

Member Personal Safety for Newly Elected Members

Staying Safe While Carrying Out Your Councillor Duties

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Today's objectives and topics

1. **The Council's duty of care to you and your status under health and safety legislation.**
2. **Hazards and Risks of your work in the community**
3. **Control measures (including Dynamic Risk Assessment)**
4. **What to do if it goes wrong**
5. **Personal safety**
6. **Advice and support**

What is Personal Safety?

‘An individual's ability to go about their everyday life free from the threat or fear of psychological, emotional or physical harm from others.’

Suzy Lamplugh Trust



Section 1

Duty of Care and Legal Status

Duty of Care

Councillors are not employees but elected office holders. However, LA still owes a duty of care under common law negligence principles.

LA must take reasonable step to protect you from foreseeable risks arising from our activities.

You have a responsibility to take care of your own health & safety and that of others.

Please understand that you carry the main responsibility for your own security.

If you do not take precautions, you may put yourself at risk.





Section 2

What are the potential hazards of your work?

Answer, using the word cloud

You can normally break this
down using the acronym PET

P
E
T



People

E

T



Who are you likely to come into contact with?

Are they...

- Total strangers/members of the public?
- People well known to you?
- People about whom you know very little?
- People with a history of violence or aggression?
- People with drug, alcohol or mental health problems?

People Environment T



Where are you working?

Are you...

- In an area with open access to the public?
- Able to communicate easily/ confidentially with constituents?
- Going into their home?
- Working out on the street with the public?
- Working in a rural or isolated area
- Able to communicate with colleagues
- Able to tell somebody where you are and your plans
- Working at night or early morning

People Environment Task



What are you doing?

Are you...

- Enforcing a rule?
- Assessing for or denying a service?
- Discussing sensitive issues?
- Delivering bad news
- Carrying valuables

Most of your concerns will be about aggressive behaviour

What triggers aggressive behaviour?

Aggressive behaviour is often triggered when a person feels

- **Threatened**
- **Frustrated**
- **Powerless**
- **Frightened**
- **Misunderstood, or**
- **Treated unfairly**

Verbal and Non-verbal signs

Verbal

- Speaking more loudly than normal
- Rapid speech
- Repeated complaints or grievances
- Sarcasm or mocking remarks
- Constant interruption
- Challenging questions
- Refusing to listen to explanations
- Blaming language ("This is your fault")
- Swearing or use of abusive language.

Non-verbal

- Frowning or scowling
- Tense facial muscles
- Clenched jaw
- Reduced smiling or friendly expressions
- Increased staring or glaring
- Crossing arms tightly
- Pacing
- Restlessness or fidgeting
- Heavy sighing.

Verbal and Non-verbal signs

Potential violence indicators

- Direct threats
- Statements
 - “You’ll be sorry”
 - “Someone is going to get hurt”

Non-verbal indicators

- Balling fists
- Removing coat or jacket
- Looking for objects to throw
- Adopting fighting stance
- Rapid breathing.

