



Aberdeen City Adult Protection Committee

Biennial Report 2022-24

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Members of the APC Lived Experience Forum





Section 1

Convener's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this Biennial Report on Adult Support and Protection activity undertaken in Aberdeen City during the period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024.

This has been a particularly challenging time for all as we emerged from a global pandemic into a cost of living crisis and other emerging issues such as the significant rise in displaced persons. All these factors have undoubtedly contributed to placing huge challenges on all. Unfortunately, it remains the case that risk of harm to many of our most vulnerable persons has not reduced because of the additional pressures placed on individuals, families and communities during this time.

The cost of living crisis has also impacted significantly on staff and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank staff across all agencies and services in Aberdeen for the critical role they have played and continue to play in identifying, reporting, supporting and protecting vulnerable adults throughout the City.

Notwithstanding the challenges however, the Adult Protection Committee continues to strive to deliver the best possible outcomes for adults at risk of harm, their families and carers. This is very much evidenced in the completion of our most recent improvement plan and strong progress in relation to implementing the refreshed national guidance, locally, across the partnership. We have also worked hard to establish closer links with other strands of Public Protection, such as Child Protection, Violence Against Women and Girls and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership to provide a more effective and efficient service.

Finally, I would just wish to thank the Lived Experience Forum, whose voice we listen to closely as we continue to strive to deliver better outcomes for all.

Campbell Thomson QPM
Independent Convener,
Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee

Section 2

Introduction

Aberdeen City Adult Protection Committee (APC) has the following vision: *“Partners in Aberdeen are committed to an inclusive approach to preventing and responding to harm and protecting adults at risk.”*

We are committed to delivering this vision through our Strategy and all partners, statutory and third sector, have endorsed our Terms of Reference. Both these documents have been reviewed during the biennial reporting period.

This established governance process has enabled us to deliver our improvement plan, which must remain dynamic to incorporate for example, the revised national Code of Practice for Adult Support and Protection.

The 2022-24 Improvement Plan aligned to the recommendations of the Care Inspectorate’s Joint Inspection of ASP in Aberdeen, in June 2022. This Plan has been completed throughout the biennial reporting period and we are now working to deliver the Plan for 2024-26. This report reflects the improvements that have been made against challenges currently faced such as the cost of living crisis.

The report also shows 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.

The [Aberdeen Protects website](#) provides a range of information and resources about different aspects of public protection. More information about Adult Support & Protection can be found on the [Protecting Adults pages](#).

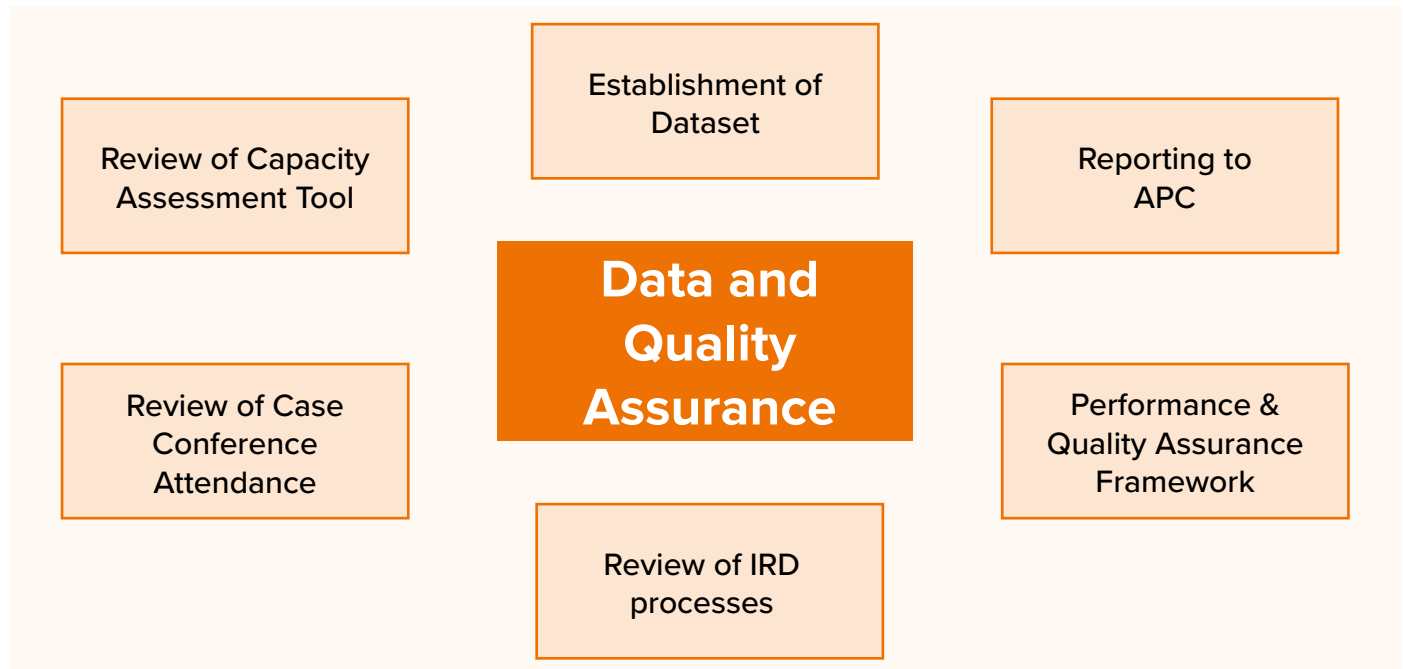
The national NHS Public Protection Accountability and Assurance Framework was published in October 2022. The Framework set out key standards for Health Boards in relation to their functions/duties for Child Protection, Adult Protection, and MAPPA.

