

Safe Lives, Good Lives

Gary Bourlet and Mark Brookes



A bit about me...

- Self-advocate for 37 years
- Lived experience of a learning disability
- Co-founder of Learning Disability England
- Membership and Engagement Lead



Learning Disability England



- Bringing people with learning disabilities, families, friends and paid supporters together on an equal basis.
- Members work together to build a world where people with learning disabilities have Good Lives with equal choices and opportunities as others.



• **A Bit About Me....**

- Advocacy Lead for Dimensions UK
- Self Advocate for 30 years
- Disability Hate Crime campaigner
- Current Churchill Fellow 2024

- Dimensions is one of the largest not-for-profit support providers for people with learning disabilities and autism
- “Dimensions places the people we support and their families at the heart of everything we do”
- We want every person we support to have a great life, with excellent outcomes
- Our safeguarding team are responsible for ensuring our colleagues know how best to keep people safe from abuse



Our Safeguarding Team



Jennifer Hickson
Group Safeguarding and
Quality Governance
Manager



Helen Handley
Safeguarding and
Quality Governance
Officer

Some of what we know...

Most safeguarding alerts made for adults under the age of 65 in England concern people with learning disabilities

They are at greater risk of:

- All forms of abuse
- Exploitation
- Hate Crime
- Harassment
- Bullying

Choice and control are sometimes seen by support staff as conflicting with safeguarding policies

People have a right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment, discrimination, abuse and harm (The Human Rights Act)



Effective safeguarding for people with learning disabilities is vital



•What is Disability Hate Crime?

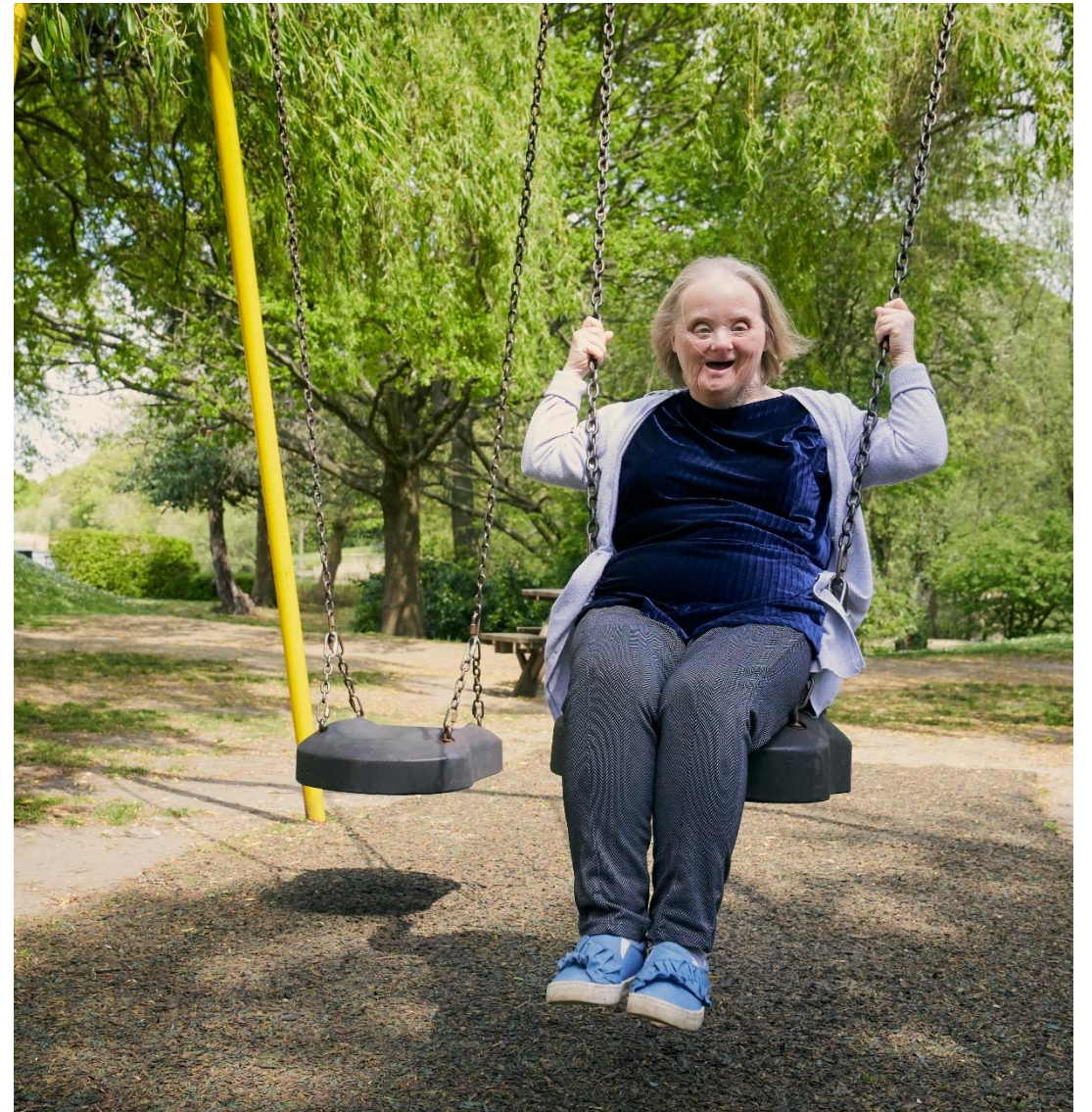
•*“Disability hate crimes and non-crime incidents are acts which target a victim because of the offenders hostility to a disabled person or disabled people in general”*

