North West Adult Social Care

Risk Awareness Tool

*Formerly TEASC Risk Awareness Tool

directors of

adass

adult social services

north west

The North West

Guide to Risk Awareness

Introduction: North West Guide to Risk Awareness

On June 9th 2016 NW ADASS successfully convened a half-day learning event to look back on the North West Region's completion of the Local Government Association (LGA) Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC) Risk Awareness Tool – Moving forward the tool is to be rebranded but this is unknown at present so is referenced throughout the remainder of the document simply as the risk awareness tool.

Over 40 colleagues from 19 different NW LAs engaged in rich discussion about past and future usage of the TEASC Risk tool including what a 'gold standard' approach to completion would look like for the region. The event enabled colleagues to reflect on last year's TEASC Risk Tool completion process and hear from a number of localities on their approach - what worked well and what they would do differently next time.

Based on feedback from NW ADASS colleagues and insight from the Local Government Association (LGA) Care and Health Improvement Programme (CHIP) and Regional ADASS colleagues we have developed a 'North West Guide to Risk Awareness' which has been developed to supplement existing guidance and aid North West Local Authorities (LAs) to complete the self-assessment to an aligned high standard.

Monitoring risk is a fundamental element of our regional approach to Sector-Led Improvement and the North West Guide to Risk Awareness provides a list of practical suggestions that LAs should consider when approaching the completion of the risk awareness tool.

The North West Guide to Risk Awareness is not a mandatory document which LAs must implement – it is simply to support colleagues to ensure we approach monitoring risk in an efficient and effective manner across the region. In doing so we can cross reference risk across the North West and mobilise a tailored sector-led support offer suitable to the identified issues.

Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool

TEASC is a national programme of sector improvement led by ADASS and the LGA and delivered by the ADASS regions to help councils improve their performance in adult social care.

One element of the programme is the Risk Awareness Tool *(Formerly TEASC Risk Awareness Tool)*. The purpose of the risk awareness tool is:

- To promote self-awareness amongst DASSs and their senior colleagues.
- To ensure councils' political and executive leaders are well-informed about the risks facing ASC.
- To enable regions to identify issues that should be addressed through SLI activity, and councils that might need most help.
- To provide assurance to the public – that risks are being rigorously assessed and managed within the sector

The tool is based on the six domains of the ADASS framework, each of which encompasses a number of performance areas. To demonstrate progress in each area, local authorities are encouraged to assess themselves against the score matrix, and to record the evidence it has to support the score.

The TEASC Board recommends that the six domains and 'key areas to consider' should be tackled in each self-assessment. However, the processes for completing, collating and considering the outputs varies from one locality to the next. The risk awareness tool has been developed to be used flexibly and this was evident across the region as 19 LAs completed the tool in a variety of manners.

In addition to the six domains in the TEASC Risk Tool there are separate self-assessment tools which focus in on integration and local authorities may also wish to consider completing the following self-assessment toolkits which are freely available online.

Stepping up to the Place, LGA Integration Self-Assessment

AQUA System Integration Toolkit

In order to learn from the different approaches to completion, we convened a learning event to hear from LAs on the pros and cons of different approaches. We heard from different LAs at our regional learning event that adopted a 'light touch' approach whereas others completed more robust self-assessments that incorporated buddying and an 'external' challenge. Presentations from the regional learning events can be found [here.](here)

One of the key messages / recommendations captured from table discussions was to develop a 'North West Guide to Self-Awareness' which would help colleagues channel their efforts in the most effective and efficient manner and enable us to have a true reflection of our most pertinent risks and challenges across the region.

The following North West guide has been developed as a supplementary document to the existing TEASC tool which can be found [here.](here)

Choosing how to use the North West Guide to Risk Awareness

The guide overleaf is a simple, practical guide to assist LAs in the completion of the Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool. The guide has been developed in the context of our regional approach to Sector-Led Improvement and is built from the strong foundations of our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). A copy of the NW ADASS SLI MoU can be found on the NW ADASS website. The MoU sets out the agreed areas and activities in which the regions LAs will work together with the shared aims of:

- Securing improvement work that is focused on galvanising adult social care services to achieve the best possible outcomes for people, working in particular on the need to avoid service failures, improving performance in relation to the more intractable challenges and sustaining progress during a period of significant economic restraint and budget reductions.
- Building on existing capability in adult social care services, corporately and with partners to diagnose improvement challenges, identify risks to performance and to commission effective, evidence based and value for money solutions.
- Systematically sharing knowledge about what works across the sector and ensuring that there is effective brokerage of best practice solutions.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of policies designed to improve the lives of service users and their families and carers.

