



Dewis Choice

Volunteer Information

Building Justice Options with Older People

The Choice Project

The Centre for the Study of Ageing, Abuse and Neglect within the Department of Law and Criminology, Aberystwyth University has been awarded a major research grant of £890,000 from the Big Lottery as part of a £1.3m research project.

Choice will work with older people, professionals and volunteers to explore new ways of promoting justice and well-being for the older person who has been mistreated in their own home by a family member or someone with whom they have a relationship of trust.

The project has 4 main objectives:

- 1 – Public awareness raising
- 2 – Designing new approaches to justice
- 3 – Delivering and evaluating the impact of the Choice initiative
- 4 – Sharing and disseminating our research findings



How you can volunteer

The *Choice* project is looking for volunteers, of any age, who have an interest in raising awareness locally about the service needs and rights of people aged 60 years and over. Choice would particularly like to learn **what you think** makes a healthy relationship between family members. We are also want to share information locally to promote choice and empower older people when seeking justice.

There are a range of exciting opportunities available for volunteers.

Choice is looking for people with a variety of skills and experience, so if you would like to help us in any way, we can find the right role for you.

Here are some of the ways you can volunteer:

‘What is a healthy relationship?’ Very few health & wellbeing campaigns focus on what people aged 60+ value in their relationship with family members. You can help us by telling us what you feel is important to you.

- There are numerous ways you can give your views – contact the research team to arrange a suitable time for us to speak with you.
- Write to us with your views on what it is about your husband, wife, children, grandchildren that makes the relationship rewarding.
- Send us photos, images, adverts etc. which shows us examples of positive ageing in Wales.

‘Show us your community’ - helping us to understand your community; telling us where older people meet and what groups they belong to. This could include taking us for a stroll through your community and will help make our awareness raising activity more effective;

‘Helping to raise awareness within your community’ – on the issues around older people who experience mistreatment in their own home. This could involve:

- Talking about the project at local meetings of groups you already attend or by helping at the local public engagement group meetings;
- Putting up posters and leaflets about the project, for example in libraries, doctors’ surgeries, pharmacies and other suitable locations in your area;

‘Putting your creative hat on’. We are keen to see any ideas people have as to images they think would work well for the project and that we could use for our campaigns. For example, it can include drawings, photos or images of older people that show ageing in a positive light, however, we cannot guarantee that all material will be used.

Please send your ideas to us via email, <mailto:choice@aber.ac.uk>, social media or post!

‘Joining us on social media’. We are keen to promote the needs and rights of people aged 60 years and over. We provide the latest updates on project developments, changes in policy and news of public events and conferences focussing on issues relating to us in later life. We would also like you to express your views and post any positive images you see about older people on Twitter.

Choice hopes to positively change attitudes towards people who have suffered mistreatment. It will also offer a forum for individuals and groups to make contact with one another to debate and challenge existing attitudes and practices when responding to older people experiencing harm in their own homes. The project aims to discover what older people want in terms of ‘justice’.



Our Twitter user name is [@choiceolderppl](https://twitter.com/choiceolderppl) so please follow us.

One of our volunteers, Lauren Boaler, (left) out with Project Researcher, Rebecca Zerk on a U3A walk in a very damp December!



Training

Where appropriate and necessary we will provide you with training to support your work on the project. This could include more information on the restorative approaches and principles, safeguarding procedures and domestic abuse and the criminal and civil options available.

YouTube

Check out the YouTube conversation between two of the project team members, who discuss what they understand by elder abuse, whether there are typical abusers and people who are abused, the differences between elder abuse and domestic violence and why it is so important to raise awareness of the subject.

https://youtu.be/85FmA5H_KqU

The Project

Choice has grown out of a number of research projects the Centre has carried out over the past few years into different aspects of elder abuse.



Left to right – the three co-investigators on the Choice project:
Professor Alan Clarke, Senior Research Fellow, Sarah Wydall and Professor John Williams.

Follow the link below to the Research section of the Choice website where you will see a list of research publications, reports, conference presentations and books relating to different aspects of elder abuse, domestic abuse and justice, which provide interesting background to the *Choice* project.

<http://choice.aber.ac.uk/research/>

The three and a half-year long *Choice* project runs from 2015 to 2018. The project is working in partnership with national charities such as Age Cymru, Hafan Cymru and Welsh Women's Aid. We have also had considerable support from local authorities and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

A Choice Support Worker will support older people referred onto the project. The Choice Support Worker will work with clients to explore a range of options, civil, criminal and restorative to promote choice and empowerment in local settings.

The research team will evaluate the choices older people make when they are being mistreated by a family member in their own home.

The project operates within existing Social Service safeguarding procedures and measures.

