

Safeguarding Adults Board

Newsletter

Issue 1, June 2020



Welcome to my first edition of the NSAB newsletter

Fran Pearson, SAB Independent Chair



Adult safeguarding is as important in the current context as it ever has been. In terms of national profile, it is probably in the more prominent place that those of us who are professionally committed to it and passionate about it, feel it should always have been.

Sadly it has taken a pandemic and loss of life amongst the adults we work with, to put adult safeguarding in the news. What I do know is that in Newham, every one of you has been working together to keep those residents most at risk as safe as you can find a way to do so. As well as loss of life, we are all concerned about what comes next in terms of safeguarding. The organisations who belong to Newham Safeguarding Adults Board are working together to plan for an increase in referrals, during whatever we might call the next phase of Covid-19 for safeguarding. The NHS language talks about 'recovery' and 'restore' and other professional bodies have developed expressions such as 'the new normal'. Language is important but shared understanding of what we are expecting is the crucial thing here. I know work is under way to understand and respond to the proportionately high mortality rates in Newham and the implications for adult safeguarding.

I wanted to end my introduction by extending condolences to those of you who have lost loved ones and those of you who as professionals have been affected in ways that we cannot all understand but want to support you and get you the right help to deal with the aftermath. I hope this newsletter is of use – please give us feedback to make it as useful as possible.

This newsletter covers Covid-19 specific safeguarding issues. The Safeguarding Adults partnership for Newham was like all 'SABs' set up by law and that law has not been relaxed due to Covid-19. The next article explains 'easements' under the Coronavirus Act but we are keeping going as a partnership in focused ways that allow senior managers on our board, and practitioners on the sub groups, to do what you need to during the pandemic in order to keep Newham residents safe.

Safeguarding under the Care Act 2014

The Coronavirus Act 2020 does not affect the safeguarding protections under s.42 of the Care Act 2014. Annex D of the Care Act easements statutory guidance states that local authorities should continue to offer the same level of safeguarding, albeit also requesting local authorities be mindful of the pressures which providers are likely to be under. The guidance is also clear local authorities should work with providers, other organisations and the community.

Therefore, where a safeguarding concern needs to be properly investigated local authorities should be urging provisions to allow entry to allow the local authority to comply with its duties as these matters are urgent in nature and require a swift response, especially where the concern relates to an individual's immediate safety or is a matter of 'life and limb'. Of course there may be some situations which are not as urgent or that could be dealt with, at least in the interim, through investigation via telephone / video call such as suspected financial abuse.

Mental Capacity & DoLS

The Department of Health and Social Care has issued emergency guidance regarding the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) to help support practitioners and providers of Adult Social Care to continue to safeguard the rights of people who lack capacity during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidance covers how to support people in the current restrictions and includes the interaction between the MCA and the new coronavirus emergency legislation and public health law.

The full guidance is available here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-looking-after-people-who-lack-mental-capacity>

Safeguarding Adults Board Meetings

This current pandemic has meant that we all are having to work in ever more creative and agile ways to ensure we keep in touch with colleagues and partners and to fulfil our safeguarding functions. The SAB Executive took the decision to cancel the scheduled SAB meeting in April which was due to take place just as lockdown came into force.

What is the next phase of resuming SAB activity?

The Executive has since met to discuss the best way to ensure that as a partnership, we continue to actively hold the reins on safeguarding adults whilst being aware of the need to do things differently. For this reason for our next SAB meeting on 15th July we would like to get your views on how best we can all work effectively together, realising that our ways of working of old may not be the best methods looking to the future.

The SAB Business Manager will email Board members to get your views on the structure and format of the next SAB meeting. Following this we'll update the invite to members, so please do respond!

In line with this guidance Newham has suspended all face to face DoLS assessments, apart from those identified as high profile or critical. We are, however, endeavouring to complete as many of these assessments as possible using the telephone or Skype and other video call tools. A reduced number of Best Interest Assessors and Mental Health Assessors are working through the applications as they come in and our administrative staff are working in new ways to support care homes and hospitals to submit applications in good time.

HOSPITALS AND CARE HOMES STILL NEED TO BE APPLYING FOR DOLS. THERE ARE NO CARE ACT EASEMENTS!

Be extra vigilant!

