

Safeguarding Bulletin

Safeguarding adults and young people at risk

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

January 2022

Issue 118

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

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Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Bulletin

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Editor's Note—Deborah Kitson, CEO

Welcome to Edition 118 of the ACT bulletin.

Happy New Year to everyone from all of us at the Ann Craft Trust! I hope you were able to take a break and enjoy the festive season in whatever way you were able. I am sure we all share the hope that 2022 will be a better year.

We were so pleased with the amazing success of the Safeguarding Adults Week in November and it is thanks to many of you who contributed to the week. We were also so pleased to be able to hold our Safeguarding Conference face-to-face last year. It was so good to see friends and colleagues in person again and I think all those attended were inspired by and grateful to the speakers and contributors. We already have the dates set for next year's week and would welcome your thoughts about the themes we should cover.

This year is a special one for the Ann Craft Trust as we are celebrating our 30th anniversary. We were established in 1992 as NAPSAC, relaunched in 1998 as the Ann Craft Trust and have had quite a journey over the years. We are planning events through the year and hope that you will be able to join us in both celebrating the successes and planning for the future challenges.

This bulletin also has an article by Margaret Flynn about the Transforming

“

We already have the dates set for next year's week and would welcome your thoughts about the themes we should cover.

”

Care agenda and the need to do so much more if we really want to make a difference. We were grateful to Margaret who wrote this for us during Safeguarding Adults Week. We saw further news about these challenges at the end of last year and need to ensure that not only do these inhumane practices stop, but that there is sufficient provision in the community to provide people with real alternatives and choices.

This bulletin is also full of news, views, training dates and upcoming events – we hope you enjoy it and that we are in touch during the year.

Don't forget to sign up to events that are running and to the 2022 Safeguarding Adults Week which is already being planned!

30 Years of The Ann Craft Trust



2022 marks 30 years of the Ann Craft Trust.

We aim to celebrate this anniversary with campaigns, events, and publications throughout the year.

The Ann Craft Trust has come a long way since 1992 and has grown to help safeguard more people as a result.

Dr Ann Craft's work on disability was ahead of its time through the 80s and 90s.

Ann was a passionate advocate for people with disabilities to be seen as people first with the same hopes and dreams as others in society.

1992 – NAPSAC

In 1992, the National Association for the Protection from Sexual Abuse of Adults and Children with Learning Disabilities (NAPSAC) was established by Dr Ann Craft.

NAPSAC was the leading organisation for promoting sexuality and independence and created a new way of thinking for practitioners and organisations around the needs of the people they supported. NAPSAC introduced sex education and safeguarding policies for services across Nottinghamshire and nationally became a champion for the rights of people with learning disabilities.

1997 – Pam Cooke & the Ann Craft Trust

In 1997, Pam Cooke was appointed Director and in 1998 NAPSAC relaunched as the Ann Craft Trust (ACT) in recognition of the enormous impact of Dr Ann Craft's work in the field and to reflect the broadening of ACT's remit to include safeguarding from all types of abuse.

Pam Cooke was appointed Director and developed ACT to become nationally renowned as a safeguarding expert and an advocate for equality and the rights of children with disabilities and adults at risk.

2002 – Dr Deborah Kitson

In 2002, Pam retired after 10 years committed to the Trust and its work to safeguard people from abuse. Dr Deborah Kitson was appointed CEO.

Deborah transformed ACT into the flourishing and widely respected organisation it is today through hard work, determination and through inspiring not only the ACT team but others across the social work sector and beyond.

Speaking about the 30th anniversary of the Trust's foundation, Dr Kitson said:

"It is with great pleasure that I have been asked to send this message to you in celebration of our 30th anniversary.

"NAPSAC was established in 1992 by Ann in recognition that, while people with

learning disabilities should have the same rights as the rest of us to lead fulfilling lives, they also need to be safe and free from abuse.

"Initially looking at the sexual abuse of people with learning disabilities NAPSAC was relaunched as the Ann Craft Trust in 1998 in memory of Ann following her premature death and out of respect held by so many for the pioneering work that she undertook.

"ACT is now committed to safeguarding disabled young people and adults at risk of any form of abuse and harm and is fortunate to work nationally with many individuals and a range of diverse organisations that share its commitment that everyone deserves to live their lives free of the fear of abuse."

We aim to celebrate this anniversary with campaigns, events, and publications throughout the year.

[Follow us on Twitter](#), or [subscribe for email updates](#), to stay informed!

The Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Time Capsule

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Share Your Safeguarding Story!

To celebrate 30 years of the Ann Craft Trust, we're putting together a **Safeguarding Time Capsule**.

Want to be part of it? Then let us know:

- What does "Safeguarding" mean to you?
- What do you think of the state of safeguarding in 2022?
- What changes would you like to see over the next 30 years?

To contribute to our Safeguarding Time Capsule, please email your safeguarding story to Elliot.Davies@nottingham.ac.uk



Safeguarding Adults Week 2021 Reaches 79.4 Million

**Safeguarding is
everyone's responsibility**

#SafeguardingAdultsWeek

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Safeguarding Adults Week 2021 took place 15 – 21 November.

Each day of the week we aimed to raise awareness about some key safeguarding issues:

- Emotional Abuse and Safeguarding Mental Health.
- The Power of Language.
- Digital Safeguarding.
- Adult Grooming.
- Creating Safer Cultures.
- Safeguarding and You.

We created [a suite of resources](#) to help people start vital conversations about these issues. And we encouraged people to use our hashtag when sharing these resources on social media: **#SafeguardingAdultsWeek**.

The Week in Numbers

We tracked the performance of our **#SafeguardingAdultsWeek** hashtag, as well as a few variations: **#AdultSafeguardingWeek**; **#SafeguardingAdultsWeek2021**; **#NationalSafeguardingAdultsWeek** and **#NationalSafeguardingWeek**.

Here's how they performed across the week:

- **79.4 MILLION** people reached by the hashtags.
- **59.5 THOUSAND** interactions.
- **47.4 THOUSAND** shares.

And that's just on Twitter!

In 2020, [we reached around 12.5 million people with our Safeguarding Adults Week materials](#). The year before, [we reached just over 5.5 million](#).

Safeguarding Adults Week is getting bigger every year. So we'd like to say a massive THANK YOU to anyone who took part. You've helped raise awareness of some vital safeguarding issues.

We Cannot Thank You Enough!

We were once again overwhelmed by the response we received.

So no matter what you did to support Safeguarding Adults Week – whether you put on an event or simply retweeted someone else – we'd like to say a massive thank you.

Ready for Safeguarding Adults Week 2022?

[Safeguarding Adults Week launched in 2018](#). To go from zero to nearly 80 million views in just three years is fantastic. And we could not have done it without you. So once more, thank you.

Together we can make Safeguarding Adults Week 2022 even better! We'd love to hear your thoughts. So let us know what sort of themes you'd like us to cover, and what sort of resources you'd like us to produce. [So get in touch!](#)

Safeguarding Adults Week 2022

21 – 27 November
#SafeguardingAdultsWeek

Safeguarding Adults Week 2022 will take place from Monday 21– Sunday 27 November.

Safeguarding Adults Week is a time for organisations to come together to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues. The aim is to highlight safeguarding key issues, facilitate conversations and to raise awareness of safeguarding best practice. So we can all be better together.

We hope the week will enable more organisations and individuals to feel confident in recognising signs of abuse and neglect and recording and reporting safeguarding concerns.

Watch our [short video](#) to learn more about what safeguarding is.

How can you get involved?

In 2021, your support helped us to reach almost [80 million people on social media](#). So we'd like to say a massive THANK YOU to anyone who took part. You've helped raise awareness of some vital safeguarding issues.

We hope that you will sign up to support the week in 2022. By signing up, you will be the first to hear about our themes for the week!

[Head here to sign up for Safeguarding Adults Week 2022 updates.](#)

Grooming and Exploitation: Opening Eyes and Minds Conference

Thursday 18 November 2021

Crowne Plaza, Nottingham

09.30-16.00

#SafeguardingAdultsWeek



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Grooming and Exploitation: Opening Eyes and Minds Conference

As part of [Safeguarding Adults Week 2021](#) we hosted our annual Safeguarding Adults Conference. We collaborated with [Small Steps](#), [Operation Repeat](#) and Daphne Franks, who leads the campaign [Justice for Joan](#), to create a unique training opportunity which sought to raise awareness of how adult grooming can be experienced across the life course.

The conference explored forms of grooming and exploitation that adults are increasingly at risk from, but in many sectors are rarely discussed.

About the Speakers

Professor Todd Landman is a Pro-Vice-

Chancellor at the University of Nottingham and acted as the chair for this event.

Alongside his role as Pro-Vice Chancellor, Todd is Executive Director of the Rights Lab, where he is involved in carrying out research on ending modern slavery.

Todd's current work on modern slavery includes engagement with organisations such as the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Daphne Franks was our keynote speaker and has recently appeared in [The Guardian](#) discussing her work to change marriage laws in England which would reduce the risk of predatory marriage.

Daphne set up the campaign 'Justice for Joan', after her Mum became a victim of

predatory marriage at the age of 91. Daphne is currently working with the Ann Craft Trust and the University of Nottingham as part of the research project 'My Marriage My Choice'. The research aims to raise awareness of predatory marriage and is lobbying to change the law so that marriage no longer automatically invalidates a pre-existing will.

Small Steps is an organisation run by former members of far-right organisations who have rejected violence and far-right narratives. They are now committed to exposing and eradicating far-right extremism in the UK.

Operation Repeat works in partnership with Community Police teams and Trading Standards to raise awareness of Doorstep Crime and Scam offences to members of the public who are at risk of becoming, or are already targets, of criminals who trade in this manner.

