

# Editorial

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Welcome to the second issue of the journal for this year, which, almost unbelievably, is celebrating its quarter century! In recent months of course, much media coverage remains understandably preoccupied and focused on more global issues such as war as well as the pandemic, which has now entered its third year and such aspects continue to cause much concern across the world. In the UK, however, we have also seen continued coverage of safeguarding related issues, including those related to migration and human trafficking. There are also safeguarding problems that arise, and which are related to ongoing problems at societal level experienced by individuals but that are caused by a combination of the pandemic, cost of living and energy crises, as well as the legacy and outcome(s) of over a decade of austerity measures and associated, repeated cuts to service provision, particularly in relation to health and social care services.

The first paper in this issue is a research paper by David Orr of the University of Sussex, concerning a study undertaken to map and review self-neglect policies and procedures from SABs, that was carried out in England. Policies, procedures and guidance documents on self-neglect were sourced from SAB websites across England and these were analysed to look at both innovations and challenges that SABs have experienced and to try and determine the areas of divergence between SABs. Within the analysis, the data extracted from the documents was synthesised and comparisons made between SAB documentation that had been accessed. The study revealed some interesting findings, including in such areas as how SABs define self-neglect, how executive capacity is considered within self-neglect, the development of appropriate pathways and multi-agency coordination within this aspect of safeguarding.

This is the first time that there has been a systematic survey of SAB self-neglect policies, procedures and guidance documents from SABs that has happened since self-neglect was included within the remit of safeguarding adults, in the Care Act 2014. It provides a useful overview of how SABs are interpreting national guidance on self-neglect and producing guidance for local practitioners. The trends and areas of uncertainty identified in the paper suggest some useful resources for research and policymaking that is well informed, making this a thought-provoking paper.

Our second paper is a research paper by Laura Doyle and colleagues, concerning assessment tools used in adult safeguarding practice within the UK and Ireland. The research team wanted to explore the possibility of adapting a pre-existing assessment framework currently in use in family and childcare social work for potential use in assessing carers involved in adult safeguarding situations. The paper concerns a multi-country study (coordinated from Northern Ireland, but also covering Ireland, Scotland and England) and relates to a small-scale pilot study that was undertaken on assessment in adult safeguarding. The paper is based on a qualitative study involving 11 semi-structured telephone interviews with adult safeguarding social work managers and experienced practitioners. Two to four professionals from each region of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland were

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interviewed (either online or by telephone) to explore their perceptions and experiences of engaging in adult safeguarding assessment processes and their views about models of assessment. The study found much variation in and between the different nations involved in the study, together with the lack of an evidence-base and accreditation for assessments that are used. Further work on this area is emphasised as necessary.

The third paper is a case study paper, provided by Fiona Laskaris, of Surrey who has written a powerful account and story about the failures that happened in relation to her son, who had several vulnerabilities but did not get the professional help and support that he needed to keep himself safe. The paper indicates how the law appears to have been misapplied in this situation that had sadly tragic consequences. Although this story is unique, the paper highlights some key areas of learning, and potential action and is a valuable addition to what we understand about the safeguarding needs of young adults. It is a moving and thought-provoking paper, which will hopefully be read by all readers and encourage changes to practice in this whole area (not just within the safeguarding arena).

Our final paper of this volume is a research paper by Susan Benbow and colleagues at the University of Chester. It concerns the issue of adult family violence and presents data on both the characteristics and context of this type of violence. It also considers what practitioners and organisations can learn from the available literature in this area. This is derived from a literature review that was carried out in relation to adult family violence and parricide, including cases that were analysed from several Domestic Homicide Review reports in relation to older adults (often mothers killed by their adult sons). The paper provides a summary of what is known about this issue, puts forward a clear argument that there should be more research on this topic and also details some more practical suggestions about potential ways forward for practitioners, policymakers and agencies. This is a useful paper with some interesting findings about this under-researched area.

We very much hope that you will find papers in this issue that are of interest and use in your safeguarding work. Regular readers of the journal will know that we are always interested in receiving contributions and we invite readers to continue to submit papers about all aspects of adult safeguarding, and across the policy, research and practice spectrum. This includes papers on matters relating to safeguarding and COVID-19, which as we have acknowledged is still with us. If contributing a paper may be of interest and you want to find out more or discuss further before committing to writing and submitting a paper, do get in touch with one of the Editors. Our contact details can be found on the inside cover of the journal, or on the specific webpage on the publisher (Emerald) website. And just a quick reminder that our next issue in this volume will provide a Special Issue on European Perspectives on Safeguarding older people, which we are very much looking forward to.

Finally, we hope that everyone has been able to stay both well and safe during these recent difficult months and look forward to providing further issues for this volume during the year.

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