

Safeguarding Bulletin

Safeguarding adults and young people at risk

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

October 2020

Issue 113

Bringing you the latest research and news on safeguarding adults and young people at risk.

Ann Craft Trust Team



Deborah Kitson

CEO



Charlotte Brooks

Marketing Officer



Lisa Curtis

Safeguarding Adults
Manager



Elliot Davies

Marketing Officer



Nicola Dean

Safeguarding Adults in
Sport Manager



Richard Fletcher

Safeguarding Adults in Sport
Admin



Sarah Goff

Safeguarding Disabled
Young People



Julie Mather

Finance



Joanne Pell

Safeguarding
Adults in Sport
Manager



Nat Rock

Administrator



Laura Thorpe

Safeguarding Adults
in Sport Manager



Kimberley Walsh

Safeguarding Adults in
Sport Manager

Trustees and Management Committee

Chair—Dave Marsland, Lecturer in Social Work

Sallie Barker, Chair of Safeguarding Adults in Sport Steering Group

Claire Bearder Training Consultant

David Charnock, Director of Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Queen's Medical Centre

Malcolm Dillon, Consultant

Rachel Fyson, Professor in Social Work

Tania May, GP

Rob Morgan, Management Accountant

Penny Standen, Professor of Health Psychology and Learning Disabilities

Suzanne Wilson, Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Patrons

Sir Roger Singleton

Kate Spicer

Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Bulletin

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Issue 113

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Editor's Note—Deborah Kitson, CEO

A very warm welcome to Edition 113 of the ACT bulletin.

We had hoped that by now we would be back to some sort of normality or at least getting used to the 'new' normal that is being referred to so frequently. However it does appear that we will be continuing with our current lives on Microsoft Teams, Zoom and other online platforms for quite a while yet.

Quite physical and mental wellbeing is at the forefront of many people's minds, whether that is because of a feeling of isolation, worry about an uncertain financial future or missing seeing family and friends. And we continue to see the safeguarding issues that have been magnified by the current situation – isolation and loneliness creates increased vulnerability. This is being reflected in an increase of grooming and exploitation, domestic abuse, financial scams and many others.

We have created resources relating to the emerging challenges in order to keep you updated and to offer advice and guidance where we can. And in this bulletin we have many features relating to current issues in these unusual times.

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First, however, I want to share the sad news that Gwyn Fraser, a very dear and loyal friend of the Trust and a Trustee herself for many years, has died after a long and brave battle with cancer. We have written about Gwyn in this bulletin, about her work with people with learning disabilities and her commitment to the rights of those people she supported for so many years. She will be missed by all who knew her.

We are all looking forward to Safeguarding Week in November and it has been great that so many of you have already expressed an interest and have

Editor's Note—Deborah Kitson, CEO

requested our resources. We would like to hear about the activities that you are doing that week so that we can feature them on our website so please do keep in touch

We will also be having our AGM on the Thursday of that week and are really pleased that Ineke Houtenbos from the NSPCC will be speaking at the AGM on 'Racism and Safeguarding'. Ineke spoke at the sport conference that we recently held with the CPSU and the presentation was so well received that we decided to ask her to present for us and were delighted when she agreed to do so.

There are a number of interesting articles in this bulletin including an article by Jonathan Senker, CEO at Voiceability, on Improving Lives and Addressing Abuse: Commissioning for Change. Here he discusses the call for changes to how we commission and plan services.

We also have an article by Lucy Gardner, Education Manager at YGAM entitled 'Gaming and Gambling Addiction is a Safeguarding Issue', another safeguarding issue magnified by the effects of lockdown.

Finally, on behalf of the ACT team, I would like to wish you all well in these challenging times. And we would love to hear from you and to feature some of the innovative and creative work that you have all been doing with the people you support in the bulletin and on our website. So keep in touch!

Safeguarding Adults Week 2020—Links, Resources, and More

National Safeguarding Adults Week 2020

16 to 22 November 2020

Safeguarding Adults Week 2020 will take place 16 – 22 November.

Each day of the week we'll focus on a different safeguarding theme. These themes are broad, and each one covers many different areas of focus.

Monday: Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Tuesday: Adult Grooming & Exploitation

Wednesday: Understanding Safeguarding Legislation

Thursday: Creating Safer Places

Friday: Organisational Abuse

Saturday: Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity

Sunday: Safeguarding in Your Community

To help you prepare for the event, we've gathered a number of resources for each theme.

We designed these resources to spark conversations, and to help spread our message on social media.

We'll be adding more resources as we get closer to the week itself. So watch this space for updates!

Plus, these themes are not exhaustive. Our

aim is to highlight certain causes, and to start some vital conversations. But if you want to use Safeguarding Adults Week to talk about a different aspect of safeguarding, please do so!

We'd love to hear about your plans for this year's Safeguarding Adults Week.

And don't forget to use our **#SafeguardingAdultsWeek** hashtag when posting to social media!

General Safeguarding Adults Week Resources

Show you're supporting Safeguarding Adults Week 2020!

[Download your A4 poster here.](#)

Monday – Safeguarding and Wellbeing

A4 fact-sheet. [Download here.](#)

Period poverty, safeguarding and personal wellbeing. [Read more.](#)

Mind's mental health and wellbeing hub. [Access here.](#)

Tuesday – Adult Grooming & Exploitation

A4 fact-sheet. [Download here.](#)

How to spot the signs of adult grooming. [Read more.](#)

A short guide to staying safe online. [Read more.](#)

Understanding financial abuse. [Read more.](#)

An introduction to predatory marriage podcast. [Listen here.](#)

Am I Being Groomed? [Read more.](#)

Catching the Catfish: Adult Grooming. [Read more.](#)

The Survivors UK guide to Adult Grooming. [Read more.](#)

Wednesday – Understanding Safeguarding Legislation

A4 fact-sheet. [Download here.](#)

An introduction to key safeguarding legislation and initiatives. [Read more.](#)

An introduction to the Sexual Offences Act. [Read more.](#)

The NHS guide to the Mental Capacity Act. [Read more.](#)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (video). [Watch here.](#)

An introduction to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). [Read more.](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service overview. [Read more.](#)

The Social Care guide to Care and Support Statutory Guidance. [Read more.](#)

A brief introduction to Making Safeguarding Personal. [Read more.](#)

Thursday – Creating Safer Places

A4 fact-sheet. [Download here.](#)

What is my role in safeguarding? Video. [Watch here.](#)

The KnowHow NCVO Safeguarding Hub. [Access here.](#)

Friday – Organisational Abuse

A4 fact-sheet. [Download here.](#)

Organisational abuse: Signs, symptoms, and solutions. [Read more.](#)

Saturday – Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity

Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity Resources Pack. [Download here.](#)

Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity fact sheet. [Download here.](#)

The Essential Guide to Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity. [Download here.](#)

Get the ACT Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity monthly update. [Sign up here.](#)

The Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework. [Learn more.](#)

More Safeguarding Adults Week Resources

On our website you'll also find various icons and graphics for social media, to help you spread the word and spark conversations about these vital safeguarding issues. [Head here for more information.](#)

We'll be producing additional resources as the week gets closer, and throughout the week itself. To receive updates direct to your inbox, [sign up here.](#)

ACT AGM 2020

Thursday 19 November 13.30

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Join us for the ACT AGM & Seminar 2020

For the first time ever, we're conducting our AGM entirely online!

Date: Thursday 19 November 2020

Time: 13.30 – 14.45

Location: Online Microsoft Teams Session

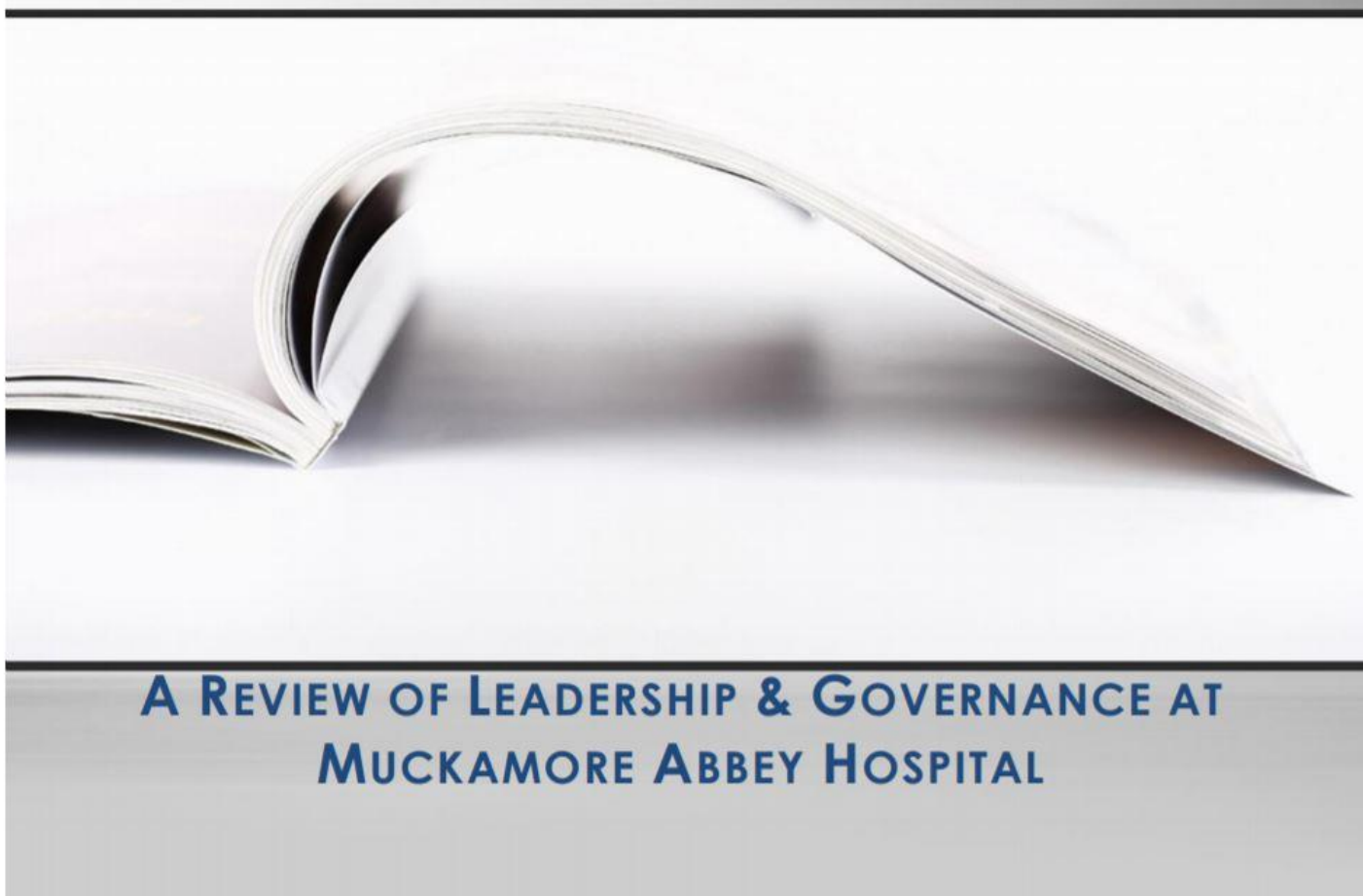
The AGM will start at 13.30.

