

The protection of children and other vulnerable people may be considered an important element in a “civilised society”. However the increased media coverage of child safeguarding has created a degree of moral panic and greater expectation on services that seek to protect children. A potential method of improving the robustness of the process is by improving the vigilance in an increased number of health and social professions that are routinely involved with children.

The profession of diagnostic radiography represents one such profession that has a natural involvement with children, albeit on a more transient basis. The Health and Care Professions Council via their Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics, make it a statutory regulatory body requirement that diagnostic radiographers must take appropriate action if concerns exist regarding the well-being of children.

Literature exists that demonstrates medical images produced by radiographers represents evidence that can be used for medico-legal purposes in cases of child safeguarding, notably in cases of suspected physical abuse. However, the role of the radiographer themselves within the overall child safeguarding process has had more limited coverage. Their contribution to this process may be underutilised, particularly in view of the combination of patient and image that radiographers observe concurrently.

This research intends to investigate diagnostic radiographer’s sensitivity to child safeguarding by using simulated cases. Those cases will involve those that are suggestive of child safeguarding concern, those that are suggestive and conditions that may mimic concerning appearances. The second phase of the thesis will involve structured interviews that intend to uncover how radiographer’s attitudes to child safeguarding are shaped and their understanding of what the HCPC describe as “appropriate action”.

The multi-factorial nature of child safeguarding requires a more blended philosophical approach. This thesis takes a social constructivist epistemology and a post positivistic theoretical perspective within a pragmatic paradigm. This blended approach will allow the wide spectrum of influencing factors that exist within child safeguarding to be considered.

A mixed methods approach allows correlation to occur between the simulation and structured interview in exploring what factors influence more strongly decision making on the part of the diagnostic radiographer. The resultant data will be used to analyse whether the role of the diagnostic radiographer could be better used in child safeguarding.