

# COVID-19, social isolation and safeguarding adults

## Advice for professionals

We know that social isolation is an increasing risk factor in relation to abuse and neglect. In particular, we know that incidences of domestic abuse, self-neglect and carer stress will increase with social isolation. With more people being asked to self-isolate as a result Covid-19 this needs to be a key consideration when undertaking Section 42 enquiries. Social isolation can mean:

- Abuse/neglect is hidden from professionals or others;
- People do not get the support they need;
- People feel like they do not want to ask for help for fear of being an added burden;
- Increased household stress and tension;
- People ask for help from people who might want to take advantage of their vulnerable position.

Some advice to consider:

- Use existing tools and guidance to assess risk:
  - [NSAB Risk Threshold Tool](#)
  - [Carers Risk Assessment Tool](#)
  - [Domestic abuse flowchart](#) (including MARAC information and support services)
  - [Self-neglect guidance](#)
- Ensure you factor in Covid-19 pressures to any risk assessments.
- As always, consider mental capacity, control and coercion on a person's ability to make decisions and keep themselves safe.
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding Adults Unit/Legal Services if you need to.
- Plans to manage risk might include:
  - Referring/opening the case to safeguarding adults procedures if it isn't already;
  - Undertaking the MARAC checklist and subsequent referral to MARAC. **MARAC will continue to operate at this time.**
  - Referral to domestic abuse or carer support agencies\*
  - Flagging address/person(s) on records and asking other agencies to do the same;

- Undertaking an assessment/re-assessment of need for the person and/or carer.
- Identifying family/friend/neighbour support and ways in which this could be done via phone/internet if possible;
- Contingency arrangements for the person's care should the person's informal support need to self-isolate or be unable to provide care;
- Mental capacity assessments and best interest decisions;

Take into consideration that smaller organisations might be operating slightly differently. E.g. [Newcastle Carers](#) have closed their buildings and are asking professionals to refer rather than signpost and referrals can only be made by email/not fax.