

Summary

Objective

A vulnerable situation for a client is when there is a potential threat to their safety, health, or wellbeing. If you're working on someone's claim and recognise the signs that they may be in a potentially vulnerable situation, you must immediately report your concerns to your manager so decisions can be made about reducing the chances they will come to harm.

Owner **9(2)(a)**

Expert **9(2)(a)**

Policy

1.0 Recognising vulnerable situations

- a** Vulnerable situations for clients come in many forms. Sometimes the potential for harm comes from the addictions, mental health conditions, or aggressive or anti-social behaviours the person exhibits. Sometimes it is the person's poor health or medical conditions in combination with the conditions they're living in. Sometimes the potential harm comes from others the person is living with.


All of these situations present risk but the most dangerous situations are where a person is unable to reduce or remove themselves from these risks.

NOTE Please refer to process of Respond to clients in Vulnerable Situations

 **PROCESS** Respond to Clients in Vulnerable Situations

2.0 Rules

- a** If you become aware that a client is in any of the situations described in the following table, or if a supplier reports that one of their clients is in a vulnerable situation, refer to the Responding to clients in potentially vulnerable situations process.


 Rules - Recognising clients in vulnerable situations Policy.docx

3.0 Reporting child abuse or neglect

- a** If you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect, you need to be mindful that the perpetrator of the abuse will be highly aware of the negative consequences for them after the abuse is reported, and either:

- attempting to deny that the child has been abused
- trying to prevent the abuse from being reported, or
- denying responsibility for the abuse.

Refer to the Referring children in suspected vulnerable situations process to file a report. In the case of at-risk children the Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children will take the actions to safeguard the child (Oranga Tamariki, Ministry for Children, have the statutory authority to do this, ACC doesn't).

 Referring Children in Potentially Vulnerable Situations (Te WHāriki)

4.0 Reducing the potential for harm

a When developing a risk mitigation plan, seek a wide range of advice as good risk mitigation can reduce the potential for harm. Any of the following should be able to assist.

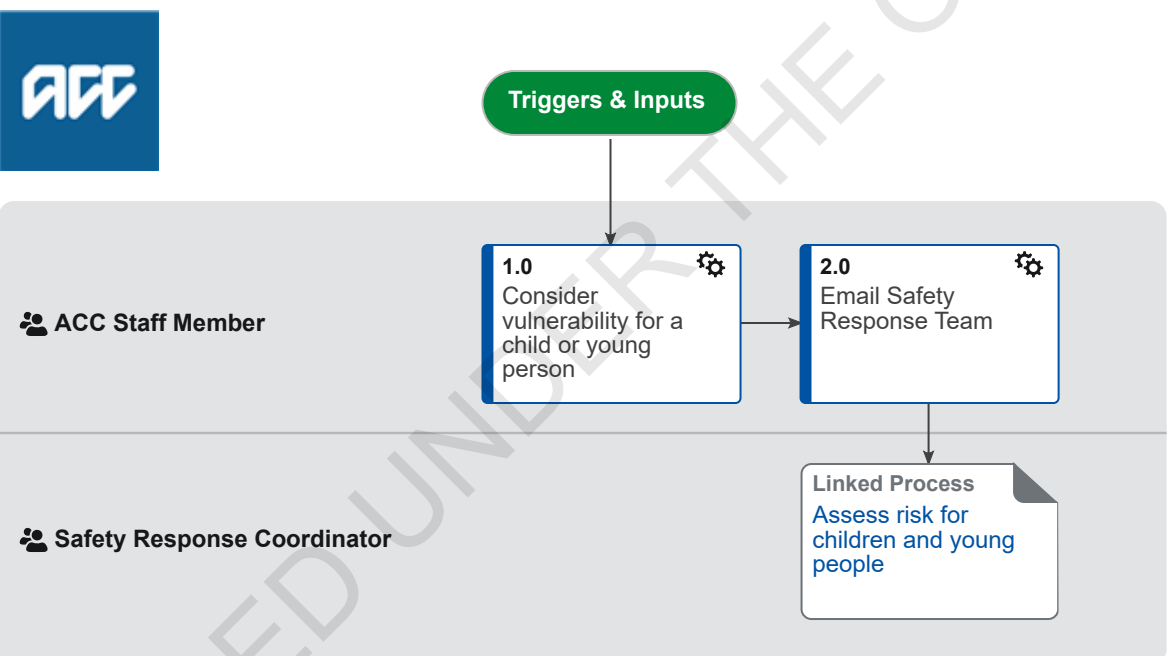
- Client Service Leader
- Clinical, Psychology or Medical Advisor
- Team Leader

In some cases there are obvious steps that ACC can take. For example, ACC can support applications for the Family Court to appoint a welfare guardian for a person with diminished decision-making capacity (see instructions for Protection of Personal & Property Rights Act orders)

Sometimes other people and agencies may need to be involved. For example, a person's GP and Mental Health Services may need to be involved to manage that person's aggressive behaviour towards others. See Additional contacts and links for managing vulnerable situations.

