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**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Briefing Note:**

**For professionals**

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways, which is caused by a virus called Coronavirus.

You **must stay at home** if you have either:

* **A high temperature** – this means that you feel hot to the touch on your chest or back
* **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. If you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual

For further information, please visit the [Telford & Wrekin Council website](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20692/coronavirus_covid-19).

Telford.gov.uk website

Safeguarding people means protecting the most vulnerable from abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect can happen in different ways and be perpetrated by anyone. **Abuse is a crime**.

**If you see something, are told something or something doesn’t feel right, you need to report it!**

You can do this by:

* Ringing **Family Connect** on **01952 385385** from **9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday**
* Ringing the **Emergency Duty Team** on **01952 676500** **after 5pm, Monday to Friday**, and **24 hours at weekends** and **Bank Holidays**

**In an emergency, always dial 999.**

**Safeguarding adults**

**Financial Abuse**

* Risk of people/community groups offering to support vulnerable adults, who could overcharge for support, sell things at a premium or sell ‘cures’;
* Low income families on zero hour contracts or at risk of reduced/no work, needing access to money;
* More people social distancing or self-isolating could increase their risk to scam; and
* Take-up of loans from loan sharks in order to make ends meet.

Further information can be found on the [Friends Against Scams website](https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/).

**Carers**

* Reduced access to respite, which could lead to stress and, subsequently, abuse; and
* Carers may need to self-isolate, or they may become ill and require hospital treatment, thus leaving the cared for without support.

It is important to identify the sole carers, and where possible, identify a back-up plan in case of self-isolation or illness.

[Shropshire Partners in Care](https://www.spic.co.uk/) can offer further advice and guidance.

**Self-neglect**

This is a risk because:

* Individuals may not be able to access food, or will not go out to buy food for fear of catching the virus; and
* Those who cannot or will not go out and neglect their personal hygiene, and their physical ability deteriorates.

**Domestic Abuse**

* Increased risk of abuse, due to increased stress and pressure; and
* Those who display symptoms of COVID-19 may unable to leave the home to seek help and support.

Further information on Domestic Abuse is available on the [TWSP website](https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/info/7/partner-agency-information/13/domestic-abuse).

**Befriending**

* Increased number of over 70s and people with underlying conditions social distancing or self-isolating requiring support; and
* Some of the people offering support will not be appropriately DBS checked.

Whilst self-isolating, we need to ensure that all adults with care and support needs are kept safe.

We have encouraged – where possible – the use of existing and trusted community groups or family members, friends or neighbours that are known, and can help with collecting essential shopping, for example.

**Neglect**

* Families on low incomes or who are at risk of having reduced/no work may not be able to afford to purchase food for the children. Eligible families are entitled for free school meals to continue. Further information can be found on the [Telford & Wrekin Council website](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20028/school_meals/9/free_school_meals);
* Parents who begin to show symptoms may not be able to care for their children as well as they may normally;
* Irregular supervision due to parents working from home; and
* Children who are victims of abuse and neglect will not be able to seek support through school. Make every contact count.

Further information on neglect is available on the [TWSP website](https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/info/10/children-young-people/15/neglect).

**Safeguarding children and young people**

Whilst self-isolating, we need to ensure that all children are kept safe.

The Government has asked all parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and have asked schools and other educational settings to remain open, but only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

Further information can be found on the [Telford & Wrekin Council website](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20692/coronavirus_covid-19).

**Domestic Abuse**

* Increased risk of experiencing emotional and psychological abuse, due to increased stress and pressure within the household; and
* Children are off school, so cannot confide in teachers. Children will not be seen regularly, so make every contact count.

Further information on Domestic Abuse is available on the [TWSP website](https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/info/7/partner-agency-information/13/domestic-abuse).

**Online safety**

* Spending more time online, which increases the opportunity for online exploitation;
* Increased risk of cyberbullying; and
* Increase in the number of children sexting and/or youth-produced sexual images.

National Online Safety have a wide range of resources and information on how to keep children safe online, which can be found on their [website](https://nationalonlinesafety.com/).

Further information on exploitation is available on the [TWSP website](https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/exploitation).

Telford & Wrekin Council:

<https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20692/coronavirus_covid-19>

Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP): <https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk>

TWSP Domestic Abuse information: <https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/domesticabuse>

Friends Against Scams:

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

Shropshire Partners in Care:

<https://www.spic.co.uk/>

Free School Meals information:

<https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20028/school_meals/9/free_school_meals>

TWSP Neglect information:

<https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/neglect>

National Online Safety:

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

TWSP Exploitation information:

<https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/exploitation>

**Useful resources**