

Vulnerable Adults Panel

Terms of Reference

Document Information

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Document Approval

Version	Date	Name	Role

Vulnerable Adults Panel (VAP) – Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Panel

The purpose of the VAP is to take a multi-agency approach to identify the most appropriate support solutions for those with the most complex lives.

Unfortunately, some people find themselves in such complex situations to the point that they are disempowered and unable to regain control of their circumstances. In some cases, people can fall below the radar of safeguarding. The purpose of the panel is to support overturning this; the aim is to be aware of those most in need of support.

Most, but not all, of the people who are brought to the panel, will be known to services, some of which will have been explored via the self-neglect and hoarding process and/or safeguarding concerns will have been followed up.

All agencies are urged to consider if other organisations within the panel could support the complex lives that they may be aware of, attempting to avoid a single-agency approach.

Aims of the Panel

The collective aim of the panel is to assist in the progression of cases, and enable those at risk to understand the risk themselves, for example to:

- Support to maintain living arrangements.
- Have the right interventions to enable a safer life whilst living in the community of Barnsley and surrounding areas.
- Have early identification of the potential for homelessness so we can try and support/manage moves.

The panel brings a joint understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individual agencies and supports joint working and the sharing of information and intelligence on cases. Discussions can be held between professionals from different organisations, assisting to identify and monitor the whereabouts and needs of those most in need who find themselves in situations that they may not always have control of.

Due to the complex nature of cases, it is not always possible to reach an absolute resolution. However, the panel will keep cases on for discussion until an agreeable outcome is identified. The most appropriate agency will take the lead where clear actions are actioned and reviewed. Communication channels remain open between colleagues from all organisations to provide advice and support between panel meetings.

The aim of the panel is to work with and support the person – any appropriate referrals will be agreed upon in communication with the person.

The panel evidence clear links to the Police and other agencies bringing awareness of any illegal or criminal activities such as county lines and organised crime. There is a preventative approach to the work of the panel where cases that are dealt with in VAP are done to minimise the risks of cases escalating and becoming high-demand cases for the Police to address as a single agency. Emphasis is on joint work and communication.

The Vulnerable Adults Panel aims to demonstrate that, with a joint approach, no one individual is given up on. It recognises those most in need of support and guidance without prejudice.

Stakeholders and roles and responsibilities:

The meeting is made up of a range of stakeholders from organisations including, but not limited to:

- Adult Social Care
- Mental Health
- Stronger Communities
- Safer Communities
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Healthier Communities
- Berneslai Homes
- Legal (in person or as follow-up)
- A presence from probation and community matrons

All agencies are invited to bring live cases to the group for discussion and advice as appropriate.

The panel does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures being followed.

The approach of the Panel

As part of the approach to the panel, legislative frameworks will need to be considered. However, the panel brings forward curiosity as to what the individual's issues are before attempting to apply the law, as this can be very different depending on the 'actual' situation the person is experiencing. The panel looks at the history of the person's life and emphasises on their journey to understand the issues.

The panel will consider if the person has mental capacity and whether any other legal framework would protect them, for example, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, or the Mental Health Act 1983, housing laws and Police powers.

The panel accepts that capacity may need to be approached differently with those who can be challenging to engage, self-neglect is a key example, where the person may not lack capacity, but is putting themselves at risk. Executive capacity and the performative element of being able to take actions to protect oneself are factored into consideration of enabling risk.

The panel will consider the potential of a checklist of issues across different influencing factors that could be impacting an individual's ability to engage and make their own decisions.

Panel Ethics

The panel captures cultural and practice issues. It acts as a joint peer reflective session, opening a safe arena to discuss and challenge to improve practice that is consistent and legally compliant.

The panel discourages silo working and handing off cases, allowing for sharing of all-round knowledge, and offering advice that safeguards both the individual and the workers involved.

The panel considers organisational and professional reputation and addresses any deficits in working towards a practice that is rights-based while promoting risk enablement. Autonomy means being supported to do for oneself, not left to struggle.

The panel considers co-production – learning from lived experience, where the relationships built from cases of positive outcomes, are crucial value to learning to supporting others moving forward. This offers the best opportunity to demonstrate that everything was considered where a positive outcome may unfortunately not be reached.

Interface with other panels

The panel interfaces with the following multi-agency meetings:

- Multi-Agency Action Group (MAGG)
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Consider is more appropriate for Children’s Social Care or other

Meetings:

The panel is held bi-weekly, on Thursday mornings.

Referral Process

The VAP referral form is available via Adult Social Care and other agencies, it will also be added to the Barnsley Council Safeguarding Adults webpage.

Referrals should be received three days prior to the panel date.

Emails should be sent to: SafeguardingCo-ordination@barnsley.gov.uk

Alternatively, our Customer Access Team can be reached on 01226 773300.

Amendment, Modification or Variation

The TOR can be amended, varied, or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by group members.

Dispute resolution protocol

Initially, disputes/concerns should be raised to the chair for consideration. If there is still no resolution, then escalation will be to the respective Head of Service.