

Welcome to  
our September  
newsletter

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People

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# SAFE Newsletter

**September 2025**

## Welcome to our September newsletter

And so Autumn arrives... Not quite mists and mellow fruitfulness yet but there is a feeling of change as schools return and we perhaps accept that we won't have the fifth heat wave of the year (though no guarantees).

It has been a quiet summer with a focus on data analysis and writing up results so we can share them more widely in the near future. We have had ethical approval to allow us to interview older people unable to attend workshops due to the fact that they can't

leave home and we also have permission to start recruiting people for interview through advocacy services. If you are linked to advocacy services or perhaps care providers with links to people in care homes or their own homes you might like to let them know about the project.

In the newsletter this month we have a project update and some information about the upcoming International Day of Older People. The Team Profile this month is of Daphne Franks who is a member of our Steering Group

who advise us and contribute insights from a wide range of experience. Daphne's expertise is in Predatory Marriage and she has written a short article about it which is also in the newsletter.

The run in to the end of the year looks set to be a busy one as we continue with interviews, work on developing our case study and prepare for the next phase in 2026 when we start talking with social workers and advocates. We will share more emerging findings in upcoming newsletters so stay tuned...



## **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS FOR EMPOWERMENT**

Any comments or suggestions for the newsletter (including being removed from our circulation list), or for more information about the research, contact:  
[keith.chappell@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:keith.chappell@sunderland.ac.uk)

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## Team Profiles

Daphne Franks, Teacher and Campaigner, Predatory Marriage UK

Daphne taught Communication Skills and other non-clinical topics at Leeds Medical School for many years, and still works freelance as a Communication Skills tutor.

In 2015, Daphne's widowed mother suffered a "predatory marriage" to a much-younger man. Her mother Joan was nearly 92 and the man was 67. Joan had advanced vascular dementia and never knew she was married. Daphne has been campaigning nationally ever since to improve the laws, procedures and safeguarding around marriage. She has recently been awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research laws and procedures at marriage in Canada, France and the Netherlands.

Originally from Leeds, Daphne moved to Newcastle two years ago with her husband to join her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter, and is very much enjoying living in the North-East.

Daphne is delighted to be involved in the steering group for SAFE.



**DAPHNE FRANKS**

### **PREDATORY MARRIAGE – Daphne Franks**

Predatory Marriage is generally defined as when a younger person – often a carer, or calling themselves a carer – marries an older person, often with dementia, in order to inherit their estate upon their death. Marriage revokes a Will in much of the UK, so if you make a Will and then marry, your Will is gone as though it never existed. The predator also has complete control of the funeral arrangements.

As well as this easy legal incentive for predatory marriage, another problem is that wedding registrars do not have mandatory training in safeguarding or in assessing mental capacity to marry.

In 2015 Daphne's mother, Joan Blass, suffered a predatory marriage to a much-younger man in spite of the fact that Daphne's family lived next door to Joan, saw her every day and had warned all the authorities about the man.

Daphne's campaign has led to the issue being raised in Parliament several times and the Law Commission has now proposed to change the Law so that marriage will no longer revoke a Will.

She has spoken to the relatives of very many cases. Laws and procedures have simply not kept up with the huge rise in dementia.

Daphne has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship for 2025 to travel to Canada, the Netherlands and France to investigate marriage procedures there with a view to bringing about improvements in the UK.

For more information please visit:

[www.predatorymarriage.uk](http://www.predatorymarriage.uk)





# Project Update

**Talks and presentations:** over the summer we gave a presentation on the SAFE project to the NHS England Safeguarding Adults National Network and we will be presenting a webinar in early October to the the North East Enhancing Care for Older People (ENCOP) network. If your organisation would like to hear more, please let us know.

**Additional Grant Funding:** Building on some of our insights from the first phase of the project which indicated churches as places of safety for older people we have received some additional funding from the William Leech Research Fund for Keith to take up a fellowship to research safety, older people and churches. He will be doing this in addition to his work on the SAFE project. The work represents an important aspect of the wider impact that the SAFE project research is having.



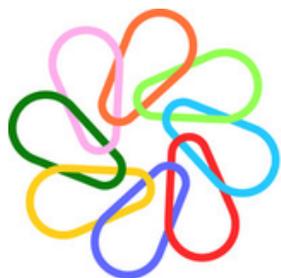
## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER.**

This year the UN theme is ‘Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: Our Aspirations, Our Well-Being, Our Rights’

Find out more here: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/older-persons-day>

In the UK the theme has been set as: ‘Building Belonging: Celebrating the power of our social connections’

<https://ageing-better.org.uk/international-day-older-people-1-october-2025>



# International Day of Older People

Every year on October 1st the United Nations marks the International Day of Older people. The aim is to highlight issues facing older people and to presents the strengths of older people around the world. The theme in the UK this year is: **Building Belonging: Celebrating the power of our social connections.**

**One of the important findings from our initial stages of research during the SAFE project has been that it is social connections and the feeling that someone is there and watching out for you that helps older people feel safe.**

*“knowing people and having a small community in which you are known are all important for safety.”* (SAFE Workshop participant)

We will be marking the day with a blog post and Keith will be speaking at a seminar is Rome organised by the Vatican to improve care for older people.

Below are some suggestions from the Centre for Ageing Better ([ageing-better.org.uk](http://ageing-better.org.uk)) for things we can all do:

- **Celebrate** all the ways that your community is creating opportunities for social connection. This could mean highlighting and sharing examples of good practice within your community such as existing community groups, activities and befriending schemes.
- **Do something new** that enables social connection on the day. This could mean planning an event or activity which brings people together to share key information about the range of events and activities for older adults.
- **Planning and taking action** to enable more social connection in the future. This could include forging new relationships which create regular opportunities for collaboration and connection across generations.



# Emergency Alert 7<sup>th</sup> September

## Advice for those in domestic abuse situations.

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 3pm all mobile phones and tablets in the UK will receive a test alert that will override being put on silent. The test will make a loud siren noise for 10 seconds and may cause devices to vibrate.

If you are affected by domestic abuse/elder abuse and have a mobile phone concealed from your abuser you may wish to opt out of receiving alerts.

Instructions on how to do so are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/alerts/opting-out>

If you, or someone you know, is affected by domestic abuse you can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline

on

0808 2000 247

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

**In an emergency call 999.**