Creating Safer Cultures to Minimise the Risk of Grooming and Exploitation in the Sport and Activity sector. A joint workshop run by the ACT Safeguarding in Sport team and British Athletics Commission (BAC). This session explored how the grooming process can occur in sport and activity because of existing power dynamics and cultures that are often embedded within

sport. The session used the experiences of the BAC, Ann Craft Trust, and former athletes to encourage participants to develop their knowledge about how they could help contribute to creating a safer culture that minimises the risk of grooming.

Missing in Mainstream: Young People With Learning Needs and Sexual Exploitation.

ACT's Safeguarding Young People lead Sarah Goff ran this workshop, which was aimed at anyone who works in any capacity with children and families. Drawing from recent practice research with parents of young people with autism or learning disabilities, this workshop asked: What can we do about sexual abuse and exploitation of young people with both diagnosed and undiagnosed learning needs? The session explored the impact of sexual abuse and exploitation on young people themselves, their siblings, and their parents and carers. The workshop discussed how we can support young people, and how we can help parents keep young people with learning needs and autism safer.

Over the following pages you'll find summaries of some of the conference's talks and workshops, with links to resources where you can explore these issues in greater depth.

Reforming Marriage Laws and Procedures to Fight Predatory Marriage

Daphne Franks, Communication Skills Teacher, Leeds Medical School



My mother, Joan Blass (d.o.b. 20/4/24) died on March 26th, 2016.

At the time of her death, my mother was 91 with severe vascular dementia – a medical diagnosis dating back to 2011 – and terminal cancer.

My mother had a male friend, whom I shall call Ranlyn Lucas, and we had been extremely worried about him for several years as my mother was such a vulnerable adult and he had moved into her house only a month after meeting her in the garden as he walked past the gate,

in December 2011. He is much younger than she was (68 at the time of her death) and extremely secretive. We had contacted my mother's GP on many occasions, the Police, the Social Services and also had taken legal advice and had been told that she could not make another Will or marry again because of her severe dementia.

Ranlyn Lucas was initially rather over-friendly to us but then became very controlling and conducted a "hate campaign" against me with all my mother's relatives, perhaps because I was very close to my mother. But thankfully it

didn't really succeed. He stopped speaking to me completely in October 2014, although I continued to visit my mother every night with my husband Stephen. Ranlyn just sat and either ignored me, eyes fixed on the television, which was always on, or stared at the ceiling, or glowered at me. It was intimidating and distressing.

My mother died peacefully at home on March 26th 2016, which was Easter Saturday. My mother's oldest friend Amy was visiting for the day with her daughter-in-law Lesley so we were all over at Mum's house at the time. On that day my mother could not speak at all but kept waving to me across the room. I commented to Lesley that I thought she was saying goodbye; and so it proved.

Secret Marriage

On March 29th, as soon as the GP opened again after Easter, Ranlyn Lucas turned up at the GP's, with a marriage certificate. He had married my mother secretly on October 26th 2015 and had not told anyone – not the family, not her friends, not the GP, not the council, not the bank.

It is impossible to describe the level of shock and distress that we felt on learning of the marriage. All we had known was that Ranlyn Lucas and my mother had disappeared for a few days at the end of October 2015 and he did not tell us

anything about it, so I was concerned for my mother's safety at the time. We have since found out that Ranlyn took my mother to Blackpool for a few days and on the way home called in to see my mother's brother and his wife in Marple, near Manchester. Ranlyn Lucas did not mention the marriage to them and by then my mother had forgotten that it had ever taken place.

Mum never told anyone about it, because she did not remember that she was married. Ranlyn Lucas never told anyone about it. I suspect this is because he had found out that there is a gap in the Law so it is never possible to annul a marriage after one party has died unless it was bigamous or incestuous. If he had told us they were married when my mother was alive, we could have sought to have the marriage annulled.

Mental Capacity

Our son Oliver rang the Register Office to make a complaint as we were absolutely certain that my mother did not have the mental capacity to marry, and her medical records back this up.

In response to my son's complaint I received a phone call from someone from the register office. Her tone was totally dismissive and suggested that I was making a fuss about nothing. "She was fine

on the day, totally compos mentis,” was a phrase that really stuck in my mind as I knew it was very far from the truth. Upon what authority, and with what knowledge, could she use the phrase “totally compos mentis”? We have since learned that registrars do not have training in assessing mental capacity or dementia.

The two witnesses to the marriage were Ranlyn Lucas’s son, whom I shall call Geoffrey, and a lady who was a member of the pub quiz team to which Ranlyn belonged: she did not know my mother well at all and I doubt if she had ever had a one-to-one conversation with her. So I asked the woman from the register office if the registrars had not thought that it was strange that a 68-year-old man was marrying a 91-year-old woman with none of her relatives present. “Ah well, we can’t judge,” she said in a very patronising manner, meaning “it’s not our job to judge”.

As a matter of fact, in the General Register Office – A Guide for Authorised Persons, it states that “one party may do all the talking or be reluctant to let the other party be spoken to alone” (paragraph 3.5 of the official guidelines). Ranlyn Lucas always spoke for my mother, as indeed the Deputy Registrar mentions in her account of what happened “Mr Lucas started to intervene and he was reminded that Mrs Blass had to answer by herself”. My mother

spoke very little generally at this time as she could never follow what was going on.

In the letter from the Deputy Registrar, of which we have a copy, she mentions that “the DSR asked me if I thought Mrs Blass was fully aware of why she was there and should we proceed with the ceremony.” However, they carried on.

We know that Ranlyn Lucas had shown the registrars a hospital letter with my mother’s terminal diagnosis. He had also described her as being deaf and forgetful, and said that her forgetfulness was caused by a stroke. In fact she was suffering from far more than forgetfulness – it was vascular dementia and we believe that Ranlyn had fooled the registrars with the terminal diagnosis and some kind of romantic nonsense about them loving each other and wanting to get married before she died.

Marriage Annuls Will

My mother had made a Will in 2004 leaving everything to myself and my brother after my father’s death. However, this marriage superseded and annulled the Will – as a marriage always does – and this means that Ranlyn has inherited her entire estate.

I had Power of Attorney for Finance, because my mother was incapable of making the simplest financial decision—

her GP had assessed this before I was able to register the Power of Attorney. And yet she was allowed to marry, which completely overturned her Will.

Legal Action

The Police finally put a case for Forced Marriage to the Crown Prosecution Service under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014. However, the Safeguarding Team at Elland Road appeared to us to be struggling throughout as it is such new law that they are not familiar with it, and they found Ranlyn Lucas very strange and difficult to deal with “He’s really odd, Daphne”.

The Police were originally not going to investigate at all. They told us “it’s a civil matter, not a criminal matter”. But the Forced Marriage Unit in London insisted that they do so, and explained that forced marriage is a criminal offence and that, if you lack mental capacity, you do not have to know that you are being forced into marriage in order for the marriage to be forced.

We took legal advice from a firm of solicitors who specialise in contentious probate. Ranlyn Lucas wanted my mother buried but all my mother’s family and friends, plus my mother herself when alive, wanted a cremation. We were told by the solicitors that we had an extremely strong case for getting control of my mother’s

body for a funeral, and so we took Ranlyn Lucas to court to try to get control of the funeral.

We had assumed – on the advice and reassurance of our solicitor – that as soon as the judge understood that my mother had dementia such that she was unable to give informed consent to marriage, he would give the funeral to the family. My mother’s GP testified in court to my mother’s level of dementia. However, in a decision that shocked our solicitor, our barrister and all their legal colleagues, the judge decided that although it was “doubtful” that my mother had the mental capacity to consent to marry, he thought that Ranlyn genuinely cared for her, and did not have a financial or malicious motive, and Ranlyn was her legal husband, so gave the funeral to him.

We have had to pay all the costs, which are over £200,000. We only let it go to court because our solicitors were so certain that we would win.

None of the family or friends were able to go to my mother’s funeral. Nobody could bear to, even if Ranlyn Lucas had shared his plans with us. We have since learned that she is buried in a graveyard in a nearby town with which she had no connection. I have visited the grave – there is no headstone and no flowers.

Systemic Failure

Although separate interviews before marriage are supposed to happen by law, we have spoken to a number of couples who married over the past few years where this has not happened.

The various letters from the Register Office etc. give bland and patronising reassurances that my mother and Ranlyn were interviewed separately, we are certain that either they were not or that my mother was given help, or permitted to give inaccurate answers, as in the evasive “she eventually answered to my satisfaction” letter from the Deputy Registrar.

I saw my mother every day and the idea that she could answer all the questions is complete nonsense. Even soon after meeting Ranlyn, when he had moved into her house, she was repeatedly asking “What is his name?” “Where did he come from?” and “Where does he live?”

I know that capacity for marriage is time-specific and decision-specific but even on a particularly “good” day my mother could barely say her own name and date of birth and certainly never knew his. She had comprehensively failed the Mini Mental State test at the GP’s several years previously in 2011, and her dementia had worsened considerably since then.

I am convinced that fraudulent marriages such as my mother’s must be happening throughout the country and we wish to raise awareness and campaign for a change in the Law. I am also appalled by the Register Office’s flippant approach to our complaint.

I complained to the Local Government Ombudsman and received a phone call where any understanding or empathy was entirely lacking. She told me that it was not possible to investigate as no evidence is kept after marriage. “But my mother had dementia that was so bad that she did not have capacity to consent to marriage!” I said, becoming upset. “So you say.” she replied.

No Prosecution

The Crown Prosecution Service had the criminal case file for over twelve weeks before making a decision not to prosecute Ranlyn Lucas. Because register offices keep no evidence of what happened on the day, the fact that two of the three registrars who dealt with my mother thought she was fine to marry overrides all preceding medical evidence. The idea seems to be that my mother could have somehow made a miracle recovery on the day of the notification and again on the day of the wedding before lapsing back into her totally confused state.

We don't think that the Crown Prosecution Service understands how dementia can present, here. They quote, both in the original decision and in the response to our appeal, that because my mother was smiling and happy she must have understood what was going on.

We believe that there are several changes to registrars' procedures which could stop similar events happening in future and have discussed these with our MP.

