See: A positive approach to Risk and Personalisation: A Framework. Gloucestershire IEP

Risk is the probability that an event will occur with beneficial or harmful outcomes for a particular person or others with whom they come into contact.

**Positive risk taking** is a process which starts with the identification of potential benefit or harm. The desired outcome is to encourage and support people in positive risk taking to achieve personal change or growth.

Positive risk management does not mean trying to eliminate risk. It means managing risks to maximise people’s choice and control over their lives.

Positive risk taking recognises that in addition to potentially negative characteristics, risk taking can have positive benefits for individuals, enabling them to do things which most people take for granted. In the right circumstances, risk can be beneficial, balancing necessary levels of protection with preserving reasonable levels of choice and control. A balance has to be achieved between the wishes of adults at risk of abuse or neglect, and the common law duty of care.

**Risk Assessment and Identification**

Risk should be considered and assessed before it occurs. This should include identifying the probability of the risk occurring and the impact if it does. It should be remembered that the impact of a risk can be positive and that not all risks will require management.

Risk assessment practice is dynamic and flexible and should respond to change. Therefore it will:

- Include the views of individuals and those of their families/carers which should have prominent focus in the assessment, identification and management of risk.
- Have a focus on a person’s strengths to give a positive base from which to develop plans that will support positive risk-taking. The strengths and abilities of the person, their wider social and family networks, and the diverse support and advocacy services available to them should inform a balanced approach.
- Be proportionate to the risk identified, potential impact and subject to ongoing monitoring and review.
- Use the principles of multi-agency working in proportion to risk and the impact on self and others.
- Use a person-centred approach to assess, identify and manage risk.
- Ensure that staff have access to appropriate training to support them to promote positive risk taking.
- Ensure that written assessments identify a review date and include the signatures of everyone involved in the assessment.
- Include historical information which is of value in the assessment and management of risk. Historical information should not prejudice a positive approach to risk taking in the future.
Risk management and personalising choice & control

'The goal is to manage risks in ways which improve the quality of life of the person, to promote their independence or to stop these deteriorating if possible. Not all risks can be managed or mitigated but some can be predicted.'

Risk management entails broad range of responses and may involve preventative, responsive and supportive measures to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk, and to promote the potential benefits of taking agreed risks. These will occasionally involve more restrictive measures and crisis responses where the identified risks have an increased potential for harmful outcomes.

Risk management strategies and measures should be personalised to the individual circumstances and context of the adult. Personalisation is not about maximising freedom. As the term implies it is primarily concerned with how to design support arrangements so they are more "personal" - which means they need to fit the person, and be suitable for them.

One of things you can personalise is control itself. Not only can you personalise control but personalised control is sometimes the key to excellent support.

Control can be personalised, just like any other aspect of a support service. But it must be justified with due regard for (a) mental capacity, (b) effectiveness, and (c) proportionality.

Personalised approaches to adult safeguarding are not just about gaining and focusing on the desired outcomes of the adult, although this is important. It is also about ensuring any support the adult needs to manage risk of abuse or neglect- including measures that may need to restrict or control an adult’s choices and freedoms- is tailored to their individual circumstances, and takes account of their history, preferences, culture and values.

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1 Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained: risk guidance for people with dementia, Department of Health, November 2010
2 Content adapted from Safeguarding and Personalisation, v1.1, Jan 2009. Simon Duffy and John Gillespie.