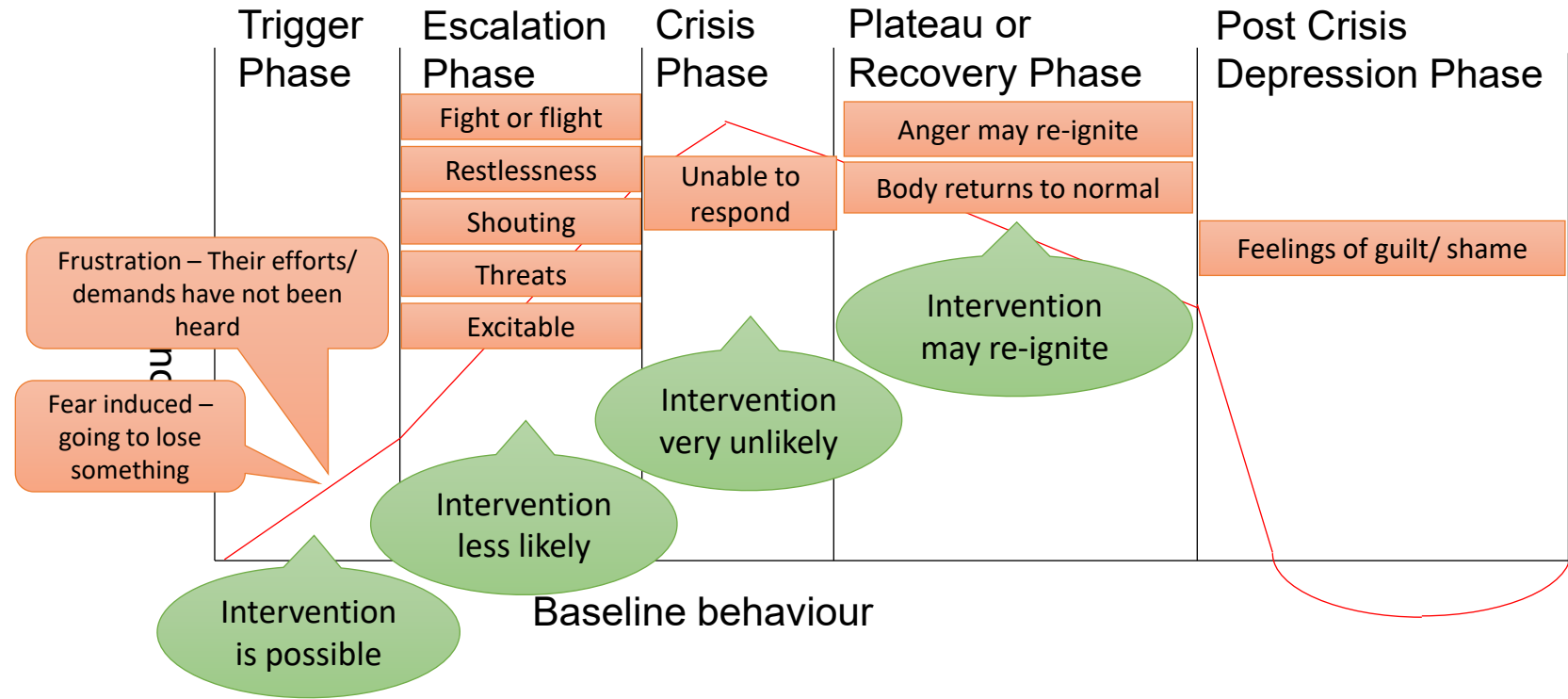
Behavioural indicators

- Pushing furniture
- Striking walls or tables
- Refusing to leave when asked
- Sudden explosive movements
- Physical intimidation of others

The Assault Cycle

What happens when a person becomes angry

- Trigger phase
- Escalation phase
- Crisis phase
- Plateau phase
- Post crisis/ depression phase





Section 3

Control Measures and Dynamic Risk Assessment

Steps you can take to reduce the risks

Control Measures

P.L.A.N.

Prepare

Failed to prepare? Prepare to fail

Look Confident

You are less likely to be the victim of a crime

Avoid Risk

Follow the procedures in place

Never Assume

It won't happen to you



Steps you can take to reduce the risks – Control Measures

Prepare

FLOWERS

Prepare

FLOWERS – car safety checks

Service

Ensure you have your car serviced regularly

Fuel

Ensure you have enough fuel for your journey.

Rubber

Check your rubber tyres for uneven wear, pressure, damage and tread

Lights

Check all lights are working – you will need help with this.

