



cooperation and working together
for health gain and social well being in border areas

**CAWT Development Project
Protection of Vulnerable (Learning Disabled) Adults
Reference Number 17147**

Summer School Summary



Working Towards
Effective Adult Protection

CAWT project 17147
Summer school report
Oct 07

The project summer school took place in September 2007 and was intended as an event to introduce practitioners from the project regions to the essence of examples of good practice regarding the protection of learning disabled adults. It was opened with the launch of the report emanating from the previous project cross-border event 'Barriers to Effective Cross-border Adult protection'. The report highlighted the gaps in ensuring effective co-operation relating to adult protection on the Irish border., but also acknowledged the strengths that exist in both countries and can be built on to improve protective mechanisms and responses.

Cost:

The project manager set aside £15K for the event within the project budget. As administration and mail was mainly handled electronically via the project manager, associated costs were mainly limited to the venue, catering, accommodation and facilitation.

The costs of the attendance and performance from the Lilliput theatre Company is included in the venue costs as they did not make a charge but were catered for over-night.

Costs can be broken down as follows:

Venue costs i.e. room and equipment hire:	1180
All catering for 2 days:	5316.2
Accommodation	4300
Lilliput costs	1800
Facilitator costs Euros	860
Photographer	<u>497.25</u>
Total cost Euros	13953.45

Facilitator costs sterling	£1350
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Attendance:

The event was first made known to the partnership organisations in May with full publicity and application invitations being sent out in June. The month of August was used to advertise the event more widely, in the anticipation that other involved organisations within the project regions would be interested. This also gave space for services involved with other vulnerable client groups to be involved.

Uptake from some of the project regions was slower than in others but overall the balance of applications was fairly equal, as were the inputs for workshop presentations. Interest from beyond the project regions also provided a good representative group of individuals without causing problems for access from those initially targeted. **Table 1** shows the participant spread. The original plan was to cater for a maximum of 100 participants, however due to the demand 110 were offered places in the anticipation of last minute drop-out. It appeared that in some organisations the communication of confirmed places failed and this meant that some expected participants did not attend.

Content:

Presentations at the remainder of the summer school were provided by a range of practitioners from the island of Ireland and from specialist trainers and consultants based on the island. Those making presentations were requested to ensure that the workshops provided room for exploration and debate by those involved, whilst each of the key speakers ensured space at the end of their talk for audience questions. Some participants commented that they felt the contribution from the South, in relation to allegations and investigation process, were not represented by the facilitators. The project manager did attempt to engage appropriate agencies in the South with this delivery, but they acknowledged that they did not feel able to do the topic justice in relation to people with learning disabilities. The North does have a more developed approach to protection and therefore can offer more practice examples (especially in investigation).

The workshop contributions were:

- 4 from independent consultants who operate across Ireland and the UK
- 4 from services/agencies in the North
- 2 from services in the South
- 1 from the project manager

The main room addresses were delivered by:

- CAWT
- A local health manager from Monaghan
- The project manager
- The Irish Human Rights Commission

The topics covered a range of issues relating to adult protection both proactively and reactively. There appeared to be a serious misunderstanding from some of the delegates as to the extent of practice that is supportive of protection and many commented that they expected the workshops to be mainly focused around investigation of allegations. This indicates a fault in the concept of protection, and perhaps the increased focus from services should be about service user well-being and safety of which responding to allegations of abuse is a part.

Evaluation:

The evaluation of the event was via a provided form that reviewed participant views under common criteria. There were 70 returns from an original 100. Numbers in the following tables may not tally to the expected 70 as not all returns were complete.

The overall evaluation of the event was one used previously in the project to see how the event assisted in meeting some of the broader aims of the project. **(Table 2)**

Workshops were allocated by participant preference (there were very few exceptions when this was not possible). The event evaluation sheet requested comment on the workshops under set areas. **Table 3** gives the results of the feedback that was contained on the returned evaluation sheets

This information should not be used as a comparative measure of one workshop against another as the numbers attending each varied. Some participants provided additional comment regarding the workshops but these are not included in this report as they were subjective rather than objective.

Future Development:

As the event merely provided tasters of practice issues, part of the evaluation was to identify areas that service personnel felt that they needed further information or training in order to support their practice. There were many areas that were commonly identified across a range of roles and agencies (**Table 4**). It is clear that where personnel have additional protection roles within their work, they feel that they are not fully informed in order to be able to be most effective as they identified the need to have clearer understanding regarding capacity, Human Rights and risk assessment.

