



Safeguarding Adults at Risk from Scams during COVID-19



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How does COVID-19 affect adults at risk?

Within the current context of COVID-19, fraud and scams are more likely with vulnerable groups in the community being more isolated, particularly the elderly and those with mental health issues, learning difficulties, drug addiction, or anxiety and/or depression.

2

What type of abuse might they be subject to?

The most likely type of abuse to occur in the wake of COVID-19 is financial. Reported scams so far include fake news updates, fake insurance, fake texts and tax refund schemes, and online sales of miracle cures, vaccines and home-testing. There is also an increased likelihood of fake cleaning services and health workers going door-to-door.

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Where can I find out more?

Further information about safeguarding adults during COVID-19 can be found [here](#). Our regional policies on safeguarding adults can be found at <https://www.cysur.wales/regional-policies-procedures/>. You can also report your concerns to Dyfed Powys Police by phoning 101

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What about volunteers?

There have been some excellent voluntary programmes set up to help the vulnerable with shopping, cleaning, medical needs and so on. Whilst many of these are genuine acts of good, there are a small number of abusers who may take advantage of such a scheme to gain access to adults at risk and abuse them.

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What should I do as a practitioner?

Practitioners who are informed of abuse by a service user should listen attentively, without asking any leading questions, interrupting or assuming the situation that adult at risk is in. Concerns should be recorded and acted on without delay. Consider whether the person has capacity and whether a formal assessment is needed.

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How can I help?

If you're worried about someone, talk to them about the risks; e.g. advise against answering the door to strangers, and warn them about online and phone scams too. Advise them not to share bank details without checking they are trustworthy. Be careful not to alarm the person; but make them aware of the risks and how they can avoid them. Encourage them to make use of official sources of support, e.g. via Local Authority Hubs, as opposed to unofficial.

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Will reduced services have an impact?

Agencies are doing everything possible to operate business as usual, but the pressures to services as a result of COVID-19 means the most urgent care needs are prioritised. This can lead to those who are not able to be supported relying on other sources for support, an opportunity which abusive individuals may exploit.