At 13.45 we'll host a short seminar – **Safeguarding & Racism**— with Ineke Houtenbos, Senior Training & Development Consultant, NSPCC.

The seminar will cover key terminology, and the implications that racism might have on safeguarding. We'll explore ways in which organisations might commit to becoming more diverse, and actions that people might take on an individual level to combat racism.

Book your place and we'll be in touch with a link to join the online session.

[Sign Up Here »](#)



“A catalogue of abuse and neglect.”

Since 2017, there have been many allegations of abuse and neglect taking place at Muckamore Abbey Hospital on the outskirts of Antrim, Northern Ireland.

CCTV footage apparently revealed 1,500 crimes taking place on one ward alone.

[You can read a timeline of the abuse allegations on the BBC website.](#)

Organisational Abuse Review

In 2018, an independent review team carried out a level three Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) investigation of patient safeguarding at the hospital.

The independent review team published their findings in a report that they called [A Way to Go](#). The Department of Health (DoH) argued that this report did not sufficiently explore leadership and governance issues at the hospital. As a result, the review team carried out a fresh review into leadership and governance.

The review team has now published their findings in a new report. [You can access the report here.](#)



Online Safeguarding Adults Training for Managers and Designated Safeguarding Leads

Wednesday 21—Wednesday 28 April, 2021

This online course will explore the roles and responsibilities of managers in terms of safeguarding adults at risk.

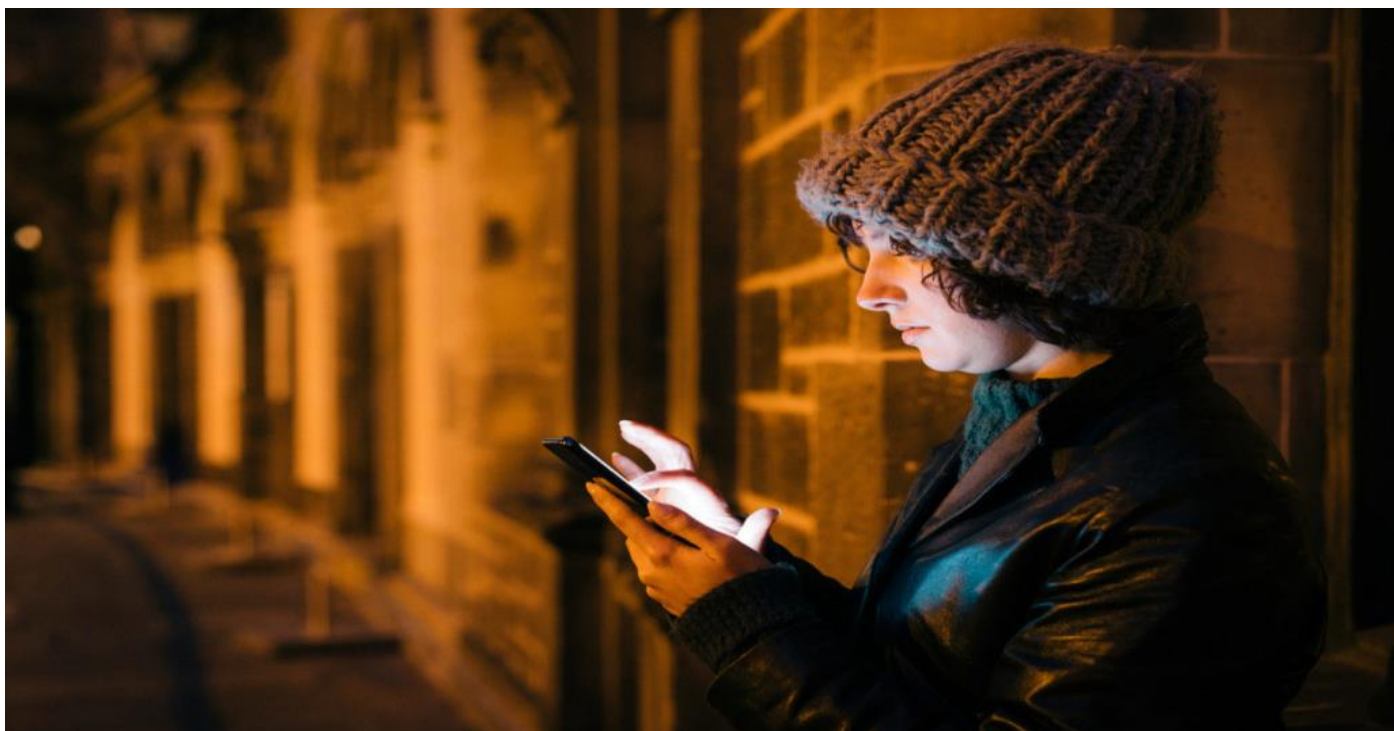
We'll look at the key changes within safeguarding as part of the Care Act. You'll be encouraged to identify where the challenges are, and to seek solutions towards implementation in practice.

We'll cover best practice, the expectations of regulators, and the lessons we learned from our safeguarding adults reviews.

The course takes place across three two hour Wednesday sessions, from 21 April to 28 April, 2021. The fee for attending all three sessions is £125, and you must be able to commit to attending all three to fully benefit from this training.

For more information, and to book your place: [Register Here >>](#)

How to Stay Safe Online—Guidance for Adults and Young People With Learning Disabilities



The internet can be a very unfriendly place.

Everyone should understand the risks of [online scams](#) and [grooming](#).

We've gathered three guides to staying safe online. Each explains the issue in simple terms, with clear pictures to aid understanding.

Staying Safe Online

[The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities](#) produced this guide to staying safe online. It features advice on dealing with online abuse, as well as lots of advice on privacy and safe social media use.

[Read this guide here.](#)

I Have Made a New Friend Online

[Stop It Now](#) produced this guide to [adult grooming](#). This guide points out the warning signs that might indicate that someone isn't who they say they are.

[Read this guide here.](#)

Live Streaming Guide

[Inequ](#) produced this guide to staying safe while using live streaming features on Instagram, YouTube, Twitch, and other platforms.

Please note: While this guide is clear, it seems to be written for a general audience, rather than specifically for people with learning disabilities.

[Read this guide here.](#)

Do You Know How to Support Young People Who Have Been Abused Online?

Charlotte Brooks—Marketing Officer, ACT



Advice and resources for professionals and parents about how best to support children and young people who have been abused online.

The internet is hugely beneficial to many young people, now more than ever before. However, sometimes children and young people fall victim to the skilled techniques employed by those who are intent on doing them harm online.

The [National Working Group \(NWG\)](#) Network and [Marie Collins Foundation](#) (MCF) have produced two leaflets which outline the main considerations for parents, carers and professionals when it is discovered a child has been harmed online. The experience

of survivors of online abuse has been shared to inform the support provided.

The leaflets explain what forms sexual abuse online can take and helps adults to understand why young people may be at greater risk of harm and why they may not tell. Critically, the leaflet helps parents to know what to do if they believe their child has been harmed, some dos and don'ts and where to go for help.

- [‘Online Sexual Harm Reduction Guide for Professionals’](#)
- [‘Sexual Abuse Online: How can I Help my Child?’ Guide for Parents and Carers](#)

#ACTSafeguardingHour

Every Wednesday

12.00—1.00 pm

@AnnCraftTrust

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Do you have any questions or concerns about Safeguarding?

Join us for **#ACTSafeguardingHour**—every Wednesday on
Twitter, 12.00—1.00.

This is an opportunity to discuss safeguarding matters with an
online community of practitioners.

For more information, find us on Twitter:

[@AnnCraftTrust](https://twitter.com/AnnCraftTrust)

Working From Home, Self-Care and Wellbeing

Charlotte Brooks—Marketing Officer, ACT



The latest government advice means that millions of people are continuing to work from home during the pandemic.

