

Bridget Penhale and Margaret Flynn

Welcome to this second issue of the journal for 2022, as we enter into our second full year of an on-going and evolving (or perhaps mutating!) pandemic. Although media coverage remains preoccupied and focused on more global issues such as war as well as the pandemic, in the UK we have seen continued coverage of safeguarding related issues and thus provide a round-up of what seem to be some of the most topical of these.

We appear to be stuck with serial crises in which remedies for grievances and relief from hurt appear remote in the spectacle of humanity's vulnerability. Adult safeguarding has always been attuned to the worlds experienced by individuals in the knowledge that the bigger world, the one that we watch safely from our homes, pervades our lives in so many ways.

The tenacious pandemic continues to blight many lives. The YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project has found that in the 27 countries it surveyed, young people and women are more likely to believe that COVID has worsened their mental health and finances [1]. Protests over restrictions persist (even among politicians) and, to a lesser extent, resistance to vaccination itself. This is in spite of the backdrop of increasing case numbers. Necessarily such defiant positions speak of a deeper malaise than the evaluative contrasts of COVID restrictions versus no restrictions and vaccinate versus don't vaccinate. Intensive care units are typically caring for unvaccinated patients. The exceptions include people who are immunocompromised with underlying conditions.

Meanwhile, the culture of online hate and abuse endures. From the "stop the steal" riot in Washington on 6 January 2021, which was facilitated by online organising, to the racist abuse of England footballers, cricketers, and the fatal stabbing of Sir David Amess MP through to the commonplace abusive tweets and threats to politicians and public figures – and the glaring want of social media's self-regulation is revealed.

If statues are removed without explanation, does it mean that the individuals and events they commemorate cease to matter or perhaps that commemoration was unmerited in the first place? The University of Hong Kong has removed the "Pillar of Shame" sculpture which commemorates the democracy protesters killed by Chinese troops during 1989. It has done so on the basis of "external legal advice" which is suggestive of intolerance and/or revisionism [2].

Something to cheer us onward into old age is that from October 2023, no one in England will have to pay more than £86k for their care costs. On the downside, this means that homeowners in the poorest areas of England face losing a greater share of their housing wealth to pay for care. The health and care levy added to national insurance contributions is centre stage in the promised reform of the social care system. The hope that it would draw the NHS and social care together with pooled budgets and integrated career paths must be set aside once again with "personal responsibility" in the foreground. Meanwhile, underfunding child social care, staff turnover and social workers' unmanageable caseloads are implicated in the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. No doubt the safeguarding practice reviews will take as read the deceit of the offenders and the long-term erosion of family support.

Well there are always charities – or are there? It turns out that since 2012, Britain's highest earners have been donating less to charities in spite of getting richer (Booth, 2021). So much

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for rising tides lifting etc. etc. It dances with the evidence of the World Inequality report: 30 years of trade globalization has widened the gap and this has become more pronounced since the pandemic.

Here is a surprise: the Post Office cannot fund the “substantial compensation bill” arising from its prosecution of over 700 sub-postmasters and postmistresses for false accounting and theft during 2000–2014. Some of these people had been required to pay the Post Office for alleged shortfalls. Most helpfully, the Westminster Government has determined that the taxpayer will foot the bill.

No doubt prospective whistleblowers will make Christine Outram's review concerning West Suffolk hospital in Bury St Edmunds their bedtime reading. It is critical of the Trust's Chair and senior management team who rejected concerns about a self-injecting doctor who was involved in the treatment of a woman who died. The Trust embarked on an investigation to identify the individual responsible for alerting the husband of the deceased patient by demanding fingerprint samples. This intimidation and flawed investigation compromised confidence in challenging unsafe working practices; the positions of Trust's Chair and senior management team; the hospital's CQC rating; and ultimately the reputation it had sought to defend. Then it emerged that the Trust's former Chief Executive who had been criticised in the review continued to remain on the Trust's payroll on secondment and will remain so until September 2022 (Weaver, 2021).

In a year during which the police have made progress in increasing the number of rape referrals to the CPS, the number of charges made has increased only slightly. The Westminster Government has apologised to rape victims who have been failed since the number of alleged rapists being prosecuted fell to historical lows. Other reminders of misogyny include the posthumous apology to the four thousand plus women who were vilified and persecuted as witches in Scotland [3]; and in Wales, in spite of 7,000 reports of stalking, only five Stalking Protection Orders were issued [4]; Perhaps the proposed Misogyny and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act [5] will concentrate minds?