Repeat Offender?

The man who married my mother used her blue disabled badge to park, some months after her death. He was caught and prosecuted and did not pay the fine. We know this because court officials turned up on our doorstep looking for him.

In 2018 he remarried to another elderly lady who lived only about 10 minutes from my mother's house.

Predatory Marriage in Parliament

Our MP, Fabian Hamilton, raised our case and its ramifications in a Private Member's Bill in November 2018. It was called the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Consent) Bill. The Bill was passed unanimously for a second reading but sadly – as happens with many Private Member's Bills – ran out of Parliamentary time.

However, we are now working with a

number of university academics, safeguarding professionals, solicitors and barristers with an aim of getting the issue back into Parliament as soon as possible, and Fabian Hamilton is continuing to support us.

Changes We'd Like to See

Although marriage with lack of mental capacity counts as "forced marriage" in Law, nobody has ever been prosecuted. This is not because of lack of cases – I have now spoken to many other traumatised families – but because there is no evidence kept at marriage so, unless the wedding is stopped on the day, it is impossible to prove lack of capacity afterwards.

The Law Commission had a consultation on Wills, including whether marriage should revoke a Will, which was unfortunately paused by the Government for a consultation on Weddings. This consultation was completed in January 2021. The aim is to modernise marriages by making it possible to marry in different places – on a cruise ship, or in your living-room – but we are very concerned that they have not considered fully the safeguarding implications here.

In Summer 2020 I co-wrote a paper on the changes needed to improve safeguarding at marriage. My co-authors were Rachael

Clawson, Associate Professor of Social Work at Nottingham University and Lisa Curtis of The Ann Craft Trust. Alex Chalk MP of the Ministry of Justice is aware of the paper and our campaign and has invited Rachael Clawson to meet him after the results of the Weddings Consultation have been analysed.

The General Register Office has now pointed out in their handbook for registrars that “demeanour” should not be used as a guide to mental capacity. However, this is not the same as actually training people and giving a clear explanation as to why not.

We have made considerable progress with our campaign, but there is still a long way to go. Our key goal is for marriage no longer to revoke a Will as this would remove most of the incentive for predatory marriage.

Learn More About Justice for Joan and Predatory Marriage

- [The Justice for Joan website](#) has lots of resources, plus lots of ideas on how you can help make a difference.
- ACT Safeguarding Adults lead Lisa Curtis [spoke to Daphne about her campaign in an episode of our Safeguarding Matters podcast](#).
- In October 2020, [a concerned relative wrote to the Guardian asking for advice about a suspected case of predatory marriage](#).



Safeguarding Adults at Risk Training for Managers and Safeguarding Leads

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

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

Each course takes place across three sessions, lasting from 10.00 am—12.00 pm with a 15–30 minute working break:

Wednesday 16 March—Wednesday 23 March 2022: [Register Here >>](#)

Tuesday 3 May—Thursday 5 May 2022: [Register Here >>](#)

Wednesday 6 July—Friday 8 July 2022: [Register Here >>](#)

Tuesday 13 September—Thursday 15 September 2022: [Register Here >>](#)

Wednesday 9 November—Friday 11 November 2022: [Register Here >>](#)

Operation REPEAT: Raising Awareness of Doorstep Crime

Reg Burrell, Director, Operation REPEAT



Operation REPEAT is a campaign that aims to raise awareness of doorstep crime and fraud. Having presented at our 2021 Safeguarding Conference, we asked director Reg Burrell to write about the campaign for our Safeguarding Bulletin.

Specialising in raising awareness of Doorstep Crime and Fraud offences, in which grooming and exploitation play a huge part, the Operation REPEAT Team have been working with Police and Trading Standards to help safeguard older vulnerable people within our communities.

Reg Burrell (Director) and Marilyn Barratt (Consultant) come from police crime prevention and training backgrounds with Home Office Certification held by both allowing them to understand how criminals work and prey on their victims.

As Operation REPEAT trainers they are in a unique position: Their personal work experience has allowed them to see the devastating effect these type of offences has on numerous victims, but they've also dealt with offenders themselves and know how they behave.

What is Operation Repeat?

Historically, doorstep crime and fraud prevention was aimed at the victims themselves, with the police and other organisations using leaflets and meetings to pass advice onto older and vulnerable people.

Unfortunately, leaflets are often discarded and those in need of the message may not have capacity to remember what they were told the previous day.

The principal aim of Operation REPEAT is to allow key messages to vulnerable clients to be continually reinforced on a daily or weekly basis by using Health and Social Care sector staff to deliver these messages. Using the existing community workforce, who are already in a trusted position, is a win on all fronts as there is an increased awareness of these crimes within the community and a more targeted approach at prevention.

Since 2012 Operation REPEAT has been training Health and Social Care staff from both public and private sectors on how the criminals work, how they target individuals and what the signs are that someone has fallen prey to these despicable crooks. More importantly, the training explores how to prevent such crimes from happening in the first place—the ethos being that simple prevention

messages are REPEATed again and again to those who could be the victims.

The many anecdotal success stories the project holds, covering all types of fraud offences, is one of the reasons Operation REPEAT has continued to be engaged by authorities to assist with crime prevention in their areas.

Currently we are working in Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and North Wales, with other projects being discussed for later this year.

We've also partnered with the Ann Craft Trust and Small Steps. This enables us to highlight the crimes and patterns around grooming and exploitation across all age groups and gives a very powerful and unique presentation in this field.

Learn More

[The Operation REPEAT website](#) has put all relevant Doorstep Crime and Fraud prevention messages in one easily accessible area.

There are now over 3000 **Operation REPEAT** trained extra sets of eyes and ears out in the community, all committed to delivering our prevention message on a weekly or daily basis, week in week out, working to keep people safe.

Imagine how many leaflets you would have to deliver to enable that sort of result.

EDUCATION is the KEY TO PREVENTION

REINFORCING ELDERLY PERSONS

EDUCATION at ALL TIMES

is that EDUCATIONAL Mechanism.

If you want to know more, or, find out about Operation REPEAT training sessions for your organisation then please contact:

info@oprepeat.co.uk or telephone **01778 305 011**.

Examples of Some of the Doorstep Crime Operation REPEAT Has Investigated

- **Criminal Traders**—Fraudsters pretending to be builders, gardeners, salesmen or other tradespeople who try to convince you that your house or garden needs urgent maintenance. They cold call and try and pressure you into making a quick decision on work for a “special cash price”. The work might be roofing, guttering, or damp proofing. They might act friendly, as if they’re genuinely offering to help. Or they might use intimidation tactics. E.g. “If those tiles fall off and hurt someone you’ll go to prison.” [Read more.](#)
- **Bogus Officials**—Distraction burglars who work in pairs. One distracts the householder while the other sneaks in to steal valuables. To gain entry, they might pretend to be from a utility company, social services, training standards, or the police. [Read more.](#)

- **Nottingham Knockers**—Also known as the “duster sellers”. They’re usually young men, and they go from door to door selling cleaning products from a huge black holdall. They sell low quality goods at a highly inflated price, which is criminal enough. But their main aim is to identify suitable targets for future burglaries. [Read more.](#)
- **Durham Fish Sellers**—Criminals who make a huge profit selling black market fish, or items that legitimate fishmongers would not sell themselves, at extortionate prices. The fish they sell is usually unpackaged, with no sell-by date and no indication that it’s been transported safely. This means that, apart from everything else, their fish poses a significant health risk. [Read more.](#)

You can learn more about these scams, along with various other scams, including mail fraud and email scams, [on the Operation REPEAT website.](#)

To inquire about Operation REPEAT training sessions for your organisation, contact info@oprepeat.co.uk or telephone **01778 305 011**.

Creating Safer Cultures to Minimise the Risk of Grooming and Exploitation in the Sport and Activity Sector

Listen, Learn, Lead
#SaferCultureSaferSport

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

Grooming and abuse can occur at any level in any sport. Anyone, at any age, can be a victim of grooming.

ACT and the British Athletics Commission (BAC) ran a workshop on grooming in sport during our November 2021 Safeguarding Conference.

The session explored how the grooming process can occur in sport and activity because of existing power dynamics and cultures that are often embedded within sport. The workshop drew from the experiences of the BAC, Ann Craft Trust

and former athletes to encourage participants to consider how they could contribute to creating a safer culture that minimises the risk of grooming.

Case Study

During the workshop, we asked participants to consider this case study:

A young adult athlete was on a performance pathway to world class programme. The athlete lived at home with her mother. Her father had passed away within the last 12 months.

The female athlete regularly babysat for

her coach, who lived an hour away from her. When the athlete babysat, she would stay over the coach's family home, with his partner present, and earned £30-£50 each time.

The coach would give the athlete lifts regularly. They would stay in the same hotel when competing and eat meals together regularly. Often it would just be the two of them during these times. The athlete would speak about her father and how she missed him during the time she spent with her coach. She appreciated this as she was unable to have these conversations with her mother.

The athlete received some money for her birthday which she had to spend on taxing her car. She told her coach she wished she could have bought herself something nice instead. The coach offered to buy her something nice which she could pay back by babysitting.

The athlete picked some underwear that she asked the coach to buy for her. Her mother later found the underwear packaged in her bedroom. The package had been sent to a drop box instead of a home address.

The mother raised concerns with the National Governing Body.

Questions to Consider

1. What are the early signs of concern / grooming behaviours in this case study?
2. At what points could you have intervened, and how would you have approached this?
3. If these concerns were raised with you, what steps would you take?
4. Does any information need to be shared with external agencies?
5. How can we have better conversations with athletes about athlete/coach relationships from an earlier age to ensure athletes have the knowledge and confidence to recognise signs of grooming and feel able to speak out?

Thoughts From the Workshop

Having read the case study and considered the questions, the workshop participants split into seven groups to discuss.