This has created benefits for some. However, working from home can be particularly difficult for social workers and third sector workers who are now simultaneously responding to a rise in safeguarding concerns as a result of the pandemic and supporting adults and children most at risk from abuse and neglect, from their own homes.

These roles have always been challenging. But they've become especially difficult without the face-to-face emotional support of colleagues and managers.

Below, we have discussed how organisations can support their employees' mental health and identified practices to support individuals in

safeguarding their wellbeing whilst working from home.

While these tips can be applied to a range of industries, they are particularly focused upon those professions where employees are responding to safeguarding concerns on a regular basis.

How can Organisations and Managers Safeguard the Wellbeing of their Staff?

- **Keep in contact with your team.** Schedule in informal coffee breaks where you can talk and offer informal support to one another.
- **Assign an emergency point of contact and share this with your team.** This will allow people to get support quickly if they need it.
- **[The Professional Association for Social Work and Social Workers](#) recommends offering virtual debriefing sessions with frontline staff.** These may need to be daily in some cases. Many professionals, such as social workers, teachers and support workers, are dealing with extraordinary risks and circumstances. They need to have access to guaranteed and supportive opportunities to discuss what they are going through.
- **Consider developing a buddy system,** whereby staff are paired or 'buddied' up with someone who they can specifically go to for peer-support. This can help to alleviate pressure on

managers as the single source of support and ensure there is another place to go.

- **Managers can download [Mind's Wellness Action Plan](#)**, which allows them to actively discuss mental health in the workplace.

How can Individuals' Safeguard their Mental Health and Wellbeing when Working from Home?

- **[The Professional Association for Social Work and Social Workers](#) advises that you check in on yourself daily.** 'Do I feel ok today?' If not, identify why not, and any support/change required. This can be a helpful routine to get into and can help you to monitor your wellbeing over the course of the pandemic.
- **Do not neglect leave, breaks and days off.** This will ensure that you are well-rested to be able to look after yourself and others.
- **Maintain a personal routine**, including home hobbies, exercise, speaking to friends/family and sleep. Maintaining a work/life balance is also important in ensuring you can continue to support others.
- **Be flexible in your approach to accommodate home working.** Take breaks away from the screen and if you do not have access to the appropriate IT systems, consider writing notes in word and uploading them later, and recognise that this is ok.
- **Ensure that you have a clear remit for your role, and say 'no' if you cannot take on more work.** Some services will

be overwhelmed or closed during this pandemic, and you should not be required to cover all of this additional work.

- **Continue to make time with your manager for supervision sessions.** [Supervision](#) is a place to reflect on your practice and consider how your work is personally impacting you.

Where else can you access support?

- The [NHS](#) has produced seven top tips to support healthy home working.
- [Mental Health Foundation](#) has created downloadable advice about working from home during the pandemic.
- [The Ann Craft Trust](#) has produced advice about safeguarding your wellbeing while working from home during Covid-19.
- The [Health and Safety Executive](#) has created additional support for those working from home.

The fantastic work of professionals supporting adults and young people at risk is invaluable within our society. It is important that their mental health and wellbeing is prioritised to ensure that they can best safeguard adults and young people at risk while minimising harm.

Forced Marriage and Covid-19

Charlotte Brooks—Marketing Officer, ACT



The impact of Covid-19 extends beyond the consequences on our physical health.

With schools closed and families struggling economically due to the pandemic, charities across the globe are expressing concerns about the increase in forced marriage, particularly amongst girls under the age of eighteen.

What is Forced marriage?

Forced Marriage is defined by the UK Government Forced Marriage Unit as a marriage without the consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. In a forced marriage one or both spouses either do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage.

Forced Marriage is regarded as:

- An abuse of human rights
- A form of domestic violence
- A form of violence against men and women
- Against the law

What is the impact of Forced Marriage?

Forced marriage has devastating consequences.

Being forced into marriage usually results in a loss of educational opportunities and puts girls and women at increased risk of poor health, poverty and abuse.

Is this a concern in the UK?

Yes. In the UK local authorities are concerned that many at-risk children are not interacting with professionals who

should be able to spot the signs of forced marriage and support them.

It is expected that as lockdown eases, there will be an increased pressure on local authorities to respond to forced marriages that have taken place during the pandemic.

What is the Global Perspective?

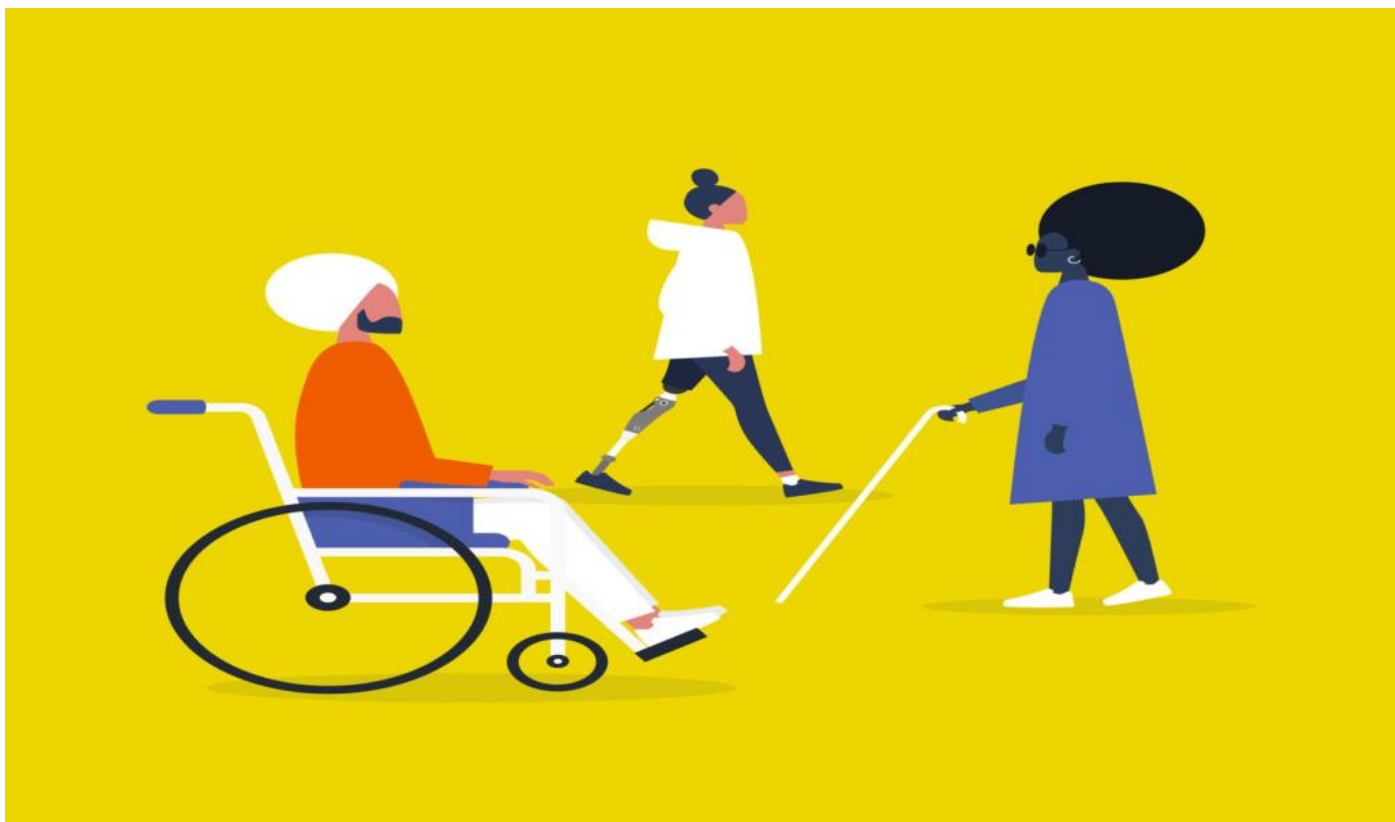
Globally, a report from humanitarian aid organisation [World Vision](#) has found that an additional **two million girls** could be at risk of child marriage in the next two years because of the pandemic.

The charity [Sisters for Sisters](#) expressed concerns over young girls being forced into marriage before the age of eighteen as families struggle to cope with increased financial pressures due to the side effects of Covid-19. This is especially problematic in countries such as Nepal, where scarce resources have become increasingly limited as a result of Covid-19.

How can I Learn More?

- The [Ann Craft Trust](#) offers training for local authorities, safeguarding leads, the police and teachers about how to understand the legislation relating to forced marriage, how to spot the signs and record concerns.
- The [UK Government](#) has produced guidance on recognising forced marriage and how to access support.
- [IKWRO](#) is a UK Women's Rights Organisation providing free resources and support to girls and young women who are survivors of abuse such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and domestic abuse. Advice can be provided in a range of languages.
- [The Ann Craft Trust](#) has resources about how to spot the signs of forced marriage
- Discover our '[My Marriage. My Choice](#)' research with the University of Nottingham. The research aimed to provide guidance to equip professionals to effectively deal with forced marriages of children, adults at risk and men and women with learning disabilities.

Safeguarding You, Safeguarding Me: Getting Our Voices Heard



How can people with learning disabilities, and their organisations, best influence the policy and practice of adult safeguarding?

Over the past twelve months we have been working with Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) alongside partners from Queen's University Belfast, Action for Real Change UK, Compass Advisory Network (NI), Praxis Care (NI), Mencap Cymru (Wales) and Richmond Fellowship (Scotland) on a research project exploring how people with learning disabilities and their organisations, can best influence the policy and practice of adult safeguarding.