Sometimes the best course of action is monitoring of the situation via regular communication – either directly with the client or through others such as service providers.

Situation	Potential for harm
Mental health or behaviour problems	<p>Mental health conditions that co-exist with a person's injury may mean they are anxious or suspicious of people they don't know. They may be reluctant to have support services delivered in their home, or they may be reluctant to leave home for assessment, medical treatments, or meetings at an ACC branch.</p> <p>Behaviours that are caused by the person's injury (often a brain injury) such as getting angry quickly, using abusive language or making threats (including threats of suicide) can make it difficult to provide them with support services they need. It may also exhaust the patience of others trying to support them.</p>
Addiction problems	Substance abuse habits or addictions that co-exist with the person's injury. This includes alcohol abuse, drug taking, and out of control gambling.
Isolation	Living alone in an isolated situation, such as a long way away from neighbours or other people has the potential to be harmful if the person is unable to seek help for themselves if they suddenly get sick, or if they're in an emergency such as a fire or natural disaster.
Decision-making capacity impaired	<p>Dementia and brain injuries often result in impairments that affect a person's ability to make their own financial or personal care decisions, including the ability to communicate concerns for their safety or to advocate for themselves. These situations have a high potential for harm when no formal management arrangements are in place, like a welfare guardian appointed by order of the Family Court.</p> <p>The ability to make decisions is the important factor here – it should not be confused with the quality of the decisions a person is able to make.</p>
Violence or abuse from others	Living in a household or associating with people with a known history of alcohol abuse, violence, physical or sexual abuse, drug taking or making, or other criminal activity. The potential for harm is increased if the person is unable to remove themselves from these risky situations with others.
No family support or backup	The person has limited or no support from family or friends. The potential harm in this situation is increased if the person has high medical or personal care support needs and their care arrangements are not always reliable.
Taken advantage of by others	Living in a situation where the person can be taken advantage of by dishonest carers or household members. The potential for harm is increased if the person is unable to communicate concerns for their safety or to advocate for themselves.
Money problems	The person has constrained financial resources to deal with unplanned expenses, such as needing to take a taxi to the doctor.
Health problems	Some health or medical conditions can be fatal if not treated promptly, like autonomic dysreflexia, or can have serious consequences if not managed correctly, such as pressure sores.
Unreliable care arrangements	If care arrangements for the person are unreliable, or the carers are no longer physically capable of providing the care needed, it can be potentially harmful. Sometimes the situation occurs if there are other members of the household whose behaviour, such as abusing or bullying carers, interferes with delivery of care.
Housing problems	Being homeless or living in an overcrowded household in a dwelling that is not insulated, poorly maintained or not weatherproof has the potential for harm if the person has health conditions that are made worse by cold, damp, and overcrowding.



ACC Staff Member

Safety Response Coordinator



Summary

Objective

To refer children to Safety Response Team when we are concerned that they may be in a potentially vulnerable situation.

Background

When an ACC staff member becomes aware or suspects that a child may be in a vulnerable situation, then an email should be sent to Safety Response team for further risk assessment.

A vulnerable situation could be in relation to their safety, wellbeing, their access to treatment, or concerning claims within their history.

Owner

9(2)(a)

Expert

9(2)(a)

Procedure

1.0 Consider vulnerability for a child or young person

ACC Staff Member

a In Eos, identify indicators on the claim that the child is vulnerable or at risk.

NOTE What are some of the indicators to look for in the claim or claims history of a child?

- Descriptions of physical abuse as a cause of injury eg punched / kicked / hit
- Unusual injury/accident description or a claim with no accident description listed
- The client is 17 years or under and has a high number of claims with ACC eg 10 or more ACC claims in the past two years, or five or more claims in the past six months
- A high number of head injuries and / or facial injuries
- Delayed presentation for treatment of injuries.
- The client is 17 years or under and has recent claim for, Self-Harm/Attempted Suicide/Willfully Self-Inflicted Injury/Overdose/Ingestion of harmful substances (Bleach, Glass, Petrol etc.)

2.0 Email Safety Response Team

ACC Staff Member

a In Outlook, create a new email to: safety.response@acc.co.nz.

NOTE What details do I add to my email?

- 1) Subject line: Referral to Safety Response Team.
- 2) Either: Client ID / NHI / Claim Number.
- 3) Brief explanation of reason for referral.
- 4) Note if the claim is active for supports.

NOTE What if Oranga Tamariki are involved?