These were their thoughts:

Group 1:

- Bereavement – should have been referral, overstepping the boundary.
- Using drop box instead of address – showing coach is aware that what they're doing is inappropriate.

Group 2:

- Lift – feels appropriate infrequently

- Babysitting – can almost understand that there's almost no massive concerns, but retrospectively recognise it's not. An hour away – is that too far?

Group 3:

- Babysitting – partner being there. Is that a protective measure?
- Coach needs training on what to say when the athlete says they miss their dad and can't speak to their mum about it.

Group 4:

- Performance pathway – They should already be aware that she's gone through personal trauma and impact on her.
- Underwear – he had a definite choice to cross a line.
- Asking for underwear is a sign of the grooming, that she felt comfortable asking for that.
- When did the grooming start? – When she was under 18/16, grooming of a whole family.

Group 5:

- Who could have spotted the issues – what about school, what about the club, welfare officers?
- He made himself indispensable. She was emotionally and financially dependent on him.

- A lot of people might only have part of the story and not have the training or knowledge to raise a concern.
- The vulnerability of being on the performance pathway – at what point do you lose control? Your coach is your gateway to get you there.

Group 6:

- Power imbalance is the red flag – isolating her from her family, babysitting and lifts give them one-on-one time.

Group 7:

- Could the coach be naive? Have they set out to groom or are they trying to help/console the athlete? Even then, education programme for coaches should include this and make sure naivety isn't possible.
- Reporting of low-level concerns should be normalised so the organisation can put the pieces together.

Participants then compared notes, and we discussed this case study as a group.

Based on the group discussion, there appears to be a widespread fear that raising concerns has turned into a semi-criminal process. There's a right to appeal, and QCs and lawyers are often involved in procedures. This can make it difficult to act on concerns that some may deem "low level". i.e. if it's such a complicated process to raise and act upon concerns, is it better not to bother?

#SaferCultureSaferSport

We ran this workshop as part of our ongoing #SaferCultureSaferSport campaign.

We launched this campaign in May 2021. Our aim is to encourage sport and activity organisations to create safer cultures where welfare, safety and wellbeing is at the heart of the club or group's values and actions.

The three essential steps to creating a safer culture are:

- **Listen**—Create an environment where everyone is confident their concerns are welcomed, listened-to and addressed appropriately.
- **Learn**—Encourage continuous learning and reflection at all levels of your organisation in order to create and embed a safer culture.
- **Lead**—Lead with positive actions and values to empower everyone with the confidence to challenge and instigate change.

Make a Commitment

We're asking organisations to commit to creating safer cultures in sport. Joining our campaign means committing to improving your sport's culture to build a safer environment for everyone.

We've created a dedicated online #SaferCultureSaferSport hub. It features lots of resources, including dedicated podcasts, to help you explore the central ideas of **Listening, Learning and Leading**.

You can also use this page to make your #SaferCultureSaferSport commitment, and to sign up for updates on the campaign.

[Head here to visit the #SaferCultureSaferSport Campaign Page.](#)

INCLUDE SUMMIT

8th-9th March 2022

**The UK's No.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Summit For Sport**

ACT at the Include Summit

The UK's No.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Summit for Sport

8-9 March 2022

The mission: To get 1 MILLION underprivileged and underrepresented young people taking part in sport and activity.

ACT's Safeguarding Adults in Sport Manager Nicola Dean will be speaking at the summit. We'll also be running a stand at the event, where you can learn more about our #SaferCultureSaferSport campaign.

For more information, and to book your place::

[Register Here >>](#)

Missed in Mainstream: Young People With Learning Needs and Sexual Exploitation

Sarah Goff, Safeguarding Young People Lead, ACT



In November 2021, we ran a workshop during our Safeguarding Conference aimed at those who work *in any capacity* with children and families.

Drawing upon recent practice research with parents of young people with autism or learning disabilities, the workshop asked; what can we do about sexual abuse and exploitation of young people with both diagnosed and undiagnosed learning needs?

The session explored the impact of sexual abuse and exploitation on young people

themselves, their siblings, and their parents and carers. The workshop also discussed how we can support young people and help parents keep young people with learning needs and autism safer.

We provided practical guidance about how individuals and organisations can minimise the risk of sexual abuse. We also discussed how to recognise and respond to the needs of young people when harm does happen.

Key Takeaways From This Session

- It's so important when working with children and families that we start with their main form of communication – whether that's a language, signing, gestures.
- It's not the child's job to tell us, it's our job to notice.
- Victim Blaming – Negative language leads to negative attitudes. Negative attitudes lead to systemic failures.
- Disabled children and young people are 3.4 times more likely to be abuse, 3.76 times more likely to be neglected
- 26.7% of disabled children have experienced abuse. Over 20% have experienced physical violence, and 14% have experienced sexual violence.

Additional Resources

If you'd like to explore this topic further, you'll find some related resources on our website:

- **Child Sexual Exploitation—**A collection of the research and training projects to which we've contributed that aim to better understand and inform on Child Sexual Exploitation. [Read more.](#)
- **Safeguarding Disabled Children in England—**A report from July 2016 presenting the findings from a national survey conducted by the National Working Group on Safeguarding Disabled Children. [Read more.](#)
- **We Matter Too—**Project funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation that explores how young people with sensory, learning or physical needs and disabilities experience the services and responses when they face domestic abuse. [Read more.](#)

Join Our Team of Associate Trainers!

We're Now Recruiting Safeguarding Young People and Children With Disabilities Specialists

Are you passionate about safeguarding and committed to protecting children and young people with disabilities?

We are looking for safeguarding trainers with experience in safeguarding disabled children and young people. We need you to help us to deliver training to practitioners from local authorities, social care, education, government, charities and beyond.

Can You Help Us Make a Difference?

We are looking for people who:

- Have experience in developing and delivering training, and who have a qualification in social work or relevant equivalent.
- Are committed to good practice and hearing the voices of the child and of families
- Have a comprehensive understanding of current legislation, policy and guidance in terms both of safeguarding children and young people and in working with D/deaf and disabled children, young people and their families

- Are aware of current issues and challenges in practice for example in addressing the needs of autistic children and their families
- Can demonstrate a track record of working with children and young people.
- Have the ability to travel regionally and to work flexibly. The post may involve evening and weekend work.

How To Apply

Want to chat about the role?

For more information, or to apply, please email Sarah.goff@nottingham.ac.uk.

Sarah is the Safeguarding Young people Manager at the Ann Craft Trust.

Could You Become a Trustee of the Ann Craft Trust?



We are looking for committed individuals who have an interest in safeguarding to join the Ann Craft Trust Board of Trustees

You will be joining the Ann Craft Trust as we enter our thirtieth year of acting against abuse. This is an exciting time for us as we seek to continue and expand our safeguarding training, research and audits across a broad range of sectors; including sport and activity, health and social care and education to name a few.

As a trustee you will have a crucial leadership role and contribute to our aim of safeguarding young people and adults at risk in all UK communities.

As a trustee you will:

- Shape the strategic direction of the charity
- Increase your professional networks in the safeguarding sector and beyond
- Join a friendly and supportive team who value innovative practice

For more information, and for details on how to apply, [download the full role specification here](#).



Safeguarding Young People Training

Hidden Needs: Unseen and Unheard Harm

Some young people face greater risks, yet they go unnoticed or unsupported.

This training aims to increase mainstream practitioners' awareness of the needs of the unheard and overlooked children and young people. Our goal is to improve multi-agency practice in this area.

We'll be running this online course multiple times throughout 2022. Each course will run from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.

For more information, and to book your place::

Friday 18 March 2022—[Register Here >>](#)

Tuesday 14 June 2022—[Register Here >>](#)

Wednesday 9 November 2022—[Register Here >>](#)

My Safeguarding Journey

Samyak Jain, Pure Economics Student, University of Nottingham



In late 2021, Samyak Jain joined the ACT team as a student intern to support Safeguarding Adults Week. We asked him to write about his experiences at our Safeguarding Conference, and to consider what “safeguarding” means to him.

The Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Conference took place at the crown plaza on the 18 November 2021. I walked into the hotel lobby where I was greeted by the event manager, Charlotte Brooks and Richard Fletcher, the administrator for ACT’s Safeguarding in Sport team.

My first task was to work with Richard at the ACT stand just outside the main conference room. Our job was to hand out fliers, promote safeguarding, and to generally explore what people thought of the conference and the issues being discussed.

After a quick refreshment break, there was a choice of three breakout rooms:

Small Steps– In today’s chaotic world young people are increasingly susceptible to far-right radicalisation. This workshop aimed to raise awareness of the various online techniques the far right uses.

Operation Retreat – Reinforcing Elderly People’s Education At All Times. More on this below.

Grooming in Sports – This is the session that I attended. The session started off with a young woman talking about her experience of grooming in sports. She talked about how one of her boxing coaches acted inappropriately, and she had no choice but to move gyms. The next part of the session involved a group discussion of a case study involving a potential case of grooming. We had to consider:

- What is the problem?
- Where would you intervene?
- How would you intervene?

This task was quite interesting, as I initially had a different viewpoint to my colleagues at the table. It resulted in an eye-opening discussion, and I soon realised that the issue of adult grooming in sport was a lot more complicated than I previously thought.

After the first session, it was time for lunch. I had the opportunity to meet some new people, including Deborah Kitson, the CEO of Ann Craft Trust. I really enjoyed getting to know a bit about her and meeting other committee and trustee members.

After lunch, we had our second breakout

session. I attended the Operation RETREAT session, delivered by a retired member of the police force. At first I thought this session wasn’t really relevant for me, just by reading the title: “Reinforcing Elderly People’s Education At All Times”. I shared my thoughts with my fellow colleagues after the talk and they were adamant I was wrong. I spent the following week thinking about this presentation, and I eventually realised that they were right.

The talk focused on doorstep crime and scam prevention, and how it is targeted towards the elderly. For example, people claiming they are from the water board, when there’s actually no such thing as a water board.

