

Exploring the Involvement of Older People within Adult Safeguarding

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Background and purpose:The importance of fully engaging adults at risk in all areas of adult safeguarding (at both a strategic and an individual level) has been highlighted within UK guidance; however, research has suggested that the level of involvement is low, both regionally (in the North East of England) and nationally (e.g., Corkhill & Walker, 2010; Wallcraft & Sweeney, 2011). This research study considered two related research questions; 1) Why is there a low level of involvement of older people within adult safeguarding? 2) How can the meaningful involvement of older people within adult safeguarding be achieved? The overall aim of the research was to contribute to adult safeguarding through greater knowledge and understanding of the involvement of older people and to identify and develop indicators for best practice in this area.

Methods:The research applied a qualitative approach using case studies as the strategy of inquiry. Two local authorities within the North East region of England were purposively selected as the cases for inclusion. Data collection methods included interviews and observations as well as the collection of related policy documents. Participants included the following: * Safeguarding Adults Board members * Advocates * Social workers * Older people and their family members

Thematic analysis was used to explore the data.

Results and conclusions:A number of key themes were identified from the data including factors which help and hinder involvement and participants' constructions of involvement and adult safeguarding. Key themes also related to the human rights of older people within safeguarding processes and the impact of both regional and national policy on adult safeguarding practice. The proposed paper will discuss the key recommendations and implications of the research findings for social work policy, practice and future research.

Key words: Older people, adult safeguarding, involvement, rights