

Coronavirus – one legal step older people should take now.

We all hoped it wasn't going to happen but our hopes were dashed. A pandemic is upon us and our lives will never be the same again. As I write this our Prime Minister is intensive care, a family member has had the virus, and I am worried about vulnerable friends. It is all getting very real and close. It is time now for everyone to think ahead and plan for the future.

Our older citizens may face unique challenges of significant illness, getting care, and even long term social isolation.

In all these situations having a power of attorney in place – especially in favour of a younger person (even on a substitute basis) could be a massive help. Powers of attorney can be used to deal with all legal and financial matters - even if the person appointing the attorney has not completely lost legal capacity – but just isn't able to do things for a period.

Many older couples just appoint each other as attorneys – that's fine but it may not help if one is infected and the other is effectively quarantined.

So if you have a younger relative suitable as an attorney – even as a substitute to your favoured attorney - our advice would be to make the appointment now. And if you haven't appointed an attorney at all – now is the time to do it!

Please remember two things:-

- 1. Many older people will qualify for legal aid for this work.**
- 2. The rules of witnessing documents have temporarily been changed and in most cases all of the work can be done over the telephone.**

Telephone 0800 152 2037 or e mail us at info@sops.org.uk and we will get things under way for you.

David Borrowman

SOPS