•(True Vision – Police Hate Crime Reporting Tool
report-it.org.uk)



•What is the scope of the problem?

- Abuse and mistreatment is so common that some people with a learning disability and/or autism think it's a normal part of daily life.
- They don't report it to anyone and don't believe they have the right to feel safe.
- Negative perceptions, ignorance and assumptions when dealing with victims of disability hate crime all make it difficult for victims to get justice.

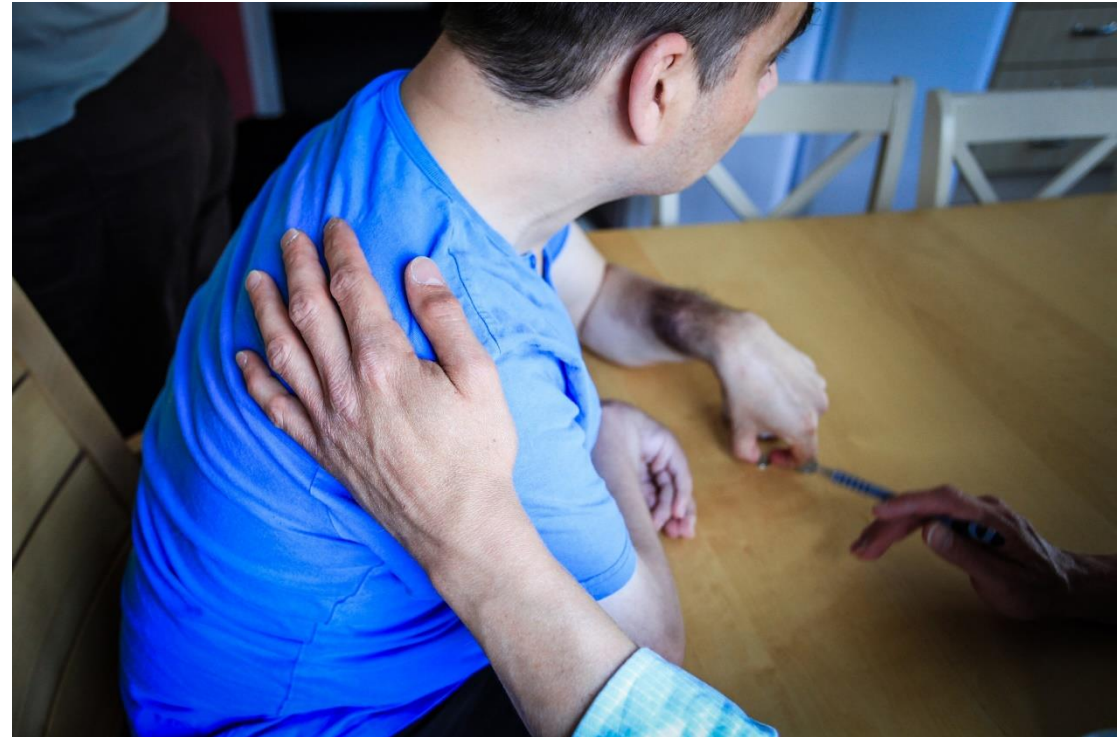


•Hate Crime, England and Wales, Year Ending March 2024

- overall disability hate crime has reduced by 18%
- Seems positive but under-reporting is still major issue for disability hate crime
- disability hate crime remains relatively constant despite reductions year on year of overall hate crime
- Outcomes for disabled people consistently poor in comparison to other strands

•Forms of exploitation include:

- Stalking and Harassment
 - Online abuse
 - Modern Slavery
- Threatening behaviour
 - Damage to Property
- Physical/Sexual/Verbal Abuse
 - Financial Abuse/Fraud
- Coercion/Mate Crime/Cookoo-ing



Safeguarding is one of the most important ways we can identify hate crime and ensure the people we support are kept safe from abuse

People with learning disabilities can live full and enriching lives

People with learning disabilities can work, live alone, learn new skills and have meaningful relationships

More choice and control means:

- Increased self-confidence
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced professional support
- Better relationships
- Increased autonomy
- Greater self-advocacy

What we also know...





What we know about rights...

The Human Rights Act says people should have control over their own life, care and treatment.

