



# Guide to Safeguarding and Public Protection during COVID-19

## Guidance Booklet 2020



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## Safeguarding Advice and Support.

Velindre University NHS Trust is committed to supporting staff to ensure that safeguarding remains everybody's business whilst our services cope with the COVID -19 pandemic. This is a time of significant uncertainty for colleagues and the public and it is crucial that we work together to ensure that safeguarding remains at the forefront of our work. Employees and volunteers will continue to have a duty to report if they have reasonable cause to suspect that an adult or child is at risk of abuse or neglect. Effective safeguarding relies on **working together**. Everyone should understand their **responsibility to report** when they suspect an adult or a child is at risk.

This guidance also offers practitioners and colleagues from partner agencies a guide on how trust services will operate over the coming weeks and months. This will be subject to ongoing review and change as we are presented with further information, amendment and clarity on the virus and what we must do to prevent, minimise and mitigate the impact.

***Tina Jenkins, Senior Nurse for Safeguarding and Public Protection and Designated Safeguarding Person.***

<b>For specialist Safeguarding advice, information and support to all:</b>	
<b>Designated Safeguarding Person Tina Jenkins</b>	<b>02920 615888 Mobile 07812384155 Monday – Friday Out of hours, contact on call manager. Emergency duty team in the relevant local authority area.</b>
<b><u>For immediate Child Protection, Adult at Risk concerns please contact the Police (999/101)</u></b>	
<b>When to contact the police</b> If there are immediate concerns about an adult or child's safety or a criminal offence against someone has occurred, they should contact the police without delay to protect from the risk of imminent danger  Examples of possible crimes include: alleged sexual assault, alleged physical injury, allegations of theft, threats and aggressive behavior by a suspected perpetrator, human trafficking, honour based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM). All the above would indicate that there is a duty to make a report.  If in doubt as to whether an offence has occurred, seek advice from the police	
<b>IT IS EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT A CONCERN</b>	

## Safeguarding Children and Adults

The government has made changes to education provision. The safety of some children may be compromised if they do not go to school. There are children living with domestic violence and with family stress, and the kinds of measures that are being discussed, however necessary or important they may be for public health, may have consequences for some families in fragile positions and the children within them. It has been reported that there has been a rise in the number of calls to ChildLine from distressed young people struggling to deal with the COVID - 19 pandemic and its impact on their lives.

Older people and people with care and support needs may be at greater risk of possible harm during isolation. Loneliness is already a problem for many of the elderly and can have a devastating effect on people's wellbeing. Older people are being increasingly encouraged to use online services and social media at this time to stay connected. As governments strive to respond to the growing threat of the pandemic, there are reports fraudsters may be taking the opportunity to exploit vulnerable people with schemes and scams.

There are less opportunities to identify safeguarding concerns across the trust as visiting is not currently permitted and many appointments are taking place using technology or via the telephone. As accessing health care and donating blood are legitimate reasons to leave your home during lockdown, safeguarding information has been included in the trust communications to ensure that staff continue to be vigilant to identify and report adults and children at risk.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures offer consistent and accessible advice on safeguarding children and adults. The app can be downloaded or alternatively accessed online. For further information and guidance on how to make a report, information can also be found on the trust safeguarding intranet site.



<https://safeguarding.wales/>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, new arrangements have been put in place for staff from different agencies to work together to support adults and children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding is a critical area of business for social services, and emergency and duty teams will remain in operation to receive calls about adults or children at risk of abuse or neglect.

You can also read further information on line about:

[Information sharing to safeguard people](#)

Additional information is also available from the **National Independent Safeguarding Board** <http://safeguardingboard.wales/>

## **Violence against Women Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence.**

The Live Fear Free helpline services will continue to provide advice, support and referrals 24 hours a day. It is important to be aware that self-isolating and social distancing could have particular impacts for survivors of abuse.

Nazir Afzal, the domestic abuse advisor to Welsh Government has said that abuse has already increased in other countries in lockdown and that the pattern will continue in the UK. Experts say that health worries and fears about income could add to anxiety and increase the risk of domestic abuse.

The charity Refuge, reported that calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline has risen by 25% during lockdown and visits to the website have gone up by 150% compared with a month earlier.

As accessing health care and donating blood are legitimate reasons to leave your home during lockdown, the Live Fear Free Helpline is promoted across the Trust with posters and cards available in all areas. We are also working in collaboration with Welsh Women's Aid to develop guidance for safe questioning regarding domestic abuse concerns over the telephone, for patients at risk during consultations.

**What is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)?** A MARAC is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between police, local authority, domestic abuse advisors and other specialists from statutory and voluntary sectors.

**Professional judgement:** If a professional has a serious concern about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to MARAC. Please refer to the Trust Ask and Act pathway. Please see the Domestic abuse tab on the Trust's safeguarding intranet.

<http://nww.velindrecc.wales.nhs.uk/safeguarding>

MARAC's across the Region have amended their working arrangements and are continuing to meet to discuss high risk cases.