In developing policies to keep people safe

it is imperative that disabled people themselves have direct influence.

Dr Deborah Kitson, CEO at the Ann Craft Trust said 'we were really excited to be a part of this vital work looking at the real engagement of the people about whom the policies are about. Inclusion should be key to all our work and practice and policies should reflect the views of people with learning disabilities themselves.'

The research seeks to find the best way to get the voices of people with a learning disability heard by those writing policies in the United Kingdom.

The research included surveying and

interviewing a range of people including; people with learning disabilities, people who work in creating social policy and politicians.

The research main aims were to:

- Identify the different approaches to exerting influence on adult safeguarding policy which have been taken by people who have a learning disability and the relevant DPOs
- Explore what works in different contexts by looking closely at successful examples where people with learning disabilities and the relevant DPOs have influenced adult safeguarding policy and practice
- Make recommendations on approaches to take and identify barriers and enablers to exerting influence on adult safeguarding policy.

The research project identified that:

- There was a lack of engagement when people writing policies ask them for their views and ideas.
- Policy makers want to hear from people with a learning disability, and face-face meetings were usually the best way of communicating.
- Understanding people's lived experience is crucial. Personal stories from people with a learning disability are the best way for people writing policies to understand what they need to change or add to their policies.
- People with a learning disability, their families and supporting organisations are

powerful. They can make change happen..

- The research also made a number of recommendations for policy makers, people with learning disabilities and organisations supporting people with learning disabilities.

Learn more about the research findings and recommendations

- [Download the executive summary](#)
- [Download the full research report](#)
- [Download the easy read report](#)
- Learn more about the project lead: [Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning](#)

Improving Lives and Addressing Abuse: Commissioning for Change

Jonathan Senker, Voiceability

“ Looking only at what goes wrong in hospital settings is like saying that jumping off a cliff doesn’t hurt, it’s just hitting the ground that’s the problem. ”

— Jonathan Senker, Chief Executive, VoiceAbility

Reflecting on the abuse of women at Yew Trees hospital reported by the CQC, VoiceAbility’s chief executive Jonathan Senker calls for changes to how we commission and plan services.

In September 2020, the CQC published their [inspection report](#) revealing abuse of women at Cygnet Yew Trees Hospital in Essex. History repeats itself, but after at least 70 years of repeated scandals “which must be learnt from” about the incarceration of people with learning disabilities and human rights breaches, perhaps the only reasonable emotions are rage or despair. Yet, I believe that we must accompany these with steely determination and clear actions.

I hesitate even as I write this, as so much has been written before. So many inquiries, policies, agreements, plans, guidance, recommendations and reports. I had similar mixed feelings five years ago as I began to work as chair of the committee responsible for developing [NICE’s guidance](#) on the service model for people with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges. I knew then, as I do now, that we needed action based on our existing understanding more than we needed further reports and recommendations. But I also recognised that the guidance provided the opportunity to identify and articulate how we can make lasting change to the service systems which have continued to

fail too many people and their families. I believe that returning to NICE's recommendations – and implementing them – can help us now.

Commissioning

Almost everyone who is in an inpatient service has a placement which is funded, usually generously, by the NHS. So, the very first and the most important set of recommendations NICE made were about commissioning:

1.1 Achieving change: strategic planning and infrastructure **Recommendations for local authorities and clinical commissioning groups**

1.1.1 Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups should jointly designate a lead commissioner to oversee strategic commissioning of health, social care and education services specifically for all children, young people and adults with a learning disability, including those who display, or are at risk of developing, behaviour that challenges.

1.1.2 Ensure that the lead commissioner:

- *plans and oversees joined-up commissioning arrangements*
- *has in-depth knowledge and experience of working with children, young people and adults with a learning disability and behaviour that challenges, including knowledge of local services*

- *plans services that take a 'whole life' approach from early childhood onwards and enable smooth transitions.*

Joint commissioning and funding

Recommendations for the lead commissioner (acting on behalf of local authorities and clinical commissioning groups)

1.1.3 The lead commissioner should ensure that budgets and other resources are pooled to develop local and regional services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability and behaviour that challenges. These should be pooled:

- *across health, social care and education and*
- *with neighbouring authorities.*

In short, commissioning needs to be based on real understanding of people with learning disabilities who show behaviour that challenges, and to be joined up between agencies to avoid shunting costs or responsibility.

Commissioning shouldn't be a reactive, purchasing role. Instead, it must ensure that services are shaped by long term plans, based on people's needs and are co-produced with people who use services and their families.

Commissioning must be comprehensive. It shouldn't just be about people in

hospital, or just about people whose behaviour is viewed to be challenging. Instead the guidance makes clear that strategic oversight is needed for the commissioning of services for “**all** children, young people and adults with a learning disability” (my emphasis).

Looking only at what goes wrong in hospital settings is like saying that jumping off a cliff doesn’t hurt, it’s just hitting the ground that’s the problem. We need to reshape support. We need to support people in ways that reduce the need for people to be admitted to hospital. The Guidelines outline how this can be done, including by:

Ensuring access to early intervention and support for families.

Making sure there is sufficient community-based support available to

work together with daily living services and families, including:

- specialist support of the type usually provided by the best community learning disability teams
- intensive support for those with the greatest needs
- crisis support
- short breaks for people and their families

Ensuring effective housing strategies, which offer a range of options including the offer of living alone with support, or if that is not what the person wants or needs,

then with a small number of other people.

Improved individual service planning and co-ordination, including named workers.

Not agreeing to admit a person to hospital unless all other options have been considered and exhausted; and then only on the basis of active planning for discharge and ensuring effective interventions are taking place.

Enhancing the power held by people and their families, including by:

- providing full information to people and families, and actively involving those of us who use services and our family members in all decisions
- ensuring that advocacy is provided and that advocates have skills and experience in supporting people with learning disabilities and behaviour that is viewed as challenging

None of this is new, and much is already practised. But there is unacceptably wide variation between areas, for example in the reliance on hospital provision and availability of community-based specialist and intensive support services.

The increasing fragmentation of commissioning accountability, including [New Care Models](#), may present different challenges to ensure strong, well supported, highly informed, integrated and wholistic commissioning, but makes it no less essential.

Getting it right for people with learning disabilities must be a critical commissioning priority. This requires national leadership and political will, translated into clear expectations which match the urgency of the issue, and support and remedies when actions fall short.

Of course, the abuse of people isn't simply caused by system issues. Lack of humanity, decency, leadership and of positive culture lie at the heart of abuse. But until we change the overall way that services are commissioned, planned and delivered, the outcomes for people won't change enough.

This isn't a moon-shot

During the pandemic, the risks of abuse have increased for very many people with learning disabilities, including people living in hospitals. Good staff and managers have been under tremendous pressure and dealing with near impossible situations. The safeguard provided by close contact with people outside the service setting, whether family members, social workers, advocates or regulators has become more restricted.

But one of the positive lessons from the pandemic is that when there is political will, major change can happen rapidly.

We already know so many ways to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities. We need to apply what we already know, backed up with just some of that same political will, for radical improvement to happen.

This article originally appeared on the Voiceability website. It has been reprinted with permission. [You can read the original here.](#)

YGAM: Gaming and Gambling Addiction is a Safeguarding Issue

Lucy Gardner—Education Manager, East and West Midlands, YGAM



The Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM) is a national education charity with a social purpose to inform, educate, safeguard and build digital resilience amongst young and vulnerable people, helping them to make informed decisions and understand the consequences around gambling and gaming.

We achieve this through evidence-led, evaluated and accredited education programmes and resources for anyone that works with or cares for young and vulnerable people, including teachers, youth workers, community volunteers and mental health specialists. YGAM also

works closely with universities and students to raise awareness of problematic gambling and gaming, across campus to build digital resilience amongst the student population.

Unfortunately, research published by The Lancet in July of this year suggests that mental health has deteriorated across all age categories in the UK this year, but especially for young people. It is thought that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its related influence on society and personal lives is playing a leading role in bringing about this deterioration in mental health. According to YGAM's research, anxiety, depression, and feelings of

isolation are often associated with increased gambling and problem gaming behaviour among young people.

Our research has also found that those who play digital games do so not only because it is fun, but because they feel they get other benefits from gaming – these include stress reduction, competition, and social interactions. While these are positive benefits, there is a trade-off between gaming to reduce stress, and problematic gaming creating additional life pressures due to investing more time into the activity.

This year makes it more vital than ever that we appreciate the pressures young people are under, and we understand the potential link between social isolation and problem gambling/gaming behaviour.

“

More than 100,000 students are in debt due to gambling, with one in four of those indebted beyond £10,000.

”



Did you know:

- It's estimated that 450,000 (14%) of 11-16 years olds bet regularly – the equivalent of one in seven.
- 1.7% of 11 and 16 years were classified as 'problem' gamblers and 2.2% as 'at risk' gamblers in 2018
- In 2017 it was estimated that more than 100,000 students are in debt due to gambling, with one in four of those indebted beyond £10,000.
- 59% of university students who gamble say they are always worrying about their financial situation while 16% have gambled more than they could afford.
- Problem gambling amongst young people is associated with poor performance at school or university, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety and in some cases suicide ideation

The Workshops YGAM run cater for professionals who work directly with children and young people. We provide professionals with the tools and information to run sessions and talk to young people about gaming and gambling with the view to prevent future harms. As a result of COVID19, we have accelerated the digital transformation of our resources and now deliver this training online, with participants being able to engage virtually with the expert materials.

