

Definition of a Vulnerable Older Person in the context of Covid-19:

An older person identified as being at particular risk and in greater need of support during Covid-19 due to their lack of support networks, level of social isolation, physical or mental health needs, capacity issues, or the withdrawal/pausing of their normal supports which facilitated them to live independently.

How to Identify a Vulnerable Person

If a person is aged over 70 and identifies with 2 or more of the below criteria, ALONE has identified them as vulnerable during the COVID19 period:

If a person is aged over 50 and identifies with 3 or more of the below criteria, ALONE has identified them as vulnerable during the COVID19 period:

Please note – A key element of being identified as vulnerable is having ‘Limited Supports’. An older person may have multiple of the below issues but be very well supported, and should not be identified as vulnerable.

Vulnerability Criteria:

- Living alone (or limited supports / isolated where they reside - e.g. rurality, accessibility to essential shops)
- Very limited or no support from family, neighbours, friends (does not have a support network to help them with practical supports – getting food, fuel, pension, medication, etc.)
- Chronic health condition / disability, and has limited support
- Has tested positive for Covid-19, and has limited support
- Advanced frailty, and has limited supports
- Capacity issues arising (intellectual, memory), and has limited support
- Identifies as socially isolated and lonely
- Addiction concerns
- Mental health concerns
- Language/speech difficulties who are living alone or has limited support
- Hearing or visually impaired, and has limited support
- Is experiencing significant anxiety in relation to Covid-19, and has limited supports
- Safety issues arising due to a recent withdrawal/pausing of supports/services- e.g. reliance on others (Home Help, Family, Neighbors, etc.)
- Other significant factor arising (safeguarding issue, domestic violence, etc.)

If there is an older person who is known to you to be vulnerable and does not fit the above criteria, it might still be deemed appropriate to identify them as vulnerable. For example, if someone is over 50 and does not meet three of the criteria above, but there are significant mental health concerns.

Particular attention should be given if someone is solely reliant on external carers and this service is cutback/paused/withdrawn.