Social Care Workforce Research Unit – Adult Safeguarding Briefing
June 2016

Introduction
The Unit’s work on adult safeguarding is now the largest UK evidence base on this subject. Our studies started when the subject was generally referred to as adult protection, but whatever it is called, safeguarding adults is of major importance to society; especially for people who are the most vulnerable or live in risky situations. For policymakers social care workers are vital agents in the web of prevention of harm, responses to mistreatment and neglect, and in seeking redress or achieving justice. Safeguarding is a major part of their role in providing care and support to people who are at particular risk of being abused, mistreated and neglected and who are not able to protect themselves. Over the last decade and before we have worked on several studies of the subject, as a team and with colleagues from across the United Kingdom and beyond. Our core funding from the Department of Health’s Policy Research Programme has enabled this to be a central theme of our work, with other funding secured from Comic Relief, NIHR School for Social Care Research, an NIHR Programme Grant, and the Alzheimer’s Society.

The impact of this work is evident in references to it in policy, the evidence base for practice and in service development and improvement. The abuse and neglect of people who live in vulnerable situations rightly commands public interest and this research enables those working in prevention, response and justice settings to consider individual cases in wider contexts, to explore trends and to make decisions in light of the evidence of what works. We draw attention to other policy initiatives where the realities of the need to consider adult safeguarding may be overlooked and to areas where policy rollout has faced challenges. As a long-standing research unit we also equip those new to this area to appreciate and critique what has gone before so that they can develop better understanding and take methods forward. We are committed to publishing and disseminating our findings.

This briefing focuses on studies that are completed or on-going. It summarises several policy and practice recommendations regarding adult safeguarding. These are directed at policy makers, care providers, and managers and staff involved in delivering care services, training or regulation and monitoring.
Key Unit studies on adult safeguarding

- We are undertaking an evidence review of what is known about powers of entry to seek access to people where third parties seem to be obstructive. We have reviewed the literature and debates on the subject and are starting on a national survey of professional experiences of this potential problem. **Helping or hindering in adult safeguarding**

- We are currently working on a study of gambling and adults at risk. This groundbreaking project includes a review of the literature and a national survey.

- We worked with the Health and Social Care Information Centre to help develop a means of assessing whether, following a safeguarding investigation, people felt safer – a Safeguarding Outcome Measure. We developed a validated survey; this was fully piloted by 40 local councils. We now know that 70% of individuals (382 adults at risk, and carers or advocates responding if necessary) feel safer. This approach is recommended in the Care Act 2014 Guidance and is being adopted by local authorities in England and further afield. We have, for example, informed the Safeguarding Board managers in Northern Ireland of the details of this approach. **Developing an adult Safeguarding Outcomes Measure**

- Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) – since its inception we have been supporting the practice-focused work of Making Safeguarding Personal to increase practitioners’ understanding and ability to meet the wishes of people who have been abused or neglected. We have evaluated a local initiative, and support the MSP Board in publications, training events, webinars, and strategy development. We worked with Tri-Borough (the local authorities in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham) on the evaluation of their initiative in particular, and have co-authored a peer-reviewed journal paper with their lead manager.

> ’In Tri-Borough (Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea Councils) we are keen to measure the effectiveness of our safeguarding work and have used the Outcomes Framework National Indicators in our surveys – we are most grateful to the Unit for its work developing this Safeguarding Outcome Measure since it is ready to use and meets our ambition to find out if our services are effective. The measure is both rigorous and easy to use. The Unit has been very helpful in supporting our work and assisting our evaluation’. Louise Butler, Professional Standards Safeguarding Team, Tri-Borough

> ’Thanks so much for your help with the Making Safeguarding Personal Report. We couldn’t have done it to this level without your support. Certainly in terms of associated status, having you there was invaluable, quite apart from the
We have studied the various stages of one important policy targeted at the prevention of harm to adults at risk by those who are caring for them, namely the checking of personal records that indicate a risk of future harm. Our analyses have included detailed work on data collected by government bodies on those who have been judged to have harmed vulnerable adults or placed them at serious risk of harm to more recent overviews of international approaches to the vetting and barring of staff. Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) referrals: the first 100 | POVA: Phase II | Investigating the Vetting and Barring Scheme | Checking care workers: a scoping review of the international evidence

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 contained several safeguards designed to protect adults lacking decision making capacity. These include people’s rights to appoint decision makers and the criminalisation of abuse and neglect of adults lacking mental capacity. The Unit took part in a major study funded by the National Institute of Health Research of the working of the MCA in dementia services, including an exploration of the new offences under the MCA, and worked with the Alzheimer’s Society to address policy and practice in the responses to financial abuse and with the Office of the Public Guardian and others on the legality of sharing information. EVIDEM: Changing practice in dementia care in the community