Include this information in your referral email.

NOTE What if the claim is active for supports?

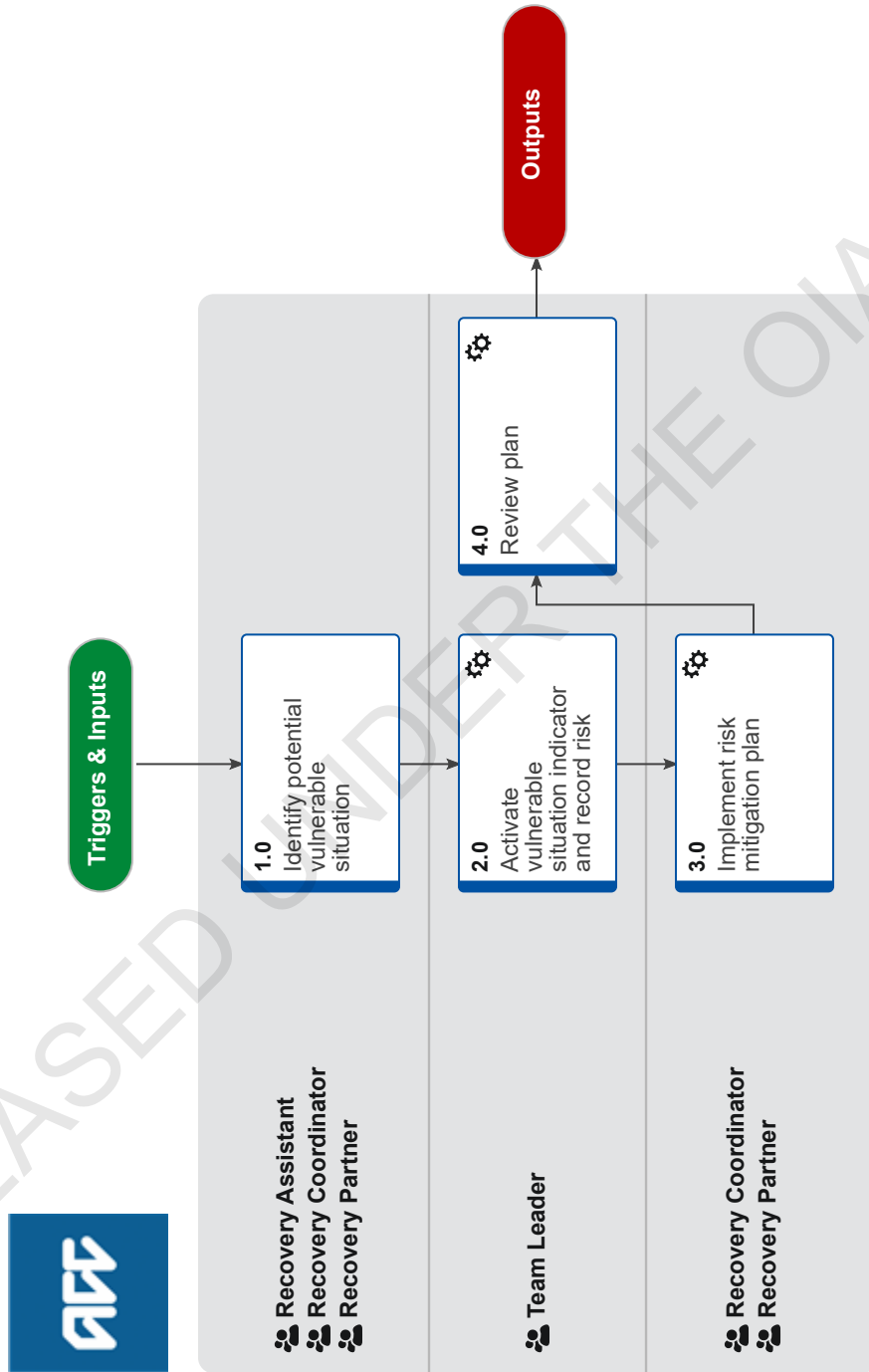
A Safety Response Coordinator will contact the Recovery Staff member to work together to review information following the referral.



PROCESS

Assess risk for children and young people

Safety Response Coordinator



Summary

Objective

The purpose of this process is to ensure we effectively identify a vulnerable situation for a client, when there is a potential threat to their safety, health, or wellbeing. If you're working on someone's claim and recognise the signs that they may be in a potentially vulnerable situation, you must immediately report your concerns to your Manager so decisions can be made about reducing the chances they will come to harm.

It allows us to be proactive in a client's recovery.