Electrics

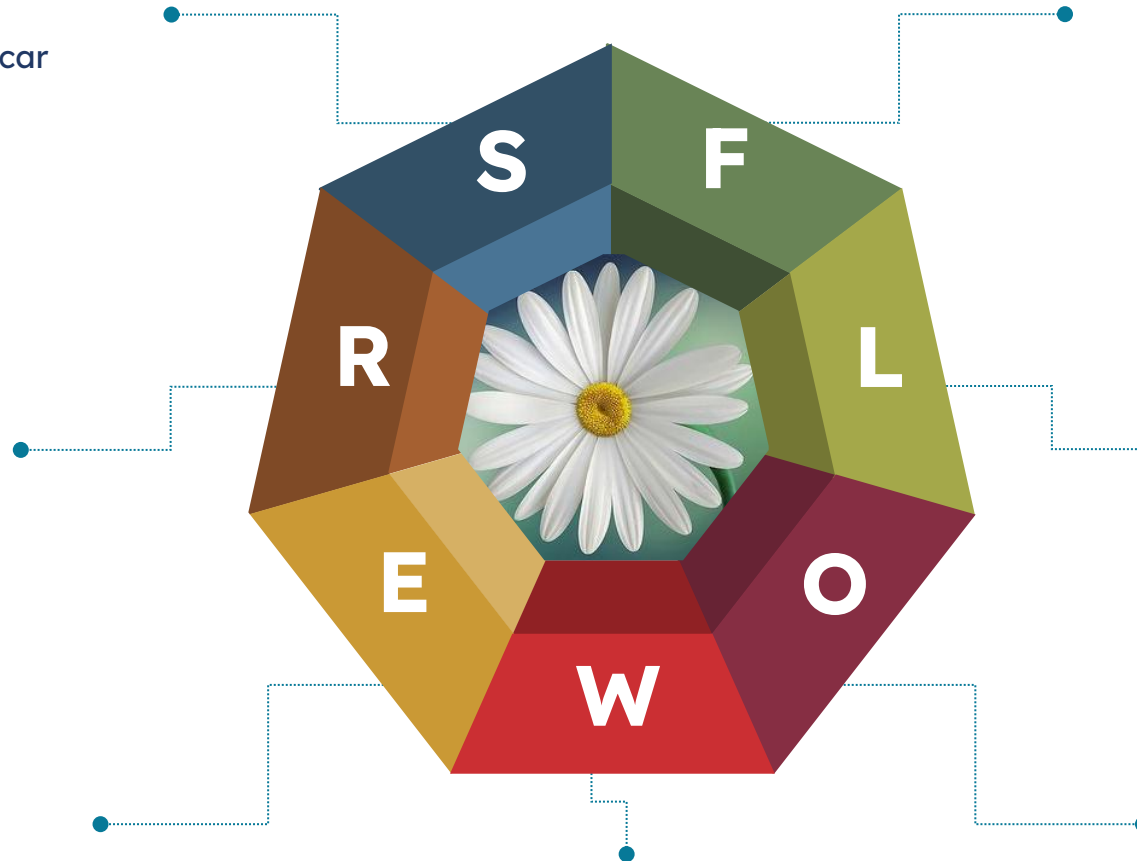
Make sure there are no indicators to say the battery is low.

Oil

Check the oil level when the car is cold and parked on level ground.

Water

Check the water level in your wind screen wash & coolant.