By training professionals who have influence over young people's learning, YGAM equip these professionals with the skills, knowledge and confidence to not only deliver the programme but also highlight the age-appropriate support available. The YGAM model means professionals can continuously repeat the education we provide to embed learning and evidence progress and understanding.

We have developed a comprehensive bank of over 450 resources designed specifically to be used with young people from ages 7-25, covering a variety of topics consistent throughout to provide the opportunity for a long-term programme of study or a single session. The resources are mapped to the PSHE Programme of Study and RSE statutory guidance for those in an educational setting, with resources for KS2-5.

There are also youth work- specific resources designed to be used outside of a formal education setting, and all the information you would need to run a session is available for you without the requirement of computer or internet access. We offer bespoke sessions for teams and organisations, or individuals can sign up to one of our open workshops, offered in two parts.

If you would like to know more you can have a look at our website [here](#). We also have a specific [Parent](#) Hub on our website with lots of advice and guidance for parents. We have also launched a [Student](#) Hub to support university students and provide them with knowledge and tools.

For more information or to talk about booking a workshop please email lucygardner@ygam.org.

Predatory Marriage – A Concerned Relative Writes to The Guardian



"The authorities can help, but you need to stay vigilant."

We recently recorded a podcast on the subject of predatory marriage. This is where someone exploits an adult at risk, often with dementia. They isolate them from their family and coerce them into marriage. And due to UK laws, once the person dies the predator could be set to inherit everything, leaving their grieving family with nothing.

[You can listen to our predatory marriage podcast here.](#)

"A younger man has befriended my grandmother. I worry he's a threat."

Recently, a concerned relative wrote to Guardian Life and Style columnist

[Annalisa Barbieri](#):

"I fear my 85-year-old grandmother is at risk. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease two years ago and lives alone in sheltered housing. She refuses to accept the diagnosis or any related assistance.

"Over the past year, a man in his late 50s has befriended her. He has been visiting her often and, in our eyes, become controlling. My grandmother trusts him entirely. Her relationship with her four children (my father and his siblings) has been strained at times over the years. However, the arrival of her new "friend" has coincided with her refusing to trust their judgment. This has caused a much greater rift, and we are worried that this man is easily able to manipulate someone in her position."

Social workers have confirmed that the grandmother is not at risk. The relative says they cannot go to the police, as the man has not committed any crimes. And crucially, their aunt and uncle have power of attorney. So if this is a case of predatory marriage, the predator may struggle to take full control of the grandmother's assets.

So is this predatory marriage? Is this relative right to be worried?

Are there any signs of abuse?

In her response, Annalisa points out that the relative hasn't specified just what danger they believe their grandmother's in. But Annalisa assumes they're worried about some kind of abuse. So she advises the relative to [look out for any signs of abuse](#).

"Much as we'd like this man's friendship to be benign, the fact that you think it isn't should be taken seriously."

Annalisa then points out that, even with a power of attorney in place, there could still be issues after the grandmother passes away:

"It sounds as if your grandmother is widowed. If so, then she is at risk of predatory marriage. This wouldn't overturn the existing LPAs, but it would mean that, on your grandmother's death, he would inherit the first £270,000 and half of the rest of the estate. (A marriage revokes any pre-existing will.)"

Annalisa consulted professor in social work at the University of Nottingham, Rachael Clawson. Rachael has previously collaborated with ACT on the [My Marriage My Choice project](#). She's currently working with ACT on a study of predatory marriage. We are working to both raise the profile of the issue and seek to lobby for changes in the law.

Rachael proposes that registrars should be able to tell when someone may not have the capacity to agree to a marriage. She also believes that notices of forthcoming weddings should be published online.

But until the law changes, what can families do if they're worried about predatory marriage? Rachael suggests:

"If you have concerns, you should contact your local register office, and those in surrounding areas, to put a caveat in place to give notification for marriage. That way, the registrar has a note that there are concerns, and, if necessary, social services could be called in."

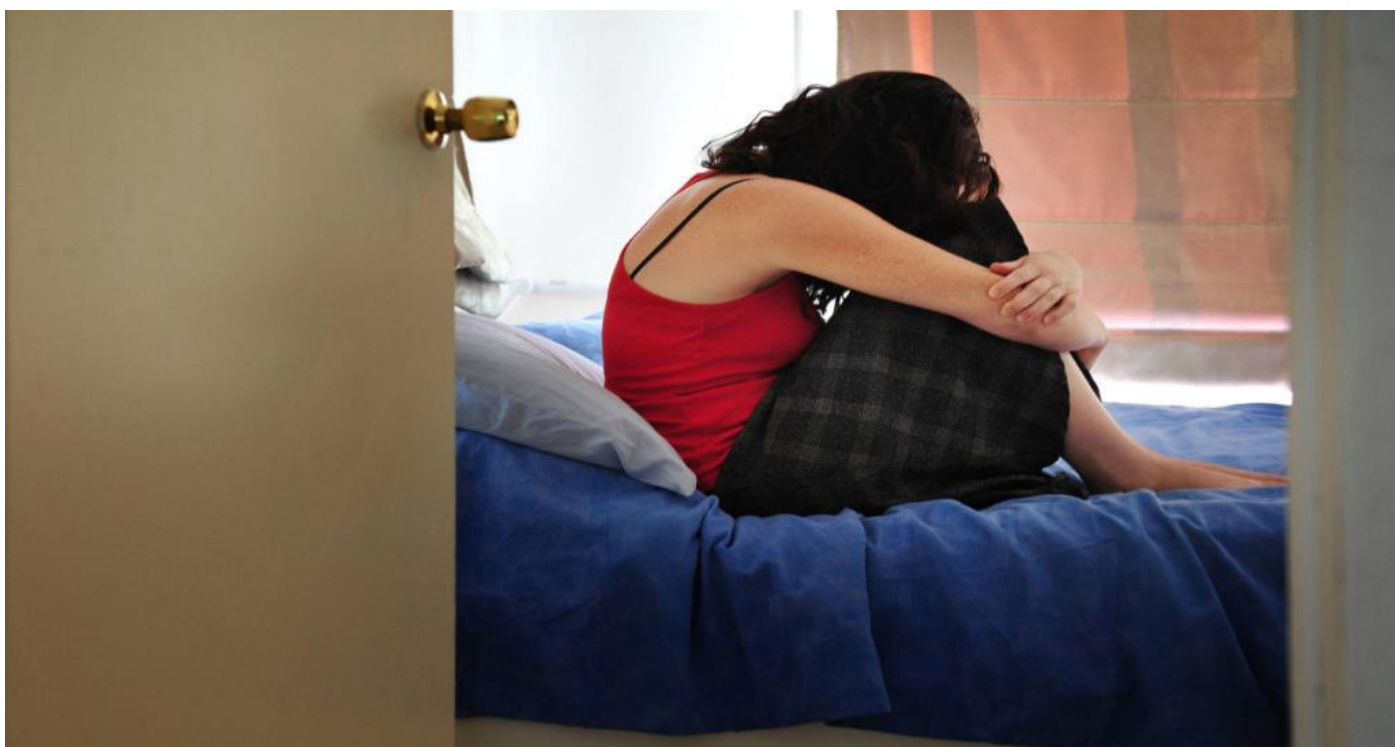
There's a lot more good advice in Annalisa's article. [You can read it in full here](#).

Justice for Joan

You can learn more about predatory marriage [on the Justice for Joan website](#), which also features a lot more information and advice for anyone who may be worried about a family member.

Us-Too: A User-Led Project on Domestic Abuse for Women with Learning Disabilities & Autism

Roderick Landman—Project Lead



Us Too is a user-led project on domestic abuse for women with learning disabilities and/or autism.

ACT CEO Deborah Kitson is on the expert advisory group for this project. We asked project lead Roderick Landman to explain how his team adapted to life under lockdown.

The team drew on its own experiences to devise learning packages. It had been delivering peer education on how to stay safe in relationships, as well as training for social care professionals on the particular impact of domestic abuse if you have a learning disability or autism. But then

came March, Covid-19, and lockdown. After this, just like everyone else, our normal lives became much less normal.

The team had actually started self-isolating before being told to do so. We were only too aware that a number of us had significant pre-existing health conditions, while others were in living situations with people who were very vulnerable to Covid-19. These were often elderly parents or other people with learning disabilities with heart or lung conditions.

Undaunted though, we rolled up our sleeves and cracked on. We anticipated

that this was going to be our world for maybe the next 12 months, and the only answer lay online. Initially we were resistant, thinking that online training would be far less effective, and that we didn't have the skills, support and technical capacity to deliver. Then we discovered Zoom and everything changed!

Finding Our Feet Online

We had a couple of team meetings and found Zoom easy to use, and could see its potential for teaching. So we set ourselves up, had a practice and started to rewrite our training.

However, we could also immediately see some problems. The training for professionals relied heavily on the team members sharing the learning from their own experiences of abuse, and this felt much less safe online. This was fairly easily resolved by agreeing a script from those experiences that were recorded by an actor. It lacks the impact of the immediacy of the lived experience, but as one team member says, *"we'll have to get used to it, it's the new norm for the foreseeable future."* Evaluation has remained strong.

Altogether more difficult were the difficulties posed for our peer education work. Some of these were technical, but we were mostly concerned with issues of support and disclosure. Our experience until lockdown had been that we were getting disclosures of abuse at almost every one of our training events –

whether peer or professional. In a face to face setting we were comfortable in dealing with that. The common experience of people with learning disabilities disclosing abuse is that it is brushed away, minimised or excused. We made sure that did not happen when we worked with people, but we needed to be certain that it would not happen with poorly trained or motivated people who might support learners to join our online training.

