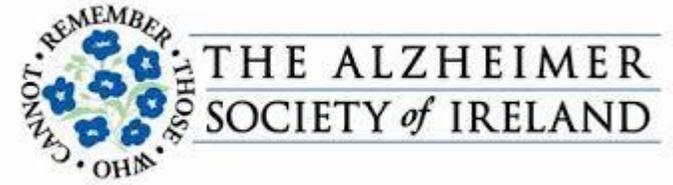


Irish Association of Social Workers National Safeguarding Day 2021

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Falling Through the Cracks

The case for change, key developments and
next steps for Adult Safeguarding in Ireland



- The *Adult Safeguarding Bill 2017* was introduced by Senator Colette Kelleher in the Seanad in April 2017.
- This study set out to explore how the absence of Adult Safeguarding Legislation in the Irish context may be impacting on safeguarding processes.

Background

Focus Groups	Dublin Focus Group (n=5)	Galway Focus Group (n=3)
Narrative Interviews	6 x Safeguarding and Protection Social Workers	2 x Disability Social Workers 2 x Primary Care Social Workers 2 x Medical Social Workers 2 x Mental Health Social Workers
	2 x ASI Dementia Advisors	1 x SAGE Regional Coordinator
Online Survey	N=116 respondents (social work practitioners)	

Methodology



**Additional protections
required to ensure
that adults at risk are
fully safeguarded**

**Standardisation in
Practices**

*...there are huge regional
discrepancies and if this referral
was in another part of the
country, it wouldn't be taken on*



**Additional protections
required to ensure
that adults at risk are
fully safeguarded**

**Inability to access
Services**

Biggest issue I have in working in the area of safeguarding in the community is the lack of supports to offer as part of a safeguarding plan. It is easy to identify the risks and write up a plan of what might reduce the risk but the resources are not there to back this up -simple resources like access to daycare and respite to provide an outlet for the person, and to relieve the stress of carers



**Additional protections
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that adults at risk are
fully safeguarded**

Mandatory Response

My experience in relation to safeguarding, people are certainly willing to refer but there's a risk that nobody wants to do the safeguarding. Safeguarding as everybody's business is another great cliché...But again I make the point, one person or one team on their own is not going to save anybody, it's not going to reduce the risk. It is a multiagency, and multidisciplinary effort so I think anything that would formalise that approach more-I would certainly welcome that.



**Additional protections
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Power of Entry

POWER OF ENTRY

Right of entry or the right of removal would be helpful, we've had a couple of cases locally where just I suppose it's the flip side of assistive technology, the family members got bugs and recording devices on the premises.



**Additional protections
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Information Sharing

GDPR has made things very difficult and I'm not sure the legislation was written to cause the trouble, it has caused. The person causing it (abuse) is not named anymore. In terms of pattern forming because that's part of the stuff that we would look at when we get preliminary screens.



Additional protections required to ensure that adults at risk are fully safeguarded

Oversight Of Private Nursing Homes And Private Home Care Providers

We view people in private nursing homes in the same way as people living in the community- the nursing home is their home and they need protected the same way as everyone else however HIQA can't deal with individual cases....



Additional protections
required to ensure that
adults at risk are fully
safeguarded

Duty to Cooperate and Multiagency Working

Legislation does change things, if the legislation has a duty to cooperate, to have a safeguarding committee that has a bit of bite, that would be much better. I want to sit with the guards and the guards see it as part of their job. I want to sit with the consultant or the mental health team and they understand that safeguarding is as much their business as it is mine. That they can't throw me half the information on something, and I make a miracle happen.



**Additional protection
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**Legislative
Underpinning the
Roles And
Responsibilities in
Safeguarding
Processes**

***We need a clear legal
framework as with child
protection to ensure adult
safeguarding is taken seriously.
Social workers support and
advocate for clients every day -
this role needs to be recognised,
supported and amplified - not
undermined.***



Report:
Health
Minister
Simon Harris
and Senator
Colette
Kelleher at
the launch of
the 'Falling
Through
the Cracks'
research
yesterday.
PHOTO: COLLIN

Two years
later...what has
changed?



Falling Through the Cracks

Conclusions

- Whilst the current policy measures offer some protection for adults at risk in Ireland, additional legal provisions are urgently required and that safeguarding procedures should be placed on a statutory basis to ensure that practices and processes are delivered in a standardised way.
- Legislation by itself is not a panacea and cannot guarantee safeguarding in each and every situation and currently there is a concerning lack of empirical research and data.
- One of the key benefits of having a standalone ASL statute is that it can become a significant means of bridging legal and policy silos and can offer jurisdictions the opportunity to reprioritise service provision across the preventative-protection continuum.
- ASL can offer a very public appearance of doing something about a problem, but its effectiveness, as observed by Harbison et al., (2012), will depend on the provision of adequate resourcing of safeguarding and protection teams and funding for proper support services in the community.
- People are 'falling through the cracks' in current system and immediate action is now needed to protect the most vulnerable in our society.



- ◆ **Thanks to Senator Colette Kelleher for commissioning the research report.**
- ◆ **Thanks to coauthor Dr Marita O'Brien.**
- ◆ **Thanks to all research participants and Collaborators (HSE National Safeguarding Office, IASW, Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Sage Advocacy).**
- ◆ **Thanks to Professor Jim Campbell, UCD for peer reviewing the research report.**

