

Safeguarding: local government and vulnerable adults



The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is high priority. All citizens and organisations have a role to play in protecting vulnerable adults from abuse, wherever and whenever it occurs. The approach is to maintain an appropriate balance between the promotion of independence and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. In the CSSIW Protection of Vulnerable Adults Monitoring Report for 2008 – 2009, there were 4, 451 alleged cases of abuse of vulnerable adults, reported across Wales. These figures represented a 5% increase on cases reported in the previous year.

With the common victims of alleged abuse being older women, the next largest category of abuse was individuals with learning disabilities. For many vulnerable adults their abusers are closer to home and may be loved ones, or individuals into whose care they have been entrusted. As in relation to safeguarding, those working in the care sector have a key role to play in the safeguarding/protection of vulnerable adults. However the understanding of who may be a vulnerable adult and what constitutes a safeguarding issue can be less clear. In 2002, strategic guidance was issued to authorities in Wales, called ‘ In Safe Hands’.

This established the national framework for the development of local policies/procedures and guidance for the protection of vulnerable adults. In Wales the guidance was issued under section 7 of the Local Social Services Act 1970, establishing the framework for these local policies and procedures. Therefore providing the basis for social services departments in Wales, to co-ordinate a process of local policy development, to prevent, identify, respond to and ameliorate action against perpetrators of abuse. Four regional forums were formed in Wales, following the publication of ‘ In Safe Hands’.

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Each region developed its own regional adult protection policy and procedures in line with the national guidance. The four regions have played the key role in the developing, agreeing and implementing the policies and procedures. The four fora areas in Wales are:- * North Wales forum * Dyfed Powys forum * South Wales forum * Gwent region The functions of the fora are to:- * Co-ordinate Adult Protection policies within the region * Promote shared understanding and practice for all agencies within the region * Contribute to all Wales understanding of POVA practice Promote a joined up approach to training Within the fora there are representations from statutory organisations such as local authorities, health boards and the police service. The foras may also include representation from the fire service, Wales Ambulance Service, NHS Trusts and the independent sector, such as a care provider organisation and the (voluntary) sector. The regulatory and national minimum standards regimes, regarding POVA, that were introduced in Wales under the Care Standard Act 2000, must be implemented effectively.

From the 26th July 2004, providers of care and employment, agencies and businesses, will be able to request checks against the POVA list, as part of an application for a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosure. In respect of individuals, being considered for care positions. Checks against a POVA list can only be made via the CRB as part of a disclosure under the Police Act 1997. If the disclosure check reveals that the individual is on the POVA list, or is provisionally on the POVA list, the CRB will advise the employer that the person may not be employed in a position of care.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Group Act 2006 was introduced following the findings of the Bichard inquiry into the Soham murders. The act <https://assignbuster.com/safeguarding-local-government-and-vulnerable-adults/>

introduced a 'vetting and barring' scheme for people working with children, whereby a new Independent Safeguarding Authority must maintain lists of people who are barred from certain kinds of work with children and adults. That list includes those who are convicted of or admit to, certain specified criminal offences, including various sexual offences, and those involving violence or the mistreatment of children.

Once barred the restrictions last from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10 years. Following the death of Victoria Climbié at London in 2002, where she had been tortured and murdered by her guardians which led to a public inquiry and produced major changes in Child Protection Policies. The public inquiry headed by Lord Laming, discovered numerous instances where Climbié could have been saved and also that many organisations in Climbié's case were badly run. The subsequent report by Laming made numerous recommendations related to child protection.

Climbié's death was largely responsible for the formation of the Every Child Matters initiative, the introduction of the Children's Act 2004, the creation of the Contact Point project, a government database designed to hold information on all children, and the creation of the office of the Children's Commissioner for England. Changes to working practices were made following the findings in the, Vanessa George case. Where, children suffered sexual abuse at the Little Teds Nursery in Plymouth.

Jim Gould, the chairman of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, called for the government to introduce legislation to 'strengthen accountability frameworks for nurseries'. A review of the George case found poor

regulation, inadequate training, and a lack of supervision at the nursery. Members of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, which carried out the review, strongly criticized the regulator Ofsted for not picking up concerns on how the structure of the nursery was being run. The Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Scheme was set out in the Care Standards Act 2000.

At the heart of the scheme is the POVA List. From 2004 providers of care and employment agencies and businesses to such providers will be able to request regular checks against the POVA List as part of an application for a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure with respect to individuals being considered for care positions. The aim of the POVA Scheme is to significantly enhance the level of protection for vulnerable adults. The policy within the care home has been set out to the requirements set by the Care Standards Act 2000.

All staff must receive a copy of the policy at induction and a signature is required to say they understand its implications. Following the policy and procedure within the care home, every member, of staff has a professional and moral duty to report any witnessed, suspected or disclosure of abuse. Staff members should notify their manager without delay, to report the concern/disclosure. (If a staff member is the alleged perpetrator, the overall manager/owner should be notified, as extended leave/redeployment may need to be considered.)