- 1.1. One of the key measures within the ‘toolkit’ related to pathways for capacity assessments, namely : *“There are clear assessment pathways for accessing assessments of capacity to contribute to protection decisions, including decisions relating to the use of Adult Support and Protection, Adults with Incapacity, and/or Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 legislation.”*
- 1.2. This measure within the toolkit was put in place due to significant national learning from both multiagency inspections and case reviews related to issues with accessing capacity assessments in adult support and protection cases.
- 1.3. NHS Grampian was a ‘pilot’ board for implementing the toolkit that linked to the framework, so was one of the first in Scotland to benchmark its current practice and processes. The initial benchmarking process identified that NHS Grampian did NOT have a capacity pathway in place for protection decisions.
- 1.4. As a result of the benchmarking, the NHS Grampian Public Protection Committee agreed to support the creation of a short life working group (SLWG) that would aim to develop a robust Capacity Pathway for Protection Decisions. The decision was reported to all three Grampian Adult Protection Committees, and the work relating to the capacity pathway was integrated into APC improvement plans.



Section 3

What does our data tell us?



The role of the APC’s Performance & Quality Assurance Sub Committee is to oversee the progression of work aimed at achieving the APC’s priority that **“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.”**

From 1st April 2023, mid way through this biennial reporting period, Scottish Government introduced a new national minimum dataset which is collated on a quarterly basis, with the first quarter reported for April to June 2023. Because of changes to the indicators and related definitions, it is only possible to compare the main headline ASP Referral data across this and preceding periods. The previous reporting period, 2020-22, covered the period of the pandemic, which of course had an impact on data across the piece, and was therefore not a ‘standard’ reporting period with which to make comparison.

ASP Data published by Scottish Government is evolving to reflect the above changes. The last set of published figures cover the period [2019-20 to 2020-21](#), albeit these are described as ‘Experimental Statistics’, as the data was still being developed. It is the intention of Scottish Government to provide collated data reporting based on the new national minimum dataset, once this has been embedded robustly.



Locally, a new social work recording system, Microsoft Dynamics 365, which was developed in Aberdeen ‘by social work, for social work’, was introduced and implemented from October 2022. The system has inevitably gone through a ‘bedding in’ period, and continues to be further developed to meet the needs, both of services and to enable us to meet our reporting requirements. Significant work has been undertaken to ensure that we can provide the data which is required, and also that practitioners are made aware of changes in what needs to be recorded. We are now in a strong position on this, albeit this continues to be a work-in-progress – the national reporting requirements continue to evolve, with the second phase of the dataset being rolled out from April 2024.

** ‘Inquiries with Use of Investigatory Powers’ were previously referred to as Investigations. Terminology / definitions were revised under the national ASP Code of Practice 2022.*

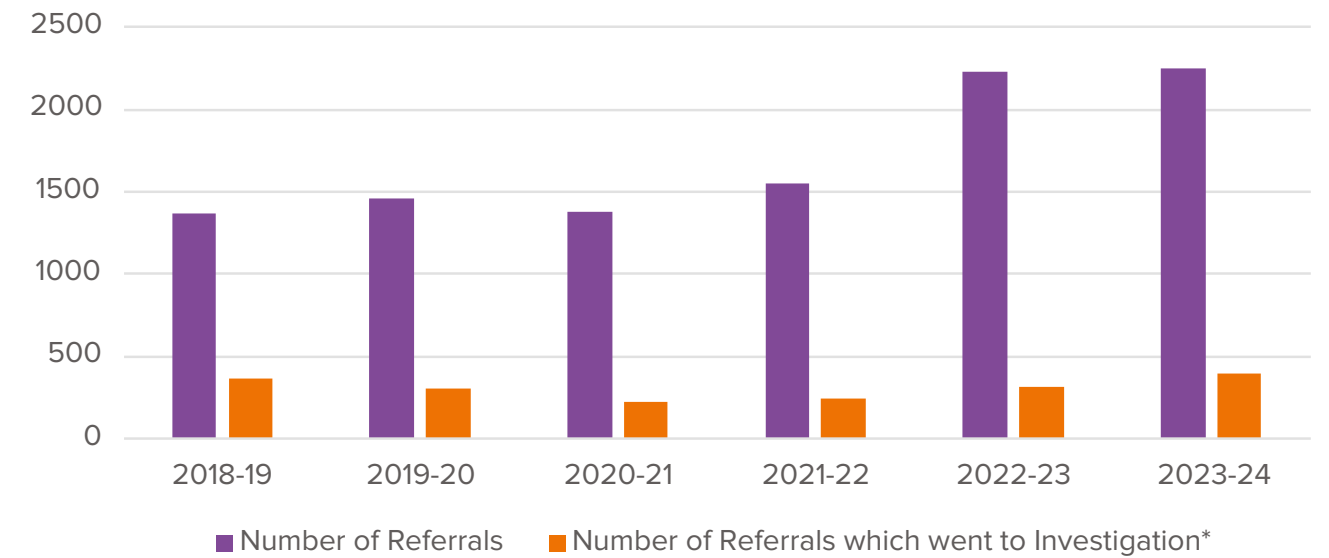
The purpose of an inquiry, with or without use of investigatory powers, is to ascertain whether adults are at risk of harm, and whether the council may need to intervene, provide support, or any other assistance to the adult or any carer. Any use of investigatory powers is triggered through the S4 duty to inquire under the Act.