The talk then moved on to a discussion about different types of scams:

- **Mail Scams** – Scam letters are sent with the sole intention of obtaining money through deception or fraud. There are fake lotteries and prize draws, bogus health cures, investment schemes and more.
- **Telephone Scams** – They come in a variety of packages, such as pension investments, HMRC refunds, to banking and courier scams.
- **Email Scams** – Fraudulent emails attempt to make you supply personal information, such as bank account

details, passwords and the answer to your security questions. They may also try to get you to click a link or open an attachment that takes you to a copycat site, or secretly installs software that can track your keyboard movements

The purpose of the talk was to highlight how everyone is vulnerable to these scams, not just elderly people. If we're all aware of the risks, and of the techniques scammers use, then we can help safeguard each other from fraud.

After a short break came the closing session of the conference. This included a Q&A with members of the committee and team.

Overall, the day ran smoothly and a big thank you must go to Charlotte Brooks for organising the event, as well as all the speakers and hosts of the talks who all did brilliant jobs.

What Does Safeguarding Mean to Me?

Following the ACT conference, ACT asked me to think about what "safeguarding" means to me.

My safeguarding journey began within my interview for my internship. My mentor, Elliot Davies, asked me: "What is safeguarding?".

It was at that point I realised I couldn't

properly define it. I have seen the word before, but I always used it as a different word for "protection".

It was only after the interview, with further research, did I fully understand the meaning and depth behind the word safeguarding. It is hard to define it in one sentence, but if I had to describe it in one, it would be:

Safeguarding means people, companies and organisations protecting the health, wellbeing, and human rights of adults at risk, enabling them to live safely, free from abuse and neglect through putting barriers in place preventing any risk or harm to come to them.

Let me tell you how I got from the thinking that safeguarding just means 'protecting' to the sentence above.

One of my tasks during my internship was to help set up ACT's Instagram page. While making posts for this page, I learned a lot about safer cultures and what they are, as well as different types of abuse and how to recognise them.

The more posts I made, the more I learned about the importance of safeguarding, as well as what we can do to prevent abuse from happening.

Attending the Ann Craft Trust's Conference, also helped shape my understanding of safeguarding.

Throughout the day, while attending different sessions and breakout rooms, I learned about grooming in different areas such as sports, and how elderly people are easily taken advantage of. This made me realise that there's a real need to step in and safeguard these adults at risk.

These two things, as well as my general placement at Ann Craft Trust have educated me a lot in terms of the issues related with safeguarding. I hope to pass on my knowledge to my friends and family and help raise the awareness of these ongoing issues.



Safeguarding Adults Training

Effective Minute-Taking in Safeguarding Meetings

Thursday 24 March 2022

10:00– 15:00

The role of a minute-taker within safeguarding meetings is vital. Their work is essential to securing positive lasting outcomes from the meetings.

This practical training will focus on the role of the minute-taker and provide you with everything you need to succeed in your role.

For more information, and to book your place::

[Register Here >>](#)

Urgent Action is Needed If We Want To Transform Care



ACT is grateful to Margaret Flynn for writing this article for Safeguarding Adults Week 2021.

Margaret has worked as a researcher since the 1980s when she interviewed the former patients of long stay hospitals. She has a long standing interest in the lives of people with learning disabilities and in what is successful in keeping all of us safe. She is especially concerned with people without families or friendship networks.

Margaret has a brother with a learning disability. They have written a children's book about what having a learning

disability is like. Margaret has also contributed to the [Books Beyond Words](#) series pioneered by Professor Baroness Sheila Hollins and developed with people with learning disabilities.

Ten years after [Winterbourne View Hospital](#), have matters reached the point where urgent and decisive intervention is necessary? [The deaths of three adults with learning disabilities](#) at another private hospital, Cawston Park in Norfolk, is the stark answer.

Despite £10.3m spent on the Transforming Care Programme and promises since the exposure of Winterbourne View Hospital in

2001, there have been subsequent scandals at St Andrews Hospital in Northampton, [Whorlton Hall](#) in Barnard Castle, Cygnet Yew Trees Hospital in Frinton-on-Sea and Cygnet Woodside in Bradford. Without exception, these exacerbate the anguish of families that their relatives with learning disabilities and autism may end up in such provision.

The Treatment of Autistic People and People With Learning Disabilities

On 13 July 2021, the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee published its fifth report of session 2021–2022: *The treatment of autistic people and people with learning disabilities*. It stated:

“Autistic people and people with learning disabilities have the right to live independent, free and fulfilled lives in the community and it is an unacceptable violation of their human rights to deny them the chance to do so.

“It is also more expensive to detain autistic people and people with learning disabilities in inpatient settings and this takes up resources that are not then available for more humane community care.

“We are therefore deeply concerned that community support and provision for autistic people and people with learning disabilities, and financial investment in

those services, is significantly below the level required to meet the needs of those individuals and to provide adequate support for them in the community...

On 9 September 2021, the Safeguarding Adults Review concerning Joanna, Jon and Ben was published about their treatment and deaths at Cawston Park Hospital. There were no undercover reporters tracking events at Cawston Park. But at Ben’s inquest, the hospital’s own CCTV coverage revealed that his final interaction was with a staff member who assaulted him. This is a familiar theme.

Strong Risk of Harm

Patients within such units are at risk of being subject to restrictive practices and being harmed. Adult Safeguarding professionals are alerted to the harms experienced by patients through increasing numbers of referrals which are vulnerable to becoming normalised.

Although recommendations may result from subsequent safeguarding inquiries, sustained change does not result. The powers of adult safeguarding are modest when considered alongside those of the Care Quality Commission, professional regulators and the police.

Each placement is haunted by failures. These result from the absence of community based support to families who

struggle to manage. 24/7 funded support in placements is typically the only option. And these placements are rarely local. Such a stark choice is light-years from the known aspirations of people with learning disabilities and autism and with those of *Think Local, Act Personal*, for example. People with learning disabilities and autism, and their families do not yet have a persuasive voice in deciding how to spend funding for support.

Rigorous Scrutiny

The low threshold for invoking the Mental Health Act is not subject to the rigorous scrutiny it merits. Ben was admitted to Cawston Park Hospital without a mental illness. He was “ready for discharge” five months before he died. His delayed discharge, and that of too many others, is a whole system problem. What is the business case for discharging patients for whom indefensible weekly fees of many thousands of pounds may be charged? Such fees place enormous strain on NHS budgets. But they are unaffected by failures in service delivery, including those that result in death.

It took too long for the Care Quality Commission to take decisive action. It is the custodian of a service’s purpose. But neither Winterbourne View Hospital nor Cawston Park Hospital delivered either

assessment or treatment. Further, there is no proper prudence concerning the registration of the interconnected companies of the directors of these hospitals.

There has to be more to clinical commissioning than hunting for specialist placements. Families cannot value a clinical commissioning service that delegates responsibility for occasionally reviewing the adequacy of their relatives’ service. As a default placement, private, specialist hospitals are failing people. Most particularly in terms of their physical health care and mental distress. Treatments which hinge on medication, seclusion, restraint, observations and chronic inactivity leave the crises which give rise to people’s admissions unattended.

Recommendations

The Safeguarding Adults Review concerning Cawston Park Hospital recommended:

- a review of the current legal position concerning private companies, their corporate governance and conduct by the Law Commission. The DHSC would have to commission such a review;
- the adoption of ethical commissioning. A focus on smaller,

local commissioning and tax compliance, for example;

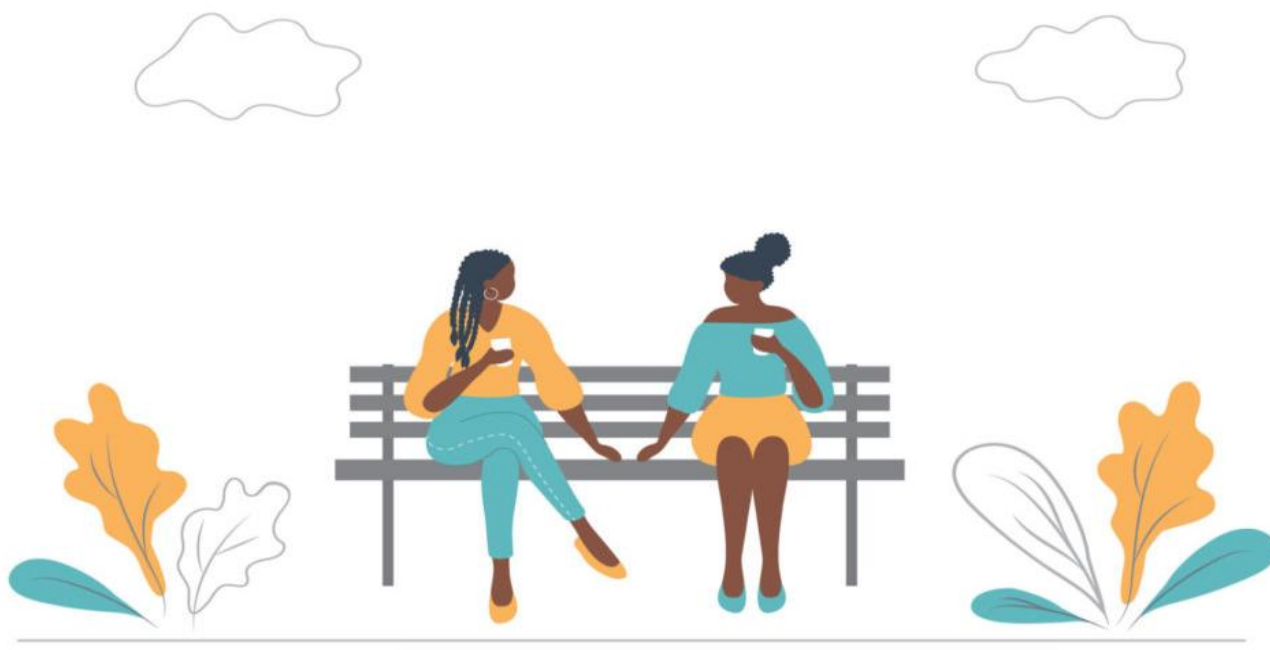
- the transfer of all Norfolk patients from the hospital;
- representation to the DHSC concerning the reform of the Mental Health Act;
- greater clinical commissioning involvement. This includes more searching scrutiny of services, up-to-date knowledge of what service is being commissioned and how it is experienced;
- greater use of registration cancellation by CQC;
- setting out the consequences of absent family-centred approaches at this hospital for the CQC
- a shift away from “medical led admissions and social care discharges;” and
- attending to the racism of people with cognitive impairments.

disabilities, people with autism and their families and their desire for humane and kinder futures.

