

*Empowering vulnerable adults:  
independence and safeguarding in  
an age of personalisation*

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# Overview

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- Empowerment & vulnerability
- Divergent policy agendas
  - personalisation
  - safeguarding
- Implications for practice

# Empowerment or survival of the fittest?

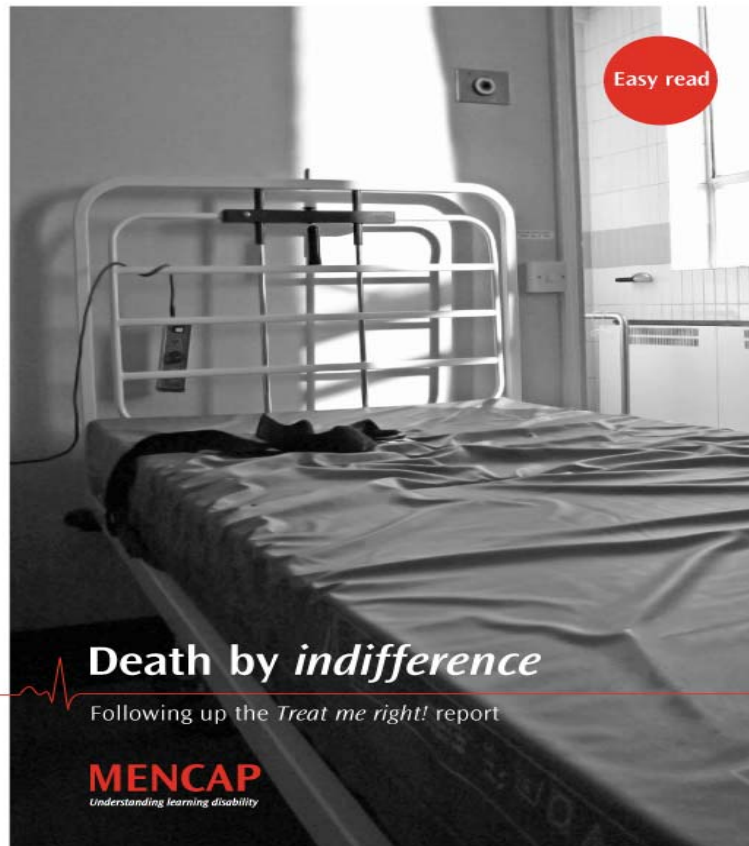
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- Who is empowered by 'patient choice'?
- Who wins?
- Who loses?
- How can equality of outcomes be ensured?

# Death by indifference

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- Institutional discrimination within the NHS
- Neglect of people with a learning disability in healthcare settings

# Choices and being 'in control'

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- Who uses health & social care services?
- How many have capacity?
- How many want the power to choose?
- How many need support to make their choices?

# Divergent policies?

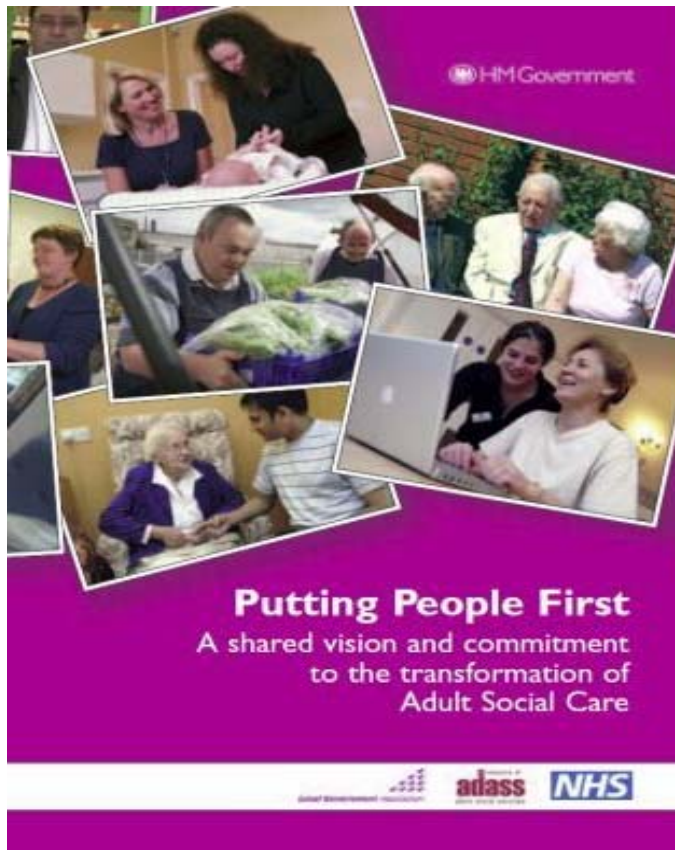
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- **Personalisation:**  
encourages choice & independence
- **Safeguarding:**  
protecting the vulnerable

# Personalisation

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“We want people to have maximum choice, control and power over the support services they receive” (p.2)

# Choice, independence & personalisation

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- *Valuing People*
- Direct payments
- *Supporting People*
- *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*
- *Putting People First*
- Individual budgets & self-directed services

# Personal budgets & self-directed services

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- Individuals know their own needs
- Choice & control are maximised
- Public money is used efficiently
- Builds upon existing networks & promotes social inclusion

## What about safeguarding...?

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- Social vulnerability
- Lack of staff vetting
- Difficulties of reporting abuse by family & friends

Experts say senior financial abuse will be the "crime of the 21st century."

# Safeguarding vulnerable adults

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- Growing awareness of adult abuse
- Currently showing similar trajectory to child abuse
- Financial abuse & physical abuse are most common

# Safeguarding measures

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- Policy response: *No Secrets*
- Criminal justice response
- Workforce vetting & barring systems

# Tensions between personalisation & safeguarding

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- Theoretical
  - Independence may increase vulnerability
- Practical
  - Lack of vetting for directly employed staff
- Whose choice, whose independence?
  - Cared for?
  - Carers?

# Empowering vulnerable adults

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- Independence & choice have little value if they come at the cost of being neglected or abused
- Protection from abuse has little value if it comes at the cost of losing all choice & independence

# Safeguarding & personalisation

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- Personalisation & safeguarding should be considered **together**
- Proactive, not reactive, measures are needed
- True empowerment requires vulnerability to be acknowledged