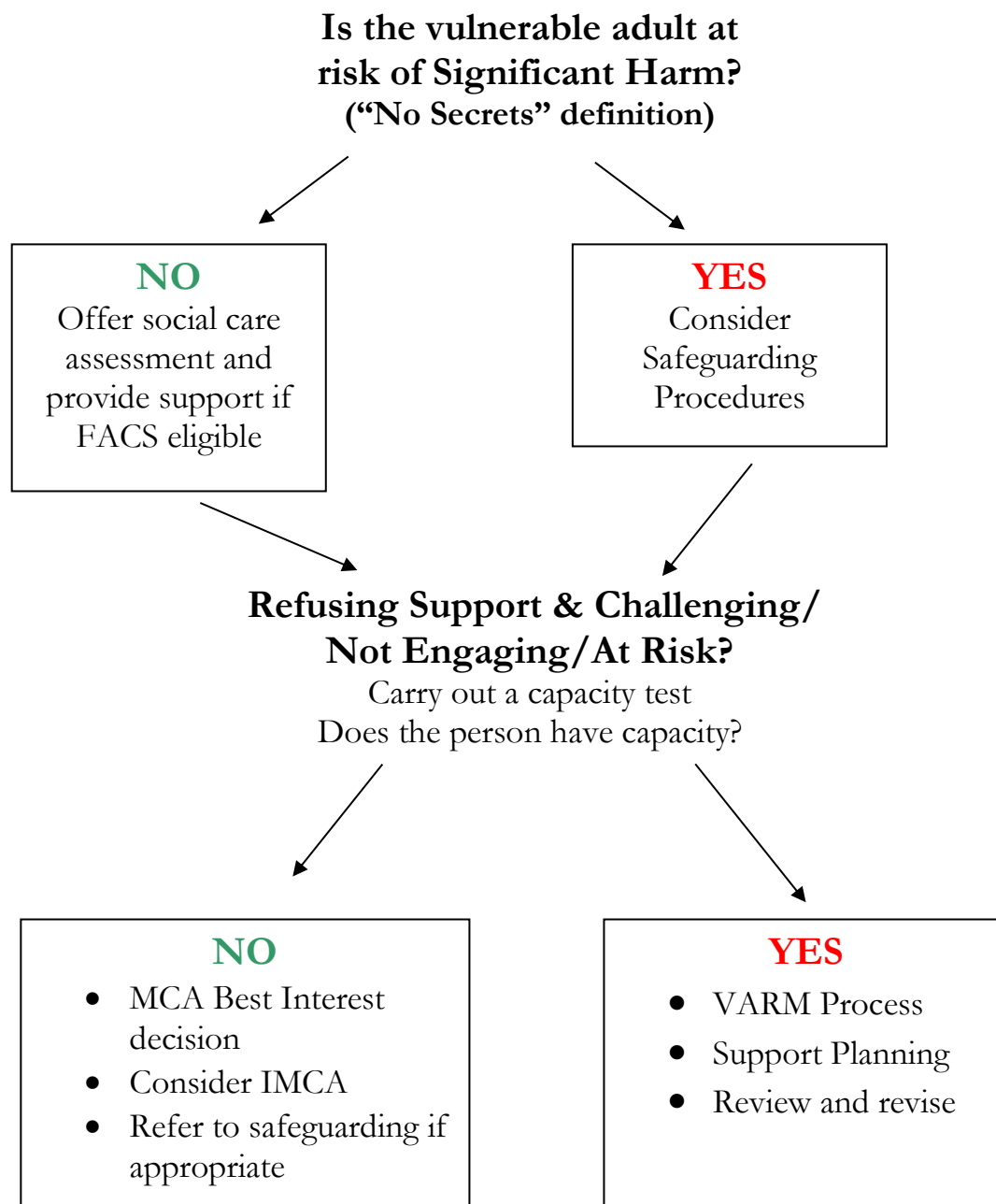
The process could also be used in managing high risk safeguarding cases for example when the person lacks capacity and the best interest decisions reached using The Mental Capacity Act 2005 are being undermined or sabotaged by family and/or other people or where the person has capacity and continues to put themselves at risk or serious harm by engaging with the perpetrator.

The purpose of this process is to ensure senior managers are aware of and can support workers with high risk cases that could result in attendance at coroner's court, challenges in the press etc. Use of the VARM process will provide a multi-agency framework to monitor and manage risks and record agreed actions and timescales.

This will not affect human rights but will extend the duty of care as far as is reasonable. The VARM process seeks to strike a balance between self-neglect or abuse and self-determination.

VARM PROCESS FLOW CHART

(Deciding on use of VARM process)



DETAILED PROCESS

1. Any worker concerned about a service user who is not engaging with services should raise their concerns with their Team Leader or Senior Assessment Officer.
2. The Team Leader/Senior Assessment Officer will agree that the criteria are met for VARM via the flowchart on page 2. A capacity assessment should be done and the decision recorded – we usually assess to demonstrate lack of capacity but in this case if we cannot establish that the person lacks capacity we would be looking at initiating VARM. Assessment of capacity may be difficult if the person is not engaging, try to obtain as much information as possible from the person or others involved. Follow either safeguarding or Mental Capacity Act 2005 procedures if appropriate at any point.
3. Complete the *Risk Assessment* section of the *VARM Process – Risk Assessment & Management Tool* (page 1) to decide whether or not the process should be used and a VARM meeting held in this case. Record the decision on AIS and if the decision is not to proceed to a meeting scan the assessment (page 1 of the document) onto AIS. If the decision made is to use the VARM process consideration should be given to informing the person concerned that this is going to happen. The person should be informed unless there is good reason why not, and their reaction recorded on page 1 of the *VARM Process – Risk Assessment & Management Tool*.
4. If the decision is to use the VARM process, meet with relevant agencies and individuals to complete the *Risk Management & Planning* Section of the *VARM Process Risk Assessment & Management Tool* (pages 2 – 4). Record the decision on AIS and scan the document onto the system. The tool doesn't replace professional judgement but will provide guidance around the issues and processes to be considered in managing risk. Complete attendance record on page 7.
5. Ensure relevant agencies are aware of the *Risk Management Plan* and have copies. If included within the plan, set up a core group with remit and frequency of meetings and set up the first Risk Management Review meeting. The VARM *Risk Management Plan* should be monitored. Refusal to engage does **NOT** mean any agencies involved should close the case – keep it open, review, try alternate plans as appropriate in an effort to engage – at the very least monitor the person and their support and their continuing capacity. Work on a multi-agency basis – some agencies may be more acceptable to the service user than others.
6. Any identified risks to the individual, to the public, to the agency or other agencies should be notified to relevant persons to reduce the impact if possible. Consider the possibility of member involvement, press interest, ombudsman involvement, legal action etc.
7. Inform the individual of the VARM process outcome if it has been decided at the meeting that s/he is to be informed. The individual should be given the VARM letter which is only in pro forma format and must be personalised by the lead worker. Generally the person should be informed unless there is a good reason why not, which must be recorded on the *Risk Management Plan* section of the tool on page 4. Record objections if there are any from the person.

8. Complete section Risk Management Review at each review and send out to relevant agencies. The review should involve a conversation or a meeting with agencies involved with the person and identified on the Risk Management Plan. If risks have increased or decreased a decision may be made to amend the plan or end the VARM process.
9. All decisions should be recorded on AIS and documentation scanned on.