An inquiry using investigatory powers requires the involvement of a council officer (an individual appointed by a council to perform specific functions under the terms of the Act). It will also require production of a full risk assessment. An inquiry which does not use investigatory powers may or may not require the involvement of a council officer, depending on local arrangements and the nature of the tasks.

The collation and consideration of relevant materials, including consideration of previous records relating to the individual and seeking the views of other agencies and professionals, does not necessarily need to be undertaken by a council officer if these inquiries do not include use of investigatory powers. Investigatory powers will be required, and a council officer involved, where there is a need for a visit and direct contact with the adult for interview or medical examination, or for the examination of record.

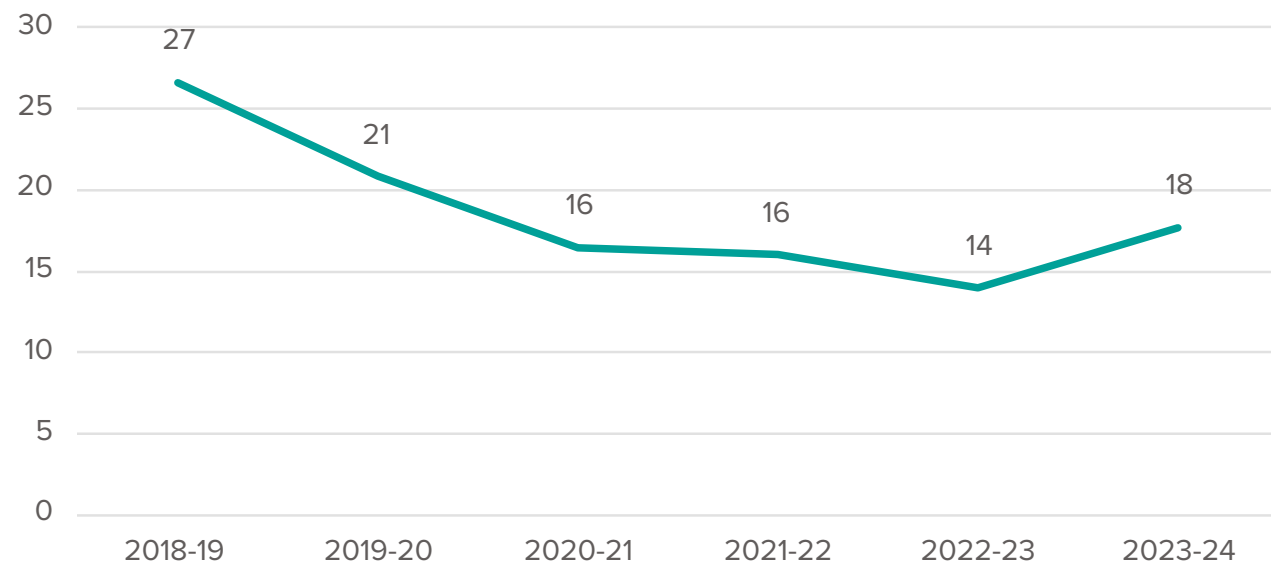
Inquiries may involve a single agency or more, as relevant, to the case. It should be noted that use of inquiries (with or without use of investigatory powers) supports a move away from talking about inquiries and investigations, and is aligned with the revised Code of Practice (July 2022).

Number of ASP Referrals and Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers*



The number of ASP Referral received has increased over time, since before Covid. A significant increase has been seen during this biennial reporting period compared to the previous. 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.

