

**National Covid-19 safeguarding adults and insight project**

**Briefing – August 2020 update**

The national Covid-19 insight project has had a great response from our local authority partners with over 79 sending in their returns, many thanks to all those who have sent in their returns. However, it is not too late to take part to build a better national picture.

For those of you **who have already sent in your returns** this briefing is to request further information on safeguarding activity to the end of June 2020, just add in your most recent data into the spreadsheet. **There is no need to provide data for months already provided, but if you wish to revise any earlier data provided copy it into the appropriate column and your previous response will be overwritten**. If at all possible, please fill in the ‘explanatory and other notes’ section on the spreadsheet as it has been invaluable in capturing information not readily clear from the returns.

For those of you are **yet to send in your returns**, you can complete the information for both periods, by filling the data into the spreadsheet. If at all possible, please fill in the ‘explanatory and other notes’ section on the spreadsheet as it has been invaluable in capturing information not readily clear from the returns.

Please access the spreadsheet from the [LGA website page](https://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-safeguarding-adults-data-collection-0).

**What is the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding adults? We don’t know.**

At the start of the lock down, many authorities reported an initial reduction in concerns/ referrals, fewer authorities experienced an increase. Safeguarding leads reflected that safeguarding issues were not being identified and reported during the lockdown because of reduced face-to-face contact with people with care and support needs, whether families, friends, neighbours or professionals. Specifically, there were worries about people in care homes, which were closed to visitors to assist prevention of Covid-19 transmission. There were concerns about the increased reporting of domestic abuse during the lockdown – but it was unclear whether people with care and support needs were equally affected. There was an expectation that there would be a surge in safeguarding activity as the lockdown is eased. What is the experience in your locality?

**Why is this important?**

It is important to understand what has happened in order to learn any lessons for future Covid-19 outbreaks, as well as responding to changing safeguarding needs. Data is essential to prompt further questions. The request for local insight is to develop an understanding about the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding activity in England, both during lock down and as the restrictions were eased. We hope this information will help inform preparations and planning for the future.

The proposal for this work came from the executive group of the National Network of Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards who suggested that it would be very helpful to understand the nature of the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown on safeguarding activity before the NHS Digital returns are published (see below). This proposal is supported by LGA and ADASS, through the Safeguarding workstream of the Adult Social Care Hub (joint LGA/ADASS), Care and Health Improvement Programme, the co-Chairs of the National Principal Social Workers Network and the safeguarding lead at the Department of Health and Social Care.

**What are our data sources? And current context**

The Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC) is an annual data collection from local authorities which captures information about safeguarding activity. Data is collected, submitted to NHS Digital and published at the end of the following calendar year (i.e. data for 2019/20 would normally be published at the end of 2020, although the collection deadline has been deferred at the moment, and data for 2020/21 would normally be published at the end of 2021). Therefore, there is considerable delay before the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding activity would be able to be described and understood across England.

This Insight project is entirely voluntary as it is recognised that Local Authorities continue to be under considerable pressure to meet other mandatory data requests from central government, which means it may be difficult to respond to this particular request. There may be conflicting priorities and so this survey request is flexible (provide whatever you can) and the timeframes are indicative (provide what you can when you can).

**What can we do now?**

This **voluntary collection of data and insight** on safeguarding activity aims to compare levels between 2019 and 2020, for example looking at the differences between activity in March 2019 and March 2020 to see what the impact of Covid-19 is on activity levels and types. Rather than the full SAC return, a sub-set of the data is proposed (see pro forma for further details – and not all the fields need to be filled in).

The pro forma includes space for free text from participants regarding their insight into what is known about local safeguarding issues and activity, what other information they might be using to understand the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding activity locally.

Participants are asked to provide the following:

***Information request (activity during lock down and as lockdown has been eased)***

***By August 31st 2020***

* Monthly information regarding number of safeguarding concerns, section 42 enquiries, types of abuse, age and risk management;
* Monthly information extending back to January 2019, to be able to compare activity to pre-Covid-19 levels and up until the end of June 2020;
* A narrative on the data including observations about other areas and issues that are of concern related to safeguarding adult is requested. This could include further information for example about safeguarding activity in Care Homes settings (which could come from ‘location of risk’ data’), safeguarding people who are homeless, people experiencing domestic abuse and any other local safeguarding issue which are considered pertinent because of Covid-19 related impacts, but not in the SAC data set covered above;
* The narrative is open text and could also cover any local insight for example noting where concerns have come from (source of referral data) indicating how the Covid-19 lock down may have affected safeguarding activity.

**What will the information be used for?**

The quality of the national picture will depend on the scale of participation across England and whatever patterns emerge. Data and insights will be aggregated and analysed at regional and national levels, without identifying specific local authorities. This data should provide insight and help clarify what did/didn’t happen, and whether there were any national or regional trends during this period as lock down was eased. We would expect to produce a summary report after the information provided by the end of August, and is analysed, for publication in the autumn.

The project uses the LG Inform site[[1]](#footnote-1) as access can be limited to participants only. LG Inform can be used to produce an online interactive report enabling participants to graphically explore the data they have provided and how their local situation compares to broader regional and national figures. If you are interested accessing this functionality, please contact James.Harman@local.gov.uk.

 All responses will be treated confidentially. Identifiable information about individuals will be used internally by the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with the LGA privacy statement[[2]](#footnote-2). Identifiable information about local authorities will be shared among the participants of this exercise but will not be made available to other local authorities, central government bodies or the general public. We are undertaking this survey to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

**What you can do**

Please provide data and insight about safeguarding adult activity in your area. The deadline of August 31st is not a hard deadline, but indicative as we don’t know how long this project might go on for. Participants are encouraged to provide as much of the data and insights as you can, and you can provide partial information if you are unable to cover all the data requests.

A space for explanatory text is included on the return, enabling participants to contextualise any features of the data provided as required. Please involve your safeguarding leads to provide local insight. If a conversation would be easier, please contact Anusree for a phone call at her email: Anusree.biswas@local.gov.uk.

Your information should be sent to the Care and Health Improvement Programme at the Local Government Association on an Excel pro forma. Simply send your pro forma to James Harman at CHIP@local.gov.uk. **Please provide as much as you can, when you can.**

**Further notes**

It is recognised and understood that data collected in 2020 will not necessarily be validated, so may not be 100% accurate. Further it is understood that in the past there have been some inconsistencies in the ways in which safeguarding concerns, section 42 enquiries and other enquiries have been counted, there has been a lot of work undertaken to address this[[3]](#footnote-3). This may mean that local practice has changed between 2019 and 2020 and this has impacted in the data. Participants can comment on this when they provide their data so this can be acknowledged.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 makes it clear that there is a duty to continue to undertake safeguarding work, e.g. s42 enquiries, and this is emphasised in the Care Act easements guidance 2020. If there have been any local changes in practice that impact on safeguarding activity, participants can comment on this when they provide their data so this can be acknowledged.

If you can wish to help develop the work, please contact adi.cooper@local.gov.uk.

1. <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.local.gov.uk/privacy-policy-0> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. see <https://www.local.gov.uk/making-decisions-duty-carry-out-safeguarding-adults-enquiries-resources> and similar paper on safeguarding concerns to be published June 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)