

Covid-19 Business Continuity Planning ADULT SAFEGUARDING ENQUIRIES RELATING TO SERVICE PROVISION CONCERNS

Document Purpose

This document sets out how we will carry out our adult safeguarding work regarding a health or social care service during the current outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19). The plan has been developed in accordance with current National Guidance and will be reviewed on a regular basis as government advice changes.

The document has immediate effect and lasts until further notice.

Overall Position – 25/03/2020

Surrey County Council Adult Social Care shall take in to account the impact on health and social care service providers of the coronavirus outbreak when applying the principle of proportionality to adult safeguarding enquiries where the concern relates to a health or social care provider.

- The Coronavirus Bill being considered by Parliament does not, in its current form, propose any changes to the duties of local authorities under s42 Care Act
- The Care and Support statutory guidance sets out in paragraphs 14.68 – 14.75 how concerns of abuse or neglect in regulated care settings, including making decisions about when the service provider makes the enquiries and when the local authority can or must do this
- The statutory guidance requires local authorities and all sectors and settings to apply six principles to adult safeguarding work, including that of proportionality
- Surrey County Council will take in to account the context of the coronavirus outbreak when applying the proportionality principle in deciding how adult safeguarding enquiries regarding care settings are carried out. In particular it will do so in regard to
 - Who will make the enquiries
 - The breadth, depth and duration of those enquiries
 - How enquiries made by others will be reported to Adult Social Care
 - Whether any actions, documents and so on are required in addition to the service provider's own response to the concern. There will be a starting presumption that the service provider's own response will have been enough

Adult Safeguarding enquiries relating to service provision concerns
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During the Coronavirus outbreak, health and social care services will be under significant pressures. When adult safeguarding concerns arise regarding a health or social care service provision issue it may not be possible for the service provider or the local authority to commit resources to an adult safeguarding enquiry in the usual way.

Potential Challenge	Solutions	By When and By Who
<p>That health and social care providers and Surrey County Council are unable to make staff available to undertake adult safeguarding enquiries in the usual way, because of the additional demands faced during the Covid-19 outbreak.</p>	<p>The Care and Support statutory guidance says that “The first responsibility to act must be with the employing organisation as provider of the service” and that “The employer should investigate any concern ... unless there is compelling reason why it is inappropriate or unsafe to do this”. We know that health and social care service providers take seriously their responsibilities to provide good, safe services, and that when concerns arise, they will respond to those issues with good effect.</p> <p>We recognise that in current times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will often be reasonable that the response by the service provider will need to be sufficient to deal with the issue but may not be as in-depth as at other times, in order not to divert resources needed to meet extraordinary demand elsewhere • Consideration of what might make it unsafe for the local authority to make enquiries itself rather than rely on those made by the service provider will include the risks created <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ by having people visit health and social care provider services solely for the purpose of undertaking an adult safeguarding enquiry ○ by diverting local authority staff away from dealing with extraordinary demands elsewhere <p>These considerations will inform the planning of adult safeguarding enquiries by Surrey County Council Adult Social Care staff.</p>	<p>Surrey County Council Adult Social Care</p> <p>From 25/03/2020</p>

<p>That adult safeguarding enquiries cannot be carried out in the usual way in the light of extraordinary demands during this period</p>	<p>When planning an adult safeguarding enquiry there may need to be adjustments made under the current circumstances from what would be the expected practice in usual times in order to avoid making overly demanding arrangements regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The breadth, depth and duration of enquiries • Requirements about who will, or who will not, undertake enquiries • Arrangements for reporting back to Adult Social Care on the enquiries made by others • Whether any actions, documents and so on are required in addition to the service provider's own response to the concern. <p>Surrey County Council Adult Social Care will start with the presumptions that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service provider will ensure that they have responded to the situation. In many instances this will already have happened or be underway by the time the adult safeguarding concern has been referred to Adult Social Care, and the referral from the service provider will give an account of what has been done • That the service provider's own response will be sufficient to stand as the s42 Care Act adult safeguarding enquiry • That if Adult Social Care reach a view that the service provider's own response has not yet been sufficient <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they will clearly communicate why they have reached this view to the service provider ○ they will take a pragmatic approach in negotiating with the service provider what will be needed in order to ensure there is a good enough process that meets the requirements of s42 Care Act and the Care and Support statutory guidance, without creating avoidable demands on resources that are needed elsewhere 	<p>Surrey County Council Adult Social Care</p> <p>From 25/03/2020</p>
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