We do not want more rehearsals of the same history. We cannot rely on safeguarding practitioners to do better than this. It is a whole system matter. It's time to defer to what has always been there. We need to listen to the experiential knowledge of people with learning

What Should I Say? Advice For Difficult Conversations

Charlotte Brooks, Marketing Officer, Ann Craft Trust



Whether you are a safeguarding practitioner or a concerned friend or family member, it can be challenging to know how to tell someone you are concerned about them.

In this blog we aim to provide practical advice to enable you to feel more confident in starting conversations about safeguarding concerns.

It is important to note that all situations, and all individuals, are different. Thus, the information below aims to provide general guidance about beginning difficult

conversations. If you believe a person is in immediate danger, you should call 999.

Set up a time to talk

Try to find a time when you can speak to the person in a private, safe place, free from interruptions. Sometimes, this may be best done in-person, although this will not be everyone's preference. Consider how the person prefers to communicate. Is this over the phone, through email or text or face-to-face. Sometimes people find it easier to speak whilst doing an activity, it might be helpful to set up a time to go for

a walk where you can start the conversation.

Ask open questions

Start the conversation by asking open questions (where the person cannot provide a yes or no answer). This may help them provide more detail or raise concerns themselves. For instance, you could ask:

- How are you getting on at work?
- What is living with XXXX person like?
How are things at home?
- How are you finding your exercise group/training?

Explain why you're asking

The person may become defensive or hostile about why you are asking these questions. If so, it is important to be honest with them and share your concerns.

Be specific, if you can, about the times you were worried about them. For instance, you could say *'I saw you crying during your lunchbreak after the meeting with your manager'*. Let them know that no-one should feel this way at work and tell them that you are here to listen to them if they wish to talk about it.

Alternatively, you may be concerned about an incident with a family member or partner. To address this sensitive issue, you

could refer to a similar incident that has been shown on a TV programme you both watch. For instance, *'I saw the storyline on EastEnders about XXXX person shouting at their partner. It made me think about the way XXXX person speaks to you and I am worried about your safety/wellbeing. How do you feel when they speak to you like that?'*

Listening is Key

The person may not respond straight away, or they may deny the abuse and attempt to shut-down the conversation.

Let them know that you are not there to judge them, but to listen to them. Tell them that you empathise with how difficult it must be to speak about these issues. Reassure them that you will be there to listen and support them when they need to.

Be prepared to have more than one conversation

The first time you approach this topic, the person may communicate very little. What is important is that you have started the conversation. Be prepared to revisit the conversation at a later date. You could set-up a time to go for a coffee a week later.

You could then ask them again how things are at home/work etc? Or you may want to ask them if they have thought about what you said before, and if they would like to

share anything with you.

Offer to support them to access help

The person may feel more comfortable talking to someone they do not know about their experience. You could write down the contact details for an organisation that can help and give this to the person you are concerned about. If texting this information to someone could put them at risk, write this information down on a piece of paper, or provide this information to them verbally. [Use our directory](#) to learn about organisations that offer support and guidance.

You can also encourage them to report the harm and abuse they are subjected to. This could be to the police, their local Safeguarding Adults Social Care Team, a member of HR or a senior staff member within their organisation. You could offer to go with them to report the abuse, or work with them as they decide what to say. It may be helpful if they write down their experiences and what happened.

If the abuse is happening within an organisation, it may be helpful to find out if the organisation has a safeguarding policy or designated safeguarding lead.

You can also contact organisations yourself to discuss your concerns and find out how best to offer support.

Other Sources of Information

There are various guides providing information about how to start difficult conversations if you are worried someone may be at risk of harm and abuse.

- [Age UK](#) have produced information about how to have a conversation about sensitive topics.
- [NSPCC](#) has produced guidance for parents and carers about having difficult conversations with children and young people.
- [The Ann Craft Trust and the Marie Collins Foundation](#) have collaborated to produce a guide for parents and carers, and a guide for professionals who are concerned about young people at risk of online abuse.
- [Open the Door](#) have published advice about starting conversations about domestic abuse.
- [The Ann Craft Trust](#) have produced a range of case studies to enable you to reflect on how you would respond to people who may be at risk in different contexts. These case studies could help to initiate discussions about safeguarding in your organisation.

#ACTSafeguardingHour

Every Wednesday

12.00—1.00 pm

@AnnCraftTrust

ann craft trust
acting against abuse

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)

What's Culture Got To Do With Safeguarding?

Ruth Ingram, Safeguarding Adults in Sport in Wales Lead, ACT

Join the
#SaferCultureSaferSport
Campaign

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Last year, the Ann Craft Trust launched the #SaferCultureSaferSport campaign for sport and activity organisations to create safer cultures.

But why are we doing it?

Safeguarding is about making sure that as many people as possible understand that children and adults can be abused. It's about ensuring people know how to report abuse.

Safeguarding is also about setting a clear procedure for making sure individuals and organisations act on any reports of abuse. This means we can protect the person at risk. It also means we can prevent the people responsible for any abuse from harming others in the future.

Finally, safeguarding means preventing abuse by making sure no one with a history of harming people comes to work or volunteer for us.

So what has culture got to do with our work?

We know that in some situations people raise concerns that are ignored. And in some situations, other people 'just know' that there is no point in trying to speak up – even when their organisation has great policies and procedures.

Culture – 'The way we think and do things around here'. This has a huge part to play in whether all people are safe within that setting. It also determines whether or not concerns are raised and appropriate action is taken.

What is a safer culture?

Being safe means being free to be oneself. It means being respected and valued for your contribution to any organisation, club or activity you are part of.

A fundamental test for a #SaferCulture is a culture that is truly inclusive and welcoming for all in all our diversity; young and old, female and male – for everyone in all shapes and sizes and identities including disability, sexuality, gender, religion or race.

Being safe means:

- Not experiencing harassment and discriminatory abuse.
- Being able to participate in whichever way the person wants – on

equal terms with all other members.

- Not being afraid to raise any concerns.
- Being confident that people will respect and act on your experience and views.

Organisations with a #SaferCulture will not have discriminatory banter in changing rooms and will have a wide range of people employed, participating and volunteering – united by their enjoyment of the sport/activity.

Why is a safer culture essential for safeguarding?

A #SaferCulture is crucial for prevention and resilience against abuse. People who feel safe, trusted and respected will be much more confident to challenge others. They'll also feel more ready to respond to any challenges they hear. Other people around them are more likely to help resolve any issues.

Clubs where people who can say – 'I'd really like it if you spoke directly to me rather than to the person assisting me' and the other person can say 'I am so sorry – old habits- I'll make sure I don't do that again' are much more likely to have #SaferCultures.

When the people taking part in an activity all respect and value each other,

someone who is acting differently – for example, by misusing their power or by being disrespectful – will stand out.

People know how their teammate looks when they are confident and happy. They'll then know when something isn't right. So they'll be more likely to know when to ask 'Are you OK today?'

Safeguarding sometimes involves difficult conversations. A bedrock of trust and respect means they are more likely to these difficult conversations are more likely to happen.

So culture has got a lot to do with Safeguarding!

#SaferCulture means:

- People are more likely to voice concerns about abuse at an early stage. People are also more likely to challenge abuse where they see it.
- Anyone raising a concern will get support.
- Everyone in the organisation works together to keep the culture safe for all.

[Learn more about our](#)

[#SaferCultureSaferSport campaign.](#)

Listen to the Latest

#SaferCultureSaferSport podcasts

- **Creating More Inclusive Cultures in Sport**—ACT and Disability Sport Wales discuss how creating a more inclusive culture in your organisation can help you achieve best practice in safeguarding. [Listen here.](#)
- **The Role of Safer Recruitment in Creating Safer Cultures**—A discussion with DBS and RFU about the role disclosures and other checks can play in creating safer cultures. [Listen here.](#)
- **Domestic Abuse in Sport**—A discussion with Rosalyn Porter, Director of Women and Girls Cricket at Oxford Cricket Club, exploring how sport clubs and organisations can support people experiencing domestic abuse and coercive control. You can learn more about this podcast on the following page. [Listen here.](#)

How Can Sport Organisations Support People Experiencing Domestic Abuse?

Ruth Ingram, Safeguarding Adults in Sport in Wales Manager, ACT



We recently recorded a podcast with Rosalyn Porter, Director of Women and Girls Cricket at Oxford Cricket Club, and her daughters Genevieve and Eloise.

You can listen to the podcast [here](#).

They talk about their experience of living with years of domestic abuse. They discuss the positive role Cricket has played in all their lives.

Yet they also describe how hard it was to recognise the situation they were in, and some of the barriers that prevented them accessing help.

This is a story of strength, resilience and love in the face of sustained coercive control and physical danger. It is a story that addresses difficult themes and some of the day-to-day realities of living with coercive control.

However, it is also a story of how some individuals were able to reach into their situation, to listen and provide much needed support. It is a story that is focused on this family's desire to educate and change things for others in the future.

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

The key lesson from this podcast is this:

People working or taking part in sport can deepen their understanding of coercive control and take positive steps to support those who are experiencing domestic abuse.

[In 2020](#), an estimated 1.6 Million (7.3%) women and 0.76 Million (3.5%) men in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse.

