Safeguarding, technology and you

We’ve made this factsheet because people, families and those who use our services, wanted information about using technology to keep safe. This could be to prevent or minimise the risk of abuse, or when there are concerns you, or a loved one might be experiencing abuse or harm.

This factsheet provides some basic information and where to go for further advice. The information we’ve provided here is not legal advice and you may want to get your own legal advice when you consider the next steps.

Keeping in touch

There are some actions you can take to minimise the risk of abuse. It helps to have someone who may notice you are being abused. Having a wide circle of friends, or contacts, can help with this. If you are unable to leave your home but, want to keep in touch with friends, consider the use of a computer, or tablet to stay in touch with them as a good way instead.

There are a number of different ways to communicate online, such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype and other applications. Age UK offer lots of information about how to get yourself, or someone you know set up to do this. They also have information about staying safe online to prevent the risk of scams and viruses on your computer or tablet. For more information visit


Telecare

Telecare is a system which uses personal and environmental sensors that enable people to remain safe and independent in their own home for longer.

If you are concerned that you are at risk of abuse, for example due to anti-social behaviour, bogus callers, or domestic abuse, Telecare can offer you a number of options to keep safe. For example, there is an alarm system to get help. This doesn’t replace calling the Police in an emergency, but where you need to contact an agreed person to check on your safety.

There is a range of ‘Safe and Connected’ units to raise an alarm call from anywhere in the home by simply pressing a pendant or bracelet, a red button on the unit or via a range of sensors.
A typical example of Telecare in use

June lives on her own and after giving money to a bogus lottery scheme once, she has noticed that she is getting many more cold callers and letters asking for money or donations through her door. She feels worried about people coming by her home and not knowing if she should answer the door.

As well as getting some advice on crime prevention from her council and the police local safer neighbourhood team, June also had motion sensors set up outside her door and a decoy camera. June already had a Telecare alarm due to the risk of falls in her home and feels safe and secure knowing that she can use her alarm to get help if she is feeling worried and would like her contact person called.

Surveillance Options

You may be worried about the care you, or someone you love, receives from a care home or hospital. You may be struggling with the decision to use a hidden camera or sound recorder to give you some peace of mind.

There is guidance from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), whose job it is to inspect health and social care services. The guidance is titled ‘Thinking about using a hidden camera or other equipment to monitor someone’s care?’ and was written in February 2015.

The guidance suggests that the use of recording equipment can only be used with the permission (consent) of the person whose care you are concerned about. This should also only be in their own private room. If the person does not have capacity to give their consent, it is important that you feel sure that you are doing the right thing (that you are acting in their best interest).

There is guidance on tips to reduce legal risks and to respect people’s privacy. This includes for example: to avoid recording in shared areas; to only use for the purpose of monitoring or protecting your care, welfare and safety, and making sure you store the recordings are stored securely.

You can see the full guidance on the Care Quality Commission website at www.cqc.org.uk

Exploring technology

There are a lot of different options out there. Did you know there are wi-fi enabled door bells? These allow you to monitor remotely or from within your home who is at your door.

Technology is constantly changing and new products become available all the time.

Where can I get more information?

For the types of abuse and where to get help online, search for the ‘Safeguarding Adults’ pages at www.enfield.gov.uk

If you are concerned that you, or a person you know is being abused, please call the Enfield Adult Abuse Line on 📞 020 8379 5212.

For more information or for a copy of the following factsheets, visit our website www.enfield.gov.uk or phone 📞 020 8379 1001.

» SA01 Making Safeguarding Personal
» SA02 Financial planning – preventing abuse and fraud
» SA03 Preventing abuse – keep yourself safe
» SA04 Safe recruitment of a personal assistant