Background

While providing support to our clients, we may identify that they are at risk. It is important to understand how to respond to vulnerable situations. Vulnerable situations for clients come in many forms. Sometimes the potential for harm comes from the addictions, mental health conditions, or aggressive or anti-social behaviours the person exhibits. Sometimes it is the person's poor health or medical conditions in combination with the conditions they're living in. Sometimes the potential harm comes from others the person is living with.

Identifying the triggers that will help us to proactively respond to a client's needs and take the required action or interventions including formulating a risk mitigation plan.

Owner 9(2)(a)


Expert 9(2)(a)

Procedure

1.0 Identify potential vulnerable situation

Recovery Assistant, Recovery Coordinator, Recovery Partner

- a** Collect details of the client's potential vulnerable situation. Refer to the 'Situation and Potential for Harm' table in the 'Recognising clients in vulnerable situations Policy'.

 Recognising clients in vulnerable situations Policy

NOTE What are the signs of vulnerable situations?


- mental health or behaviour problems
- aggressive or anti-social behaviours
- addiction problems
- isolation
- decision-making capacity is impaired
- violence or abuse from others
- no family support or backup
- taken advantage of by others
- money problems
- poor health problems
- medical conditions
- unreliable care arrangements
- housing problems
- conditions they're living in
- harm from others the person is living with.

All these situations present risk, but the most dangerous situations are where a person is unable to reduce or remove themselves from these risks.

NOTE What if a child is affected?

If no, continue.

If yes, go to Referring children in potentially vulnerable situations process, and file report.
See also Interagency protocol for at-risk or vulnerable children Policy.

 Referring children in potentially vulnerable situations

 Interagency protocol for at-risk or vulnerable children Policy

- b** Obtain details of the potentially vulnerable situation.

NOTE Who could you obtain details from?

The treating provider, a family member, a carer, school or contracted agencies.

- c** Identify and contact all parties involved, eg:
- Police
 - Oranga Tamariki - Ministry of Children
 - Ministry of Health
 - Housing New Zealand
 - Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ)
 - client's doctor or General Practitioner
 - contracted service suppliers.

NOTE What if you are referring your client to a provider?

Contact and discuss with the provider prior to them accepting and contacting the client.

If creating a task, clearly outline that the client is in a vulnerable situation.

- d** Discuss with your Team Leader.

NOTE What if my Team Leader advises the client is considered vulnerable but doesn't meet the Vulnerable Indication criteria?

Update the Cultural needs life area of the Recovery Plan with the following information:

- Provider Safety Plan
- Concerns that have been identified

Update or add safe or alternative contacts if required. Continue with previous process.

- e** Consider if the client needs to be transitioned to a different team.

NOTE What do you need to consider?

As a result of the change in Vulnerable Situation Indicator consider transitioning the client to a different team. If your client is in Assisted Recovery transition the client to Supported or Partnered Recovery. For more information refer to the guidelines and process below.

 **PROCESS** Transition Claim

 GUIDELINES Choosing the right Recovery Team

2.0 Activate vulnerable situation indicator and record risk mitigation plan

Team Leader

- a** Contact the Recovery Team member to discuss the actions.
- b** Request CSL to activate the Vulnerable Care Situation Indicator in EOS through the claim party record:

1. Navigate to the Indicator tab
2. Click Add
3. From drop-down menu select Vulnerable Situation Indicator
4. Click Yes
5. From drop-down menu select Vulnerable Status
6. Select Active
7. Complete the section Why the client is believed to be in a vulnerable situation
8. From drop-down menu select Risk Mitigation Plan Update Type
9. Select Initial
10. Complete the section Parties affected by situation
11. Complete the section Risk mitigation actions undertaken by ACC
12. If there are other parties involved, complete Other parties involved in managing the situation
13. Click OK


- c** Advise the Recovery Team member that the indicator is active and tasks in the risk mitigation plan can now be carried out.

3.0 Implement risk mitigation plan

Recovery Coordinator, Recovery Partner

- a** In Eos, open the clients party record and navigate to the Indicator tab.
- b** Review the plan.
- c** Meet with Team Leader to review and agree on each task and the dates.
- d** Implement the risk mitigation plan.
- e** Update the Recovery Plan with the action taken.

NOTE Go to the Create or Update Recovery Plan process.

 **PROCESS** Create or Update Recovery Plan

 Recovery Plan - Create Reminder Actions - System Steps

- f** Create a reminder to review the risk mitigation plan in 6 months.
- g** Set up an action to contact the client again to monitor the situation.

4.0 Review plan

Team Leader

- a Review the risk mitigation plan after 6 months. Go to Reviewing Vulnerable Situation Indicators for clients process.



Reviewing Vulnerable Situation Indicators for clients process (CHIPS)

<http://thesauce/team-spaces/chips/issues/vulnerable-situations/process/reviewing-vulnerable-situation-indicators-for-clients/index.htm>

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