‘I’m pleased that we are now in a position to share the final version of this leaflet with you and to discuss launch plans of ‘Accessing and sharing information: Acting on behalf of a person with dementia’. Thank you for your contributions throughout the project’. Andrew Parker, External Partnerships Manager, Office of the Public Guardian

‘I have just viewed your YouTube video on the Mental Capacity Act and Safeguarding and thought it excellent ...I was wondering whether you could recommend other resources, and whether I could have a copy of the research you speak about in the film. We want to provide an engaging day of learning for all our staff and I was so pleased to come across your film’. Elizabeth Ross, Safeguarding Adults Team, University Hospital of South Manchester

The Unit has collected and analysed Serious Case Reviews and the new Safeguarding Adults Reviews for several years. These are a valuable national resource and are consulted by several interested parties. Our analyses are cross-cutting by theme (for example, by learning disability services or dementia) or by setting (e.g. care homes). We explain that the events reported are not common, but that the Reviews throw light on practice and systems that may be helpful to practitioners and managers. Serious Case Reviews / Safeguarding Adults Reviews project.
We have also worked with colleagues in children’s services in projects funded by the Department for Education and organised by NSPCC to make connections between Adults and Children’s Reviews and Inquiries.

“We were delighted that Prof Jill Manthorpe was able to contribute to our seminar on exploring the complexities of interpersonal violence. Her excellent work on vulnerable adults provided a much appreciated set of insights into how violence and abuse experienced by this group can be understood and addressed in both policy and the development of best practice”. Catherine Donovan, Professor of Social Relations, University of Sunderland

Our Longitudinal Care Work Study (LOCS) has been collecting data from frontline care workers and managers for several years. Analysis of the data has been helpful in hearing what is happening in different social care services about safeguarding – such as the views of people at the frontline of care scandals and media criticism of the sector. Longitudinal Care Work Study

Until our recent study of Models of Safeguarding we knew little of how local authorities organise their services in adult safeguarding. Our research has collected details of organisational models, data and views from many managers and frontline practitioners. We have been able to debate the consequences of different models and suggest options for service design to several local authorities and their partners. Models of safeguarding

In England and in many parts of the developed world governments have enabled people using care services to have greater choice and control over their care. Growing numbers have chosen to employ their own care workers; others have greater ability to fashion their own care. One of our recent studies has examined the risks of such an approach by focusing on Personal Budgets. We have collected a range of evidence about the ways risk is managed and implications for practice: Risk, Safeguarding and Personal Budgets. This study built on our early work on Individual Budgets and safeguarding; and, in Scotland, our evaluation of the Self-Directed Support pilots, where again we focused on safeguarding, in the Scottish context.

“This year I am teaching a Masters level CPD module for social workers who work in adult services called “Assessing and Managing Risk”. Part of this will require them to justify risk decision making in respect of safeguarding. Thanks very much for your help with your publications as they will be provided as references alongside other sources of knowledge/evidence which the students will be required to examine and draw on where appropriate”. Dr Peter Scourfield, Senior Lecturer, Anglia Ruskin University
• For the government review of the first multi-agency policy on adult protection, we undertook two pieces of work. The first was a specific exploration of the views of older people living in rural areas and the second was a piece of quality assurance of the consultation responses for the Department of Health.

• The Unit played a key role in the development and undertaking of the National Elder Abuse Study, funded by Comic Relief and the Department of Health. This provided the first evidence about the prevalence and incidence of mistreatment and abuse in the community. The study has been hugely influential internationally, informing policy and practice about risk factors, definitions, and potential for action. UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People: Prevalence Survey Report

• As part of our work for the Department of Health we have also explored the value of existing data in our studies and made suggestions for data capture and improvement Abuse, neglect and loss of dignity in the institutional care of older people: definitional issues | Analysis of secondary data sources (abuse) study

• Partnership, Regulation and Protection; this early study (funded by Nuffield Foundation) investigated the working of adult protection at local levels; for the first time bringing together and exploring the views of managers, multi-agency board members and practitioners about partnership working on the subject. We have continued this theme. Regulation and Partnership in Adult Protection

‘Thank you for giving your support and time to the Eastern Locality Safeguarding Adults Partnership (ELSAP) Seminar on ‘Information sharing and safeguarding: challenges and dilemmas’. Without exception the feedback was highly complimentary and there were numerous comments about how informative and useful the seminar was. A number of colleagues have telephoned me this week to talk about it’. Walter Lloyd-Smith, Safeguarding Adults Lead, East Coast Community Healthcare CIC

Acknowledgements and Disclaimer
We thank all those who have funded and participated in our studies. Our studies’ reports and publications are available on our website—or contact us for further details. We also hold regular events to publicise our findings for practitioners and policy makers; please contact us if you wish to be informed of these. The views expressed in our studies are our own and should not be interpreted as those of our funders.

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