We are currently running at full capacity, with all seven FTE staff in the team able to work remotely for the foreseeable future. We obviously cannot predict sickness, but this is no different to any other agency and we have robust Business Continuity Plans in place.

There is currently no expectation to redeploy safeguarding staff, we understand how crucial a functioning safeguarding team is at this time. We will not be attending ‘non-essential’ meetings but using dial in / video conference facilities where available. Should any major changes to this take place, all boards and partners will be kept informed.

If capacity falls in the team through sickness, we will be focusing on the core business of detecting, escalating and preventing harm, abuse and neglect, which may mean less urgent work is deferred or cancelled. For adults we will be looking closely at Section 42 (Care Act 2014) enquiries to ensure they meet a safeguarding threshold and referring them to the most appropriate person to respond. This is because S42 enquiries are often sent to an operational manager for a response, and currently our operational managers time is extremely valuable. If the enquiry does not meet the criteria set out in the Care Act 2014, Local Authorities (depending on the nature of the enquiry) may be directed towards our Patient Experience Team instead. We will always work with partners to understand each other and compromise where necessary. Ranking of urgency may take place with child deaths, general enquires, audits etc, again working alongside partners to identify priorities.

Training with a face to face element is currently suspended, although we are launching updated and refreshed online training to our staff in a few weeks. This will help mitigate concerns staff will miss out on statutory and mandatory training. We are working to identify any new and evolving issues generated by the COVID 19 outbreak (scams, vulnerable children no longer under the tacit protection of schools etc.) and disseminate this learning to front line staff. We will be making plans as the situation evolves to ensure our training provision gets back to normal as soon as it is safe to do so.

It goes without saying that our service, along with our colleagues across the whole health and social care economy are entering a time of unprecedented demand and strain on resources. We are working around the clock to ensure safeguarding our patients does not fall by the wayside, and we would appreciate the support of the collective boards in ensuring that we are able to do this effectively. I apologise in advance if any response from me or my team is not as swift as it might have otherwise been.

Finally a quick reminder of our contact details;

**Secamb.safeguarding@nhs.net** **(for secure communications)**

**Safeguarding@secamb.nhs.uk** **(for all general enquiries)**

**Philip.tremewan@secamb.nhs.uk** **– Nurse Consultant for Safeguarding**

**07788 380 109 – Our enquires number for urgent requests as we are unable to access our 0300 line remotely.**