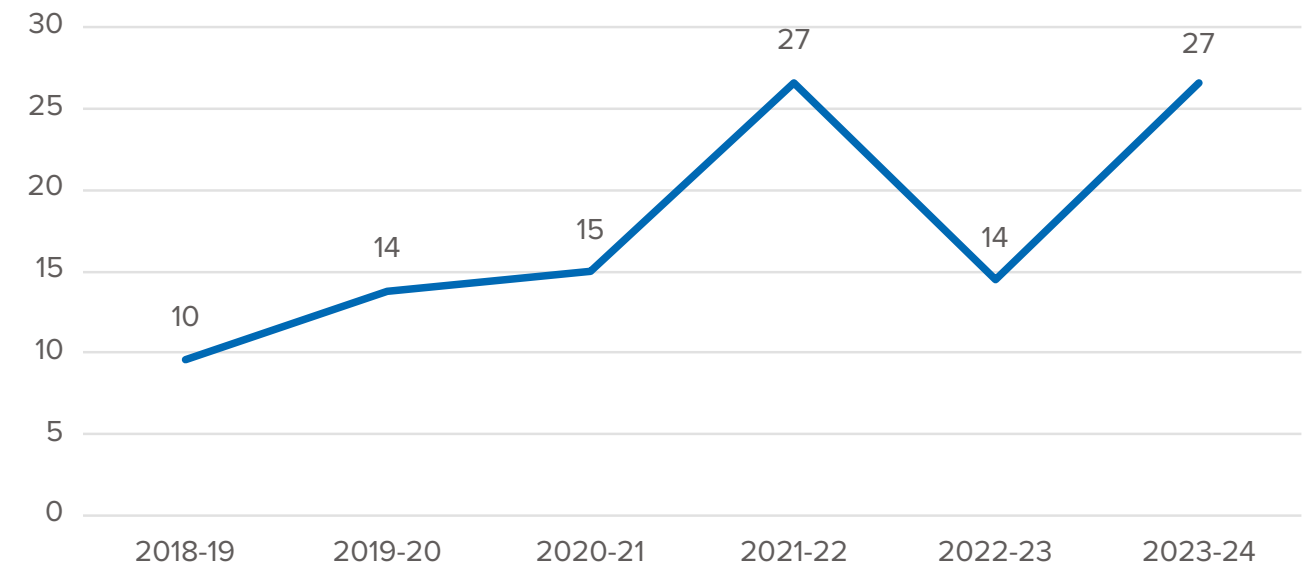
% of Referrals for which Inquiries with Investigatory Powers* were used



The number of referrals for which Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers were undertaken has returned to pre-covid levels. However, the chart above indicates that these have not increased proportionately with the number of referrals, although an increase can be seen in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. The general reduction in numbers is likely to relate to the establishment of a dedicated Adult Protection Social Work Team, in October 2021. The Team undertakes initial and enhanced inquiry in relation to all referrals received, addressing initial safeguarding concerns and responding with a 'least restrictive' approach. Adults are supported and protected via existing service provision, or signposted to other supports, where possible and appropriate, which allows for the most relevant support to be provided.

The increase in the proportion of Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers in 2023-24 is likely to reflect the increase in complexity of cases, and application of the three point test and particular circumstances such as trauma, mental health, alcohol and drugs, and self neglect & hoarding.

% of Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers* for which an Initial Case Conference was held



The proportion of Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers which progressed to Case Conference increased up to 2021-22, dipped in 2022-23, and then increased again in the second year of the reporting period. The general increased trend reflects improved use of the ASP process, and individuals progressing to case conference sooner after Inquiries with Investigatory Powers are used. The dip in 2022-23 correlates with the number of Inquiries for which Investigatory Powers were used that year.

