

## Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Manager's Blog

June 2020

### ***How defrosting my freezer focused me on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day***

I am posting this blog today (Monday 15th June) to coincide with [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day \(WEAAD\)](#), following United Nations resolution 66/127. More about this later.

One evening last week I didn't shut our freezer door properly and I came down the next morning to a fridge which looked like a scene from *Frozen*! When I did finally manage to prize the top freezer drawer open, the contents were completely obscured by ice and frost. You might be someone who knows exactly what is in your freezer at any time. Me? I'm not so sure. I need 'eyes on' to know what is inside.

After I had rescued the freezer contents and waited for the ice to defrost, sitting on the floor mopping up the water (I did cheat a little and use a hair dryer to speed up the process), I thought about 'eyes on abuse' in the last 10 weeks of lockdown and I wondered, what has it been like for those who are at the greatest risk of abuse during the lockdown?

One fact is clear: during lockdown those who are in a position to be a 'protective factor' against abuse & harm – family, friends, those who support adults in a professional role – have had less eyes on. See my [May 2020 blog, What's your daily safeguarding 'exercise'?](#)

As we come out of lockdown, are we going to open a Pandora's box of abuse? Alongside concerns about physical, psychological or financial abuse, will we need to review concerns coming from different perspectives? For example, how might we consider the unintended consequence of the lockdown on people's safety and wellbeing through the lens of neglect or organisational abuse? There have already been a number of news reports of legal actions starting against the government for its handling of the crisis – see [BBC News | Coronavirus: Government sued over care home deaths 'disgrace' \(12 June\)](#) and ['I lost my father to Covid-19. Now I'm taking legal action against the UK government' | The Guardian 03 June](#) .

As the government announces further changes to the lockdown, how can we get better ‘eyes on’ this hidden problem? Which brings me to the United Nation’s World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on Monday 15th June.

There are now so many ‘awareness’ days for all sorts of important issues and concerns, it can feel a bit tokenistic at best and meaningless at worst. Indeed, I would argue that *every day* should be an awareness day about adult abuse.

However, WEAAD does give a useful hack into greater exposure – **since we have got it, let’s use it!** Let’s use WEAAD as a stimulus to remind all those we work with and everyone we are linked with outside of work about the critical roles we all have to get ‘eyes on’ adult abuse.

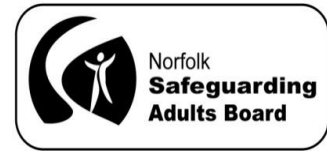
I’ve been working closely with colleagues from Norfolk Police and Norfolk Council County’s communication team to produce some social media material to support every organisation in Norfolk – small, medium or large – to raise awareness in support of one critical message: **If you are worried that an adult is being abused or at risk of abuse, say something by calling Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.** *We also have a case study to show that we can and do make a positive difference to protect adults from abuse when concerns are shared. We are launching the campaign as Norfolk’s contribution to WEAAD.*

On Monday 15th (but keeping it going thereafter) I am asking all readers of this blog to:

- Retweet messages about the See Something, Hear Something, Say Something campaign
- Download and use the social media graphics from the NSAB website
- Share the downloadable poster on your social media feeds (material will be on the NSAB website after 13:00 on the 15th)

Monday 15th June also marks the start of **Citizens Advice’s** national campaign for **Scams Awareness Fortnight 2020**. Citizens Advice have provided ALL the resources you need to help you campaign over the next fortnight and beyond. [A more detailed campaign briefing is now available on the Citizen Advice website](#) along with a [messaging toolkit](#).

[See the June 10th news story on the NSAB website for more links.](#)



Thank you

PS Unfortunately I didn't find any surprise choc ices in the freezer. Better luck next time.

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Monday 15th June 2020