



SAFEGUARDING BRIEFING NOTE

Covid-19 briefing note.

April 2020

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To: All CFRS Staff and Volunteers

1. CFRS Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health and wellbeing and human rights to enable them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Cheshire Fire Authority are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults and recognise that the protection and safety of these individuals is **'everyone's responsibility'**. Therefore, **all CFRS staff**, either in a paid or voluntary capacity have a role to play in safeguarding and preventing the abuse of those who may be at risk.

For further information, please refer to E-docs **44-3603 Safeguarding Children** and E-docs-**232 Adult Safeguarding** that are available on the intranet and published on the services website for those who are cannot access this portal.

2. What is an Adult at Risk?

Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 states that safeguarding enquiries should be made where a person has:

- Need for care and support
- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and neglect
- Because of their care and support needs, is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse, neglect or the risk of it.

This may be a person who:

- Is elderly and frail due to health, physical disability or cognitive impairment
- Has a learning disability
- Has a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- Has mental health needs, including dementia
- Has a long-term illness or condition

- Misuses substances or alcohol
 - Is a carer (family member/friend) and is subject to abuse
 - Does not have capacity to make a decision and is in need of care and support.
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3. What is a Child at Risk?

A child at risk for the purposes of child protection is 'anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday'. Child protection procedures also apply to an unborn baby. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, which means:

- Protecting children and young people from harm and maltreatment
- Preventing harm to children and young people's health or development
- Ensuring children and young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to ensure all children and young people have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process, it focuses on protecting individual children and young people identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

4. Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse (COVID-19)

Measures announced over recent weeks to tackle coronavirus (COVID-19) have seen people's day-to-day life being drastically altered. These changes are essential to beat coronavirus and protect our NHS.

The Government acknowledges that the order to stay at home can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses you are under ([click here for more information](#)).

For anyone who feels that they are at risk of abuse, it is important to remember that there is help and support available to you.

The Government supports and funds a number of charities who are able to provide advice and guidance; these support services will remain open during this challenging time.

If you believe you are being abused, or are worried you may commit domestic abuse, please use the following services which may help you.

Also, if you suspect that your neighbours or those in your community are victims of domestic abuse, please report it to the police.

Call 999

If you are in immediate danger, call **999** and ask for the police. If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call **999** and then press **55**. This will transfer your call to the relevant Police Force who will assist you without you having to speak.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline (<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>) website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and

loved ones. They can also be called, for free and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0800 2000 247. The website also has a form through which women can book a safe time for a call from the team.

Women's Aid

Women's Aid (<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-safety-advice-for-survivors/>) has provided additional advice specifically designed for the current COVID-19 outbreak, including a live chat service.

Men's Advice Line

The Men's Advice Line (<http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/>) is a confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and those supporting them. It can be contacted on 0808 8010327.

Galop – for members of the LGBT+ community

If you are a member of the LGBT+ community, Galop (<https://www.galop.org.uk/galop-to-run-national-lgbt-domestic-violence-helpline/>) runs a specialist helpline on 0800 999 5428 or email help@galop.org.uk

Hestia

Hestia (<https://www.hestia.org/domestic-abuse>) provides a free-to-download mobile app, Bright Sky, which provides support to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or those concerned about someone they know.

Chayn

Chayn (<https://chayn.co/>) provides online help and resources in a number of languages, ranging from identifying manipulative situations and how friends can support this being abused.

Support if you are worried about hurting someone

If you are worried about hurting the ones you love while staying at home, call the Respect Phonenumber (<https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>) for support and help to manage your behaviour, 08080 8024040.

More information

For more advice and guidance on domestic abuse, please see Domestic abuse: how to get help (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>).

5. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and as such, **all CFRS staff & volunteers** have a duty of care to our service users, colleagues and members of the community. A safeguarding concern is defined as the first contact between a person concerned about the abuse or neglect of a child, young person or adult and the reporting of such to the relevant Local Authority who can respond to that concern.

If there are concerns that a child, young person or adult is at an **imminent** risk of serious harm, CFRS staff should dial NW Fire Control and request Police presence at the incident, as they have

the powers to intervene should a person need immediate assistance due to a health condition, injury or other life-threatening situation. NW Fire Control will then advise the relevant Duty Officer of the incident. At the earliest opportunity following this, a safeguarding referral should be submitted using the Safeguarding Reporting Process outlined in the service's Child and Adult Safeguarding Policies.

If there is **no** imminent significant risk of harm, a Safeguarding concern should still be raised at the earliest opportunity (at least by the end of that shift) through:

The designated safeguarding officers for either adults or children (**During office hours**)

Or the Duty GM (**Out of office hours**)

CFRS Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

Sean Barlow (Children and young people)	07776 297832	sean.barlow@cheshirefire.gov.uk
Vicky Wrest (Children and young people)	07583 975941	vicky.wrest@cheshirefire.gov.uk
Steve McCormick (Adult)	07776 297796	McCormick@cheshirefire.gov.uk
Lee McGarity (Adult)	07776 297781	Mcgarity@cheshirefire.gov.uk

6. Obtaining Consent

CFRS staff, where possible should always obtain consent from individuals when referring them for a safeguarding concern, simply asking someone “do they require some additional support with their current situation” is an act of compassion that in most cases than will mean that people will voluntarily receive the help that they need. However, a request for that consent may also complicate the situation you are concerned about and if you feel that by asking for that consent, you may add further burden to the person this should be noted and you should seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer.

If a person refuses intervention to support them with a safeguarding concern, or requests that information about them is not shared, their wishes should be considered. However, there are a number of circumstances where that decision may be over-ridden and beyond your control.

Please note that any safeguarding concern submitted by CFRS staff and volunteers, the Safeguarding Duty Officer triages prior to onward transmission and it is not your duty to do anything other than to pass on your immediate concerns. You are not to investigate or delve into matters that may exasperate a situation and you should take a considered approach to separating personal opinion from the facts that you are presented with. Your responsibility is to simply pass on the facts and information to the designated officers for them to consider the services response.

As promoted in CFRS's child and adult policies on safeguarding, our combined responsibility in these circumstances is simply defined by the 5 R's rule.

Recognise, Respond, Report, Record & Refer.

7. 7 Minute Briefings

7 Minute briefings are based on a technique borrowed from the Federal Bureau of investigation (FBI). Learning for 7 minutes is manageable in most services, and learning is more memorable as it is simple and not clouded by other issues and pressures. The contents of the briefings will be a mixture of new information (such as learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews/Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews) or a reminder/repeat of basic information.

Their brief duration should also mean that they hold people's attention as well as giving something to share with staff. Clearly, these briefings will not have all the answers but it is hoped that they act as a catalyst to help CFRS staff to reflect on our practice and systems.

8. Further information

If you require any further information or would like a more detailed explanation on any of the information attached to this briefing, please do not hesitate to contact one of the designated safeguarding officers named in this document.

Those staff are here to support you with any safeguarding concerns you may have under any normal working conditions and ever more so as we respond to the challenges ahead.
