

APPENDIX 1

Aide Memoire for Assessing Risk and Compiling a Safety Management Plan

A Structured Approach to Risk Decision Making

[From: Morgan, S. (2010) Making good risk decisions in mental health and social care. *Health Care Risk Report*, 16(5), 16-17.]

- Is the required decision *reactive* (to what the person is doing or plans to do) or *proactive* (to be initiated more by the service providers)?
- Is the Patient's understanding and experiences of risk clearly understood (it may be very different from the professional's assessment of the risks)?
- Is the carer's (as appropriate) understanding and experiences of risk clearly understood (it may at times contradict that of the Patient)?
- What behaviours are identified as being risky in relation to the specific circumstances of the decision (i.e. what is your risk assessment)?
- What is the clear definition of the risk that is being taken (the emphasis is on the detail)? Have you considered the other options that are available?
- What are the positive desired *outcomes* to be achieved through taking the specific risk (short &/or long-term)?
- What *strengths* can be identified and used in pursuit of a positive risk-taking plan (including personal qualities, abilities, achievements, resources, motivations and wishes)?
- Are there any clearly defined stages to be accounted for in a risk-taking plan?
- What are the potential pitfalls, and estimated likelihood of them occurring? Have you thought of these in relation to the other appropriate options? [Important for demonstrating that alternatives have been evaluated in the risk decision-making process]
- What are the potential safety nets (inc. early warning signs, crisis and contingency plans)?
- Has this course of action been tried before, and if so what were the outcomes?
- If tried before, how was the plan managed and what can now be done differently (what needs to, and can change)?
- What is your *formulation* from all the above information (clearly weighing up the different alternatives considered and presenting the reasoned decision that has been taken, with appropriate reasons why you have not taken the alternative decision)?
- Who agrees (and importantly disagrees) with the plan?
- How will progress of the plan be monitored?
- When will the plan be reviewed?