What Choice offers:

- Choice is working together with older people, volunteers, local communities and professionals in two pilot areas (Carmarthenshire and Cardiff) to design an additional approach to justice based on restorative principles. This new approach will form one of three options introduced to the client by the Choice Support Worker.
- Older people will be involved from the beginning in all discussions and decisions as to the best course of action and will be empowered as a result of this involvement.
- Qualified and trained project staff will liaise with the older person and other family members to agree how best to resolve their situation.
- The Choice Support Worker will work with the older person for up to 18-months

Sarah Wydall, Senior Research Fellow, at Aberystwyth University said;

“This project aims to provide older people who have been harmed by a family member with the opportunity to explore civil, criminal and restorative options from a rights-based perspective. It is highly innovative in its approach, particularly the involvement of victim-survivors and the integration of research and practice. Although based in Wales, the findings of the project will have international significance.”

The four objectives of the project are:

1 – Public Awareness Raising

The project involves raising awareness, primarily in Carmarthenshire and Cardiff, amongst the public and community-based services providing support for older people.

The awareness-raising campaign will provide information on healthy relationships but also highlight how to seek help if someone is being mistreated. Further information will be given on adult protection and safeguarding. The public awareness raising will help people in the community recognise the signs of mistreatment and how to respond to them more effectively. This aspect of the project will be inter-generational with older and younger people acting as ambassadors.

This highly innovative project has already featured in the local and national media and this coverage will continue as the project develops.

The launch conference was held on 22nd October 2015 in Carmarthen, where Sarah Rochira, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and Eleri Butler, the CEO of Welsh Women's Aid were two key speakers. There will also be a series of local public engagement / awareness meetings held in the two pilot areas of Cardiff and Carmarthenshire, which will introduce the project on a more local basis.

Our website – see link: <http://choice.aber.ac.uk>

The website contains more detail about the project, provides access to research papers and reports relevant to the issue of abuse of older people and the 'Latest news' section contains copies of the presentations given at the Carmarthen conference in October 2015.

2 – Design new approaches to justice

In phase two of the project we will design new approaches to justice based on restorative principles – one in Cardiff and one for Carmarthenshire. This new option will exist alongside criminal and civil justice options.

These approaches will be designed by members of the public together with local practitioners from both the third sector and local Social Services. Different restorative approaches may be developed for our pilot areas. These will be tailored to the needs and priorities of the local area that are identified by the design groups in each area.

3 – Deliver and evaluate the impact of the Choice initiative

(a) Delivery

An innovative element of the project is that fully-trained personnel will also be involved. A Choice Practitioner and two Choice Support Workers will be employed to discuss with older people who have been harmed by family members, the range of options available to them.

Any agency can refer an older person onto the project, but the older person will have to go through the existing Social Services risk assessment process carried out by the Adult Safeguarding Teams in Carmarthenshire and Cardiff. The project is only able to accept referrals for people who have been designated as 'lower risk'. The risk level will continue to be monitored by the Choice Support Worker before, during and after the intervention.

They will adopt a person-centred approach to meet the needs of the older person. They will engage with other services to help provide a complete package of support for the older person. The Choice project focusses on justice and human rights, any welfare needs will be referred to the third sector.

Participants in the project will be supported for up to a period of 18 months.

(b) Evaluation

The project will evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the Choice initiative in a number of ways:

- The research team will discuss with participants their levels of satisfaction with the service, their sense of empowerment and degree of involvement in the decision-making process.
- The two Choice Support Workers and the Choice Practitioner will comment on any perceived changes in victims' engagement needs and empowerment.
- Numerous measures will be administered to assess issues relating to safety, empowerment and control.
- Participants may be asked to keep a reflective diary, using any medium they wish, throughout the process as well as meeting with the research team.
- The 'success' of the reparation process will be monitored after a period of six months.

4 – Share the learning and dissemination of research findings

The findings from the project will be disseminated at selected conferences aimed at practitioners, academics and the general public. We see sharing the learning about the Choice initiative as a crucial part of the project.

A multi-media training package will be produced for practitioners. The findings of the research will inform the development of guidance on appropriate responses to abuse, harm and mistreatment. This package will provide information on promoting healthy relationships in later life.

The Project Team

Pictured L to R:

Jeremy Newman - Sarah Cairns - Rebecca Zerk - Sarah Wydall - Alan Clarke - John Williams



Contact us

Please contact us if you have further questions about the project or how you may be able to help us by volunteering.

Address

Choice Project
Department of Law & Criminology
Room 2.60, Elystan Morgan Building
Llanbadarn Campus,
Aberystwyth University
Aberystwyth
SY23 3AS

Email: choice@aber.ac.uk



Our Twitter user name is [@choiceolderpp](https://twitter.com/choiceolderpp) so please follow us.

Telephone: Jeremy on 01970 622516 or Rebecca on 01970 622519



Thank you for your interest in *Choice*!