During March and April the number of safeguarding concerns fell as people began to self-isolate and professionals reduced face-to-face contact. Since May however, the number of safeguarding concerns have increased to usual levels.

We know that during this Covid-19 crisis as residents remain in their homes it is particularly important to safeguard adults with care and support needs, who may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect as others may seek to exploit them.

The risk remains that some of our residents will be targeted due to a number of factors. They may need assistance with some tasks, be less up to speed with technology, more welcoming of new contacts, more trusting and – for many older people – wealthier. Many older and disabled people spend long periods at home alone, and now as the whole nation is being asked to stay at home the same groups are more likely to be alone rather than in a family group.

Those who seek to exploit these vulnerabilities are quick to act. We will all have been warned of new scams offering help and advice on Covid-19 or with financial assistance. Many of us will have concerns for family members who may fall prey to fraudsters.



Safeguarding during the pandemic

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis safeguarding activity within Adults and Children's services has continued, albeit taking a "proportionate" approach.

Wherever possible safeguarding enquires are undertaken remotely using the phone or electronic means such as FaceTime, WhatsApp or Zoom. There are some exceptional circumstance when a visit is needed and in these situations social work staff should use the required PPE as advised in conjunction with advice from their managers. All care homes have been provided with iPad devices so staff can arrange to link up with their customers via the unit managers.

Safeguarding Referrals

There has been a slight reduction in the number of safeguarding referrals received which is a similar pattern across London. This is particularly noticeable in the low number of referrals being received from the 'unseen' risks in the community and from our care providers and hospitals. This is not unexpected due to the demand on these services, additionally there is a reduction on visiting care settings or hospitals, all of which have an impact on identifying and reporting abuse and neglect. It is largely acknowledged that we are likely to see a significant increase in referrals as the lockdown restrictions ease with increased reporting on financial abuse and theft / fraud, domestic abuse and neglect.



Social Distancing

There are some concerns in relation to some customers not adhering to the Government's social distancing / lockdown restrictions. A social distancing framework to support staff and providers is in progress and will be available shortly.

The London Fire Brigade have temporarily stopped carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits, and the only exception is that these will be considered when there is a significant risk and in these circumstances additional screening will be required – please see the link: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/covid-19-and-home-fire-safety-visits-hfsvs/>

Safeguarding information and training has been provided to all of our HelpNewham volunteers and they are picking up concerns as they undertake their duties in delivering prescriptions, food parcels and befriending services. Information sheets have been provided to volunteers and the residents, [these & further useful information can be found on our Provider Portal](#)

If anyone has any Safeguarding, MCA or DoLS queries please contact the LBN's Safeguarding Governance Team via the following mailboxes:

SSD - Safeguarding Adults Admin - Safeguarding.AdultsAdmin@newham.gov.uk

Adults - Deprivation of Liberty/MAC - Adults-DeprivationofLiberty/MAC@newham.gov.uk

Thankyou and Goodbye

The following Board members have moved on to new ventures and we thank them for their valued contribution and wish them well.

Ian Maxey, Services Manager, London East, Voiceability

Sam Spillane, Head of Safeguarding, Barts NHS Health Trust

Welcome

The Chair would like to welcome on behalf of the Board the following new members:

Annmarie Ahtuam, Operations Manager for London, Voiceability

Clare Hughes, Interim Head of Safeguarding (Adults & Children) Barts NHS Health Trust

Jessica Juon, Head of Safeguarding (Adults and Children), Waltham Forest, Newham and Tower Hamlets CCGs (WEL).

Useful Safeguarding Adults Website Links

[Newham Adults IAG pages](#)

[Newham Provider Portal - information to support partnership between providers and ASC](#)

[Adult Safeguarding and Covid-19 FAQs](#)

[#HelpNewham](#)

[NHS Shield Offer](#)

[Domestic abuse](#)

Get in touch

This is your newsletter.

If you have any suggestions about future topics, or some important information to share please let us know.

nsab@newham.gov.uk

Alternatively contact our Business Manager, Anne Ibezi, on: 020 3373 2630

The next newsletter will be produced in August 2020.

If you want to raise a concern about an adult

Members of the public

Phone: 0203 373 0440

Or complete a short secure form

[Raise a safeguarding concern](#)

Professionals

Complete a secure form

[Professionals e-referral form](#)

In an emergency situation call 999.