Steps you can take to reduce the risks – Control Measures

Prepare

FLOWERS

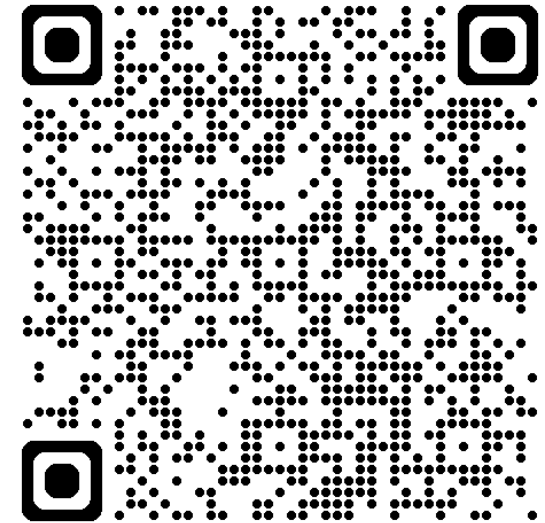
Check the area on Police crime map

Phone charged, lone working app, Emergency SOS

Colleague (Buddy) knows departure/arrival times & venue

Check location on Google Maps,

Where to park and how to travel to venue

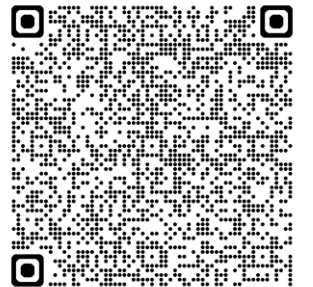
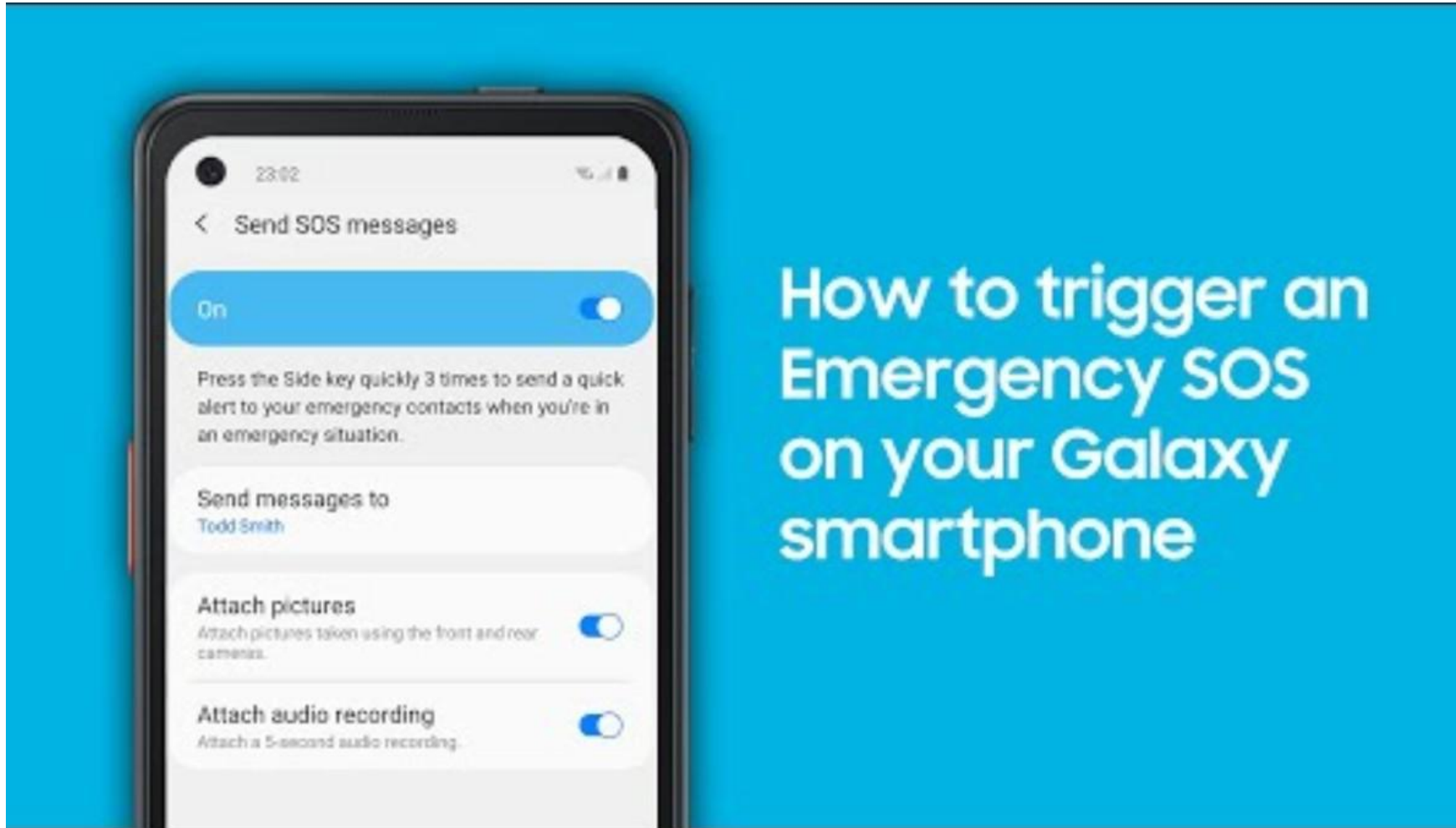


Police Crime Map

Phone's Emergency SOS



Phone's Emergency SOS



Lone Working App



Steps you can take to reduce the risks – Control Measures

Look Confident

Know where to park

Know where you are going

Walk purposefully

Avoid wearing earphones

Avoid using your phone whilst walking

Avoid unnecessary baggage

Remain alert to your surrounding



Steps you can take to reduce the risks

Control Measures



Avoid Risk

Follow the procedures in place

Next of Kin details

Make, model and registration

Social Media

Surgery self-assessment

Aware of dynamic risk assessment

Lone working checklist

Trust your instinct – be prepared to depart

Have an excuse for leaving

Do not engage with individuals who are stalking/harassing you (on and offline)

Report intimidation to your internet service provider / mobile phone company.

