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Brexit has taught us a lot about nurturing stereotypes since the rapid increase in “hate crimes” has yet to wane. Figures released by the National Police Chiefs’ Council are at higher levels than they were 12 months ago[1]. In the absence of extra school places, enhanced NHS provision and housing in areas which have absorbed newcomers – as well as action to address wage undercutting – the destructive legacy of slavery surfaces[2]. Little wonder that there’s no news about the former Prime Minister’s promise to launch an “action plan” following the spike in racist violence after the Brexit vote. The suggestion that child refugees arriving in the UK from Calais should undergo rigorous checks (including dental examinations) to prove their ages fuels a xenophobic fire that looks unlikely to be quelled any time soon.

Earlier in the year the Care Quality Commission announced that it would undertake fewer and more focussed inspections – effectively rolling back the approach of in-depth quality and safety inspections of hospitals. This is the result of the £32 m reduction in the CQC’s budget and associated staffing issues. Many hospitals welcomed the reduction and GPs have been emboldened to request the same[3]. Now the Food Standards Authority’s reduced budget is resulting in the large retailers being invited to police themselves. Readers may recall that this is only a couple of years after “horsegate” (Morley, 2016) and related, but unsurprising concerns about the inability of organisations of all types to effectively monitor and regulate themselves. We are reminded of the apparent circularity of some issues over time.

During September we learned that the proportion of people accessing mental health services is increasing and that mental illnesses among young women are soaring, that is, they have now become identified as a “high risk” group. It is also not surprising to learn that mental health problems disproportionately affect those facing deprivation and that people in the black ethnic group have particularly low treatment rates[4].

A very worrying development hinges on Michael Fallon’s assertion that “Our legal system has been abused to level false charges against our troops on an industrial scale”. The conservative government wishes to limit the jurisdiction of the ECHR on the basis of cost to the Ministry of Defence[5]. Fortunately, there are lawyers to remind us that it is the role of the justice system to determine the validity of claims and it matters that function is quite separate from that of government[6]. And although there are those who are suggesting that an exit from the EU will automatically mean a departure from the ECHR, it is clear that membership of both the Court and the Council of Europe are independent of any EU membership (and indeed pre-dated this by some time).

During October, the family of the woman whom footballer Ched Evans was accused of raping stated that his retrial resembled a trial of their relative. This is because graphic details of the woman’s sexual history (as opposed to Ched Evans’) were set out during his retrial. Ched Evans had been convicted of rape during 2011 and served over two years of a prison sentence. However, in the light of the woman’s sexual history, the prosecution failed to secure a prosecution for rape through a failure to convince the members of the jury “beyond reasonable doubt”. The press coverage acknowledges the considerable concern that women and perhaps in particular the majority of rape victims, will be deterred from reporting rape. A woman’s sexual history was a typical defence strategy which those being prosecuted for rape mounted prior to the introduction of the Youth and Criminal Evidence Act 1999[7]. We hope that we will not see a return to that type of defence, but unfortunately it does feel like an endorsement of that tenacious prejudice “she was asking for it!” Under-reporting of a different variety also features in this edition with a paper from Steve Moore, that relates to the under reporting of safeguarding issues in care homes for older people. Based on a relatively small-scale piece of research the paper contains some interesting and useful findings to this under explored area of the safeguarding world.

Reporting matters are also touched in a paper by Jill Manthorpe *et al.* concerning the issue of powers of access and entry, which have been subject of some debate in recent years, with arguments for and against the introduction of legislation in this area. This paper discusses the debates that were held in the UK Parliament about the need for legislation and presents some interesting findings though its detailed analysis.

There is significant learning from the Greek island of Lesbos and specifically from 85 years old resident Emilia Kamvisi. Greek islanders have been nominated for the Nobel peace prize for “opening their hearts and homes” to Syrian refugees despite the parlous state of Greece’s economy. Emilia Kamvisi’s father arrived in Greece as a refugee in 1922. She is believed to have embodied the compassion of locals when she was filmed bottle-feeding a Syrian baby. She said, “It is in our blood to help these people. We are all human. It is the right thing to do[8]”.

It is events such as these, which have the potential to shape our thinking and attitudes about child protection and adult protection. In this edition, we feature an article about the role of Forum Theatre in shaping attitudes to adult protection for both professionals and (lay) members of the general public. It is helpful to see innovative techniques such as this being used to accompany more traditional approaches in this field.

For readers with an interest in Acquired Brain Injury, you will be aware that the British Association of Social Workers has recently published useful practice guidance to assist practitioners involved in this area of work[9]. This edition of the journal complements the guidance with an important article by Alyson Norman who provides powerful testimony about the life and death of her brother and brings a much-needed personal and familial perspective to our terrain.

Our final item of this issue and indeed of this year is a book review submitted by Mala Shankardass. This is a review of a book by Tova Winterstein and colleague Zvi Eisikovits from Israel about their work in relation to violence against older women. Based on research studies undertaken over the past decade, this volume takes a lifecourse perspective and discusses possible strategies and approaches to intervention. It is likely to be of interest to many.

Finally, we hope that readers will have found some additional points of interest that they wish to explore further from the content of this issue. As ever, if anyone has any ideas for potential papers that they wish to explore with the editors, do please get in touch as we would be happy to discuss this further with individuals; our respective contact details are contained on the cover of this (and any other) issue. Thanks for your continuing support for the journal and we hope that all have a peaceful and restful festive period. We look forward to continuing to provide new issues to you in 2017.

## Notes

1. [www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/07/hate-surged-after-eu-referendum-police-figures-show](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/07/hate-surged-after-eu-referendum-police-figures-show)
2. [www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/)
3. [www.gponline.com/gp-forward-view-gpc-will-push-further-reduction-cqc-inspections/article/1392231](http://www.gponline.com/gp-forward-view-gpc-will-push-further-reduction-cqc-inspections/article/1392231)
4. [www.nhsconfed.org/news/2016/09/the-adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey](http://www.nhsconfed.org/news/2016/09/the-adult-psychiatric-morbidity-survey)
5. [www.politicshome.com/news/uk/defence/military-campaigns/news/79546/michael-fallon-i-will-protect-british-troops-war](http://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/defence/military-campaigns/news/79546/michael-fallon-i-will-protect-british-troops-war)
6. [www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/derogating-from-echr-shuts-door-to-cases-of-genuine-abuse/](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/news/press-releases/derogating-from-echr-shuts-door-to-cases-of-genuine-abuse/)
7. [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/17/the-guardian-view-on-ched-evans-reconsider-the-law](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/oct/17/the-guardian-view-on-ched-evans-reconsider-the-law)
8. [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/22/lesvos-humanitarian-operations-compassion-refugees-continue-to-arrive-by-sea](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/22/lesvos-humanitarian-operations-compassion-refugees-continue-to-arrive-by-sea)
9. [www.basw.co.uk/resource/?id=5157](http://www.basw.co.uk/resource/?id=5157)

## Reference

Morley, K. (2016), “Food safety cuts raise fears of new horse meat scandal”, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 October.