We had the good fortune to attract some additional funding from Comic Relief to address these issues. This enabled us to partner with [Research in Practice](#) to devise a set of protocols, equip the team with better kit and individualised training in its use, and in November we hope to roll out a pilot online workshop for young women with learning disabilities and autism.

The write up and resultant resources should be available by the end of the year, so if you want to know more, check our website or get in touch.

Roderick Landman
ARC Us Too project lead
rod.landman@arcuk.org.uk

Gwyn Fraser—Obituary

Deborah Kitson—CEO, ACT



The team at the Ann Craft Trust were so very sorry to hear the sad news that Gwyn had died after a long and brave fight against cancer.

Her courage and determination during her illness were amazing. She never lost her interest and compassion for others or her gentle sense of humour that many of us will always remember.

Following many years working as a psychologist, including in long stay hospital care, in 2003 Gwyn was appointed as Head of Psychology in Learning Disability Services in Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. She took early retirement in 2011, though she never stepped away entirely from supporting people with learning disabilities.

Gwyn was a supporter and friend of the Ann Craft Trust over many years, originally as an Associate Trainer, then as a Trustee in 2005. In 2009 she became the chair of Trustees.

I had the privilege of co-training with Gwyn on a number of occasions. Her knowledge and generosity in sharing her experience have benefitted many over the years.

Gwyn will be missed by many including myself who regarded her both as a colleague and a good friend over many years. We all owe Gwyn a debt of gratitude for her commitment and contribution to supporting people with learning disabilities.

Safeguarding in Challenging Times Seminars

Charlotte Brooks—Marketing Officer, ACT

As we transitioned into lockdown in March our lives quickly transformed. The changes impacted safeguarding too. With more of our lives than ever before happening behind closed doors, this presented new safeguarding challenges.

In response, the Ann Craft Trust held a series of online seminars to discuss topical safeguarding issues.

The seminars were a place to learn more about the safeguarding challenges created as a result of Covid-19, learn about how to respond to these challenges and share best practice as a safeguarding community.

The Seminars

We held five seminars from April to July. We have shared the resources from each seminar below to support your practice as lockdown eases.

Seminar One – When home is not a safe place

In our first seminar we discussed the worrying rise in domestic abuse cases due to lockdown and shared best practice about how to support adults and young people at risk.

Resources for this seminar

[When Home is Not a Safe Place](#)

[Support for young people](#)

[Support for survivors of domestic abuse](#)

Seminar Two – Safeguarding your Wellbeing

The pandemic has impacted everyone's mental health and wellbeing. We discussed top tips for how to manage the pressures of Covid-19.

Resources for this seminar

[Safeguarding your wellbeing during the coronavirus crisis](#)

Seminar Three – Safeguarding children, young people and families during the pandemic

The pandemic has changed services for families, children and young people, we discussed how these changes have impacted on people's lives and what has been learnt as a result that could improve practice going forward.

Resources for this seminar

[Safeguarding children, young people and families during the pandemic](#)

[Useful contacts](#)

Seminar Four –How has Covid-19 Impacted Adults with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, and Visual and Auditory Impairments.

Adults with additional needs have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. We discussed this and also how services have learnt from the pandemic to make positive changes to their work.

Resources for this seminar

[How has Covid-19 Impacted Adults with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, and Visual and Auditory Impairments](#)

Seminar Five – Listen and Act: How are Sport and Activity Participants and Organisations Responding to the Pandemic?

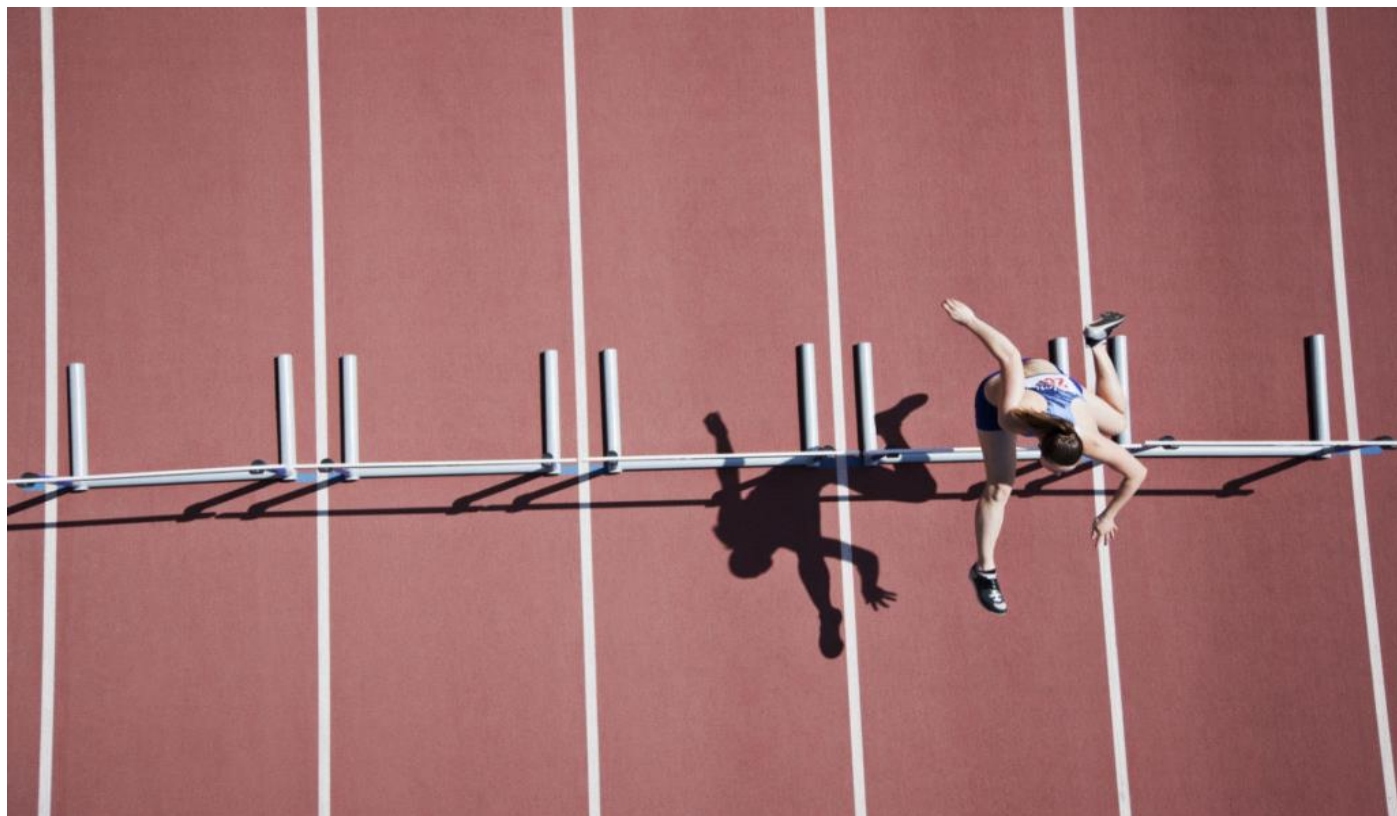
During April and May, we worked with Sport England to design two surveys to explore how the sport sector was responding to the pandemic.

Resources for this seminar

[Listen and Act](#)

Athlete Voice: Listening to and Valuing the Voices of People Involved in Your Sport or Activity

Kimberley Walsh, Elite Athletes Lead, ACT



Listening is Key.

Being open to hearing and understanding the concerns and issues that may be affecting those taking part in your sport or activity will help your organisation protect staff, volunteers and participants from harm and abuse. It will also help reinforce what makes sport and activity such an enjoyable experience.

If you hear about things that aren't going so well, you'll know what areas to work on to make improvements in your organisation. But it doesn't have to all be negative. Through asking, you'll also learn what is working. You'll find out what makes your sport or activity a safe and enjoyable environment that people want to return to.

Issues Affecting Women's Elite Sport in Britain

[The BBC recently carried out an Elite British Sport women's Survey.](#) They sent their survey to 1,068 women in 39 different sports, and received responses from just over half.

The results offer some invaluable insight into issues and concerns within women's elite sport in Britain.

The survey highlighted many inequalities between female and male elite athletes, as well as some concerning statistics about online abuse and sexism. Both of these have seemingly increased from the previous survey carried out in 2015:

- **64.6% said they had experienced sexism in sport, with only 1 in 10 reporting it** (compared to 41% in 2015).
- **29.9% said they had been trolled on social media** (compared to 14% in 2015).
- **60.2% also said that fans expect a different standard of behaviour from female athletes compared with male athletes.**

The full survey results can be found [here](#)

A Wider Problem?

Many of the issues highlighted in the survey are not unique to sport and elite athletes. But this survey shows that athletes are by no means immune or exempt from such behaviours, attitudes and beliefs. So what can organisations do to help support participants who have been subject to abusive behaviour from trolls?

How can we help those who are experiencing sexist behaviour and attitudes? Can education show people how to block and report abusive social media posts? How can cultures be improved so that inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated or accepted as 'normal'? What processes does an organisation have in place to deal with inappropriate behaviours or inequalities? And how do these processes apply when the inappropriate behaviour comes from someone within the organisation?

The survey also highlights the value of hearing directly from participants. They have views and perspective that only they can give. If people don't feel able to share concerns, or if they don't feel supported when they do, wrongdoing will go unchecked. This might cause people to leave their sport and activity. Meanwhile, the harm and abuse will continue.

