

SFJBE101

Assess the risk of serious harm to victims, survivors and witnesses



Overview

This standard is about assessing the risk of serious harm to victims, survivors and witnesses. It includes involving the victim/survivor/witness, wherever possible, in the assessment and in agreeing the consequent factors and needs to be addressed.

Where an assessment tool is used, this can be paper-based and/or electronic.

The resultant outcomes will then inform the development and implementation of appropriate intervention plans, with this activity being addressed in separate but related units of national occupational standards.

There are three elements

- 1 Gather information regarding the victim/survivor/witness and their circumstances
- 2 Assess the information, agreeing needs and identifying risk
- 3 Agree the victim/survivor/witness' needs from appropriate interventions

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Performance criteria

Gather information regarding the victim/survivor/witness and their circumstances

You must be able to:

- P1 describe clearly and accurately your role and responsibility to the victim/survivor/witness, explaining the information being sought, the reasons for seeking it, and with whom it may be shared
- P2 ensure that the discussion with the victim/survivor/witness takes place in an appropriate and safe environment for the individual
- P3 confirm your organisation's policy relating to confidentiality, including which parties may require particular information, and the circumstances where information may be divulged
- P4 confirm that it is acceptable to the victim/survivor/witness to proceed
- P5 identify the victim/survivor's relevant circumstances, including their relationship to the offender(s)
- P6 obtain verification and/or corroboration for the information, where required and where possible
- P7 communicate in a manner, and at a pace, appropriate to the victim/survivor/witness
- P8 allow the victim/survivor/witness to progress at their own pace, treating them with dignity and respect, listening actively and checking for understanding
- P9 maintain accurate and up to date records, setting out details of the victim/survivor/witness' relevant circumstances

Assess the information, agreeing needs and identifying risk

You must be able to:

- P10 determine the potential risk factors identified from the assessment process, providing evidence to show the basis for your decision, and to explain the strength and nature of the link between a factor and the likelihood of further harm to the victim/survivor/witness and where relevant to their children
- P11 assess the relevant factors, including the victim/survivor/witness' relationship with the offender(s)
- P12 use your professional judgement to assess the significance of both the victim/survivor/witness' overall situation to determine the level of risk, and of particular aspects of their situation, to identify priority areas for interventions and support
- P13 determine the likely outcome(s) of the risks identified, including whether the victim/survivor/witness is vulnerable to harm from the offender(s) or others, including their children where relevant
- P14 identify any circumstances which may mean that the victim/survivor/witness, and/or their children where relevant, are particularly vulnerable
- P15 discuss and identify the needs of the victim/survivor/witness towards

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assisting them to address the risk of harm

- P16 ensure that your risk assessment is placed in the context of the victim/survivor's circumstances, and is defensible
- P17 complete the appropriate assessment fully and correctly, maintaining accurate and up to date records, setting out the risks and protective factors identified, the likelihood of harm and the likely imminence and possible severity of such harm

Agree the victim/survivor/witness' needs from appropriate interventions

You must be able to:

- P18 involve the victim/survivor/witness in the risk assessment, explaining the process used and the rationale for the resultant outcomes
- P19 explain clearly to the victim/survivor/witness the impact of the risk and protective factors identified
- P20 explain the options available to the victim/survivor/witness, and recognise and respect their wishes, agreeing with the individual the preferred options and associated actions
- P21 determine and acknowledge the victim/survivor/witness' own coping mechanisms, where relevant, and identify and agree coping mechanisms that might be developed
- P22 use agreed procedures and appropriate protocols for multi-agency liaison
- P23 ensure that relevant procedures are agreed with the victim/survivor/witness and are in place to provide ongoing support to the victim/survivor/witness, with a frequency appropriate to the level of risk identified
- P24 alert relevant persons promptly where you identify real and particular concerns regarding the risk of harm to the victim/survivor/witness, and/or their children where relevant
- P25 ensure that your analysis is justified and defensible, with a clear rationale for your conclusions, associated recommendations and subsequent plans
- P26 provide your report, including all relevant information, promptly to the relevant person(s)

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

- K1 legal and organisational requirements which relate to undertaking risk-led assessments of victims/survivors/witnesses at potential risk of harm from offenders, and their impact for your area of operations
- K2 legislation, policies and procedures relating to human rights, data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
- K3 the role of your organisation and its services relating to providing public protection, including the provision of support to victims/survivors/witnesses
- K4 the role of the principal external support agencies, and multi-agency arrangements towards providing support and interventions for victims/survivors/witnesses in your area
- K5 the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded

Requirements particular to assessing needs and risks

You need to know and understand:

- K6 the relevant risk assessment instruments/process(es) and how to undertake these
- K7 the information required towards making an assessment of victims/survivors/witnesses, appropriate to addressing the risks to them from offenders
- K8 methods of verifying and corroborating the information required
- K9 how to distinguish between directly observed evidence, evidence from reliable sources and hearsay
- K10 factors impacting upon the vulnerability of victims/survivors/witnesses
- K11 common indicators that an individual may have problems relating to their mental health which are impacting adversely upon their behaviour, and the appropriate actions to take where you observe such indicators
- K12 agencies to which the individual might be referred for help and support with their mental health, and the procedures for progressing such referrals
- K13 circumstances requiring additional assessments and how to arrange these
- K14 circumstances where victims/survivors/witnesses are considered to be at a very high risk, requiring particular support and an associated risk management plan, and how to progress such a plan

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Requirements relating to communicating with victims/survivors/witnesses

You need to know and understand:

- K15 different styles and forms of communication that may be appropriate and the importance of building trust and empathy with victims/survivors/witnesses, and the methods of achieving this
- K16 the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language, and how different cultures use and interpret body language in different ways
- K17 possible barriers to communication, their causes, and ways to overcome them, including the feelings and reactions which victims/survivors/witnesses may have that hinder their ability to discuss their circumstances
- K18 the importance of being aware of your own values and beliefs, and their impact upon your ability to challenge discriminatory or potentially damaging attitudes and behaviour
- K19 limits of confidentiality applying to your job role, and the circumstances when it is necessary to go against a victim/survivor/witness's expressed wishes in their best interests, and in such cases the importance of ensuring that they understand what is happening and why

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Developed by Skills for Justice

Version number 1

Date approved March 2010

Indicative review date March 2012

Validity Current

Status Original

Originating organisation Skills for Justice

Original URN SfJ BE101

Relevant occupations Public Services; Public Service and Other Associate Professionals

Suite Public Protection

Key words Assess, risk, serious, harm, victims, survivors, witnesses