## **Professional Concerns/Safeguarding Allegations/Concerns about Practitioners and those in Positions of Trust**

Professional Concerns Reports/Referrals should continue to be completed to the relevant responsible Local Authority. The Trust continues to follow the Policy for the Management of Allegations of Abuse of Children or Adults by Professionals and Members of Staff (Professional Abuse /Concerns Policy).

<http://nww.velindrecc.wales.nhs.uk/safeguarding>

## **Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**

There is a probability that many people who are critically ill with COVID 19 will not be in a position to make key decisions, such as whether to accept treatment, or even to decide not to continue with treatments. This means that those responsible for their care and welfare must follow the principles of the MCA and assess their mental capacity and make best interests decisions for them.

For people who lack capacity to make a serious medical decision, without anybody appropriate to consult about their wishes and feelings, the MCA legally requires that a referral to an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) is made. See the advocacy tab on the safeguarding intranet pages for further information.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878910/Emergency\\_MCA\\_DoLS\\_Guidance\\_COVID19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878910/Emergency_MCA_DoLS_Guidance_COVID19.pdf)

The above guidance has been circulated and is available on the safeguarding intranet pages. Compliance with the MCA as a legal requirement will continue across the Trust and will require working differently and often having remote discussions with family or advocates to ensure compliance with the law.

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) holds a register of everyone who has a lasting or enduring power of attorney, or who has a deputy acting for them. This can be searched to find the contact details of those involved. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, there have been many urgent requests to search the database for people who have lost mental capacity.

OPG is working to respond quickly to these requests, with a process specifically for patients incapacitated by COVID-19. Below is a link to information about fast track requests for NHS or social care staff to check whether someone has an Attorney or Deputy in COVID-19 that has been published by the Office of the Public Guardian. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-staff-searching-our-registers-of-attorneys-and-deputies>

It is essential that the principles of the MCA continue, to ensure that the human rights of our patients are protected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senior Nurse for Safeguarding and Public Protection will review all applications made for DoLS during the pandemic, to ensure that the least restrictive options are being considered and that deprivations are proportionate, in the absence of independent assessors being able to visit the ward area. Support regarding best interest decision making and consultation is also being provided as requested by the clinical teams.

## **Safeguarding and Public Protection Training**

Safeguarding training will only be available via NHS e Learning Wales at this time and all classroom training is postponed.

All new trust recruits, will complete level 2 safeguarding adults and children NHS e-learning training and will be advised to download the 'Wales Safeguarding Procedures'.

Group 1 Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, eLearning package will also be mandatory and the Live Fear Free helpline will continue to be promoted across the Trust.

Safeguarding training compliance will continue to be monitored and reported through the Trust Safeguarding and Public Protection Management Group.

## **Safeguarding Supervision**

Trust employees will now, more than ever, require good quality accessible safeguarding supervision, as they will be managing increased risks in relation to decision making around safeguarding during COVID-19. Safeguarding supervision will continue, providing greater flexibility and accessibility. Safeguarding supervision can occur face-to-face in line with government guidance, moving as appropriate to Skype/Facetime or telephone as the situation changes.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Worries and anxiety about COVID-19 and its impact can be overwhelming. Social distancing makes it even more challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we live our lives. People may experience stress, anxiety, fear, sadness and loneliness, mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression can worsen. People with cancer and their families might feel especially worried about the virus, as cancer and its treatment can lower your ability to fight infection. Also difficult decisions may have been made regarding delaying or discontinuing treatments. Many patients may have been issued government shielding guidance for people who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus because of underlying health conditions. This along with social distancing can add to feelings of loneliness and reduced access to support.

Across the Trust the Psychology department is continuing to support patients and staff and are working in line with government guidance. The Velindre Mindfulness App is promoted across the Trust and services are continuing to offer patients emotional support. The Trust supportive care services, have amended their service provision to respond to changing needs in the Cancer Centre during the pandemic.

## **Increased safeguarding provision for the Trust during COVID 19.**

Safeguarding remains everybody's business. Employees and volunteers will continue to have a duty to report if they have reasonable cause to suspect that an adult or child is at risk of abuse or neglect.

The Senior Nurse for Safeguarding and Public Protection will provide more direct support all areas across the Trust, to include:

- Support the completion of any referrals, strategy meetings or discussions on behalf of the clinical teams as appropriate.
- In the absence of Serious Incident reporting of 'Grade 3' and above pressure ulcers. Support will be available to review all incidents and provide immediate learning to clinical teams.
- Support the review of any patients care arrangements that meet the 'Acid Test' for a potential deprivation of liberty. Offer direct support in 'Best Interest' decision making or complex MCA related decisions. Also to support decision making in line with the COVID- 19 ethical framework.
- Provide safeguarding advice and supervision for all employees and volunteers across the trust.
- Continue to work in collaboration with the communications team to ensure that relevant safeguarding information and legislative guidance is included in the trust communications.
- COVID- 19 tab added to the safeguarding intranet pages for any COVID- 19 related safeguarding information and communications

**Please see Safeguarding intranet pages for contact numbers, further information and updated guidance.**

**<http://nww.velindrecc.wales.nhs.uk/safeguarding>**

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