

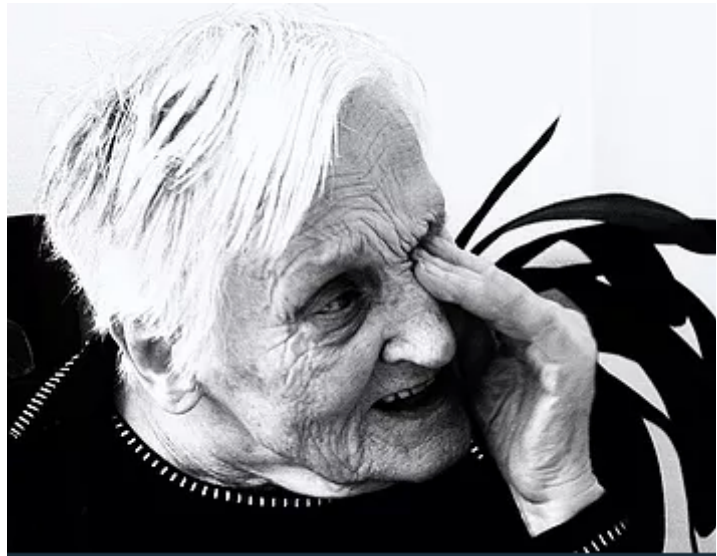
Making safeguarding personal – this includes person centred approaches to communication

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[An opinion piece by a lead practitioner in safeguarding.](#)

‘Since the introduction of the Care Act in 2014, greater focus has been placed on the need to ensure vulnerable adults at risk or subjected to abuse or neglect are fully safeguarded. Integral to this is the requirement that they are given an opportunity to be at very least informed and most certainly involved in any safeguarding process relating to them, irrespective of their capacity. People may wonder if this isn’t already the case, to which the immediate answer would be ‘you would think so’. However in the majority of cases until relatively recently the idea of consulting and fully involving people who have been the subject of an adult safeguarding incident has been minimal and in practice can be challenging. Evidence is already beginning to show however that where Making Safeguarding Personal is being effectively applied, outcomes for individuals have been positive in terms of reduced risk and improved well-being. (see: http://www.local.gov.uk/adult-social-care/-/journal_content/56/10180/6074789/ARTICLE)

Person Centred Planning has been a central tenet of practice for Social Workers, Nurses, Speech and Language Therapists, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, other professional and Support Workers within the Learning Disability field for over 20 years. This practice has not been as prevalent across other service user groups and depending on where you work although applicable to these areas, has been less of a feature for a variety of reasons.



The common response is that Person Centred Planning is too time consuming and resource intensive in the face of increasing demand, high caseloads coupled with the need for quick turnarounds and immediate results/outcomes.

It would be easy to develop a counter argument but the purpose of this blog is not to present an ideological case for Person Centred Planning but rather promote the practical merits of what a person centred approach means within the context of adult safeguarding, based on my own experience of close collaborative work with Speech and Language Therapy colleagues.



Prior to the implementation of the Care Act, 'Making Safeguarding Personal' had become more of a feature within Adult Safeguarding practice and since April 2014 is now quite rightly very prominent,. Practitioners and or investigators are now required to evidence how the person as the subject of a safeguarding enquiry has been informed and depending on their wishes, been involved in the process .

In essence it is Person Centre Planning within the safeguarding context brought to the present. It is absolutely true however that to say it is one thing, doing it is another, particularly if the person lacks capacity and or has communication difficulties that require specialist support. Increasingly therefore the Mental Capacity Act is requiring Best Interest Assessors, Social Workers, Psychologists and Psychiatrists to bring Speech and Language Therapy to support the assessment of a person's understanding and therefore their level of cognitive functioning . In addition they are often also asked to support the person (and the professional) to communicate their needs, wants, desires, aspirations and motivations.

This can be further complicated if the person has capacity with a level of learning disability/difficulty who wishes to make an unwise decision regarding his/her own safety as part of the making safeguarding personal process.

The consensus is that the above situation and process is becoming more common place and therefore crucial for commissioning authorities. If ignored or the person is not appropriately supported in such a situation it can be costly, not just in an economic sense but from a human rights, individual well -being and legal perspective, with the authority being exposed to legal challenge and judicial review. Some authorities with foresight are now recognising that in the long term it is not only judicial and significantly cost effective but fundamentally important to the individual that the right type of assessment with the appropriate level of support as outlined, is beneficial for all."