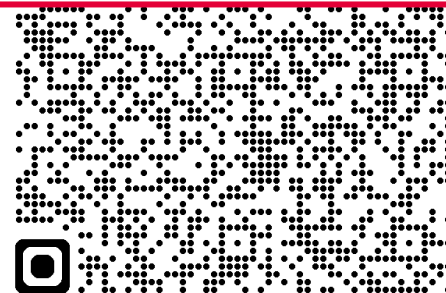
Use 'Report Abuse' tools on social media platforms

Block/report trolls

You can disable comments on the Meta platforms

Conduct an online health check

Seek advice from your local police force on personal safety and building security



Lone working
checklist

Steps you can take to reduce the risks – Control Measures

Never Assume

It won't happen to you



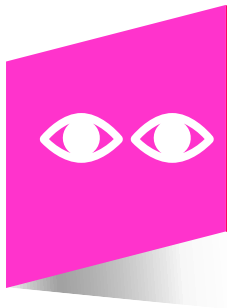
Not risk free

Policies, procedures and practices
Will not eliminate all risks



What if they..

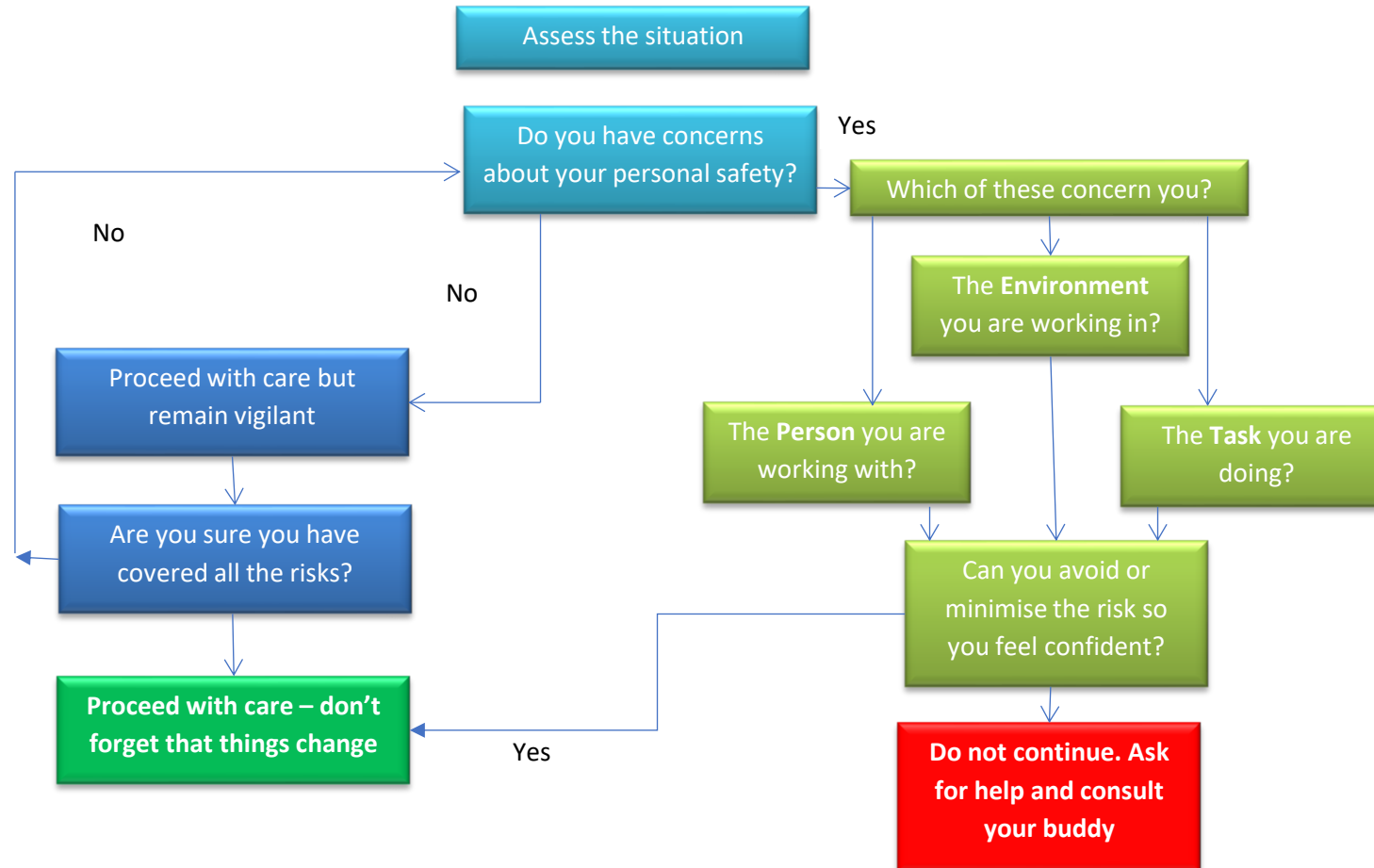
Are obviously drunk
Make threats against you
Start making irrational statements
Produce a weapon



