

Editorial

Bridget Penhale and Margaret Flynn

Welcome to this fifth issue of the journal for 2021, in what are still unusual and difficult times for many people. Although evidently still dominated by the pandemic crisis across the world, media coverage across the UK has continued to include information about safeguarding issues and we draw attention to some of these below.

However, first, having watched in awe the mastery, resolve and grace of Olympians [1] being reminded of the willing sacrifices they made to achieve sporting excellence, we have been wondering about the reach of barely fathomable “influencers”. Although evidently our media favour celebrities whose platforms are dotted with ultra-modest achievements, the actions and words of those whose athleticism has merited fame during the summer months are acknowledged and celebrated here.

Thank you England Manager Gareth Southgate. His letter to fans is inspiring:

“I have a responsibility to the wider community to use my voice, and so do the players. It's their duty to continue to interact with the public on matters such as equality, inclusivity and racial injustice while using the power of their voices to help put debates on the table, raise awareness and educate” [2].

Thank you Manchester United striker Marcus Rashford. Although he and his peers were targeted with racial abuse on social media and his mural was defaced hours after the European Championship defeat, it prompted anti-racist demonstrations. As he reflected:

“Whilst I continue to say sorry I want to shout out my teammates. This summer has been one of the best camps I've experienced and you've all played a role in that. Brotherhood has been built that is unbreakable, your success is my success, your failures are mine [...] I can take critique of my performance all day long, my penalty was not good enough. It should have gone in but I will never apologise for who I am or where I came from [...] I'm Marcus Rashford, a 23-year-old black man from Withington and Wythenshawe, south Manchester. If I have nothing else I have that. For all the kind messages, thank you. I'll be back stronger. We'll be back stronger” [3].

Thank you gymnast Simone Biles. She explained the importance of mental health as she withdrew from the Olympics and yet continued to support her teammates [4].

Thank you jumpers Mutaz Essa Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi who shared a gold medal. They could have continued to a “jump off” but requested that they share their achievements [5].

Thank you to runners Isiah Jewett and Nijel Amos whose accidental collision resulted in a supportive hug and they finished the race together [6].

Thank you, runner, Sifan Hassan. Although she tripped during her race, she did not give up [7].

Thank you track and field athlete and 11 Olympic medals winner Allyson Felix. Motherhood did not slow her down, diminish her wish to advocate for women athletes or take on her sponsor [8].

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Thank you swimmer Caleb Dressel for giving your gold medal to a teammate who had swum in the preliminary heats [9].

Thank you road race cyclist and mathematician Anna Keisenhofer who achieved a gold medal without a coach even though the odds were stacked against her [10].

Thank you runner Elaine Thompson-Herah who won three gold medals [11].

Thank you swimmers Lilly King and Annie Lazor who celebrated the brilliance of Tatjana Schoenmaker, the gold medal winner [12].

Thank you gymnast Oksana Chusovitina. Although twice the age of her competitors she received a standing ovation from them in her final Olympic appearance [13].

We rarely associate a readiness to challenging injustices with football managers and players, but since politicians have serially failed so abysmally on this front, we hope that the legitimate credibility of Olympians prevails and persists. Summer has gifted sporting triumphs, role models and the strengths of speaking out about mental health, sharing achievements [14], praising the achievements of competitors, supporting each other and having enduring goals. These qualities are critical to humanity, health and social care practice – and safeguarding.

The skill of staff responsible for others is a familiar topic, perhaps, particularly within safeguarding. Too often the families of people who have been harmed in services express dismay that support staff was ill-equipped for their work, including inadequate training for roles and responsibilities. The death of 18-year-old Annelise Sanderson is a case in point [15]. Prison staff was not trained in suicide prevention, despite previous deaths at HMP Styal and the fact that she was placed on a suicide prevention plan. Annelise had long-standing mental health challenges and yet mental health help was unavailable to her at the most crucial time of need [16].