This is an important podcast for anyone who would like to better understand domestic abuse. It explores ways that sport might offer the right type of support to anyone in that situation.

If you are interested in developing tools to help sport and activity organisations support those at risk of domestic abuse please contact ruth.ingram@nottingham.ac.uk

If you need more information or help and support to address a domestic abuse or coercive control situation:

National Domestic Abuse Help Line

0808 2000 247

[BSL](#)

[Website](#) (with text/chatline)

Live Fear Free Helpline (English/Cymraig)

0808 80 10 800

[Website](#)

Safer Lives

[Website](#)

Safeguarding Adults in Sport & Activity Training Courses (ONLINE)

BOOK YOUR PLACE at www.anncrafttrust.org/events

| COURSE | DATES 2022 |
|---|--|
| Safeguarding Adults in Sport & Activity Training: Level 2 (Wales) | February 16 th March 9 th |
| Safeguarding Adults in Sport & Activity Training: Level 3 (Wales) | February 7 th & 8 th |
| Safeguarding Adults in Sport & Activity Training: Level 3 (England) | March 8/9/15 th & 16 th June 7/8/14 th & 15 th September 6/7/13 th & 14 th December 6/7/13 th & 14 th |
| Putting Policy and Procedures into Practice within Sport and Activity: CPD Case Study Session* (England) <i>(*Completion of ACT Level 3 training required prior to attending)</i> | February 8 th July 5 th October 4 th |

Safeguarding in Sport Training 2022

We're running multiple safeguarding adults in sport and activity training courses throughout 2022.

For more information, and to book onto any of these events, head to our events page.

[Book your 2022 Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity Training](http://www.anncrafttrust.org/events)

Adult Coach–Athlete Relationships: The Complexities and Risks

Kimberley Walsh, Safeguarding Elite Athletes Lead, ACT



The topic of adult coach–athlete relationships can be a contentious subject.

It's a subject that evokes strong opinions, ambiguity and differing experiences. The aim of this article is to highlight some of the considerations and potential risks with coach–athlete relationships along with suggestions to help minimise those risks.

To help with this discussion, we must first define the different relationships that we'll refer to in this article. There are many different terms and definitions used to describe relationships which can have a variety of meanings to different people

and situations. Although the article uses the term coach–athlete relationship it could be equally relevant to other roles within a sport and activity set up where there is the opportunity for an imbalance of power between parties.

This article is based on the following descriptors.

- **Professional relationship:** A relationship between two people for the purposes of carrying out specific designated roles or to meet a common goal, whether paid or voluntary. It involves staying within professional boundaries which are

set out in relation to the roles; often linked to specific locations and activities.

- **Personal Relationship:** A relationship involving close connections between two people generally formed through shared emotional bonds and interactions, interests and experiences. Often including friendship, connection, support and involvement with aspects of someone's life beyond the remit of a professional relationship.
- **Intimate Relationship:** A personal relationship that has developed beyond friendship and involves romantic, physical or sexual connection or activity between two people which can take place on one or more occasion.

Coach-Athlete Relationship Dynamics

The dynamics of a coach-athlete professional relationship is a unique and often complex one. The relationship includes a shared passion for the sport, commitment and joint goals as well as significant time spent together. There are incredibly high levels of trust, closeness, connection and influence involved, most of which are often unavoidable due to the nature of the roles and can be intrinsic to the pursuit of improvement and

performance, regardless of level.

The culmination of these elements can, and often do, start to blur the lines between a 'professional' relationship and a more 'personal' relationship. A personal relationship can involve anything from socialising outside of training, to supporting and offering advice in relation to life outside of sport and working on joint projects outside the sport, to forming an intimate relationship.

It could be argued that a coach-athlete relationship cannot be successful if the more personal aspects of the relationship didn't exist, however what happens if that personal relationship develops into a more intimate relationship?

Are Adult Coach-Athlete Intimate Relationships Acceptable?

Whether you are a coach, athlete or participant at the elite level of sport or your local community activity group is it acceptable to enter into an intimate relationship with someone you are coached by or coaching if you are both consenting adults?

This is a good question. After all, as adults, both parties have 'self-determination'; the right to make their own decisions even if someone else considers it to be an unwise decision. There are no laws that prevent two adults entering into an

intimate relationship with each other assuming they both consent to the relationship and there are no laws that prevent a coach having an intimate relationship with an adult they coach- so why the need to even discuss it or suggest it may not be the right thing to do?

Sadly, there are people who will abuse their position of trust, power and/or influence to the detriment of another for their own personal gain. Therefore, it is important to highlight and discuss potential risks, signs and indicators of concerns and ways to minimise or remove those risks.

What are the risks in relation to an adult coach-athlete personal or intimate relationship?

The greatest risk is that the relationship has been formed through grooming, controlling or exploitative behaviours- resulting in an unhealthy abusive relationship.

Such a relationship may be formed in 'plain sight' of others or kept hidden and it can often be difficult for someone within such a relationship to feel able to end the relationship or even be able to recognise it as unhealthy or abusive. Being involved in such a relationship can have significant short and long term impact on an

individual's physical and mental well-being.

Due to the nature of coach-athlete dynamics, there is the increased opportunity for personal and intimate relationship to be formed from behaviours including (but not limited to):

- Grooming
- Coercive control
- Exploitation of position of power, trust and influence
- Perpetration of Abuse – for example sexual, emotional or financial
- Exploitation of the drive to 'be the best'

In addition to an imbalance of power that can be present within a coach-athlete relationship, there are many additional factors that can contribute to the increased vulnerability of athletes, particularly at the elite level of sport. It is therefore important to also be aware of these and consider them in relation to whether a coach-athlete personal or intimate relationship has formed.

For further information, see our guide about the [vulnerability of adult elite athletes](#).

Mitigating risks in relation to adult Coach-Athlete personal and intimate relationships

If two consenting adults want to pursue an intimate relationship together there is, in reality, very little someone can do to stop it. However, there are preventative measures an organisation can have in place and implement to help reduce the risks associated with a coach-athlete personal or intimate relationship.

- Have Codes of Conducts in place for staff, athletes, members, volunteers and coaches. These should outline appropriate/ inappropriate and expected behaviours and process for any breach of the conduct.
- Ensure signs of inappropriate behaviour or breach of code of conduct are picked up and appropriately managed as early as possible.
- Have clear and transparent protocol/ policies and procedures relating to intimate adult relationships between staff/ volunteers and athletes or participants.
- Have a clear process in place for reporting and managing any concerns raised.
- Ensure staff have completed

Safeguarding Adults training and are aware of the signs and indicators of grooming and abuse. They should also be able to recognise additional vulnerabilities.

- Have clear and transparent athlete selection/de-selection processes for competition, training, facility use and support services eligibility.
- Provide opportunities for people to share feedback, worries or concerns.

One of the most important factors in minimising risk in coach-athlete intimate relationships is ensuring your organisation has a culture where people don't feel they need to keep their relationship a secret and hidden.

Questions to Ask

1. Is there an imbalance of power within the relationship due to roles and responsibilities within the organisation?
2. What level of control does one party have over the outcomes, opportunities and progression of the other?
3. What Code of Conduct/ Ethics has each person signed up to?
4. Is there a policy or procedure in place? Are people following it?

5. Is one person experiencing difficult circumstances that could influence their level of vulnerability at the time?
6. Has the personal relationship evolved into a more intimate relationship?
7. Has the relationship, or an intimate aspect of the relationship, been kept, or asked to be kept, a secret?
8. Are there any signs or indicators that an intimate relationship is not consensual?
9. Are there any signs or indicators of coercive controlling or threatening behaviour or abuse?

The Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

Based on the [6 principles of adult safeguarding](#) outlined in the English legislation for Safeguarding Adults at Risk the following can also be helpful to bear in mind when considering how to reduce the risks and manage concerns associated with adult coach-athlete personal or intimate relationships in sport.

- **Empowerment**– Empower staff and athletes with the information to protect themselves and others, to understand procedures and expected appropriate behaviours and where to seek help if they need it.
- **Prevention**– Have policies, procedures, guidance and Codes of Conducts in place. Communicate them as clearly as possible to ensure that people understand them, and follow them. Provide training to staff and where possible athletes in relation to adult safeguarding, including identifying grooming behaviours and abuse.
- **Proportionality**– Keep proportionality in mind when managing and responding to situations where intimate relationships have developed. Consider the level of your response and the actions you take. Also consider how this may affect future openness if another adult coach-athlete intimate relationship develops.
- **Protection**– Have processes in place to manage cases where suspected harm has occurred to protect from further harm.
- **Partnership**– Work together to find solutions and resolve problems that work for the individuals involved. In cases involving harm, work in partnership to help support the harmed person and to minimise risks to others.

- **Accountability**– Be accountable for the actions and processes within your organisation. Ensure there is a culture that prioritises safety, welfare and wellbeing over that of reputation of the organisation or staff.

Relationship protocols

Organisations must establish and communicate clear boundaries, expectations and protocols regarding personal relationships between adult staff members, volunteers, athletes and participants. Many organisations and businesses produce personal relationship policies and procedures. These reduce the risk of people in positions of power, influence and trust from exploiting or abusing their position. This is something sport organisations should consider following suit with.

Factors to Consider With a Relationship Policy or Protocol

- Do you want to discourage personal and intimate relationships between adult staff, volunteers and athletes or participants?
- A blanket ban does not necessarily stop intimate relationships forming. It risks the relationship being a secret, which can be more dangerous.
- Encourage openness and
- declaration of a personal or intimate relationship forming as early as possible.
- Have a transparent procedure in place for declaring a personal or intimate relationship between coach and athlete.
- Have a procedure for discussing and implementing risk reducing measures. Ensure neither member of the relationship can influence any decision-making or opportunities in relation to the other. E.g. access to facilities, selection to squad/teams, funding etc. Also, change the working dynamic/ roles where possible e.g. Remove the 'coach-athlete' element from the relationship by working with different athletes or coaches or changing role.
- Adults have the right to self-determination.
- The performance pathway has the potential for greater power imbalance. This does not mean there are no risks for people involved in community or grass route level too.
- Ensure there is information about who to speak to if anyone has any concerns about someone's wellbeing or safety.