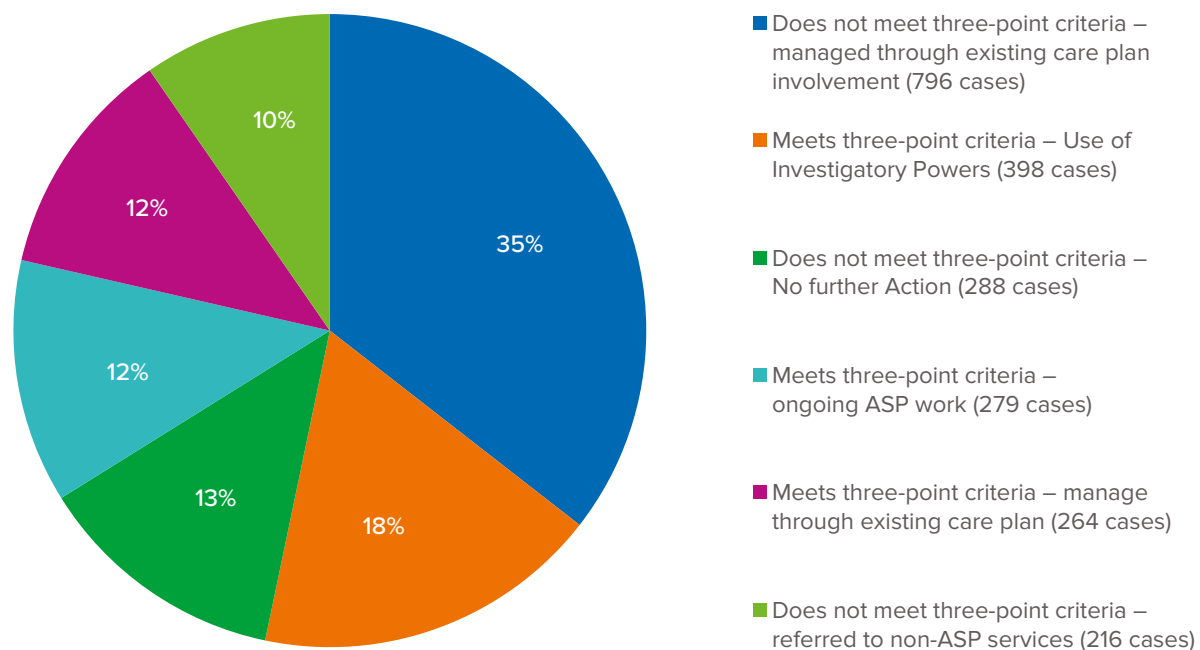




Single year Data:

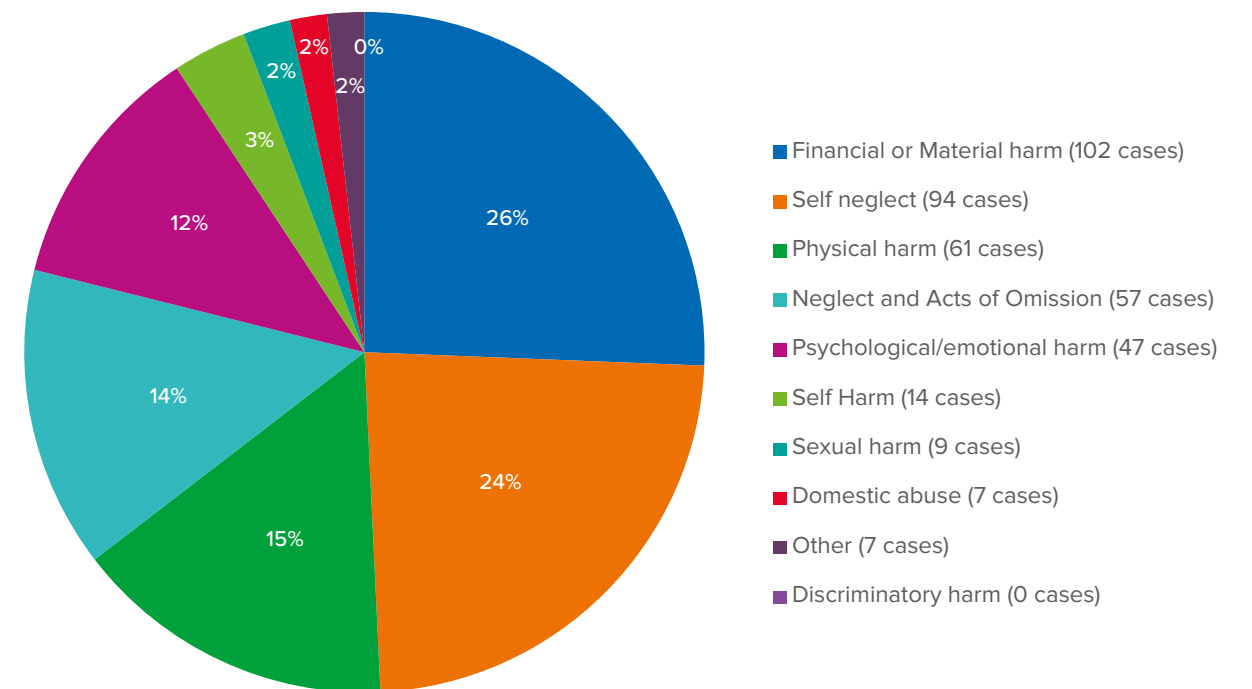
As mentioned above, because of changes to the indicators and related definitions, it is only possible to compare the main headline ASP Referral data across this and preceding biennial periods. The following data relates to 2023-24 only.

Action Taken following Inquiries without use of Investigatory Powers* (2023-24)



The above chart reflects action taken in relation to all referrals received in 2023-24. Previous data is less detailed, and moving forwards it will be possible to provide comparable data in relation to this. The largest proportion relates to: “Does not meet the three-point criteria – No Further Action” (288 cases). These are adults who are not at risk of harm - who are able to safeguard themselves and/or do not have a health or mental health condition that would make them more vulnerable to harm. More often than not, these adults would be considered to have vulnerabilities, but not at the significance to meet legislative criteria for ASP or statutory Social Work services. Advice, information and guidance will have been given to the adult and/ or the referrer about relevant and appropriate community supports and services.