Table 5 identifies the roles of those completing the evaluation form. Not all respondents completed this section

PSNI and An Garda Siochana representatives clearly identified the need to improve their interview techniques with learning disabled witnesses, and there was a clear cry for a joint protocol to be developed between social work and policing in the south in order to support more effective investigation.

The development of the registered social care workforce in Northern Ireland has set clear challenges for improved induction, staff development, support and supervision, but colleagues in the South indicated that this remained a serious gap in several of their services. This is a very obvious area for shared knowledge and skill at a cross-border level. Some services in the Dublin NE area have accessed NVQ delivery from educators in the North and this may be a framework that can be built upon. There is also joint activity between the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and the Irish Social Work Qualifications Board that aims at narrowing the gap between the two countries standards and requirements in order to promote more accessible employment for qualified social workers. However it is not sufficient to leave such areas of development only to professional bodies as many care workers are not covered by their requirements and this leads to increased risk in caring practice.

Two of the learning disability practice examples within the workshops provided great debate as they relate to the changing society and contextual lives of adults with learning disabilities. Learning disabled adults, their sexuality, their need to engage in a range of relationships and the possibility of finding themselves as parents, all require effective service policy that is supportive in these areas. Services often avoid such debate due to the concerns of parent pressure and opinion, but research shows that when parents and carers are worked with in true partnership it enable improved understanding of issues affecting their loved ones. Such work also requires greater co-operation with child, family and education services to enable work

that starts with learning disabled children and their parents to bear fruit and be of benefit when adult services take over. Many children's services have policies that assist with this and then the work is forgotten due to the policy inadequacies in adult services. Many tools have been developed to support service personnel in their interventions but having a knowledge of them and the ability to select the most appropriate needs extended service efforts that staff do not always have time for.

Several participants commented that they felt they could learn skills from job swaps/shadowing experiences with colleagues on the other side of the border. There are some areas of skill development that are more highly tuned in some services than in others. If services can identify the skill developments they require and also network effectively with parallel services, they could arrange for shadowing, or skill clinics. There is a need to break the 'service/region defence barrier' that exists in some locations. For some services this is an issue within their own region, where staff development is service specific and does not involve those other agencies who could make a valuable contribution e.g. statutory/non-statutory engagement. If much of the skill to support the required development of knowledge and skill in others is available in non-statutory services, then there is a clear requirement for increased interagency work to support such development. Where the statutory services are developing responsive procedures regarding allegations of abuse, they need to be sure that they have identified strategies that will support staff development that is appropriate in delivering those procedures.

Whilst there are some issues that are specific to supporting adults with learning disabilities regarding their safety and protection, there are also a range of 'specialised roles' that have similar developmental needs regardless of client group. These are those of investigative and designated officers. Opportunities for these personnel to learn together beyond the role of interviewing and chairing protection meetings are required if they are to be effective in this area. The need for improved understanding of risk, Human Rights, statutory powers, legal processes and effective mediation is clearly required. These issues are not necessarily covered to a sufficient extent in any current training. For those services operating in the border regions, there is also a requirement for them to understand how corresponding responses and investigations operate in their cross-border localities.

Conclusion:

The project acknowledges the quality and strength of the majority of learning disability services and personnel in the CAWT regions. The provision of the summer school has only scratched the surface of the need to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding around this topic. Services in the CAWT region need to ensure that a strategic plan, beyond that already connected to adult protection in their localities, evolves to address the gaps identified here. Services cannot simply sit back and rely on the plans of the wider organisation to assist them with this work, as there are other pressing priorities to compete with this need. Ensuring that the issues relating to the well-being and safety of learning disabled adults is addressed in a systemic

way will promote the ability of service personnel to respond appropriately and aid in preventing many sources of abuse and harm that come from within services and practice. The reports and other tools provided from the project are intended to assist with such developments.

The final group session posed 3 questions to the participants and the feedback is provided here:

A Summary of the Feedback from the Group Work Session **Dealing with the Question :-**

What must happen next?.....

1) Within my own service;

2) Between Agencies;

3) Cross Border.

1) Within my own service?

