

# Current issues: Covid-19 and safeguarding adults

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# Safeguarding Adults and the Coronavirus Act 2020

- Safeguarding adults remains a statutory duty, and the responsibility of local authorities (and partner agencies) - to keep everybody safe from abuse or neglect, with a clear role in avoiding any breach of human rights.
- The Coronavirus Act 2020 emergency legislation (25 March 2020), allows for 'easement' or suspension of a number of duties in the Care Act 2014, downgrading them to powers.
- The Care Act easements guidance explains how this can be done, and the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care provides support to decision making in this context.
- The Care Act easements guidance 2020 says that it is vital that local authorities continue to offer the same oversight and application of Care Act 2014 Section 42 duties as before, but that responses are proportionate, and are mindful of pressures on social care providers.
- Principal Social Workers (PSW) and Safeguarding Leads should advise on any changes to safeguarding practices locally during this period.

[Gov.Uk - Coronavirus: Covid-19, changes to the care act 2014](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ethical-framework-for-adult-social-care)

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# Impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding activity

- We don't know
- Anecdotally an initial reduction in concerns/referrals were reported in some places, whilst an increase was reported in others.
- There is some expectation that there will be a surge in safeguarding activity when the lockdown is eased. The Coronavirus Act 2020 makes it clear that there is a duty to continue to undertake safeguarding work, e.g. s42 enquiries, and this is emphasised in the Care Act easements guidance 2020.
- Organisations with safeguarding duties can closely monitor their safeguarding activity and use this intelligence to support flexible partnership responses to meet local needs. Safeguarding Adults Boards can use data to review safeguarding trends locally and re-prioritise their strategic plans accordingly in order to support services to respond to any changes in the nature and pattern of local safeguarding activity.

## Areas of concern: scams & domestic abuse

- There has been an emergence of new scams to defraud people, particularly older, isolated and vulnerable people whose social contact is further reduced due to the Covid-19 lockdown.
- Scams can be reported nationally to [Friends Against Scams website](#)
- Scams can be reported locally to Trading Standards teams and police services. They have been instrumental in raising awareness of financial scams and can release information on current scams.
- There has been increased reporting of domestic abuse. It is important to understand the impact of this on residents locally, particularly for those with care and support needs, for example inter-generational abuse of older people by adult children, as a result of pressures within the family home resulting from the lockdown.

## Areas of concern: Care Homes

- Concerns safeguarding people in Care Homes and other institutions because of reduced access, historical 'hidden abuse' and high mortality rates reported from Covid-19?
- Advice and guidance has been issued nationally and regionally regarding how to work safely in Care Homes. Care Home providers have now been prioritised for support with PPE and testing. Plans have been initiated to enhance health care in Care Homes, so that residents are provided with effective and adequate care. A range of government guidance has been developed, including supporting people at the end of life. The Care Quality Commission has introduced a new system in response to Covid-19.
- Whistleblowing on safety and safeguarding concerns has been encouraged.

## Areas of Concern: specific groups of people

- People who are homeless and rough sleeping
- People with learning disabilities
- Carers
- People with mental health problems or who self neglect
- People who lack mental capacity (and may not comply with restrictions like social distancing)

## Your areas of concern:

- Who are you worried about and why in terms of safeguarding risks?
- What has changed in your work that worries you in terms of safeguarding risks?

Importance of access to advocacy

See Advocacy and Covid-19 Mythbuster

- <https://qualityadvocacy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-Advocacy-Mythbuster.pdf>