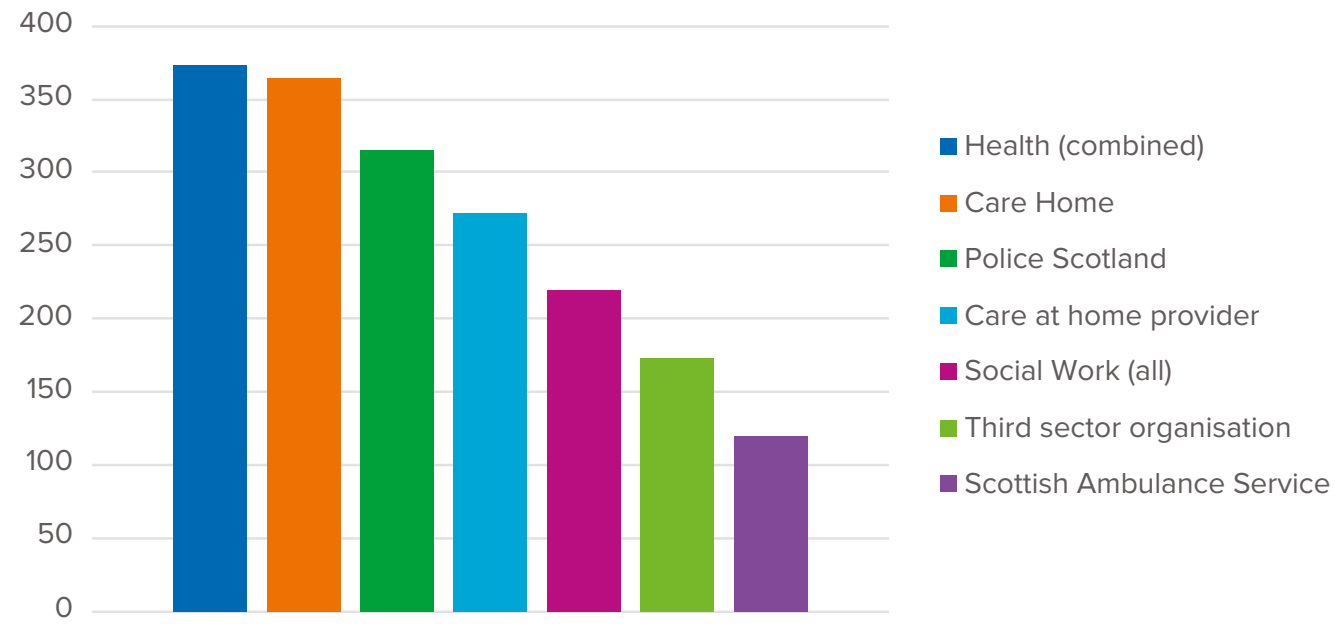
Types of Harm, for Inquiries where Investigatory Powers* were used (2023-24)



The most common principal harm type for Inquiries with use of Investigatory Powers is Financial or Material Harm, followed by Self Neglect. This reflects the complexity of such referrals and the need to use Investigatory Powers to support and protect the adult.

Source of Referrals

Top Referrers – over 100 Referrals (2023 -24)



Health services collectively submitted the highest number of referrals in 2023-24, demonstrating the impact of a significant focus on staff awareness-raising and training. The number submitted by Care Homes was only slightly lower.

Location of Harm

‘Own Home’ remains the most significant location of harm where Inquiries with Investigatory Powers have been used.

There have been significant developments in relation to data during the reporting period. From a national perspective, the introduction of the new national minimum dataset for Adult Support and Protection has for the first time provided a framework from which we can provide consistent data, ensuring it is comparative with other areas in Scotland. Despite delays we are now fully adopted that approach, however, it must be recognised that there will be initial challenges.

