

## **Covid-19 – Safeguarding Partnership Response**

### **Escalation of safeguarding systems issues in services responding to safeguarding activity during the Covid-19 outbreak (March 2020)**

This paper sets out proposals for escalation of safeguarding systems issues to senior leaders in services across Berkshire West, during the Covid-19 crisis. It is not intended to replace the Berkshire West Safeguarding Adults Procedures<sup>1</sup>, more to ensure there is swift, smooth communication between partners to accommodate changes forced by the crisis, as they occur.

#### **Which Services?**

In the first instance, this paper relates to services which are considered statutory in the Care Act 2014<sup>2</sup>, and including specific health providers:

Berkshire West CCG (also representing Primary Care)

Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

South Central Ambulance Service

West Berkshire Local Authority (Adults)

Wokingham Local Authority (Adults)

Reading Local Authority (Adults)

Thames Valley Police

Emergency Duty Team

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.berkshiresafeguardingadults.co.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

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This is further underpinned by emergency legislation brought into force to ensure appropriate responses to protect services, particularly health and social care<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to consider the role of the strategic and local care homes quality assurance groups and to ensure that these teams manage particular issues that will not be safeguarding. The partnership leads will continue to escalate and link between quality and safeguarding care providers in the context of this multi-agency response to ensure that their contribution to this collective effort is sought at each stage.

### **Emerging issues**

It is anticipated that over the coming week/months, we may see issues such as:

- Family member carers falling ill leaving them unable to care for adults with care and support needs often with limited or no fall-back provision
- A rise in the incidence of domestic abuse
- The potential for adults cohorts not attending support centres to be at higher risk of abuse and neglect
- Escalating pressure on families who may have been struggling before the crisis, who are now off grid<sup>4</sup>
- Increasing stress and pressure on families and financial pressure
- Increase in incidences of scamming and financial exploitation
- Increase in mental health issues in both adults and children
- Reduction in care provision from domiciliary care services or finding suitable placements for discharge and / or concerns about the spread of the virus
- Widespread significant workforce disruption due to sickness and redeployment affecting business continuity

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/press-releases/children%E2%80%99s-charities%E2%80%99-issue-joint-statement-on-coronavirus-national>

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- Early discharges may put extra pressure on community services; however this is being managed and considered within the wider strategic planning.
- Inconsistent information, fake news fuelling widespread anxiety

### **Process:**

Each organisation has confirmed they have an up to date Business Continuity plan which can be found on their websites. The sexual abuse referral service contact details can be found in the Adult Contacts list at the end of the document. Contacts for the safeguarding partnership are available to be shared and attendance at the COVID-19 safeguarding partners meeting will allow weekly updates and any escalation to the SAB. This will help colleagues understand which services are available, where there are modifications to a service or where alternatives may need to be sought.

In the event of any redeployment of individuals from safeguarding teams the partner agency will need to notify the SAB Business Manager and inform the partnership to allow us and support any contingency planning.

In addition there will be:

### **Covid-19 Care home meetings across Berkshire West**

*(Contacts for general/system concern enquiries only)*

Simon Hawkins, Quality Improvement Lead, Berkshire West CCG

[simon.hawkins2@nhs.net](mailto:simon.hawkins2@nhs.net)

Lyndsey Storey, Commissioner, Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services  
Reading Borough Council

[lyndsey.storey@reading.gov.uk](mailto:lyndsey.storey@reading.gov.uk)

### **Domestic Abuse Covid-19 partnership meeting in each Local Authority area**

*(Contacts for general enquiries only not safeguarding )*

Narinder Brar, Wokingham Community Safety Partnership Manager,

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Wokingham Borough Council

[Narinder.Brar@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Narinder.Brar@wokingham.gov.uk)

Linda Wyatt, Safeguarding Administrator, BW CCG

[linda.wyatt2@nhs.net](mailto:linda.wyatt2@nhs.net)

### **Category 1 – case issue requiring immediate liaison**

Where one partner is experiencing difficulty in managing individual case issues, it is expected that safeguarding professionals across the partnership liaise quickly at the correct level, to clear any blockages that may increase risk to individuals the wider system. Each organisation should identify:

- The contact details (ideally direct) for service leads, which should be shared widely across the partnership
- Risk and Mitigation log will be maintained by the SAB Business Manager. Consideration during the time of any need to support the partnership with extended hours if required.

### **Category 2 – systems issues between organisations**

SAB statutory partners, LA and Health services team will be meeting regularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure a fully co-ordinated response to emerging issues the LA will liaise and provide any update from Emergency Duty Service. These regular meetings will be an opportunity to identify any systems issues, *which as far as possible should be considered on a Berkshire West- wide geography*, to avoid fragmentation or over-complication for services which cover the whole locality.

However, if there is anticipated to be a safeguarding system issue that cannot wait until the next meeting, a clear process of direct linkage with senior leaders should be established:

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- A system issue between 2 organisations related to an area specific matter should, in the first instance, be resolved by senior leaders in those organisations.



SAB Members.docx

During this process, the organisations involved must consider if the specific matter has an impact on the wider Berkshire West footprint. If this is the case, or the matter cannot be resolved, there should be an extraordinary meeting of the Covid-19 Safeguarding partnership, ideally chaired by the SAB the same day or within 24h. The request for this can come from any of the senior leaders in statutory organisations and should be initiated via SAB.

- Co-ordination and administration of any extraordinary meeting should be convened through SAB, using Microsoft Teams where possible, or other virtual conferencing facility. Decisions are expected to be circulated within 24 hours of extraordinary meetings.

### **Communication**

Access to Safeguarding Lead contacts and all Safeguarding Adults Leads have direct contacts to DASS and CCG Health Directors

The SAB Partnership April 2020 review May 2020

Adult Contact Details:



Adult Contact  
Details.docx