This includes respecting the ability of people with capacity to take risks and make their own decisions.

Safeguarding includes protecting people's human rights

What does the policy say?

In 2001, the Valuing People strategy set out principles of rights, independence, choice and inclusion to underpin care and support for people with learning disabilities.

In 2015, Building the Right Support, published as part of the Transforming Care Programme, said we should be supporting people with learning disabilities to live ordinary, independent lives in their own home as part of the community.



So, how do we protect people from harm but also make sure they are active participants in their own Good Lives?



The Aim: Good Lives

Good Lives is a vision for change developed with people with learning disabilities, families and support providers.

It is a vision for what a good life for someone with a learning disability looks like and ideas on how we can get there.



A man with short dark hair, wearing a red jacket, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. There are two text overlays: one on the left side of the frame and one at the bottom center.


International
agreement

on disabled peoples' rights



What can you learn from Good Lives?



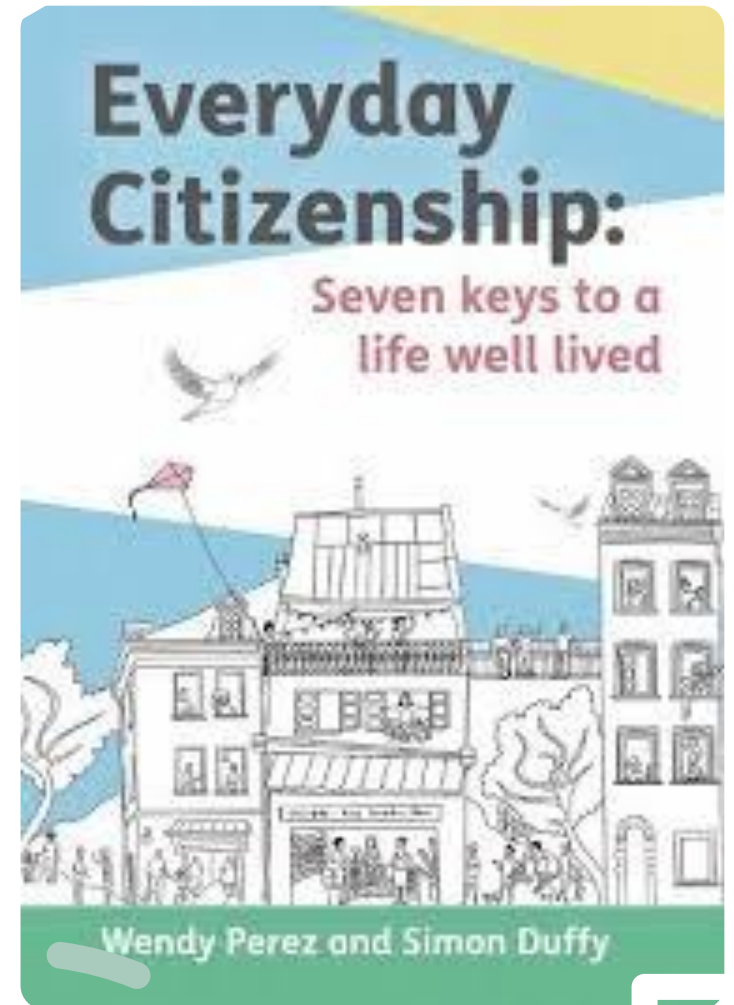
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- A good life is one where people can choose the direction it takes – where they live, what support they get, who they build relationships with...
 - A good life has many parts
 - We must look at the whole picture
 - Making lives better for people takes us all working together
 - Like with safeguarding, it is all our responsibility to make Good Lives happen

