Vulnerability & Abuse
Setting the Scene

Denise Shanahan
Consultant Nurse Older Vulnerable Adults Cardiff & Vale UHB
Honorary Lecturer, Cardiff University
Chair Elect CNMHP
Depending on the guidance or legislation there are numerous definitions-

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

“child” means a person under the age of 16

“vulnerable adult” means a person aged 16 or over whose ability to protect himself from violence, abuse or neglect is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, through old age or otherwise
Abuse is a global problem

Abuse can happen anywhere

There are no social or class barriers

There are no age barriers

It is wrong to stereotype the typical victim and typical abuser – it can happen to anyone

Abuse can be premeditated/deliberate
Or an omission/ failure to act

It can be a single or repeated act
Abuse remains:

Taboo
Hidden
Shameful
Endemic

Initiatives to address domestic violence and child abuse have opened up the opportunity to address elder and vulnerable adult abuse.
Neglect

- Categories of child abuse for statistical return includes:
  - Neglect only
  - Neglect and physical abuse
  - Neglect and sexual abuse
  - Neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse

**Neglect**

is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. For a vulnerable adult, it may include omissions in assessment, care planning and care delivery/ not meeting the needs of an individual.

It also may relate to a failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
Physical abuse

Categories of child abuse for statistical return includes:

- Physical only
- Physical and sexual
- Neglect physical and sexual

**Physical abuse** - Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child who they are looking after; commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities. It includes sexual assault, sexual acts or exposure to pornographic material whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or for which the vulnerable adult has not/could not consent to.

Categories of child abuse for statistical return includes:
- Sexual only
- Physical and sexual
- Neglect and sexual
Emotional abuse

Categories of child abuse for statistical return includes:
   Emotional abuse only

Categories of vulnerable adult abuse for statistical return include:
   Emotional / psychological abuse

Emotional abuse- is defined for children as the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying that the individual is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It also includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or support network.
Financial abuse
Categories of vulnerable adult abuse for statistical return include:
- Financial abuse

Financial abuse - includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits, denial of access to finances.

Other types of abuse referred to within the literature include discriminatory and institutional abuse, bullying and stalking.
Domestic Violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality. It can include honour based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage.
Domestic Violence

- In Wales & England 1 in every 4 women will experience domestic abuse by their partner or ex-partner at some time in their life.
- 2 women a week are murdered by a partner or ex-partner.
- Incidents of domestic abuse make up nearly a quarter of violent crime.
- Women will be assaulted on average 35 times before reporting it to the police.
- 54% of rapes in the UK are committed by a woman’s current or former partner.
- Nearly 75% of children on the Child Protection register live in households where domestic abuse occurs.

http://www.welshwomensaid.org/whatis/facts.html
Welsh Women’s Aid (WWA) is the umbrella body incorporating 34 Welsh Women’s Aid Groups.

- During 2008/09 the WWA Helpline received 17,161 incoming calls
  - 53% of calls originated from South Wales
  - 35% from North Wales
  - 12% from Mid-Wales
- 70% of callers to the Helpline were calling for the first time

Of those first time callers:

- 94% were female
- 162 calls were from men experiencing domestic abuse
- 78% of callers who disclosed their age were aged between 26-45
- 4% callers reported that they were pregnant
- 2% callers reported that they had a disability
- 36% callers reported that they had children

Figure 1 Children on child protection registers, at 31 March 2009 by categories of abuse

- 48% Neglect
- 24% Emotional
- 20% Physical
- 9% Sexual

Local authority child protection registers Wales 2009

Figure 4 Number of children on child protection registers, by age group and gender at 31 March 2009

Figure 7: Rate of children on child protection registers per 10,000 population under 18, at March 2009.

Local authority child protection registers, Wales 2009.

Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales, February 2010

People who are older, disabled or suffering physical or mental ill health may have increased vulnerability due to a variety of reasons:

- Physical frailty
- Chronic illness
- Sensory impairment
- Challenging behaviour
- Poverty
- Emotional problems
- Homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Mental health problems
- Learning disability
- Physical disability
Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Defines a vulnerable adult in the context of the setting in which they are situated or the service they receive as follows:

- Those in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing or in receipt of domiciliary care services
- Those receiving health care
- Those in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer
- Those receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority
- Those receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of their age or state of health
- Those who need assistance in the conduct of their affairs
Vulnerable Adult- current ‘working’ definition

‘A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation’.
Total Number of referrals by forum area

Figure 4  Total number of completed referrals by forum area, year ending 31 March 2009
Completed referrals, by type of abuse, year ending 31 March 2009

- 29% Physical
- 24% Neglect
- 21% Financial/material
- 20% Emotional
- 6% Sexual
Perpetrators of abuse

- 38% staff
- 29% relatives
- 11% another SU
- 9% friend, neighbour or acquaintance
- 8% person unknown
- 5% other
Hundreds of thousands of elderly people are being abused in their own homes, research suggests.