- A consistent approach.
- Collection of data/research.
- TrainingMandatory
 - Awareness raising
 - Investigations
 - Case Conferences
- Support from Service Managers.
- Communication, especially re: roles/responsibilities.
- Resources, particularly speech therapy and appropriate accommodation.
- Use of video in investigations.
- A dedicated service.
- In-depth knowledge of local services including the independent sector.
- A local Adult Protection Forum.
- A Dedicated Resource e.g. an Adult Protection Co-Ordinator in each locality.

2) Between Agencies?

- Multi-agency acceptance of responsibilities.
- Clarity of contact points.

- Communication, networking.
- A local forum to include senior management and the Gardai/PSNI.
- Joint Training and Protocols.
- Look at models worldwide.
- More formalised approach as opposed to one which is personality driven.

3) Cross-Border?

- Improved communication and networking.
- More shared training.
- A forum to allow for sharing of Good Practice.
- Address resource differences.
- Extend CAWT remit to Belfast!

A number of areas were given a particular focus across all of the groups viz:

- The need for consistency of approach, whether in the community or hospital, the statutory or the independent sector and between jurisdictions.
- Senior Managers must demonstrate commitment to this area of work.
- Training at all levels from awareness-raising to specialist input in investigations and the chairing of case-conferences.
- The establishment of local, inter-region and cross-border fora to allow for networking and improved communication.

TABLE 1

	Western Trust	Southern Trust	HSE West	HSE Dublin NE	External regions
Service manager	6	16	3	8	3
Senior practitioner	5	2	10	6	2
Designated officer	3	1	0	3	
Investigative officer	5		2	0	4
PSNI/Garda	2	2	5	2	5
Service regulator	0	0	0	0	1
Trainer	1	1	0	0	
total	22	22	20	19	17
Grand total	100				

TABLE 2

Working Towards Effective Adult Protection offered by the Adult Protection Project (number 17147)	18th & 19th Sept. 2007 Hillgrove Hotel Monaghan
Was there sufficient notice of the event?	YES 69 NO 1
Were the aims of the event clear?	YES 62 NO 6 DON'T KNOW 2
How informative was the event regarding the topic of adult protection?	VERY 46 O.K. 22 POOR 0 No COMMENT 2
Was the event relevant to your role?	YES 68 NO 0 PARTLY 1 No Comment 1
Was the event relevant to your location in the island of Ireland?	YES 65 NO 1 PARTLY 4
Were you provided with sufficient supporting information to use the learning from the event?	YES 58 NO 4 WILL ACCESS OFF WEBSITE 5 NO COMMENT 3
How will you use the information from the event in your work?	Most respondents thought that they would use the information to inform their colleagues and examine their practice. Some believed that they could use it to develop thinking in services
How do you rate the venue, considering access, comfort and the general environment?	EXCELLENT 40 GOOD 30 POOR 0

TABLE 3

	Informative	Provided tools	Allowed discussion	Well facilitated
Risk assessment	26	16	19	23
Professional boundaries	5	5	8	8
Capacity	15	7	14	12
Managing investigations	20	11	17	17
Practice standards	8	4	10	6
Communication	17	12	10	14
Partnership	8	5	8	7
Empowerment	17	13	20	17
Special measures	12	2	13	8
Sexuality model	9	5	10	9
Parenting	7	2	6	4
Joint protocol	20	11	19	15

TABLE 4

Topic area	Requested by personnel from N.I.	Requested by personnel from R.I.
Border region differences and protocols	✓	
Interviewing skills with adults with special needs	✓	✓
Sexuality, sexual needs, relationships and education of people with learning disabilities	✓	✓
Working closely with health and social care staff in investigations		✓
Risk assessment relating to abuse	✓	✓
Investigation management	✓	✓
Capacity, consent and legislation	✓	✓
Therapeutic recovery from abuse	✓	
Service user training re risk and safety	✓	✓
Working with the allegation referral process	✓	
Development and use of associated data	✓	
CAWT road shows to inform front line staff of activities		✓
Human Rights	✓	✓
Supporting parents with learning disabilities	✓	
Appropriate staff induction and development		✓
Practice review and evaluation methods	✓	✓

TABLE 5

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Manager	10	4
Practitioner	13	5
Designated officer	6	4
Investigative officer	5	1
Police	1	8
Regulator	0	1
Trainer	0	1
Role not specified	5	1