The woeful underfunding of such services is part of the picture. The absence of prevention work may be seen in the number of children taken into care. In 2010, 64,000 children and young people were taken into care. By 2020, this number had risen to 80,000. Local authorities have taken the hit in terms of the indefensible costs of children's homes placements. Impatience grows at the failure of the Westminster Government to publish its much delayed and vital reform of social care funding at a time when almost 7,000 people have been waiting more than six months for an assessment and almost 75,000 disabled and older people and carers are waiting for help with their support [17]. There is a parallel rise in drug-related poisoning which is associated with the impacts of isolation and financial insecurity on people with addiction problems:

"In 2020, 4,561 deaths related to drug poisoning were registered in England and Wales (equivalent to a rate of 79.5 deaths per million people); this is 3.8% higher than the number of deaths registered in 2019 (4,393 deaths; 76.7 deaths per million)" [18].

How we are welcomed and how have been welcomed stay with us. We know what the best and worst of welcomes feel like. The welcome of five-year-old Mohammed Munib Majeedi and his family to Britain is unlikely to be forgotten by Afghan refugees. Mohammed's family had fled the Taliban and were accommodated at a £33 per night hotel. Mohammed fell from the ninth floor – even though the safety and suitability of the hotel were questionable [19]. Meanwhile, the Taliban's advance continues and over three million people have been displaced. Still, by linking the threat of tax increases to slashing £4bn from the foreign aid budget [20] the Westminster political project

trundles along seemingly untroubled by the fate of the globe or at times, it seems, even the UK.

Meanwhile, fingers crossed that the Law Commission's consultation concerning Corporate Criminal Liability [21] will yield improvements concerning the appropriate capture and punishment of criminal offences committed by corporations, their Directors and managers. It is too easy to pick off the low hanging fruit and prosecute poorly paid support workers as their employing directors' lament that they were unaware of the behaviour of their employees. We will be drawing the attention of the Law Commission to a senior Coroner's pertinent and compelling Report to Prevent Future Deaths [22].

This issue of the journal contains five papers covering different aspects of safeguarding and from several different countries, which is pleasing to see. The first paper, by Kate Maclure and Ali Jones, from Scotland, is a research paper concerning the provision of effective digital services for those who experience domestic abuse and intimate partner abuse, as well as those who provide such services. This was undertaken as part of a government-funded project on Technology Enabled Care on domestic abuse. The paper focusses on exploring the relevant literature on this topic via desk-based research. Findings from this element of the project included the lack of effective solutions in this area, for either individuals or service provision – even beyond the context of the pandemic. Increases in levels of digital abuse that occurred are noted, as is the need for future developments and digital interventions to be based on ethically sound design principles.

The second paper in this issue is a research paper from Portugal by Sonia Caridade and colleagues. The exploratory research reported concerned the development of remote forms of support for women experiencing domestic violence during the first lockdown period of the pandemic crisis in Portugal. The perspectives of domestic violence professionals working in support services were obtained through a survey. Findings from this initial study determined that the use of telephones was the form of remote support that was most likely to be used in their work, with over three-quarters of those that took part reporting that they had not had any training in the use of other technologies such as video-conferencing. The potential for the development of remote support services and possible advantages of doing so was also established.

The third paper, by Erin King and colleagues from the UK, provides a viewpoint in relation to the development of a research agenda on positive risk-taking (PRT) within the twin contexts of the pandemic crisis and safeguarding. The paper explores the concept of PRT in relation to safeguarding and determines the need for empirical research on this topic to establish whether there has been a conceptual and related attitudinal shift from statements of principle to associated development within professional practice and making a difference to service users' circumstances and lives. The ethical tensions for professionals between freedom of choice and decision-making by service users and safety of both individuals and the broader society that are apparent in policy documents, professional opinion and relevant literature are examined and considered within the contexts of both health and social care and societal changes that have occurred due to the pandemic.