How To Listen to Your Participants

Many funded sports, NGBs and clubs carry out periodic member, volunteer and staff surveys. Or if they don't, they should!

Often they conduct these surveys once a year. Is this enough? What happens with that information from year to year? Do people feel it is worthwhile? Does it make a difference? What other opportunities throughout the year are there to raise concerns? 365 days is a long time to wait if these surveys are the only opportunity to share views, feedback and concerns!

Having said that, I can hear organisations saying: "we ask for feedback, but no one replies to our questionnaires. So we stopped sending them".

It is a two-way street. There is a responsibility for those being offered the opportunity to have their say to embrace it.

So what can you do as an organisation to encourage people to share their views with you?

The Importance of Good Survey Design

The more you collect participant feedback, the better you'll be able to listen and act upon concerns. And the more you act upon concerns, the more you'll be able to show evidence of change. When participants can see evidence that you genuinely value their views, they may be more likely to provide their feedback when you ask. With regular feedback surveys you'll build up momentum, and before long you can embed feedback and change into your organisation's culture.

But there are other things you can do to make it easier for people to share their views:

- Invite feedback in a welcoming, open manner.
- Provide the opportunity for anonymity where possible.
- Explain the benefits of your survey – that it's a chance for your members to have their say and to shape the future of your organisation.
- Where possible, provide evidence that you act upon feedback. Share an example of when you used feedback to instigate positive changes or improvements.
- Consider offering an incentive for people to take part in your survey. This could be entry into a prize draw, a small gift, or a discount voucher.
- Offer a variety of ways for someone to respond. Are you ensuring the method you use is inclusive?
- Make your survey quick and easy to

complete. Aim for as few questions as possible.

After you've completed your survey, it's essential that you:

- Follow through on plans and promises.
- Share the outcomes or findings.
- Share plans or actions taken as a result of the feedback.

Ultimately, the success of your survey will depend on how well you know your audience.

How Often Should You Run Feedback Surveys?

It's important to find the right balance between too much and too little. Run too many surveys and people might stop engaging. Run too few and people might think of your surveys as unimportant "tick-box" exercises.

The best solution is to ask! Run a survey as soon as possible, and make this one of your questions:

"How often would you feel comfortable sharing your views?"

You can also ask how people prefer to provide their feedback. Be flexible, and be prepared to change your plan based on the feedback.

A Healthy Listening Culture

Seeking the voice of athletes, volunteers, staff and participants doesn't always have to be a 'formal' process or questionnaire. If there is a healthy listening culture in your organisation, sharing views could be a natural part of your everyday practice.

Seeking the voice of those involved in your sport or activity has many benefits. It sets the foundations for a healthy culture, which creates a happy environment, so ultimately a safer environment. If people feel valued, and if ideas, thoughts and concerns are welcomed, listened to and acted upon, they are far more likely to report a concern about safeguarding or poor practice. They are also more likely to do it sooner.

ACT Sport and Activity Participation Forums

The Ann Craft Trust run a series of Participation Forums. Forming part of a research project, these forums offer the opportunity for the voice of the participants, and staff and volunteers of sport and activity organisations to help influence and steer the work we do at ACT. They ensure that we can deliver guidance and best practice that is relevant to those involved and taking part in sport and activity.

Check our events page for news of any upcoming participation forums.

If you can't attend these forums, you can still have your say. Take the time to complete our short online surveys:

- [Online SPORTS PARTICIPANT survey](#)
- [Online STAFF survey](#)

Updating Sports Governance to Increase BAME Participation

EXPERT ANALYSIS



Kwadjo Adjepong
Sport Resolutions Panel
Member

“How should sports governance be updated to tackle racism and increase BAME involvement in sports?”

How should sports governance be updated to tackle racism and increase BAME involvement in sports?

Kwadjo Adjepong from Sports Resolutions has written on how sports governance should be updated to tackle racism and increase BAME involvement in sports.

achieved easily?

- Should the IOC revisit their guidelines which ban protests at Olympic Games
- How should fines and punishments for racist abuse be handled in sport?

[Read the article here.](#)

The article specifically looks at:

- Where do imbalances exist within sport?
- The Sports Governance Code revisited
- Commonwealth Games leadership review
- What progress has been achieved to date?
- Are there any steps that can be

Addressing Sexual Misconduct Allegations in British Professional Wrestling



The #SpeakingOut campaign addresses allegations of sexual misconduct in British professional wrestling.

Earlier this year the Athlete A story made waves about [a harmful culture in the world of elite sport](#).

Now people are opening up about their experiences of sexual misconduct in the British professional wrestling community.

“It Feels Like We’re Fighting a Losing Battle”

In June 2020, Wrestler Millie McKenzie was one of several female colleagues to come forward alleging widespread abuse and sexual harassment in British professional wrestling.

“Very scary doing this,” she said in a tweet. “But I don’t want anyone to have to go through what I did. Things need to change.”

Another wrestler, Lucia Lee, said: “Every girl in this business has stories like these. Every single one. We warn each other, we support each other, but it feels like we’re fighting a losing battle.”

Many of the alleged victims talked about a “locker room” culture in wrestling that allowed misconduct to happen.

You can read more about the allegations and the testimonies [on the BBC website](#).

What happens next?

Several MPs have formed an 'All-Party Parliamentary Group for Wrestling' with women from the #SpeakingOut movement. The group is chaired by MP Alex-Davies Jones, and they aim to set up a regulatory body for the industry.

Entertainer trade union Equity has suggested five pledges to regulate British wrestling. The pledges include safeguarding and 'dignity at work' policies, separate dressing rooms at shows and agreed transport and accommodation arrangements.

Progress Wrestling told BBC Sport: "We've all got to be great for this industry to work and to prevent another Speaking Out movement happening. Because if we're on the same level, we're on the same page, it's going to be safer for everyone."

Revolution Pro Wrestling CEO Andy Quildan said it wants "an independent body and we want to be held accountable".

He added: "British wrestling needs to focus on the word 'professional' in professional wrestling. In terms of fundamentally changing people's mindsets it's a change that needs to be made from the grassroots up."

Club Matters Launch Autumn and Winter Activity Toolkit



Helping people to stay active through Autumn and Winter!

Sport England launched their [Autumn and Winter Activity Toolkit](#).

It will help sports clubs and physical activity organisations assist more people to stay active over the next six months.

The toolkit is packed with resources and insight that'll support both individuals and organisations. Sport England Club Matters produced it on the back of some new and worrying figures that show a decline in the nation's activity levels.

The toolkit will help with the major difficulties clubs are facing due to the coronavirus pandemic. These include the ongoing tightening of restrictions, financial

constraints and the annual seasonal challenge winter brings.

You'll also find [a range of resources that can help clubs](#) on the Club Matters website.

[Head here to access the Sport England Club Matters Autumn and Winter Activity Toolkit.](#)

Vulnerability of Adult Elite Athletes

Why are elite athletes considered a group who are at increased risk of harm and abuse?

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

Why are elite athletes considered a group who are at increased risk of harm and abuse?

Over the last 5 years, there have been increasing reports, allegations, criminal convictions and media coverage of abuse, bullying, harassment and misconduct in the elite sporting world.

Reports of cultures where athletes feared speaking up, or serious complaints dismissed and brushed under the carpet and inappropriate behaviour ignored.

Some very high profile and world renowned coaches, mentors and professional practitioners have been accused and convicted of inappropriate and illegal behaviour which, in some cases, spanned decades and affected many.

Abuse within sport is sadly not new, however as a result of some high-profile cases and increased media coverage, there is an ever-increasing awareness of the need to safeguard athletes in elite sport, regardless of age.

The following guidance, written by ACT safeguarding elite athletes lead Kimberley Walsh, is based upon the vulnerability of adult elite athletes. Much of the information is applicable to both children and adults involved in elite sport. However, there will be additional vulnerabilities specific to child elite athletes which are not included. For further information relating to child elite athletes visit the cpsu.org.uk.

[Download this free resource.](#)

Online Sports Participation Surveys—Join Us in November!



Help us develop best practice in safeguarding adults at risk!

We're running an online discussion forums on **Monday 16 November 2020**.

One forum is for anyone participating in sports or activity at a grassroots, semi-professional, professional or elite level.

The other is for anyone working or volunteering in the sport sector—again, whether it's at a grassroots, semi-professional, professional or elite level.

Join us to share your experiences about what is working well, and what could be improved, in relation to safeguarding and sport.

We will discuss how sport could be safer for all.

We will then hand over to you to discuss topics such as:

- What does safeguarding mean to you?
- What can individuals, clubs, and organisations do to keep people safe?
- What are the possible safeguarding risks in sport?

[Book Your Place](#)

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Young People

“Serial Sex Beast” Used WhatsApp to Groom 10-Year-Old Girl

16 September 2020 | [DailyRecord.co.uk](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk)

Children at Risk Could “Slip Out of View”

16 September 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Revenge Porn Cases Surge During Lockdown

16 September 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Lockdown “Sexting” Blackmail Concerns

18 September 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

YouTube Faces Legal Battle Over British Children’s Privacy

5 June 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Midlands & Northern Cities See Spike in Child Poverty Rates

14 October 2020 | [CYPNow.co.uk](https://www.cypnow.co.uk)

Significant Cultural Change Needed to Recruit More Disabled Foster Carers

29 May 2020 | [CYPNow.co.uk](https://www.cypnow.co.uk)

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Period Poverty, Safeguarding & Wellbeing

6 August 2020 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://www.anncrafttrust.org)

How Can You Communicate Effectively Through a Face Covering?