The study, funded by the government and Comic Relief, suggests that in eight out of 10 cases the abuser is someone well known to the elderly person.

UK Study of Abuse and Neglect of Older People: Prevalence Survey Report
http://www.comicrelief.com/docs/elder-abuse/ComicRelief-ElderAbuse-Full.pdf
Reported of Types of Child Abuse

- 47% Physical
- 24% Sexual
- 20% Emotional
- 9% Neglect

Reported of Types of Vulnerable Adult Abuse

- 29% Emotional/psychological
- 24% Physical
- 21% Neglect
- 20% Financial/material
- 6% Sexual
Who do you recognise?

Peter Connelly
(RIP 2007)

Baby P

Victoria Climbié
(RIP 2000)

Carole Green
(RIP 2010)

Margaret Panting
(RIP 2001)

AKA Granny P
Margaret Panting was 78 years old when she died in July 2001, just weeks after moving to live with her son-in-law and her teenage grandchildren at their home. A post-mortem revealed a horrific catalogue of more than 60 injuries including razor-blade cuts to Mrs Panting's stomach and chest, cigarette burns to her back and armpits, and black eyes. There were so many bruises they were uncounted.

But although Mr Biggin and his sons Martin, then 18, and Nathan, 16, were arrested on suspicion of murder, it could not be proved who was responsible for her injuries and no-one was ever prosecuted.

http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/In-her-life-Margaret-became.701255.jp
MP moved from sheltered housing on 2 June 2001. On 6 July 2001 the emergency services attended at the house and found MP dead on a bed in a first floor bedroom.

When the emergency services attended it was found that the house was smelly and in a filthy state. Carpets were tacky with accumulated filth and in some areas dog faeces.

A Serious Case Review was undertaken.

The report & failings of adult protection measures did receive some national press interest.
On occasions the activities and lifestyle of MP and her visiting grandchildren had caused problems for other residents.

Between 1991 and 2001 the fire brigade attended at 10 reported instances of minor fires within MP’s sheltered accommodation.

There were many indications of MP’s ongoing health problems over a number of years: falls, breathing difficulties and depression.

There were no indications that NHS Over-75 checks or holistic assessments were carried out.

There were indications that MP may have been financially abused.

In 1999 MP reported to a member of staff that one of her grandchildren had hurt her arm.
The new offence of "causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult" was designed to deal with scenarios in which a child or vulnerable adult dies as a result of neglect or abuse and it is not clear which member of their household was responsible for the death.

‘familial homicide’ closes a legal loophole that allows those jointly accused of the murder of a child or vulnerable adult to escape justice by remaining silent or blaming each other.

Those directly responsible for the injuries that led to his death were

- his mother, Tracey Connelly,
- her boyfriend, Steven Barker
- Steven Barker's brother, Jason Owen,

- Following Peter's death they were arrested and charged with murder. Each was acquitted of murder and the alternative offence of manslaughter during a trial at the Central Criminal Court in the autumn of 2008
- Each was, however, convicted of an offence contrary to s 5 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 of causing or allowing Peter's death
Couple jailed over baby torture

A couple have been jailed for nine years for abusing a 17-month-old boy who was sliced with a knife and burned with cigarettes.

The court heard how Tahla was repeatedly taken to hospital, but seeing a different doctor each time probably prevented his mounting injuries being recognised as systematic abuse.

A post-mortem examination discovered a marrow fat embolism from the untreated broken thigh had invaded his lungs, starved his brain of oxygen and caused death.

They were convicted of the "causing or allowing" offence, which does not require the individual who inflicted the fatal blow to be identified.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6983491.stm
A woman who abused and beat her lover's "slave" wife to death and the husband who let it happen have both lost appeals against their sentences.

The terms passed on Su Hua Liu, 29, and takeaway boss Lun Xi Tan, 42, were "richly deserved", said Lord Justice Laws at London's Court of Appeal.

Liu was jailed for nine years in May after admitting the manslaughter of Shaowei He, 25, in Rotherham in March.

Tan was jailed for six years for causing or allowing her death.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/south_yorkshire/6159034.stm
Michael Gilbert led a troubled life. He had been in and out of care as a teenager.

As a teenager, he ended up in the Brambles Children's Home in Luton. This is where he met James Watt and Natasha Oldfield.

The pair have now been convicted of his murder, along with Nicola Roberts.

Three others involved in the case at Luton Crown Court were guilty of familial homicide, while one, Antonio Watt, was cleared of this charge.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/beds/bucks/herts/8625026.stm
Final Thoughts

Safeguarding is everybody’s business