It is proposed LAs utilise the guide and where applicable adhere to the recommendations set within it. We encourage colleagues to use the tool in the context of their local systems, structures and practice – being fully aware that certain approaches will work in some areas and not in others. Each LA will individually be best placed to decide what works for your locality and what will enable you to detect the presence of risk across key areas of your adult social care system. On completion of the tool we encourage LAs to identify their top 3 – 5 risks and place them into the template provided *(Appendix 1)* as this will help the Programme Office understand the risks that run across the region and subsequently help shape the regional support offer.

North West Guide to Self-Awareness: Principles

Below are a set of principles that colleagues are asked to adopt to ensure the risk awareness process is meaningful and generates a true account of your local authorities' risks:

1. Use the tool for **genuine, honest reflection**, adopting a transparent approach.
2. Adopt a **co-production approach to the self-assessment process** to help drive a learning and improvement culture
3. Understand the importance of **triangulating 'hard' and 'soft' evidence** to develop your local account.
4. **Consistently and proactively monitor risk** across your locality – embed risk awareness as an ongoing process.
5. Develop a **safe environment** in which to share risks and welcome challenge from your peers.

Adhering to the above principles will enable the region to fully understand recurrent areas of risk and help inform the regional SLI support offer to develop mitigating actions.

The North West Guide to Risk Awareness: Key Recommendations

The below table highlights a series of practical actions you may wish to consider when completing the Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool. The table highlights collectively what we deem to be the pivotal elements for a robust and comprehensive process and what added value the approach enables. There are also columns to the right hand side to help you keep track of what recommendations you have adopted.

Table 1

Key Recommendations	The Added Value	Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
Embed the principles (with partners where applicable) from the beginning of the self-assessment process ensuring the wider team are 'signed up' to the approach.	Enables an open, true account of system risks and prevents 'masking' of real issues. Agreeing the approach from the offset encourages an efficient and open process.			
Begin the self-assessment process with a short reflection exercise (where applicable) on the previously completed risk tool exercise. Review your previous top three areas of risks and account for any outstanding risks, whilst also discussing successful mitigating action.	Enables colleagues to quickly identify outstanding risks and where applicable prioritise efforts to source successful mitigating actions.			
That every DASS and their team receives external challenge from a 'critical friend' on their completed self-assessment and associated action plan.	'Buddying' with a geographical neighbour or statistically similar local authority will ensure constructive, helpful, external challenge to highlight areas of risk. Colleagues are advised to consider the benefits of working with both geographical and statistical neighbours and rotate engagement on an annual basis. Colleagues should also consider the potential benefits of buddying with LAs outside of their sub-region.			
DASSs should engage AD's and their wider team (Policy, performance, finance, etc) in the completion of the self-assessment process – completion of the tool shouldn't sit with one team or set of colleagues.	This will enable a true reflection of risks within your locality. It will help identify strategic level issues but also bring to the fore practical, front-line risks.			

DASS's and their teams should use a combination of "hard" and "soft" evidence to assess risk, triangulating data with other evidence to form a robust and true account.	Reliance solely on data can mask certain risks – spending time gathering qualitative information will ensure the process is thorough and identify areas for improvement.			
The completed risk awareness tool and associated action plan should be signed off by the councils statutory DASS and inform content of their local annual account.	Ensuring strategic level endorsement of the findings will provide visibility of the risks and mobilise support from internal and external colleagues (where appropriate)			
DASSs are encouraged to share the findings from their risk assessment with both their chief executive and portfolio holder to help raise their awareness of the risks and mitigating actions being taken.	Ensuring strategic level endorsement of the findings will provide visibility of the risks and mobilise support from internal and external colleagues (where appropriate). *This will be dependent on local systems, structures, the political environment and is a local decision.*			
Share a summary of the key findings with the Regional Chair, Regional SLI Lead and Programme Office to enable the development of a regional risk overview.	This will enable the branch to develop a clear regional work plan and efficiently and accurately allocate regional resources (£).			
Ensure risk awareness is developed as on 'ongoing' process and to supplement the annual risk tool completion with regular in-house monitoring.	Reduce the possibility of not identifying 'in-year' emergent risks and encourages a more open and flexible approach from staff to raise awareness of risk. It can also test proposed mitigating actions and help enforcement of agreed actions.			

The North West Guide to Risk Awareness: Enhanced Recommendations

The below table contains a series of recommendations which can be considered as enhanced risk awareness activity in addition to the core recommendations in Table 1. All the recommendations below have to be considered in the context of your local systems and structures and implementation will very much depend on your local circumstances. Buddying with likeminded localities may mobilise the take-up of a selection of the enhanced risk awareness approaches.