The following research paper, by CV Irshad and colleagues from Madras (India) concerns the participation of older people in decision-making within families and households. The evidence for this study was drawn from the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, a study that is undertaken across India – and relates to data from 2017–2018 relating to specific familial decisions. One of the findings was that participation in such

decision-making declined with later life (and with increased age). There were also some interesting differences in decision-making between men and women, rural and urban settings and those with differing economic and social statuses. Some of the implications of the findings are discussed in the paper.

The final paper in this issue, by Joao Fundinho and colleagues from Portugal and Brazil, is also a research paper that concerns the adaptation of a tool that has been developed (in Brazil) to measure social skills for use in Portugal. Some evidence exists for links between social skills and interpersonal violence, but this does not extend to situations of elder abuse (which was the overall context for the study). The paper details the work that was undertaken to adapt the tool to a different cultural context, which was successful. It also explores the six specific skills/factors that might be of relevance (and used) with older adults.

We hope that you will find papers on this issue of interest and use you in your safeguarding work. Regular readers will know that we are always interested in receiving contributions to the journal and we invite readers to continue to contribute papers about adult safeguarding, including in relation to safeguarding and Covid-19, which of course is still with us. If you may be interested and want to discuss further before committing to submission, do get in touch with one of us as per our details on the inside cover of this issue. Finally, we hope that everyone has been managing to stay safe and well during these strange times and look forward to providing the final issue of the journal for this volume later in the year.

Notes

1. Please note, this Editorial was written prior to the Para-Olympics taking place.
2. www.theguardian.com/football/2021/jun/10/england-fans-boos-players-take-a-knee-euro2020 (accessed 20 June 2021).
3. <https://talksport.com/football/911480/marcus-rashford-mural-grati-instagram-man-utd-penalty/> (accessed 21 August 2021).
4. www.bbc.co.uk/sport/av/gymnastics/58284865 (accessed 21 August 2021).
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6. <https://apnews.com/article/2020-tokyo-olympics-track-and-field-isaiah-jewett-nijel-amos-44515fecddf8c12d9f008b78414a894c> (accessed 21 August 2021).
7. www.bbc.co.uk/sport/av/olympics/58052055 (accessed 21 August 2021).
8. www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2021/aug/07/allyson-felix-ends-her-olympic-career-a-fighter-both-on-and-o-the-track (accessed 21 August 2021).
9. www.teamusa.org/News/2021/August/10/Caeleb-Dressel-A-Humble-Olympic-Champion-Is-Not-Counting-His-Medals (accessed 21 August 2021).
10. www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jul/25/anna-kiesenhofer-claims-shock-road-race-glory-as-van-vleuten-mistakes-silver-for-gold-olympics (accessed 21 August 2021).
11. www.bbc.co.uk/sport/athletics/58295310 (accessed 21 August 2021).
12. www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news/how-annie-lazor-lilly-king-pushed-each-other-to-be-the-best-breaststrokes-they-could-be/ (accessed 21 August 2021).
13. www.bbc.co.uk/sport/olympics/57961857 (accessed 21 August 2021).
14. www.nbcolympics.com/news/most-inspirational-moments-tokyo-olympics (accessed 21 August 2021).
15. www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/23/investigation-woman-18-dies-styal-prison-cheshire (accessed 5 July 2021).
16. The Sunday Times *Stia at Annelise jail lacked anti-suicide training* 1 August 2021.

17. www.adass.org.uk/adass-spring-survey-21 (accessed 18 July 2021) www.adass.org.uk/adass-spring-survey-21 N.B. The Editorial was completed before any announcement about social care funding.
18. www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoninginenglandandwales/2020 (accessed 20 August 2021).
19. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-58280360 (accessed 20 August 2021).
20. www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tories-may-cut-foreign-aid-to-stave-o-tax-rises-9cqwrftf (accessed 18 July 2021).
21. www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-sseek-views-on-corporate-criminal-liability/ (accessed 14 June 2021).
22. www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ben-King-Prevention-of-future-deaths-report-2021-0250_Published.pdf (accessed 22 July 2021).

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