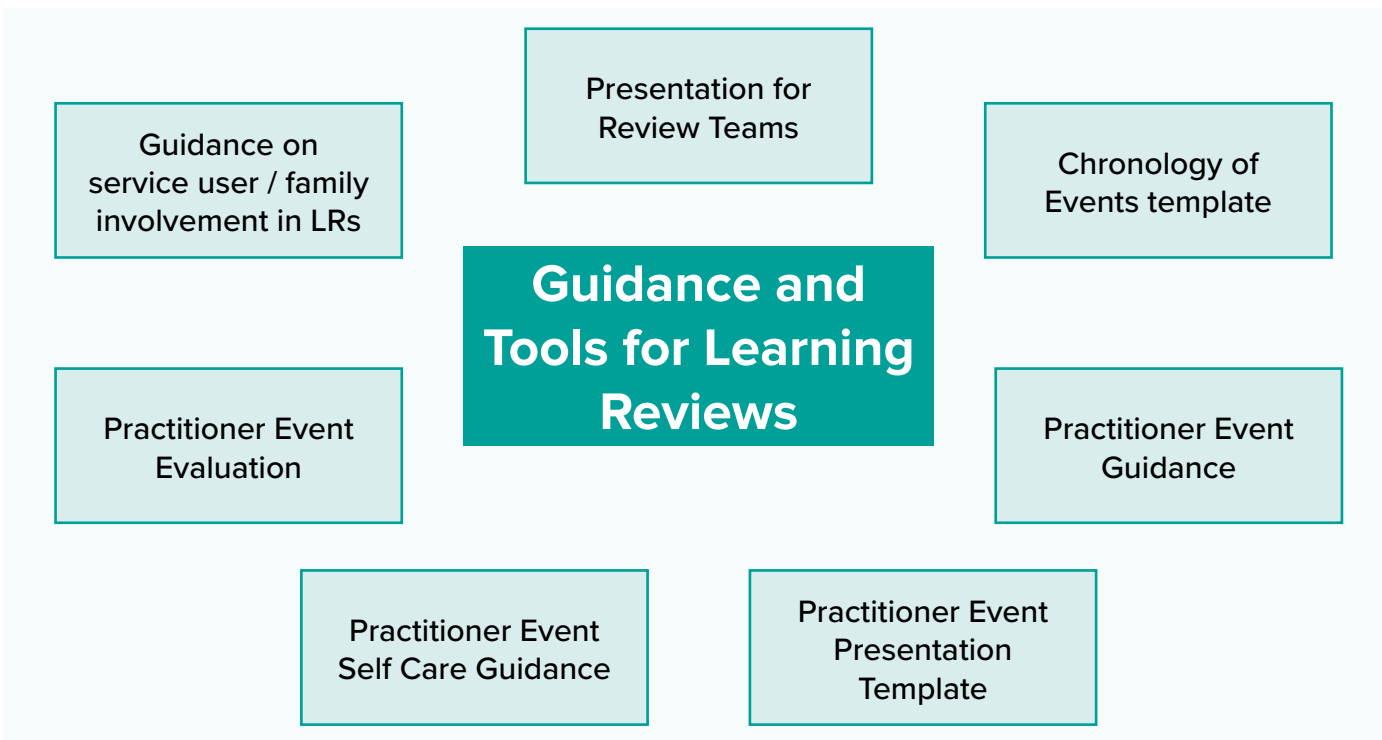
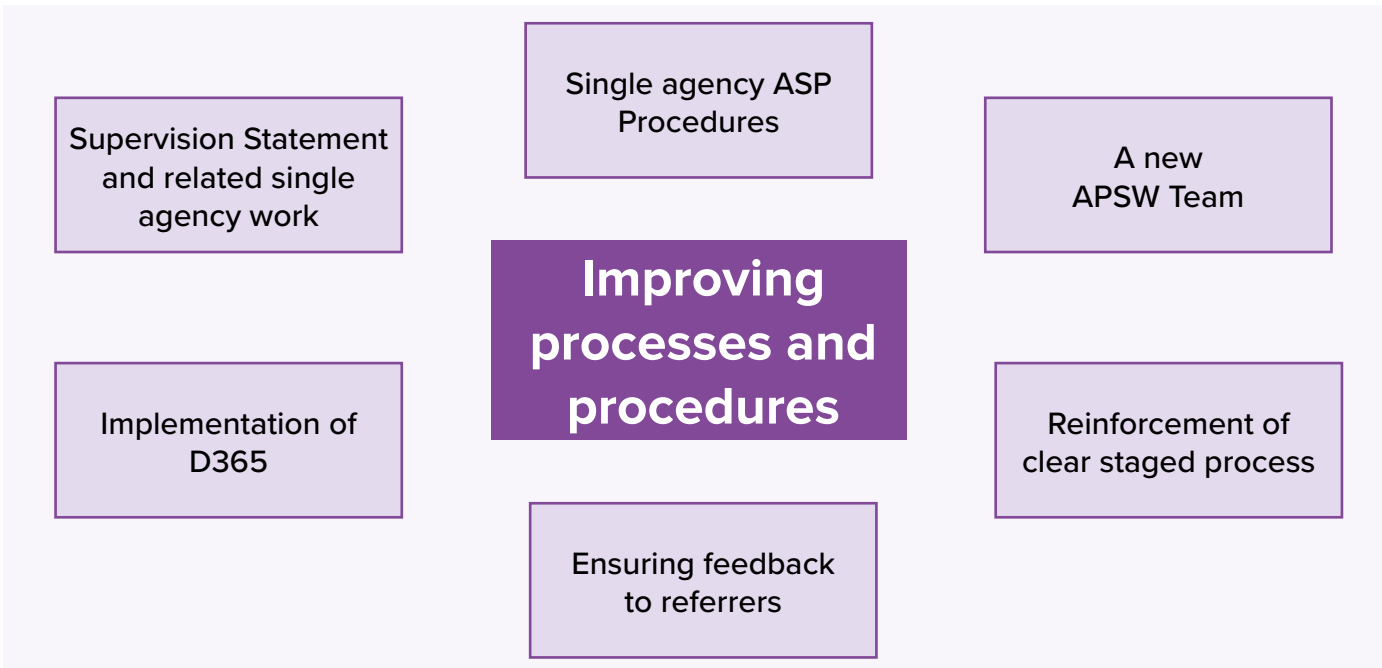
From a local perspective, the transition from Care First to D365 has been completed. Similarly, there have been challenges, however, there is a confidence now that the data produced is robust.