Table 2

Enhanced Risk Awareness Recommendations	The Added Value	Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
Report the outcomes of Care Health Improvement Risk Tool and subsequent action plan to Cabinet.	Raises awareness of the key risks at Cabinet level can help identify and lever additional support to put in place mitigating actions. *This will be dependent on local systems, structures, the political environment and is a local decision.*			
Completion of the risk tool on devolution or suitable health economy footprints (Or other suitable footprints).	Working with a number of LAs will enable colleagues to understand risks across wider geographical boundaries or health economies. Utilising the recently constructed devolution systems and structures to mobilise support activity and system wide change.			
Adopt a coproduction approach to completion of the risk tool with private sector providers.	Mobilise a dialogue from an early stage in the process to fully understand risks from both a commissioner and provider perspective.			
Explore 'Elected Member Buddying' to add value to the adult social care team process	Gain additional perspectives from Elected Members on risks in your respective systems.			
Complete the risk awareness tool using the 6 key domains for individual specific elements of adult	Completing the 6 key domains of the risk awareness tool for specific elements of social care will give an in-			

social care, for example: Workforce, Home Care, Residential Care, etc.	depth insight into existing and potential risk. The 'deep dive' approach will enable colleagues.			
In addition to completing the Care Health Improvement Risk Tool use the available supporting toolkits which focus on particular areas of adult social care.	Provides a more in-depth review of risks across your adult social care systems.			
Introduce a regular method of communication with your 'buddying' authority – challenge progress against actions plans and share emerging risks and concerns on an agreeable timescale (Monthly, Quarterly, Bi-annually)	Reduce the possibility of not identifying 'in-year' emerging risks and encourages a more systematic, ongoing approach to enforcing proposed mitigating actions.			
Integrate new questions into the risk tool which are pertinent to your local arrangements / strategic priorities such as: Integration, Transforming Care and impact of the EU Referendum.	Covering programmes, agendas new policy that isn't embedded in the existing risk tool will ensure you gain an enhanced and detailed overview of your current risks.			

Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool: Next Steps

NW ADASS Programme Office

The NW ADASS Programme Office will continue to work closely with the Design and Delivery Team, Excellence Board, ADASS and their Regional Networks, and the LGA to embed a robust and efficient risk awareness programme in order to help identify and mitigate risks.

We will work collectively to:

- Encourage a flexible, place based approach to completion of the risk tool.
- Map risks across the region, sub-region and where applicable other footprints (Devolution) to identify recurrent themes.
- Ensure our regional risk picture directly influences the SLI review and support programme and helps identify the strategic priorities of the North West Branch.
- Ensure regional risks are fed through to appropriate governance groups / organisations and used to influence national policy direction.
- Commit to delivering an annual 'Risk Awareness' workshop which can be built into existing business planning processes.
- Influence content of the revised risk tool (Late Dec 2016) which could include risk in relation to: Integration (Devolution and STP's), Transforming Care and the potential impact of the EU Referendum.
- Draw on best practice more efficiently – using the newly commissioned North West Collaborative Portal and learning from the LGA and ADASS Regions.
- Ensure high level outcomes of the risk tool drives the development of the Branch's strategic objectives and shapes the SLI programme.

Risk Mitigation framework:

The LGA is in the process of gathering information from regional discussions to build a mitigation framework alongside the self-assessment toolkit. The LGA are analysing feedback, sharing learning and good practice approaches which in turn are informing the development of the risk mitigation framework. The LGA aim to launch the findings from these discussions in autumn 2016.

It is anticipated there will be a rebranding of the former 'TEASC Risk Awareness Tool' to 'Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool' and once branding has been confirmed we will inform colleagues and update artwork where applicable.

Contact Details:

If you require further information on the Care Health Improvement Risk Awareness Tool you can contact colleagues at the LGA Care Health Improvement Team by emailing: chip@local.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can contact the NW ADASS Programme Office on the details below. If you have any questions about this guide, please don't hesitate to contact members of the Programme Office:

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Adult Social Care: Risk Awareness Tool
Priority Risks

In the below table please identify your top 3 – 5 risks following the completion of your CHIP Risk Tool. The information will be aggregated to regional level by the NW ADASS Programme Office to identify recurrent / common areas of risk and will inform the business planning process for 2017.

1 – 5 (1 being highest priority for your LA)	Priority Area of Risk	Briefly explain your reasons behind level of risk	How can the NW ADASS Programme Office support you?	Additional comments
1	*For example: Market Resilience, DOLS, Carers, Workforce retention, etc*	*Please provide a general overview of risk and evidence to support your claims*	*Please suggest any activity (Research, training, collaboration, etc) that may help improve performance*	*Please specify any additional comments, for example: Timeframes, urgency of issue*
2				
3				
4				
5				