What next?

Let's not shy away from discussing coach-athlete relationships. As much as the simplest solution and best practice would be for a coach-athlete relationship not to develop – they do. It is therefore important to be realistic and prepared for if and when they do occur in your organisation. That way you can ensure you do as much as possible to help minimise the risks.

Culture plays a crucial element in this topic #SaferCultureSaferSport. Ensure the culture of your organisation is one that encourages openness and transparency. Hopefully this article has provided food for thought and helped highlight areas to consider, develop and discuss further.

For further information, see our [resources for guidance about safeguarding adults](#).

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Young People

Study Links Rising Poverty to 10,000 Children Entering Care

10 January 2022 | [Vulnerability360.org.uk](https://vulnerability360.org.uk)

Child Abuse Image Crimes in the UK Have Risen

3 December 2021 | [NSPCC.org.uk](https://nspcc.org.uk)

“We mustn’t rely on a child to tell us verbally in order to take action.”

26 November 2021 | CSACentre.org.uk

“Fundamental” social care flaws place teenagers at exploitation risk

10 January 2022 | [Vulnerability360.org.uk](https://vulnerability360.org.uk)

Five Key Lessons From the Commission on Young Lives

12 January 2022 | CYPNow.co.uk

Early Help Schemes Will Not Stop Rise in Teenagers Entering Care

12 January 2022 | CYPNow.co.uk

December 2021—“Loneliest Month For Children Contacting Childline”

12 January 2022 | [NSPCC.org.uk](https://nspcc.org.uk)

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Hope For Justice—A Collection of Human Trafficking Case Studies, With Some Happy Endings

January 2022 | [HopeForJustice.org](https://www.hopeforjustice.org)

Short Film Explores Financial Exploitation on Social Media

13 December 2021 | [AnnCraftTrust.org.uk](https://www.anncrafttrust.org.uk)

Disability Rights UK New Year's Message 2022

6 January 2022 | [DisabilityRightsuk.org](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

“One Final Chance” to Publish Commissioned Research on Disabled People’s Experience of Benefits System

16 December 2021 | [DisabilityRightsUK.org](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

MP Calls For Law Change For Dementia Patients

11 January 2022 | [BBC.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk)

Councils Give Discretion on Spending £60m Fund to Ensure Speedy Use

11 January 2022 | [CommunityCare.co.uk](https://www.communitycare.co.uk)

More Social Workers Needed to Deal With Hundreds of Thousands of New Assessments

7 January 2022 | [CommunityCare.co.uk](https://www.communitycare.co.uk)

Safeguarding News Watch:

Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity

New toolkit to help make gyms more accessible

5 January 2022 | [UKCoaching.org](https://ukcoaching.org)

UK Coaching Awards 2021—The Results

7 December 2021 | [UKCoaching.org](https://ukcoaching.org)

Sport England Club Matters—The Good Governance Guide

7 January 2022 | [SportEnglandClubMatters.com](https://sportenglandclubmatters.com)

An Invitation to Contribute to a Feature Film About Grooming in Sport

7 December 2021 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://anncrafttrust.org)

We Are Undefeatable—New Videos From Learning From Local Places Event

14 December 2020 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://anncrafttrust.org)

Sport England Publish Results of Active Lives Adult Survey

26 October 2021 | [AnnCraftTrust.org](https://anncrafttrust.org)

Five Reasons to Put Physical Activity in Low and Middle Income Countries High on the Public Health Agenda

17 November 2021 | [SportandDev.org](https://sportanddev.org)

Safeguarding Research and Resources

A Guide to Good Governance in Sport and Activity

Good governance helps organisations work effectively. It helps them meet the needs of their people and be sustainable. Sport England Club Matters produced a guide to good governance. It explains what governance is, and what makes it “good”. It also explores who is responsible for governance, and the sort of benefits good governance can bring.

Read more: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/getting-the-right-structure-how-good-governance-can-help-sport-achieve-best-safeguarding-practice/>

Carers UK—State of Caring 2021

A snapshot of unpaid care in the UK.

Read more: https://www.carersuk.org/images/Research/CUK_State_of_Caring_2021_report.pdf

Free Sex Education Resources

Suite of free multilingual resources from Brook to support relationships and sex education (RSE) teaching and learning. Includes guides to contraception, consent, disclosure of sexual harassment or assault, pornography, and the National LGBT partnership terminology guide.

More information: <https://www.brook.org.uk/resources/>

Safeguarding Research and Resources

Safeguarding Code in Martial Arts

The Safeguarding Code in Martial Arts was launched nearly 4 years ago with the support of Sport England and The National Lottery and created as a code of practice for martial arts practitioners including instructors, coaches, clubs and anyone delivering Martial Arts as a means of being recognised as delivering good safeguarding practices within their organisations.

Read more: https://www.safeguardingcode.com/index.php?redirect=0&mc_cid=117843f3fc&mc_eid=4ca38753bb

Talking to Your Child About Online Sexual Harassment

Guidance from the Children's Commissioner.

Access here: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/talking-to-your-child-about-online-sexual-harassment-a-guide-for-parents/>

Lords Committee—New National Plan for Sport, Health and Wellbeing

Failings in sport and recreation policy and fragmented delivery have resulted in little progress being made in tackling levels of inactivity, particularly in certain groups including women and girls, disabled people, ethnic minorities, the elderly and people from less affluent backgrounds. A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing will set clear goals and better coordinate departments to deliver real change.

Learn more: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/482/national-plan-for-sport-and-recreation-committee/>

Safeguarding Research and Resources

Liberty Protection Safeguards Consultation

The government has confirmed that the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) will not be implemented in April 2022, adding that it is “aiming to launch” a long-awaited consultation on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) replacement early in the new year.

Read more: <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2021/12/17/liberty-protection-safeguards-consultation-to-launch-early-2022-but-new-target-date-unlikely>

Positive Behavioural Support

Information pack for family carers from Challenging Behaviour Foundation.

Access here: <https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information-and-guidance/positive-behaviour-support/pbs-an-information-pack-for-family-carers/>

EASS Engagement Newsletter

Latest Edition of Equality Advisory and Support Service Newsletter.

Access here: <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/ci/fattach/get/219667/1632132609/redirect/1/session/L2F2LzEvdGltZS8xNjMyNDk0NzI5L3NpZC9RLW16QIVscA==/filename/2021%2009%20Equality%20Advisory%20Support%20Service%20Engagement%20Newsletter%20September%202021.pdf>

From The Vault: My Unbeatable Experience

Kate Brackley, BILD

From Issue 83, April 2013

My programme in the Undateables series was shown on Channel 4 on 22 January 2013.

It shows my story, what love means to me and my search for love again. I did find love nine years ago and I was head over heels about that gentleman, but unfortunately this didn't last as it was a long distance relationship and for practical reasons we split up. There have been guys in the past but they did not respect me for who I was so these did not last, and at that point I lost my confidence.

Now nine years on I realised I would like another chance to find love again. So with the help of a local Stars In The Sky I met a guy and he was so sweet and so down to earth. We went out on two dates and they went so well I felt a spark there.

It all started in June at an event that I went to through Stars in the Sky, which is a group where people with learning disabilities can make friends and relationships. The event was their Summer Ball and a friend mentioned that the producers of the Undateables were

there looking for people to feature in the new series. I put my name down out of interest and had a screen test to see how I coped being filmed. I must have come across well because Channel 4 liked me and told me I would be in the programme!

While I was being filmed it felt weird and it was slightly embarrassing as I have never done anything like this before. I suppose the feeling was how to I react, what to say and what I should do.

I was nervous meeting the film crew for the first time but after a while it just became natural to me, perhaps because I became friendly with the crew. It also took a lot of my time of course but, secretly, I lapped it up as I was relieved to have such an amazing experience of my life.

The things that got filmed were around where I was living, when spending time talking to my friends and family about what love is like in my eyes and their eyes, and talking about the dates and how confident I was feeling meeting a guy.

I was also filmed on the way to work at

BILD and in the office, as well as at Our Way Self Advocacy in Kidderminster. And of course the dates also got filmed.

I was so excited and nervous about meeting my date, but it was a pleasant experience and I loved meeting him. He was lovely, a good sense of humour, a unique personality and he was very warming.

On the first date we went to the Forest of Dean and I met him for the first time and walked together into a maze and that went really well. Our conversation flowed.

After completing the maze we had a go at crazy golf and a drink in the local café. By the end of this meeting I really wanted to stay in touch with him and so did he, so both of us exchanged telephone numbers and since then we have been in contact.

We arranged a follow up date and again it went really well. I had a poem which I wrote for him and he was very touched.

We went to a pub where we had a nice meal and after that we went to Himley Hall to walk in the park and feed the ducks. It felt so romantic, just the perfect location for the date, and we decided to be friends and take things really slow and this has not changed.

Since the start of the new year it has been amazing, I have been on This Morning Live on ITV, I've featured in New, the magazine for the Daily Express as well as being on the front page of my local newspaper, The Droitwich Advertiser! I've also been interviewed for Care Talk Magazine.

In my home town of Droitwich Spa I have had people come up to me saying that they have seen me on the TV advertisements for the Undateables, and This Morning.

I am so happy with all that I have done, it has been a whirlwind for me. The support that I have had has been amazing. I would like to say thank you for everyone's support.

This article originally appeared in a 2013 BILD newsletter, and was reprinted, with permission, in the April 2013 edition of the ACT Safeguarding Bulletin.

Respect-Ability made a short film about Kate, which you can watch [here](#).

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Everyone has a right to be treated with respect and dignity.
Everyone deserves to be safe.