

Safeguarding Response Guidance During Covid-19 Isolation Responding to Safeguarding Concerns (as of 28/04/2020)



Given the volume of people who are social distancing, self-isolating or quarantined during the current Covid-19 pandemic, we are expecting a significant number of people to be concerned about neighbours or family members. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team are here to help and advise you, but we are issuing this guidance to assist pragmatic local responses should you be unable to reach us in a timely way.

The Church's National Safeguarding Team have published this briefing sheet to provide a basic framework for how to respond pastorally to concerns during this Covid-19 period: <https://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Think-Safeguarding-Covid19-Pastoral-Care-Brief.pdf>

General Advice

If a friend, neighbour or family member becomes ill:

- Direct them to the latest official advice on how to seek help or treatment - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

If you are concerned that a friend, neighbour or family member in isolation is running short on food or other supplies:

- Check to see if there is a mutual aid scheme in the vulnerable person's area who could help if it is not feasible or safe for you to do so. The Diocese of Exeter guide to this support can be found here: <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/coronavirus-guidance/covid-mutual-aid/> (including the link to the national mutual aid coordination information).
- If there is no recognised support system in place locally, try contacting your clergy or Parish Safeguarding Rep (or pastoral care team if you have one) to see if any of them is able to help or knows someone who can.
- If there are no options found through the church, try local or national charities to see if they have support options. You can find a directory of local organisations here: <http://www.victimcaredevonandcornwall.org.uk/> or through Devon Services Guide to Public and Community Providers: <http://www.devonservices.org.uk/>
- If you are unable to find anyone who can provide practical support for the vulnerable person(s) and you believe they are at significant risk of

harm or neglect, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or the Adults Safeguarding service for your local authority area. The contact details can be found here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-team/>

If you are unable to make contact with a friend, neighbour or family member:

- **If there is concern for the immediate welfare of the resident, contact the emergency services.**
- Consider checking with your clergy or Parish Safeguarding Rep (or pastoral care team if you have one). Do they have other contact details or details of others who may be supporting that person. Consider going to their address (if you feel safe to do so) and knock on their door. If there is no response consider knocking on neighbours' doors to see if anyone there has seen or heard from them. Find out if any neighbours are a trusted key-holder.
- If a trusted key-holder can be identified, consider inviting them to check the property if they feel safe to do so. It may be more appropriate to call the police instead to enter the property and check on the occupant(s). If you don't have access to a key you should call the police rather than force entry to a property.

If you're unable to reach our team and someone is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, please don't think you need to speak to us before you contact other services or agencies – contact who you need to, when you need to, to keep the vulnerable person safe and well.

Domestic Abuse Concerns During Lockdown

Social distancing and isolation are significantly increasing the risks to people effectively trapped in the house with their abuser. Opportunities to reach out to abuse victims are made more complicated, further exacerbating the issue. The Church of England's advice and guidance page on Domestic Abuse during the Covid-19 period is being regularly updated:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19>

The faith-based DA charity, Restored, also offer a range of resources and ways to engage with this topic during the Covid-19 period:

<https://www.restoredrelationships.org/Covid19/>

Vulnerable Children During Lockdown

An emerging concern is that vulnerable children may also be at further risk of harm while under lockdown conditions. Farrer & Co solicitors have published an article that highlights the factors that may make a vulnerable child easier to recognise currently, and some thoughts on how we might be part of the effort to reach out to these children and their families:

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/coronavirus-safeguarding-vulnerable-children/>

If you have immediate concerns about the safety of a child, ring 999. If you need to talk to someone about your concerns [contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team](#).

Concerns for Mental Health in Children and Young People

For those living in Plymouth, a new 24/7 helpline has been launched for children, young people, families and carers. If a child or young person is experiencing anxiety, worry or stress, or psychological or emotional distress, they or someone caring for them can call 01752 435122 for advice and support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Outside of Plymouth, parents and carers can call the Young Minds charity on 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri 9.30-4pm), and children can call Childline anytime on 0800 1111.

For wider guidance about the Church response to Covid-19/Coronavirus, please visit this page: <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/coronavirus-guidance/>

The contact details for our team and the key Safeguarding agencies and services in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay can be found here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-team/>