

Editorial

Bridget Penhale

Welcome to the final issue of the year for the current volume. In this issue we are pleased to include four papers covering several safeguarding issues and that reflect the broad range of areas that safeguarding work comprises.

The first paper in this issue is by Emma Austin-Garrod who has provided a paper detailing a case study of abuse and mistreatment of an adult with learning disability. For several different reasons, case studies of this type do not often appear, but such personal stories and narratives of lived experience are important for professionals in terms of both the information and points of learning that they contain. The paper adds to knowledge about the lived experience of safeguarding, including the processes involved, and therefore offers useful external insights about how safeguarding operates in practice.

The paper is about a single individual case and has been written by/from the perspective of a sibling of a person who has a learning disability who experienced abuse within the social care system. Some very useful views about their experiences of the system are included and consideration of some of the systemic failures to act that were encountered is also contained in the paper, which should be of great interest to readers and useful for practitioners in this area to consider further.

The following paper is by Caroline White and Elisabeth Alton (Universities of Hull and Teeside) and is a research paper about a study that explored GP's experiences of safeguarding in care homes for older people. There is generally quite limited research that considers the role(s) that GPs play in adult safeguarding, so this paper provides a useful addition to this area of knowledge and understanding. The paper details a relatively small-scale study that was undertaken to look at the experiences of GPs about safeguarding issues that occur in care homes for older people. Of the practitioner/professional groups that visit care homes, GPs are amongst the most frequent, so the role that they play is a useful one in relation to safeguarding.

The study consisted of qualitative interviews with 12 GPs to explore their experiences and perceptions. Topics included in the interviews were issues that raised concerns for the GPs, the actions taken in relation to these concerns, together with consideration of some of the dilemmas and difficulties that were experienced by GPs.

Some interesting findings are detailed and discussed in the paper, providing several areas for further consideration. Overt signs of abuse and neglect were rarely reported by the interview participants, but they did report coming across situations that were rather unclear and even ambiguous. Formal reports about situations were made by GPs if/as necessary – but issues were raised concerning some difficulties with ambiguous situations and the fact that some abuse appears to be relatively well hidden within care settings. Some uncertainty about thresholds for abuse, particularly in relation to reporting mechanisms was also raised in interviews.

The third paper in this issue is provided by Freda Quinlan and colleagues from University College Dublin and is a research paper concerning the topic of coercive control of older adults, which is a relatively recent area of consideration and concern in safeguarding.

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The paper details a scoping and literature review that was undertaken in relation to filial coercive control. This was done to identify the defining characteristics of this type of mistreatment and explore the circumstances in which coercive control happens to older people. Following analysis of the literature identified several antecedents to such abuse were apparent. These included ageist norms and stereotypes, issues relating to proximity and relationships and characteristics of control that adult children used within situations. Through use of the dominant themes that the review identified, several models and contrary cases were developed to illustrate the findings. This was followed by outlining a tentative operational definition and conceptual model. This could be a useful starting point for the development of prof. practice and education and training as well as for possible future research.

The final paper in this issue is by Sarah Vaughan and colleagues at the University of Chester. This research paper explores adult safeguarding data from England and provides an analysis and mapping of such data obtained across the country covering the period 2022–2023. Use of quite novel techniques (at least within safeguarding) resulted in the development of colour symbology maps, which were produced to provide a visual analysis of safeguarding concerns and S42 enquiries per 100,000 population. This included those safeguarding concerns that were then converted to S42 enquiries, so rates of conversion were also covered within the analysis.

Findings from the study established regional differences across England in relation to the number of documented concerns, the S42 enquiries that were undertaken and the conversion rates of concerns to enquiries. Perhaps not too surprisingly, some regions had statistically significant either higher or lower S42 enquiries per 100k of population compared to their geographical neighbours. The paper contains some useful reflections on the findings, together with some recommendations. These include the need for further exploration and data analysis of administrative data in safeguarding which could inform both policy and practice.

The final contribution for this issue and this volume is a Book Review provided by Rachel Fyson of the University of Nottingham. The book reviewed is *Adult Safeguarding Observed*, by Jeremy Dixon and is about professional practice in safeguarding, including recent research that was undertaken on this area of practice. The book contains some useful insights and views about safeguarding practice and will be of interest to professionals, managers, policymakers as well as people involved in education and training.

We hope that you will find the papers in this issue of some interest and use to you in your safeguarding work, whatever that consists of. As usual, and previously stated, we are always interested in receiving contributions to the journal and invite readers to continue to contribute papers about adult safeguarding. If you may be interested in a contribution and want to discuss further before committing to writing and submitting a paper, please 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 webpage for the journal. And a quick reminder that there will be a special themed issue relating to topics concerning Caregivers, abuse and safeguarding published next year in volume 27. Finally, we hope that the winter months and holiday period will be both healthy and successful for you and we look forward to providing the new volume of the journal next year.

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