Germany's highest court ruled that disabled people must be protected by legally binding guidelines in the event of hospitals introducing a pandemic-triage system [6].

The Competition and Markets Authority studied the private providers of children's homes and foster care during 2021. Its report confirmed that the market is broken. Many providers carry high levels of debt which render them vulnerable to collapse and children and young people are being placed far from their families of origin. These big businesses are party to a dysfunctional market system due to undersupply and elevated prices [7]. It is worth checking out *The Guardian's* investigation of Achieve Care Homes, Achieve Training Centres, etc. whose director is a “Lamborghini-driving plasterer, turned pub landlord” (*The Guardian*, 2022). There are parallels with Assessment and Treatment Units which may continue to operate in spite of poor inspections, the disbelief of Safeguarding Adults' Boards and the dismay of their “host” local authorities.

Analysis by the Guardian determined that hundreds of care homes in England are providing substandard care to people with dementia. One in five is rated as “inadequate” or “requiring improvement” by the Care Quality Commission. Of the 7,589 homes specialising in dementia care, 1,483 are delivering substandard care [8].

Unaffordable gas and electricity costs are connected to the long tolerated energy inefficiencies of so many homes. They disproportionately affect those on low incomes. In hand with rising food prices and inflation, the poorest households' spending on gas and electricity is higher as a proportion of disposable income [9]. It is alarming that growing numbers of children and young people are growing up under economic hardship that places their development at risk. Neither the impact nor the duration of poverty on families is distributed evenly.

The wrecking ball of disbelief features in a report published during January 2022, concerning cult-like evangelical Christian society at Winchester College, a private school [10]. John Smyth QC secured a powerful influence over members of the Christian Forum and went on to subject those he groomed to brutal beatings. Unchallenged by the head and his colleagues, he moved to Zimbabwe where his violence similarly went unchecked.

The Ministry of Justice's consultation concerning victims closed at the beginning of February 2022. It is not known whether legislation will result. It is regrettable that it did not consider people with compromised mental capacity, sensory losses and of those with limited communication skills who have been and are too easily dismissed as "unreliable" witnesses. We would have wished to see explicit reference to "secondary victims", that is, the relatives of victims. These relatives are credible "rational bystanders" and in some cases they may have a quasi-legal status as attorneys.

Westminster's "partygate" [11] has gifted an example of the confusion and delay that plagues decision-making when parallel, professional investigations take place. This is familiar to Safeguarding Boards. It may take many months and several changes of police officers before a Safeguarding Board is finally advised that the CPS will not be prosecuting. Although police investigations have primacy, the addition of professional regulators' investigations and complaints to the mix and the pursuit of solutions are enfeebled.

Although anguish concerning the gangster techniques of Belarus towards Ukraine bubbled at the end of 2021, the brutality of trapping refugees in sub-zero temperatures without food and shelter was not perceived as a humanitarian crisis. A state of emergency resulted with plans for a Trump-style wall [12] to halt the progress of refugees at border crossings. As the numbers of people seeking asylum increases, xenophobic rhetoric is harmful. The phenomenon of people fleeing war, tyranny, persecution and famine, or migrating in bondage, is the story of the human race. What we know is that traumatised people fleeing war in any country require safe and legal routes – humanitarian corridors. This background to the flow of 100,000 Russian troops around Ukraine's border, plus President Putin's denial that an invasion was planned – then his announcement concerning a "partial" withdrawal from the border – were contexts to an increasingly ruthless and brutal war destroying its neighbour's hospitals, clinics, residential blocks and schools. Ukrainians are defending their country with astonishing resilience and resistance [13]. The impacts of this war's shocks include the lost lives, destroyed homes, the displacement of whole communities, a humanitarian crisis, disinformation, global inter-dependence and the indefensible fortunes of oligarchs.

