

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

Overview

This standard is about assessing the risks associated with an individual's offending behaviour in contribution to preventing the offending and/or reoffending of individuals. It includes involving the individual, wherever possible, in the assessment, and in informing the consequent factors and needs to be addressed.

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

'Risk' is taken to mean, 'the probability that an event or behaviour carrying the possibility of an adverse or negative outcome will occur', (Kemshall, 1998)

The resultant outcomes will then inform the development and implementation of appropriate intervention plans and activities. Recommendations within assessment reports may be made to others within your organisation, or to other organisations.

In working with offenders you are expected to consistently display the skills of pro-social modelling, offender engagement and professional judgment to encourage offenders to desist from their offending behaviour and to reduce the risk of re-offending.

There are three elements

1. Gather information regarding the individual and their circumstances
2. Assess the information, identifying risk and protective factors
3. Identify the individual's need for appropriate interventions

Target group

This standard is aimed at workers who undertake assessments of offenders and their risk of reoffending. The information is used to make recommendations about interventions that will promote and encourage desistance and rehabilitation.

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Gather information regarding the individual and their circumstances

1. explain your role and responsibility to the individual, explaining the information being sought, the reasons for seeking it, and with whom it may be shared
2. identify the individual's relevant circumstances including their:
 - 2.1 living arrangements and environment
 - 2.2 family and personal situation
 - 2.3 education and employment situation
 - 2.4 physical and mental health
 - 2.5 attitudes, beliefs and motivation
 - 2.6 offending history
3. collect information regarding the individual, their circumstances and behaviour, from a variety of sources, including factual and clinical data wherever possible
4. verify the information wherever possible, using approved methods
5. communicate using techniques appropriate to the individual and their needs
6. maintain records in line with organisational requirements

Assess the information, identifying risk and protective factors

7. determine the rating of potential risk factors from the assessment tool, and
 - 7.1 provide evidence to show the basis for your decision
 - 7.2 explain the strength and nature of the link between a factor and the likelihood of reoffending
8. assess relevant factors in line with organisational procedures, including the:
 - 8.1 individual's living arrangements and environment
 - 8.2 family and personal situation
 - 8.3 education/employment situation
 - 8.4 physical and mental health
 - 8.5 their attitudes, beliefs and motivation
9. assess the significance of both the total risk to determine the likelihood of offending/reoffending, and of risk related to particular factors, to identify priority areas for interventions
10. identify the nature of the individual's potential risk of harm to others, or to themselves
11. determine the likely outcome(s) of the risks identified, including whether there is a likelihood of reoffending, whether the individual is vulnerable to harm, and/or there is a risk of serious harm to others
12. determine the factors likely to be contributing to the causes of the

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

individual's offending behaviour

13. identify the factors that may trigger the offending behaviour
14. determine factors that might help to reduce, or prevent the offending behaviour and encourage desistance
15. identify any life events, or circumstances which may mean that the individual is particularly vulnerable
16. identify where additional assessments are required, and make the appropriate arrangements, recording your reasons for the additional requirement
17. take account of individuals' circumstances when developing defensible risk assessments
18. use assessment tool(s) in line with organisational procedures, and set out the:
 - 18.1 risks and protective factors identified
 - 18.2 likelihood of the behaviour/situation recurring
 - 18.3 likely imminence of such an event

Identify the individual's need for appropriate interventions

19. involve the individual in the risk assessment, explaining the rationale for the resultant ratings
20. explain to the individual the impact of the risk and protective factors identified on their offending behaviour
21. explain the identified triggers of their offending behaviour, and actions that might be appropriate towards addressing these
22. identify with the individual areas of risk to be targeted, and inform them of objectives to be addressed in a subsequent intervention plan
23. select and record any external and internal controls that need to be implemented
24. identify protective factors to be strengthened
25. check that your analysis is justified and defensible, with a clear rationale for your conclusions, associated recommendations and subsequent plans
26. check that procedures are in place to monitor and review the assessed risk, with a frequency appropriate to the level of risk identified
27. alert relevant persons promptly where you identify concerns regarding the risk of harm by the individual to others and/or themselves
28. provide your report, including all relevant information, to the relevant person(s) in line with organisational procedures

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements

1. legal and organisational requirements which relate to undertaking risk-led assessment, and their impact for your area of operations
2. legislation, policies and procedures relating to data protection, health and safety, diversity and their impact for your area of operations
3. the role of your organisation and the services which it provides in relation to assessing the behaviour of offenders
4. organisational policy and procedures regarding confidentiality of information and the disclosure of information to third parties, and the specific circumstances under which disclosure may be made
5. the limits of your authority and responsibility, and the actions to take if these are exceeded

Working within the community justice sector

6. good practice communication techniques relevant to the situation and how to apply them
7. the relevant assessment tool(s) and how to complete these
8. the information required towards making an assessment of individuals, appropriate to managing their risk of reoffending
9. the principles of risk-led practice based on specific descriptions of risk in terms of behaviour and circumstances
10. approaches to risk assessment, how to use these and their relative advantages and disadvantages
11. sources of relevant information regarding individuals and how to access these
12. methods of verifying and corroborating the information required
13. how to distinguish between directly observed evidence, evidence from reliable sources and hearsay
14. how to distinguish between prejudice and opinions that are backed by evidence
15. the ways in which stereotyping and discrimination might affect risk assessment and how to guard against this
16. factors influencing the vulnerability of individuals
17. types of vulnerability, or levels of harm, used in assessing risk, their indicators and how to determine these
18. key risk factors for serious offending, including:
 - 18.1 the number of previous convictions

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

- 18.2 the nature of any current offence
- 18.3 patterns of harmful behaviour
- 18.4 drug/alcohol abuse
- 19. circumstances requiring additional assessments and how to arrange these
- 20. circumstances where cases are considered to be very high risk, requiring a structured and detailed risk management plan, and how to progress such a plan
- 21. multi-agency arrangements including their definitions and associated actions
- 22. how to ensure that personal norms, communication styles and unconscious or implicit bias do not influence your judgement
- 23. good practice related to offender engagement

Assess offenders for risk factors and levels of risk associated with their behaviour

Developed by	Skills for Justice
Version Number	3
Date Approved	August 2015
Indicative Review Date	July 2020
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Skills for Justice
Original URN	SFJEA2
Relevant Occupations	Probation Officers; Probation Staff; Probation Support Officers; Public Service and Other Associate Professionals; Public Services; Community justice workers
Suite	Community Justice
Keywords	Offender; assessment; risk factors; offending behaviour; intervention; desistance; desist; rehabilitation; transforming rehabilitation