Plan, visualize, repeat

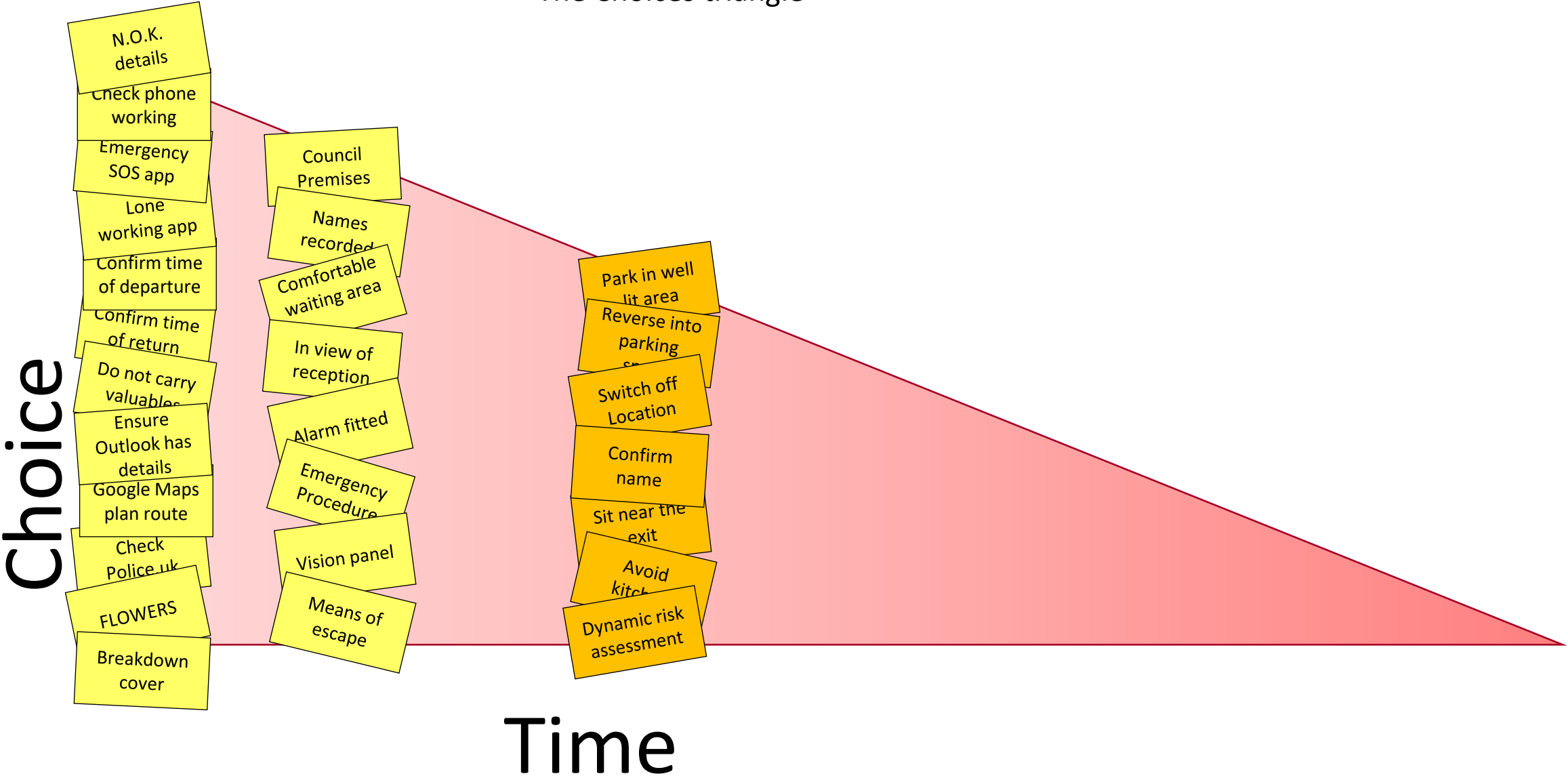
Plan your response
Visualise the situation
Repeat the process so it become automatic

Dynamic risk assessment



Before you leave

The Choices triangle



Once you arrive
The Choices triangle





What is wrong with this?