Stop Press! Our final news item is to alert readers, if not already aware, that in the latter part of March the government announced long-awaited details of the consultation process concerning the Code of Practice that is being developed for the introduction and implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards and associated revision to the Mental Capacity Act. So following this consultation alert, please respond to the Ministry of Justice's consultation on the Liberty Protection Safeguards and Mental Capacity Act *Code of Practice* at: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-03-17/hcws694>

This issue of the journal contains four papers and a book review. The first paper, by Mark Holloway and colleague Alyson Norman, concerns individuals with acquired brain injury (ABI) and through an extensive literature review considers the findings of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) relating to ABI. The principal focus of the review are the recommendations made in reviews in relation to social work practice. Through a thematic analysis of the reviews, four main themes were identified, including issues concerning assessments of mental capacity as well as professional curiosity (or lack of) by practitioners. Overall, the review emphasises shortcomings in social work practice, education and training concerning ABI and highlights a clear need for improvement in these areas. There is much food for thought in this practice-oriented paper.

Our second paper, by Michael Preston-Shoot and colleagues Christine Cocker and Adi Cooper, also concerns Safeguarding Adults Reviews – this time relating to matters of Transitional Safeguarding. Although, thankfully, it appears there have not been many such reviews, the paper establishes the framework for an evidence base in this area. This is achieved through consideration of other literature relating to transitions of young people with concerns about safeguarding needs and from that developing an analytical framework. The approach was developed with an aim to assist those conducting SARs in this complex area and appears to provide a useful way forward for those undertaking such work.

The third paper in this issue is by Marlina Muluk and colleagues from Indonesia and is a research-based paper. It concerns the development of a type of rational emotive therapy to be used in relation to treatment of women who are deaf who have experienced sexual harassment and who have been adversely affected psychologically by such abuse. The paper describes the work undertaken to develop this type of therapy and the pilot work conducted in relation to this, prior to further research to evaluate the use of such tools. The paper will be of interest to those who are interested in psychological interventions for different types of abuse.

The final full paper in this issue is by Karl Mason and colleagues and is also research-based. The paper considers the inclusion of Discriminatory abuse as a type of abuse in the government guidance produced in England in 2000 and is also based on a literature review. This category of abuse is relatively rarely used in practice-related contexts and the review set out to explore this type of abuse and possible reasons why the category is not used. Some useful recommendations for practice were derived from the review, together with an identified need for further work on this issue and these are included in the paper.

The issue concludes with a Book review provided by Pete Morgan. The publication reviewed is published by Jessica Kingsley Publications as part of their series of book relating to violence and abuse and is titled: “Why Can’t You hear Me?” by Andy and Amanda McCulloch and concerns their experiences as parents in relation to safeguarding. Some useful detail is included in the review.

We hope that you will find papers in this issue of interest and use in your safeguarding work. Regular readers will know that we are always interested in receiving contributions to the journal and we invite readers to continue to contribute papers about adult safeguarding, including in relation to safeguarding and COVID-19, which of course is still with us. If you maybe interested and want to discuss further before committing to a submission, do get in touch with one of us as per our details on the inside cover of the journal or on the webpage. As this issue was in preparation, a Call for Papers for a Special Issue of the journal was issued on the JAP website. It relates to a planned Special Issue relating to European Perspectives on Safeguarding older people, to be published in spring 2023. The call is open until early May and full details appear on the website, so please do look at this if you are interested in producing an Abstract for consideration by the Guest Editors.

Finally, we hope that everyone has been managing to stay safe and well during these continuing strange times and look forward to providing further issues for this volume during the year.

Notes

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5. www.gov.scot/news/working-group-on-misogyny-and-criminal-justice-in-scotland/ (accessed 17 March 2022).
6. www.dw.com/en/covid-germany-must-protect-disabled-people-in-triage-cases-court-rules/a-60271619 (accessed 20 January 2022).
7. www.gov.uk/government/news/action-needed-on-dysfunctional-children-s-social-care-market (accessed 12 March 2022).
8. [www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/18/hundreds-dementia-care-homes-substandard-england#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20care%20homes%20in,CQC\)%2C%20inspection%20reports%20show](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/18/hundreds-dementia-care-homes-substandard-england#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20care%20homes%20in,CQC)%2C%20inspection%20reports%20show) (accessed 4 February 2022).
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12. <https://techunwrapped.com/trump-style-on-the-us-mexico-border-poland-will-build-an-anti-immigrant-wall-on-the-border-with-belarus/> (accessed 17 March 2022).
13. www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/17/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-22-of-the-invasion (accessed 17 March 2022).

References

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