

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board

# Safely Ceasing Involvement

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# Safely ceasing involvement

## Introduction

People who self-neglect and refuse to engage with services for support are of particular concern to professionals. In Norfolk, any professional can request multi-agency involvement in a difficult case using the [complex case guidance](#) and a multi-agency discussion can also be convened, as mentioned in the [Self-neglect and hoarding strategy](#) and via the local help hub.

## SCIE guidance

The Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) has issued guidance on safely ceasing involvement: [adult safeguarding practice questions](#), number 7. Before any professional considers ceasing involvement with someone who is self-neglecting and not engaging with professionals, a number of points should be considered:

It is vital to establish if the person has capacity to make decisions about their own wellbeing, and if they are able or willing to care for themselves. If you are not sure how to assess capacity, you have a responsibility to consult your manager or another professional for guidance. A person may say they understand the impact of their behaviour, but can they actually carry out the actions they say they will? Do they really understand the likely consequences of their behaviour or continuing to live as they are? If the answer to these questions is 'yes', then they may have capacity to make choices or unwise decisions that others think of as self-neglect. A **risk assessment** should also be carried out before closing a case where the person is neglecting themselves or refusing to engage.

Professionals must assure themselves that **the person's 'vital interests' are not compromised** – i.e. there is no immediate risk of death or major harm. Professionals should also assure themselves that **no-one else is at risk**, for example from fire. If others are at risk from the person's behaviour, the case should not be closed. Capacity and risk assessments must be carefully recorded.

## Assessments

Carrying out an assessment may be difficult if the person is reluctant. The [Care Act guidance](#) states that professionals must take all steps to carry out an assessment which includes the things that a person wants to achieve, and have documented the care and support that the professional believes they need. This should be recorded.

It is known that intervening successfully depends on professionals **taking time** to gain the person's trust and **build a relationship** whilst going at the person's own pace. Professionals must evidence they have tried to do this before involvement is ceased.

If it is impossible to complete an assessment, or if the person refuses to accept support services, professionals should be able to show that they have tried, and that information and advice have been made available to the person on how to access support in the future.

All decisions, and the considerations that have led to them, should be recorded in light of the person's wishes and their particular circumstances. Professionals should be able to show that whatever action they have taken is reasonable and proportionate and be able to evidence their rationale for ceasing involvement.

### **Points to remember when ceasing involvement**

Before ceasing involvement, professionals must ensure that other agencies have been informed and involved as necessary. Consideration should be given to scheduling a review or follow-up by one of the partners at a later date.

In particularly serious circumstances, adults who have capacity to make decisions which may result in them placing themselves at risk of significant harm or death may require legal or court intervention to ensure their safety.

This is most likely to occur if the adult continually fails to engage with professionals and all other options have been exhausted. The High Court can intervene and make decisions in the case of an adult, even when they have the capacity to consent, for example, where an adult is receiving undue pressure or coercion from a third party. This is known as **Inherent Jurisdiction**. The court's purpose is not to overrule the wishes of an adult with capacity, but to ensure that the adult is making decisions freely. Legal advice must be sought when the inherent jurisdiction of the courts is being considered.

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board also has guidance on complex case management where a final step would be to request a senior manager review in such serious situations where every possible option has been explored.