Control Measures in Premises/Surgeries

- [Self assessment surgery risk assessment form](#)

Self assessment surgery risk assessment form

Hi, Frank. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

1. Please provide the address/s of your surgery location

Enter your answer

2. The layout of the room should ensure that you can sit nearest to the door with residents seated on the other side of the table. Is this possible

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Do the surgery locations allow for a swift means of escape?

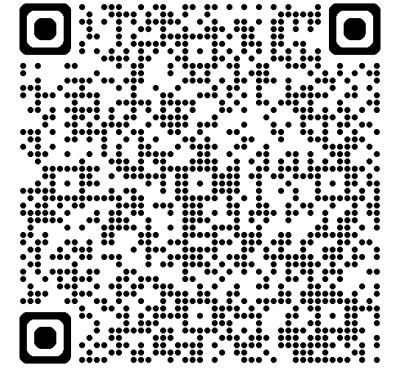
☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Is there a separate, comfortable waiting area?

☐ Yes

☐ No



**Self-assessment Risk
Assessment**

Section 4

What to do if it goes
wrong

What to do if it does go wrong?



It won't happen to me, will it?

Jones



Pennington



2000

Timms



2010

Cox



2016

Amess



2021

*Handout: Attacks on Councillors – Personal Safety Update 2016

What did they have in common with us?

- They were just doing their jobs?
- They were going about their daily routine?
- They work with the public?
- They were vulnerable?
- They were exposed?
- They were Lone Working?
- Did they consider their personal safety?

Defusing Techniques

Listen

Empathise

Acknowledge/Ask questions

Paraphrase/Parrot-phrase

Summarise

Section 5

Personal Safety

Personal Safety

Travelling by car

Breakdown cover

Don't offer lifts

Keep windows shut

All doors locked

Hold keys in hand when approaching your car

Don't programme your home address in sat nav

FLOWERS



Personal Safety

Travelling by public transport

Know the timetable

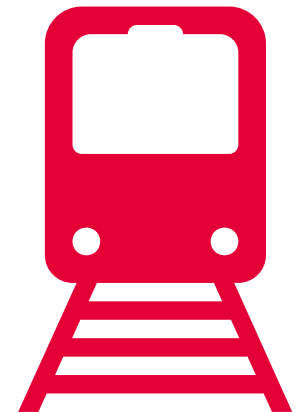
Access to funds for a taxi, contact number for reliable taxi firm

Use lower deck so driver can see you

If you feel threatened, get the drivers attention

Use well populated carriages on trains (move seats if needed)

Arrange to be met at the bus stop or train station



Personal Safety

Travelling by taxi

Don't hail a taxi unless it is a Hackney

Drivers ID on display – check photo matches driver

Confirm name of driver matches mini-cab firm names

Check the reg and vehicle match the text sent

Share the taxi with a friend

No personal details to driver



Personal Safety

Walking

Check your route beforehand

Walk down the middle of the pavement

Avoid eye contact with those you don't wish to engage with

Long hair and scarves tucked in

Bags under your coat and away from road

Keep your hands free as you walk

Avoid using your phone

If followed head for lights and noise



PERSONAL SAFETY

When away from a place of safety:

- **Leave with others** if you can

If alone?

- **Don't** become complacent/distracted
- **Use** well lit, safe routes
- **Look Around** for the unusual
- **Listen** for anything/anyone different (don't wear headphones)
- **Gut Instinct** be aware
- **Keep Calm**
- **Do not go into unsafe situations** - if you don't feel comfortable – don't go, report back
- **Be ready** keys in hand for door/car, alarm within reach
- **Don't be a hero!**

Section 6

Advice & Support

Advice and support



[Member portal – safety and risk pages](#)



Health and Safety Intranet Pages



Helpdesk number - 0333 013 9818



Team mailbox - HS@essex.gov.uk / democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Reporting Incidents

Report all accidents, assaults and near misses promptly

Unsafe conditions (locked fire doors, trip hazards etc.) should be reported to those responsible for the premises

Injuries or assaults may be reportable by law - RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013)

Assaults should be reported to the Police.



