



## Welcome from the chair of the HSAB (Chris Miller)

Dear Colleagues, welcome to the winter 2019 – 2020 newsletter. We are about to embark on our first formal SAR which has a theme of self neglect. It will examine how this complex issue affects not only adults with capacity, but also the children that they have parental responsibility for. Balancing respect for the autonomy of the individual with a requirement on us to exercise our duty of care is a difficult exercise and this SAR will help us understand how robust our procedures are and what if anything we can do in the future to work more effectively together when needed. This newsletter devotes time and attention to these issues.

As ever, suggestions for the newsletter can be sent to either Sue Spurlock ([sue.spurlock@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:sue.spurlock@harrow.gov.uk)) or Seamus Doherty ([seamus.doherty@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:seamus.doherty@harrow.gov.uk)).

## Loneliness and Social Isolation – look out for your neighbour!

- over 9 million people in the UK, across all adult ages, are either always or often lonely
- half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all
- two fifths of all older people (almost 4 million) say the television is their main company

Research shows that loneliness and isolation can increase during the winter months and any adult who is lonely or isolated is more vulnerable to abuse such as financial abuse, fraud and ‘scammers’, exploitation and self neglect .



If you have a relative, a patient in your service, or a user supported by your Team that is lonely or socially isolated, please take some time to check that they are OK.

There is a useful publication which provides advice for combating loneliness:



[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/document/s/combating-loneliness-guid-24e\\_march\\_2018.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/document/s/combating-loneliness-guid-24e_march_2018.pdf)

## Basic Awareness Training



The next “Safeguarding Adults – Basic Awareness” training session will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (morning only).

The venue is the Council Chamber, Harrow Civic Centre and you can book using the following web link: <https://harrow.learningpool.com/login/index.php>

Book early to avoid disappointment!

## Working with people who self neglect

With the recognition that this area of work is very challenging for staff across all relevant agencies, there has been a lot of research about the best ways to approach it. The following are the most common recommendations to have been made from all the SARs where self neglect has been a contributing factor:

1. share relevant information
2. carry out robust/coordinated risk assessments
3. the need for a case coordinator approach in complex cases – use multidisciplinary meetings
4. improve understanding and compliance with the Mental Capacity Act
5. better practice in managing pressure ulcers
6. make safeguarding personal, taking into account the person’s history and also their relationships
7. better understand self-neglect and responses to service refusal
8. involve people who are interested in the person’s welfare
9. improve legal literacy – what legal options do we have?

## Discussion point:



If you have a patient or client in your service that is reluctant to accept services and that you are worried about – do you know what legal options you have that might help them?

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## New help for Charities



The Government has recently launched a new online portal to strengthen support to charities handling safeguarding concerns or allegations. Every organisation that delivers charitable activities has a responsibility to safeguard people from harm or abuse, whether they are staff members, volunteers, or other people who come into contact with the charity through its work. The portal can be found here: [Online Portal](#)

It offers a step by step guide to help charities in England correctly manage their concerns and handle the reporting of safeguarding allegations about the behaviour or actions of a person in their charity. It also helps identify the right people to contact if needed and access helpful resources and advice.

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## The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)



# Office of the Public Guardian

The Office of the Public Guardian's (OPG) has a safeguarding duty to protect people at risk of abuse or neglect. This includes investigating concerns reported to them about: (i) deputies appointed by the Court of Protection; (ii) attorneys appointed under a registered lasting power of attorney (LPA); and (iii) attorneys under a registered enduring power of attorney (EPA). The OPG's responsibility is to support people and help them plan ahead so that their health, welfare and financial decisions will be taken care of if they lose mental capacity and to safeguard the interests of people who may lack the mental capacity to make certain decisions for themselves.

The ways they work to prevent abuse include:

- making people aware of legal safeguards such as lasting powers of attorney and the services of the OPG and the Court of Protection. They promote safeguarding through talks, training, presentations, publicity and work with their key stakeholders and partners
- supervising deputies appointed by the Court of Protection to make decisions on behalf of someone who lacks mental capacity
- making sure systems are in place to prevent or reduce the possibility of a member of OPG staff abusing an adult at risk
- working with other agencies, including adult social services and the police

The ways they investigate reports of abuse include:

- receiving reports that an adult at risk is being abused ('whistleblowing')
- answering requests to search the register of deputies and attorneys (free of charge)
- investigating concerns about the actions of a deputy or registered attorney, or someone acting under a single order from the Court of Protection
- working in partnership with other agencies, including adult social services and the police, including taking part in meetings and case conferences
- taking part in joint investigations of suspected abuse

The ways they work to stop abuse include:

- applying to the Court of Protection to suspend, discharge or replace a deputy and to cancel or revoke an EPA or LPA
- providing reports to the Court of Protection under sections 49 and 58 of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, to help the court make informed decisions
- reviewing client files and visiting clients where they know abuse has happened in the past or if there's a risk abuse might happen
- continue to closely monitor the situation through ongoing supervision of the case
- tell external agencies. This includes notifying any professional body where the person who has committed abuse is a member. The OPG also has power to make referrals to the [Disclosure and Barring Service](#), which may mean the abuser is put on the 'barred list' so they can no longer work with other adults at risk or with children

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/adult-social-care/staying-safe>