Another way to see it: Achieving Citizenship

Simon Duffy's book *Keys to Citizenship* describes how we can achieve citizenship in practice.

Citizenship means **being respected**,
being equal and **being different**.

It reminds us that we can each live a good life, in our own way, while also being able to live together with mutual respect.



7 Keys to Citizenship

- 1. Freedom** - Being a citizen means being in control of your own life - being able to make decisions, make mistakes, make your own way.
- 2. Direction** - Being a citizen means having a life of meaning - your own meaning.
- 3. Money** - Money gives us the means to be independent, to set our own course and to achieve our own goals.
- 4. Home** - We all need a place we can call our home, not just a shelter, but a place where we can have privacy, where we can be with those we love, where we belong.
- 5. Help** - We all need help everyday and the giving and receiving of help from others is the key to a good society.
- 6. Life** - It is by giving something back to our community that we can really help others to understand our worth.
- 7. Love** - the beginning and the end of citizenship is found in love. Through meeting, working with and joining in with other people we can form relationships, friendships, find lovers and make a family.

- Making Safeguarding **Personal**

- Safeguarding Easy Read Guides – for victims and families;
- Encouraging support workers that if something is worrying them, there is a duty of care to report this.
- Reframing Language for the people we support– “Safeguarding Against” – remind the people we support that safeguarding is about protecting them, and not “telling on” others
- Keep people informed at every step of the process. People who are at risk aware should be aware of what is going on.
- Where incidents are raised, and risks identified, use this data to inform and change the way we support people to implement positive risk.

What to remember when safeguarding

People are experts in their own life

They should feel in control and not controlled by a process

Treat people with dignity and ensure they feel empowered to make choices and decisions about their own life

Think about ways of working with the person to achieve what they want to



Practical Steps: Safeguarding and Supporting Good Lives...



Identify and nurture people's strengths: Focus on people's abilities and help them see and develop their talents and interests. This can boost their confidence and self-worth.



Set realistic goals: Work with people to set achievable goals that fit with their interests and capabilities.



Provide opportunities for decision-making: Encourage people to make choices and decisions in their daily life.



Encourage independent living skills: such as personal care, money management and problem-solving. This empowers people to express their needs and be independent.



Offer guidance and support: Try and find a balance between offering assistance and allowing people to take the lead, whilst making sure they have the necessary resources and support available.



Don't be afraid to step in if someone's safety is at imminent risk



Supported Decision-making

For people with speech, language and communication needs who may need support to make informed decisions.

Allows people to keep making decisions by choosing supporters to help them make choices.

People select their trusted advisors, such as friends, family members, or professionals, to serve as supporters.

The decision maker is still at the centre of the process.

How can Self-Advocacy Keep People Safe

1. Understand what hate crime is, especially most common ones against people with disabilities
2. Training and awareness – including within your self-advocacy groups for people with LD and autism
3. Enable people to speak up about their personal stories.
4. Keep pressure on government bodies to ensure hate crimes against people with LD and autism are not ignored or forgotten.



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Any Questions?

