



Dewis Choice



DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SAFEGUARDING: A NEED FOR A MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH

**XXXVth International Congress on
Law and Mental Health**

REBECCA ZERK 2017

OUTLINE

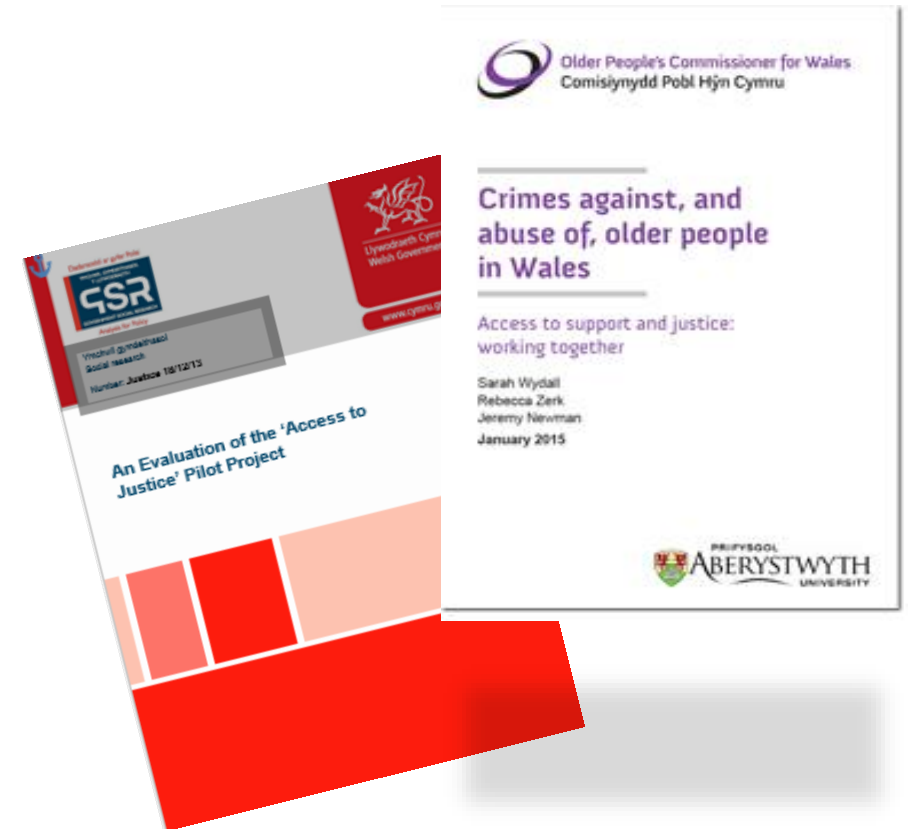
- Provide a backdrop of the learning to date
- Share our research findings
- Discuss existing practice issues
- Discuss the current policy and legislation

OUR RESEARCH

An Evaluation of the 'Access to Justice' Pilot Project (2012)

Crimes Against, and Abuse of, Older People in Wales (2015)

<http://choice.aber.ac.uk/research/>



STRUCTURAL AGEISM

- Very little coverage in policy
- Exclusionary practices
- Significant gap in service provision
- Paternalistic approaches
- Older people are denied the basic human right to access justice



70% of older people had not been consulted in the decision-making process (Access to Justice, 2016)

DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

- Low use of legal remedies

There are a wide range of sanctions and I think there are enough civil sanctions to protect subjects of domestic abuse, elder abuse or whatever, but they are not being used. Frontline workers should know what the options are, they don't explore them with the victim; more training is needed. There is a perception that they [civil justice options] are expensive, difficult, they are not ... The law is there, we just need to use it more.

(Senior criminal justice manager: interviewee 3)

- Over reliance on 'welfarisation' of older people

RESTRICTED ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SERVICES

- Domestic Abuse, Stalking and ‘Honour’-based Violence Risk Assessment Tool (DASH RIC)

http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/adult_protection/ric_checklist.aspx

- Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)



INTEGRATED WORKING

‘...both the safeguarding and MARAC process have their strengths and weaknesses; we need that cross pollination between the two. The MARAC has access to considerable resources in terms of third sector and statutory agencies. The safeguarding process can be very responsive, so we take the individuals circumstance first and make sure the DLM [Designated Line Manager] is at the MARAC, or the IDVA [Independent Domestic Violent Advocate] is at the strategy meetings. Currently it is a ball bouncing back and forward and no one is willing to see the strengths in tackling it jointly... to the detriment of the person [victims].’

(Criminal Justice Manager: 1)

UTILISING THIRD SECTOR SUPPORT

' ... you need someone to sit down with that victim and befriend that person. With Age Concern this is what happened ... they [victims] need time so they can trust that person, it has to be something done sensitively. You may need to call and chat two or three times before they start talking. I can talk about it now quite openly but I couldn't at the time. The victim loses all power and you need to help them conquer that; there needs to be a plan set up with all agencies. It may be sometime later before the problem can be tackled...I think it is that one link [building a relationship] that is really missing with social services etc. ... it's that befriending side, it is vital, it really is...'

(Male victim)



MOST RECENT LEGISLATION IN WALES

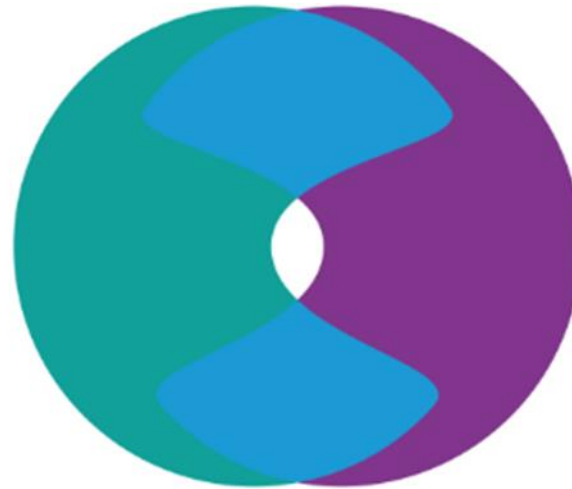
- *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*
- *Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015*
- Created in silo
- A need for a more integrated approach

TO CONCLUDE

“Justice and empowerment, along with adult protection should lie at the heart of any comprehensive safeguarding service.”

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (2010)

CONTACT INFORMATION



Dewis Choice

Website: <http://choice.aber.ac.uk/>

Email: choice@aber.ac.uk

Twitter: [@choiceolderppl](https://twitter.com/choiceolderppl)