5 August 2020 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://www.anncrafttrust.org)

Mandatory Masks Cause More Problems than they Solve

5 August 2020 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://www.anncrafttrust.org)

Chief Social Workers: Suspension of Care Act Duties Should Continue Through Winter

21 September 2020 | [CommunityCare.co.uk](https://www.communitycare.co.uk)

Cultural Knowledge Gap When Safeguarding Traveller Communities

13 October 2020 | [CommunityCare.co.uk](https://www.communitycare.co.uk)

Lockdown Has “Shocking” Impact on Scottish Social Care

8 October 2020 | [DisabilityNewsService.com](https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com)

Most of Government’s Disability Networks Remain Silent

8 October 2020 | [DisabilityNewsService.com](https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com)

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity

Heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson on her Personal Battle Against Racism

September 2020 | [Vogue.co.uk](https://www.vogue.co.uk)

British Gymnastics Chief Executive to Retire in December

13 October 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Freddie Flintoff: Living With Bulimia

October 2020 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Swindon Wildcats Back NSPCC Safeguarding Campaign

8 October 2020 | [SwindonAdvertiser.co.uk](https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk)

Physical Activity Can Help Children Catch Up On Missed Work

5 October 2020 | [SportEngland.org](https://www.sportengland.org)

Worries to Wheelies—Bicycles Battle Lockdown Mental Health Crisis

1 July 2020 | [Crowdfunder.co.uk](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk)

Footballers' Calls to Mental Health Support Services Rise Post Lockdown

7 October 2020 | [SkySports.com](https://www.skysports.com)

Safeguarding Research and Resources

Safeguarding Adults in Sport FAQs

This short guide covers many of the most common questions you might have about safeguarding adults in sport. It covers a range of topics, and each question features a link to a resource that will help you explore the issue in more detail.

Access it here: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/safeguarding-adults-in-sport-faqs/>

National Review of Support for Disabled Children and Their Families

The Care Inspectorate in Wales are reviewing the arrangements for disabled children across Wales.

Read more: <https://careinspectorate.wales/191220-national-review-support-disabled-children-and-their-families>

Learning Disabilities Mortality Review

“We must advocate strongly, ask questions, have open dialogues and work in partnership with health professionals. But we must also challenge decisions we don’t feel are right and have the confidence to seek second opinions.

“We must advocate strongly, ask questions, have open dialogues and work in partnership with health professionals. But we must also challenge decisions we don’t feel are right and have the confidence to seek second opinions...” “

More information: <https://www.tacinterconnections.com/index.php/allnews/campaignnews/3386-shocking-statistics-in-learning-disabilities-mortality-review-leder-uk>

Safeguarding Research and Resources

State of Care – CQC's annual assessment of health care and social care in England

State of Care looks at the trends, highlights examples of good and outstanding care, and identifies factors that maintain high-quality care.

Read more: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care>

Modern Slavery Risks for Care-Workers in England During Covid-19

University of Nottingham report. Modern Slavery Evidence Unit briefing—more challenging working conditions and a move to digital recruitment have led to an increase in exploitative labour practices and new opportunities for mitigation.

Access here: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights--modern-slavery-risk-in-english-social-care.pdf>

We Belong

New campaign from Disability Rights UK.

Disabled people make up a fifth of the population of the UK. We are not invisible. And yet we are still the largest minority which faces discrimination in this country.

Learn more: <https://www.we-belong.co.uk/>

From the Vault: “The Role of the Expert Witness”

By Gwyn Fraser, Clinical Psychologist, South Derbyshire NHS Trust

From Issue 33, October 2000

I have taken on the role of the expert witness in cases involving people with learning disabilities on a number of occasions over the past few years. I have learned a great deal from doing this and I welcome the chance to share this with you.

I am a Clinical Psychologist by profession so I can only talk with any sort of authority about the role of the Clinical Psychologist as an expert witness. I qualified as a Clinical Psychologist in 1982 and have worked almost exclusively with people with learning disabilities since that time, building up expertise in understanding learning disabilities, in communicating with people with learning disabilities and in helping them to express their feelings and thoughts.

Around 10 or 11 years ago I became involved in a case in which a young woman with learning disabilities disclosed that she had been sexually abused by a care-worker in the home where she lived. Although the young woman's disabilities were quite severe, after a great deal of work and perseverance the case came to court and the man concerned was found guilty of indecent assault and was sent to prison. My client needed a good deal of

support throughout, but in the end she made an excellent witness, despite the fact that she was extremely distractible and could not remember times or dates she was able to give a clear and convincing account of what had happened to her.

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I worked with her for a year before the case came to trial. In the initial stages we worked on building up her confidence and self-esteem and helping to allay her fears and anxieties. Later we spent time talking about court procedures and visiting the court in order to prepare her for the trial. When the case came to court, the judge and barristers removed their wigs and gowns and my client was allowed to have a screen and to have a volunteer from Victim Support sitting with her in the witness box.

At the time all these measures were discretionary but without doubt they

helped to allay her anxieties and to give her confidence as a witness. My interest in working with people with learning disabilities who have been abused and in supporting them within the criminal justice system stems from this time.

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Since then I have been called on a number of occasions to prepare reports for the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts.

As an expert witness I am able to advise the court on a number of aspects concerning the witness's particular intellectual difficulties. I am able to undertake assessments that will show the level of learning disability that a person has, but also highlight areas where they have particular strengths and weaknesses in their ability to understand others and to make themselves understood. I can advise on the extent to which the person understands the legal process and also on how well the person is likely to remember events.

The most commonly used assessment of intellectual functioning – the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – will, for example, given

an indication of a person's ability in a number of areas including:

- Verbal comprehension
- Working memory
- Long-term memory
- Common sense reasoning
- Learning ability
- General knowledge
- Degree of abstract thinking.

These are all extremely relevant when deciding how to maximise a person's chances of giving the best evidence in court.

Assessment is particularly important because it is often very difficult to determine how much a person understands even when talking to them. One person may be very lively and talkative and this can give the impression that they are comprehending much more than they actually are. Another person may find it difficult to speak, or may leave long pauses in their speech and may thus give the impression of understanding much less than they actually do.

People with learning disabilities are often reluctant to admit that they do not understand, so they may agree to whatever they are asked. Or they may put on a show of bravado which leads people to think they are arrogant or that they 'couldn't care less'. This is why an accurate assessment is such a vital aid to the court's understanding.

I would also like to discuss the concept of 'mental age'. There are some assessments that psychologists use that may result in what are known as 'age-equivalent scores'. For example, the British Picture Vocabulary Scale, which measures hearing vocabulary, can be interpreted by saying that the person has a score equivalent to that which would be expected of a child aged '*' years.

The Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales are administered by interviewing someone who knows the person well and give an indication of the person's ability to perform the daily activities required for personal and social independence. The scales are divided into a number of areas including Communication, Daily Living Skills and Socialisation, and again age-equivalent scores can be provided for each of these areas. These assessments are often used when the person is not able to undertake the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (for example, they do not have the verbal or physical ability to do so).

These types of assessments are often liked by the court because they seem to give a more concrete indication of the person's level of functioning and also because, to the lay person, an age-equivalent score seems easier to understand than an IQ. It is important to remember, however, that such a score relates only to the particular area of behaviour assessed and it should never be misinterpreted as a so-called 'mental age'. The concept of 'mental age' is especially problematic when considering the difference between

intellectual ability and emotional maturity.

In addition to advising on a person's abilities, a psychologist is also able to advise the court on other relevant matters. These might include the person's response to stress, their level of anxiety, and particular disorders that a person may have, such as autism, which may affect how they will react in court.

I am also increasingly asked to give my opinion on whether or not a person with learning disabilities is able to consent – usually to a sexual act. This is, as you will be aware, an extremely complex (and currently controversial) question and involves an in-depth assessment covering, amongst other things:

- The person's cognitive abilities and their level of learning disability; this might include their abilities in understanding abstract concepts and in reasoning logically
- Their knowledge of sexual matters and their awareness of the significant of sexual intercourse and its implications for them
- Their ability to independently weigh the consequences of actions before making decisions
- Their understanding of social situations and their behaviour in these situations
- Whether or not they may be particularly susceptible to pressure as a result of authority, force, threat, trickery or manipulation.

I have also been asked to make comment to the court on the effects that an abusive experience or experiences have had on a person with learning disabilities. This involves a knowledge and understanding of the possible effects of abuse and how these might manifest themselves in people with learning disabilities.

It has often been suggested, in the past, that people with learning disabilities are less affected by abuse than other people. Research has shown, however, that withdrawal, behavioural difficulties and emotional distress are common amongst people with learning disabilities who have been abused.

In cases where symptoms are not immediately apparent this often relates more to communication difficulties than actual lack of distress. It seems reasonable to assume that the effects of abuse are similar for people with learning disabilities to those experienced by non-disabled people. However, there may be additional or slightly different manifestations, or effects may be compounded by other aspects of the person's disability.

The psychologist can offer an expert opinion on how badly the person has been affected and how this is shown by their behaviour.

This is a brief overview of the kind of advice that a clinical psychologist might be able to offer as an expert witness in these types of case. A final point is that all psychologists are not the same!

Clinical psychologists specialise and most do their main work within one area, for example, with people with learning disabilities, with people with mental health problems, with children or with older adults.

It is important that, in any particular case, the expert involved should have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to be able to assess the vulnerable witness concerned.

Ann Craft Trust

Centre for Social Work
University of Nottingham
NG7 2RD

0115 951 5400

ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk



anncrafttrust.org

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Everyone deserves to be safe.