

## Bridget Penhale and Margaret Flynn

Welcome to this third issue of the journal for 2021, in what continue to be unprecedented, although perhaps increasingly familiar times! Although evidently dominated by the pandemic crisis across the world, media coverage across the UK has continued to include information about safeguarding issues within the context of different sports – in relation to gymnastics [1], judo [2] and swimming [3] as well as ongoing concerns about abuse within football – including high levels of racism, abuse and hate crime online, leading to a brief, but targeted social media blackout/boycott by professional football players in May 2021 [4]. In addition, announcements about further cuts in relation to social care services to individuals and the resultant distress that this causes, at times even leading to neglect, have also been highlighted in recent months [5], as has the situation of care home residents continuing to be effectively isolated and denied visits from family members, despite some easing of the pandemic, including legal challenges to counter such trends [6].

The first paper in this issue is by Christine Cocker (from the University of East Anglia) and colleagues and concerns issues in relation to transitional safeguarding. This practice-related paper makes the case for use of the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) framework within safeguarding for children and young people. The paper sets out the commonalities and distinctions in the relevant legal frameworks that relate to either safeguarding children and young people or adults and presents the case for the development of a transitional safeguarding framework. It also promotes the inclusion of an MSP approach to this type of safeguarding and indicates that the differences in safeguarding of adults and that which relates to children and young people are not so substantial to prevent such an approach being both useful and relatively straightforward to develop. In addition, the MSP framework is premised on the wishes and desired outcomes that individuals have in relation to their situations – and this is also a central consideration within transitional safeguarding. However, it is also clear that this type of approach would need to contain components that are contextual and developmental, as well as relational, as strongly emphasised in the paper. There is much of interest in the paper, especially for those working in areas where there are combined safeguarding boards.

The second paper, providing a legal perspective, is by Vinny Kennedy (of Northumbria University) and explores the issue of religious gifting and undue influence. The paper is written from a desire to expand discussion, in the context of England and Wales, at least, about how best to protect people from possible undue influence when they are making gifts to religious institutions. It is based on the legal provisions that exist in England and Wales in relation to undue influence and draws on relevant associated literature. It appears that although there has been an attempt to define, in a legal sense, the scope of undue influence, there is little guidance about the distinction between persuasion and coercion. The argument developed in the paper is that more should be done to protect individuals, including the production of guidance, to ensure that such gifting is achieved by the exercise of free will. Further development and adoption of safeguarding policies by religious institutions, and including consideration of undue influence, would also be helpful. As it appears that there have been few studies of this topic, the paper is useful addition to the area and to the development of discussion of how individuals can be better safeguarded from risk of such harm, as well as the relevant institutions being protected from accusations of undue influence and abuse.

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The following two papers return to the topic of the last issue, which readers will recall was the special issue on violence, neglect and abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic (JAP, 2021). Although neither of these papers was submitted for the call for papers for the special issue, which appeared in May 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us and still affecting many individuals in diverse societal contexts, we are aware that further work is being undertaken relating to this topic. We therefore anticipate further papers in future as well.

The third paper in the issue is by Jonathan Parker (Bournemouth University) and explores the issue of structural discrimination and abuse that occurred during earlier stages of the pandemic crisis in the specific context of people living in care homes in England and Wales. This conceptual paper examines the high death rates of care home residents (and staff) that occurred during the early stages of the pandemic across England and Wales. From consideration of secondary data (research, media reports and mortality information) it explores the mortality figures plus situations of differential treatment of residents and staff (for instance in access to and provision of personal protective equipment) that took place and conceptualises these as an example of structural abuse. An argument is made that structural abuse should be included in typologies as a separate category of abuse. Such a reclassification of abuse to include structural forms would also be likely to require reconsideration and reconfiguration of health and care services, both locally and nationally, but the indicators of structural discrimination, underlined by high and unprecedented levels of overt ageism, seen during the pandemic are strongly suggestive that such a course of action is warranted. The paper is thus a useful addition to the developing literature endorsing the calls for a UN convention on the rights of older persons.

The following paper, by Sandra Walklate and colleagues (from Liverpool University), also focuses on the situation that has developed during the pandemic, through a consideration of policing within the context of high-risk situations of domestic violence. The paper reports on a study that was undertaken concerning the challenges posed by COVID-19 to continuation of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) for high-risk cases of domestic violence and abuse. Through a rapid-response research study involving qualitative interviews (undertaken online) with a series of police leads for domestic abuse, the paper provides findings concerning the development and increased use of virtual platforms for MARAC meetings and a positive perception of benefits of such digital developments from the police perspective. As this may well not be a perception shared by others who attend MARAC meetings as participants, more work in relation to the experiences and opinions of both victims/survivors and representatives from other agencies about such meetings and the ease of use of online platforms is indicated in the paper. If such methods are likely to be used on an ongoing basis in future a need for additional infra-structure support and support for attendees is also signalled. The paper is useful in providing evidence about how the pandemic has been shaping professional practice in this area of safeguarding as well as likely continuing consequent changes to practice.

The final paper in the issue is a further practice-related paper, by Zoe Hodges, a professional based in Cardiff. The paper provides a viewpoint perspective on the apparent developing use of the term of acopia as a diagnosis for individuals in acute hospital settings and associated resultant difficulties in this form of medical terminology. The paper argues that professionals from all agencies should be aware of the situations and priorities that individuals have in relation to the care that they need (from discussion with the person and others, if/as relevant). A failure to recognise complexity, at an individual level, could lead to extremely adverse consequences. The paper emphasises the importance of what language is used in relation to adults at risk and highlights that a failure to adequately take this into account can (negatively) affect the quality of care that an individual receives. This is a thought-provoking paper on which to close this issue and which is likely to be of interest to many of our readers.

We hope that you will find this issue of interest and use to you within the context of your safeguarding interests and work. As always, we are interested in receiving contributions to the journal and would like to invite readers to continue to contribute papers in relation to safeguarding and COVID-19, as well as other elements of adult safeguarding. If you are potentially interested and wish to discuss this further before committing pen to paper (or more likely fingers to keyboard...) do get in touch with one of us to progress this further. Finally, we hope that everyone has been managing to stay safe and well during these strange times and look forward to providing future issues of the journal later in the year.

## Notes

1. [www.telegraph.co.uk/gymnastics/2021/03/09/british-gymnastics-abuse-allegations-shocking-numbers-reveal/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gymnastics/2021/03/09/british-gymnastics-abuse-allegations-shocking-numbers-reveal/)
2. [www.bbc.co.uk/sport/judo/56423236](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/judo/56423236)
3. [www.irishtimes.com/news/former-irish-swimming-coach-admits-sexual-abuse-of-girls-1.129869](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/former-irish-swimming-coach-admits-sexual-abuse-of-girls-1.129869)
4. [www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/social-media-boycott-blackout-football-b1840272.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/social-media-boycott-blackout-football-b1840272.html)
5. [www.communitycare.co.uk/2021/04/13/social-care-cuts-increased-charges-causing-huge-distress-disabled-people/](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2021/04/13/social-care-cuts-increased-charges-causing-huge-distress-disabled-people/)
6. [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56607669](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56607669)

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