

ACTION ON ELDER ABUSE

REPORT ON THE PROJECT TO ESTABLISH A MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCESS FOR ADULT PROTECTION REFERRALS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH 'NO SECRETS'

The Dataset Project is a two year funded programme and year one has just been completed. This Report is in two parts, the first being an outline report of the work concluded the year one and the second being information on current work activities.

The Adult Protection Analysis Project has three clearly stated aims:

1. To establish the current situation regarding adult protection referrals in England.
2. Develop national reporting requirements for adult protection.
3. To contribute to the development of performance indicators for adult protection

The first aim of the project was been completed by requesting data on adult protection referrals from all local authorities in England. The second and third aims of the project are being completed by in depth work with eight pilot authorities: Brent, Redbridge, Essex, Hertfordshire, Dorset, Kent, Liverpool, and Hull and East Riding

In June 2005 these local authorities will begin piloting the new national reporting requirements for adult protection and following this the reporting requirements will be rolled out nationally.

STAGE ONE

Statistics on adult protection were requested from all local authorities in England in July 2004. 109 local authorities responded to the request for information. This level of response was very high and the quality of data was also high. However the number of authorities who were able only to supply very basic data was surprising i.e. number of adult protection referrals only.

The overall analysis of the data shows, that there is a clear link between policies, procedures, practices, thresholds for intervention and recorded information and that there are a great number of differences between these across authorities. Inevitably this makes it difficult to draw useful and meaningful conclusions about the current state of adult protection referrals.

Factors affecting data collection

When is an adult protection referral logged? – at source or following screening process?

Different definitions of a vulnerable adult – strict interpretation of eligibility criteria or relaxed rules? Is there a universal definition of a vulnerable adult?

Consent of the vulnerable adult to proceed with referral – at what point of process does this become critical? Does it tie up with work on Domestic Violence?

The relationship of adult protection to domestic violence – what is the starting point? Impact of new definition of domestic violence, Differing priorities of agencies.

What is covered by adult protection policies? – Service user on service user abuse?

Service user on staff abuse? Neglect versus practice where is the line drawn?

In total information was supplied on **15,089** adult protection referrals and our end of year report provided information on the total number of referrals by client service user group; the most common form of abuse; the most common setting where abuse is occurring; the most common type of abusers; and the most common source of referral for allegations of abuse. It also considered a number of problems raised by the recording of outcomes for adult protection investigations.

Breakdown of Figures by Service user Group

The total number of referrals attributable to a specific service user group was 9,939 which represented 65% of total referrals. This obviously left a high number of referrals not attributable to a specific service user group.

Older People	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Physical Disability	Sensory Impairmt	Substnce Misuse
<u>4436 Total Referrals</u>	<u>3047 Total Referrals</u>	<u>1100 Total Referrals</u>	<u>1086 Total Referrals</u>	<u>43 Total Referrals</u>	<u>227 Total Referrals</u>
29.39% of total referrals	20.19% of total referrals	7.29% of total referrals	7.19% of total referrals	0.28% of total referrals	1.50% of total referrals

Type of Abuse

From the statistics provided the most common form of abuse reported was physical abuse, followed by financial abuse. 65.47% of local authorities showed physical abuse as the most common form of abuse reported. From the data supplied however it was impossible to identify how often multiple abuse was being reported.

Place of Abuse

The most common place of abuse reported was within the home of vulnerable adults. 94.5% of local authorities showed the home as the most common place of abuse.

The second most common place of abuse was residential care/nursing homes. Considering the small percentage of people now living in residential homes it was of concern that the incidents of abuse seemed disproportionate to the number of people resident.

Who abusers

The most common type of abuser was a paid carer and/or paid worker. 84.5% of local authorities showed paid carer/worker as the most common abuser.

This was closely followed by family members, although this can be slightly misleading as some local authorities split this group into separate main carer and other family member categories.

Many local authorities were commenting on the numbers of alleged perpetrators who were also vulnerable adults. This would appear especially so, although not exclusively, within Learning Disability Service User Groups.

Source of Referral

The most common source of referral was social services and/or paid staff. 55% of local authorities showed social services/paid staff as the most common source of referral.

The next highest group was friends/relatives. This category often reflected where adult protection awareness training and literature had been targeted and it was noted with concern that there was a lack of referrals from both the general public and the police (although these groups may be contained within the aforementioned categories).

Recorded Outcomes for Adult Protection Investigations

It was also a particular concern that there were a number of problems with the information collected around the outcomes of adult protection investigations. These problems were summed up as the information being very "investigation led" and recorded outcomes based on the results of an investigation and any subsequent action taken against the alleged perpetrator; very little information on "outcomes for vulnerable adults" was currently recorded and there was no measure as to how the life of the vulnerable adult was affected; different language was often used to determine the outcome of a referral or investigation, with some local authorities using the language of the complaints system i.e. has the referral been upheld. A number of local authorities state whether abuse was proven or not proven and a number of local authorities asked if the abuse was substantiated or not. We noted that the POVA list worked on the grounds of "on the balance of probability" and not "beyond reasonable doubt". However, only 19% of local authorities were recording "outcomes for vulnerable adults" as part of their adult protection statistics.

YEAR TWO work

Through the ongoing work with the eight pilot local authorities we are beginning to pilot the new national reporting requirements for adult protection from May 2005. However, there are a number of issues around implementing national reporting requirements for adult protection referrals and these are use of different I.T systems; lack of standard adult protection language; no one single route for making an adult protection referral; adult protection arrangements (e.g. location of staff) varies across the country; volume of referrals varies across the country; and data collection arrangements vary.

The process of designing the new national reporting requirements has been based on a number of factors: data collection requirements contained within No Secrets; an analysis of data currently being collected; and new legislation and guidance

The requirements have been debated thoroughly both with the local authorities involved in the project and the advisory group of the project and most authorities are collecting a lot of the information required under the new requirements but no one is currently collecting all of the information required.