Follow Up

Following an incident some of the following may be appropriate:

- De-Briefing with Democracy Team
- Support to report to Police (e.g. if assaulted)
- Referral to Counselling
- Provide warnings to others who may encounter the person/address
- Further training/advice
- Risk Assessment Review

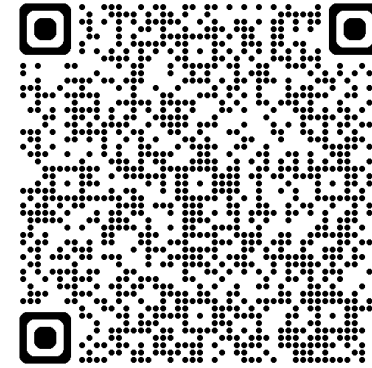
Further information

[Holding Surgeries on ECC Premises - Members' Portal](#)

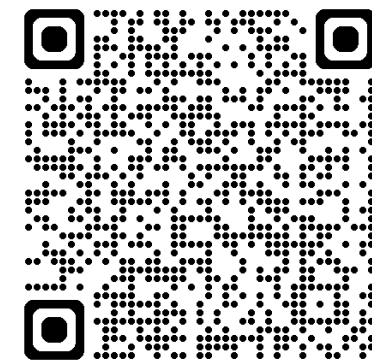
[Microsoft Forms Surgery self assessment risk](#)

[Safety and Risk - Members' Portal](#)

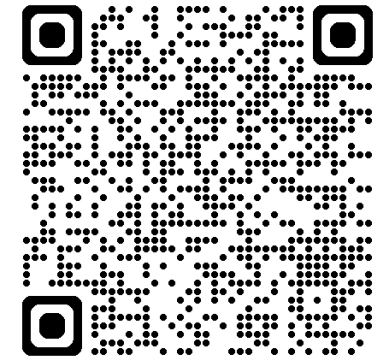
[Personal Safety Guide - Members' Portal](#)



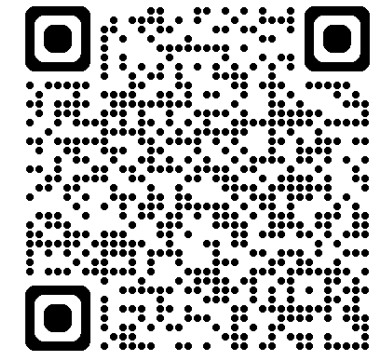
Self-assessment Risk
Assessment



Personal safety guide -
Members Portal



Holding Surgeries



Safety & Risk -
Members Portal

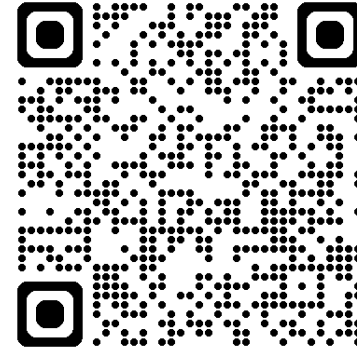
Further information

Local Government Association advice

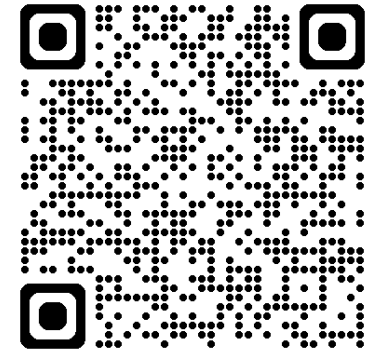
Suzy Lamplugh – safety on the doorstep

LGA – Handling online abuse

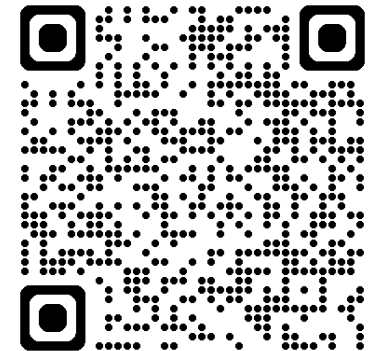
LGC – Tales of abuse



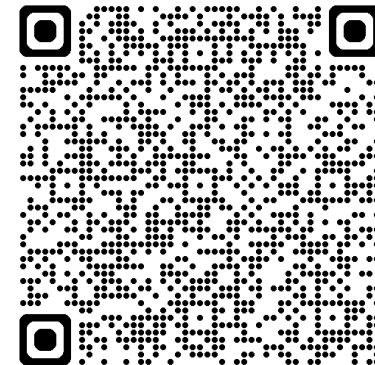
Suzy Lamplugh - Safety
on the doorstep



LGA Advice



LGA Advice – Handling
online abuse



LGC Article – Tales of
Abuse

THANK YOU



ANY QUESTIONS?