

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing & Public Protection Committee
DATE	21 November 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Adult Protection Committee (APC) Biennial Report 2022-24
REPORT NUMBER	ACHSCP/24/336
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Fiona Mitchelhill, Chief Officer HSCP
CHIEF OFFICER	Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work
REPORT AUTHOR	Val Vertigans, Strategic Service Manager Justice Social Work service
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.9

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share the Adult Protection Committee (APC) Independent Convener's Biennial Report for 2022-24 for assurance purposes, in terms of the delivery and impact of 'adult support and protection' in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee's Biennial Report for 2022-24 which has been prepared as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, and which provides assurance about progress made over the period.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 stipulates that the Independent Convener of an Adult Protection Committee must prepare a general report on the exercise of the Committee's functions during the preceding two years. A copy of the Biennial Report must be submitted to the Adult Support & Protection (ASP) statutory partners (i.e. each of the public bodies and office-holders represented on the APC), the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Ministers, the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and the Public Guardian. The Biennial Report for 2022-24 as attached at Appendix 1 is the 'public-facing' version of the populated Word Template which has been submitted to Scottish Government as required.
- 3.2 The APC is committed to an inclusive approach to preventing and responding to harm and protecting adults at risk. The APC includes representation from a range of professional backgrounds and organisations including Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue

Service, ACVO (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations), the local third sector interface, and Advocacy Service Aberdeen. The Independent Convener of the APC also plays the same role for the Child Protection Committee.

- 3.3 Adult support and protection activities are, by their very nature, often complex and challenging. This Biennial Report covers the 'post-pandemic' period, and attempts to highlight the scale of activities and initiatives over the two-year period, the collaborations between partners, the co-ordination between professionals and the positive impacts on those who are or who have been at risk of harm – all within the context of the additional contextual challenges such as the cost of living crisis.
- 3.4 The APC's Improvement Plan for 2021-23, which was the basis of much of the work undertaken during the period, was informed primarily by the self evaluation in advance of, and the [findings](#) resultant from, the Spring 2022 joint inspection of adult support and protection (published in June 2022).
- 3.5 Some key messages from the Biennial Report include:
- Notwithstanding the demand for services, which continues to increase, and the challenges across the workforce, not least in terms of capacity, the APC has delivered on its improvement plan and benefitted from self-evaluation against the new national ASP Code of Practice. The report demonstrates the ability of the APC to adapt and change where appropriate to ensure the safety and wellbeing of adults at risk of harm. It also reflects Aberdeen City's ongoing commitment to align areas of Public Protection to deliver a more efficient and effective service against current demand.
 - A significant increase has been seen in the number of Adult Support and Protection referrals received during this biennial reporting period compared to the previous two periods. This is likely to reflect greater awareness of adult support and protection and a related increase in reporting, but also the wider context of the cost of living crisis, increase in poverty levels, and reduced availability of other services due to over-arching increases in demand on services across the board.
 - The most common principal harm type for Inquiries where 'Investigatory Powers' were used was Financial or Material Harm. The cost of living crisis is likely to further enhance the conditions for such harm against vulnerable adults to take place. In recognition of this, the three Grampian Adult Protection Committees published a [Grampian Financial Harm Strategy](#) (December 2022) which provides strategic direction to partners across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, in the prevention of, and response to, Financial Harm.
 - Staff learning and development in relation to ASP continues to be a priority, on a single agency basis by individual partners, and also on a multi agency basis.
 - The APC continues to endeavour to ensure that the 'voice' of all those we aim to support and protect is at the centre of all we do. The APC's Lived Experience

Forum, established for over two years now, plays a key role in this, and has been involved in a range of activities.

- 3.6 In terms of moving forwards, as set out in Section 8 of the Biennial Report, the APC [Strategy](#) for the period April 2024 to March 2026 encompasses the below Priorities. Activities to progress these are set out in the refreshed APC Improvement Plan which is being progressed by the APC's Sub-Committees.

Stakeholder Engagement

We commit to continue to develop appropriate mechanisms for effective communication:

- i) recognising how diverse our communities are, to ensure the 'voice' of all those we aim to support and protect is at the centre of all we do,
- ii) to raise awareness about ASP, so that staff and public recognise the risks of harm to vulnerable adults and know how to respond, report and connect to appropriate supports, and
- iii) to ensure we understand each other's roles, responsibilities and aims (including via sharing of updates and good practice across all partners' staff groups).

Performance / Quality Assurance Framework

We will develop a robust Data Performance and Quality Assurance Framework, to enable us to:

- i) identify trends, areas for improvement and areas of good practice; and
- ii) establish a process for continuous improvement and ensure learning is embedded into practice.

This will enable us to deliver safe and effective services with improved outcomes for those at risk of harm.

Learning and Development

We will continuously improve ASP practice, learning and development by reaching all our people, ensuring effective support, preventative measures and protection of adults at risk of harm.

In addition to the above, the APC continues to prioritise a focus on learning from Reviews, continuing to work to fully embed the relatively new processes throughout the partnership. There is full recognition that it is not only about identifying learning, but also about, where appropriate, changing practice and thereafter measuring better outcomes for individuals.

The APC also contributes fully to efforts by the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection to improve alignment across public protection, which are led by a Lead Officers Group. This Group looks at cross-cutting themes and opportunities to collaborate, including information sharing, strategic work, Learning and Development and the [Aberdeen Protects](#) website.

- 3.7 The Biennial Report has been submitted to Scottish Government and shared with key stakeholders as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. It has also been circulated widely to partners and staff, and has been published on the Aberdeen Protects website.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 46 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 requires the convener of an Adult Protection Committee to prepare a general report on the Adult Protection Committee's work every two years. The development and publication of the Biennial Report as appended at Appendix 1 ensures that this statutory requirement is complied with.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			N/A
Compliance	Risk of non compliance with Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 if no Biennial Report prepared	Biennial Report has been prepared as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007	L	Yes
Operational	No significant risks identified			N/A
Financial	No significant risks identified			N/A

Reputational	Reputational Risk if Biennial Report not prepared and published as required by Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007	Biennial Report has been prepared as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of aspects of the policy statement under the following headings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People with the Cost of Living • Caring for Each Other • A Safer Aberdeen
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p><i>The proposals within this report support Prosperous Adults section of the LOIP:</i></p> <p>Our improvement activity is focused on supporting the people most vulnerable to harm due to poverty, homelessness, mental health and drugs and alcohol in the short term as well as making changes to our systems to prevent these harms in the future.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Claire Wilson, Chief Officer Adult Social Work, on 21 st October 2024.

Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - APC Biennial Report 2022-24.

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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