Aberdeen’s Chief Officer Group for Public Protection (COG) has requested that all strands of public protection align their reporting and this is ongoing from an adult and child protection perspective, with Violence Against Women and Girls due to follow.



Section 4

Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements



FINANCIAL HARM

Grampian partners collaborate together on an ongoing basis to enhance the protection of adults at risk of financial harm, recognising that to effectively combat the diverse risk of financial harm there is a need to influence the practice and procedures of public bodies, service organisations and third sector care and support providers. In December 2022, the three Grampian Adult Protection Committees published a [Grampian Financial Harm Strategy](#) which provides strategic direction to partners across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray, in the prevention of, and response to, Financial Harm.

This remains one of the most prevalent types of harm perpetrated against vulnerable people – in 2023-24, Financial Harm was the Principal Harm Type for 26% of referrals where Inquiries with Use of Investigatory Powers were progressed (the ‘top’ harm type) - and it can be argued that the cost of living crisis could further enhance the conditions for such harm to take place. Furthermore, the situation is constantly evolving, with new scams being generated as soon as an opportunity presents itself. It is therefore crucial that partners work collaboratively to try and keep abreast of these, as well as other well established methods of financial harm, and prevent people from being financially harmed by raising public awareness and educating people on how to keep their money and possessions safe.

Case Example:

“An 82-year-old recently widowed female researched Cryptocurrency investment after hearing about potential returns on a television program. She was contacted by criminals who instructed her to attend at her Bank and transfer a five figure sum. Bank Protocol activated with Police attending and safeguarding the victim, making appropriate referrals to statutory partners and ensuring a suitable support network was implemented. The resultant criminal investigation identified individuals operating as part of an international organised crime syndicate as being involved in the fraudulent scheme. Work continues with partners in criminal justice to apprehend those responsible”

NB The Banking Protocol is a collaboration between Police, Trading Standards and financial institutions to provide a rapid response to prevent customers losing money to frauds and scams. Staff working in banks, building societies and Post Offices are trained to detect warning signs that someone is being scammed and to make an emergency call to the Police. Police Officers will then visit the branch to investigate the suspected fraud and arrest any suspects still on the scene.

Work undertaken by Grampian partners has included regular sharing of information about current harms, scams, etc, specific awareness-raising with financial institutions in relation to the part they can play in safeguarding vulnerable adults, and wider awareness-raising with members of the public via social media.

SELF NEGLECT & HOARDING

At the beginning of 2023 the Adult Support and Protection Team set up a multi-agency Practitioner Forum to support practitioners working with people at risk of harm from self-neglect and hoarding. A range of professionals attend this forum from local authority, NHS, Police, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Third Sector and Registered Social Landlords. An in-person workshop, involving approximately 25 members of the Forum, was held on 19th September 2023, aimed at considering our 'pathways' for support around this complex area. The output from this workshop significantly informed a refresh of our [Aberdeen City Self Neglect & Hoarding Guidance April 2024](#) which was approved by APC on 23rd April 2024.

Over 50 people from across partners and agencies attended an online event on 4th July 2024 aimed at launching the refreshed guidance and raising awareness around this challenging topic. Evaluation feedback following this session evidenced that it had been well received, and that specific learning had been taken away by practitioners.

INSPECTION / QUALITY ASSURANCE / AUDIT ACTIVITY

Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection 2022

A joint inspection of adult support and protection processes and strategic leadership was undertaken from March to April 2022, with the [resulting report](#) published on 21st June 2022. The report commended how the strategic leadership team had invested and progressed their vision for adult support and protection during the pandemic, through a programme of well delivered operational and structural change and improvement. The inspection covered the period from February 2020 to February 2022, significantly overlapping with the 2020-22 biennial reporting period, and the [Biennial Report for 2020-22](#) provides extensive commentary on the outcome of the inspection and improvement work undertaken. The APC Improvement Plan for the biennial period 2022-24 continued to build on the recommendations from the inspection, and progress already made.

Nationally, the Care Inspectorate are leading the development of a new Quality Improvement Framework for Adult Support and Protection to which locally we have been engaged in contributing to its development. Locally, the APC is developing a Performance & Quality Improvement Framework including audit, which is aligned to existing CPC processes. This work is included within the APC Improvement Plan and being led by the APC's Performance & Quality Assurance Sub Committee.

In addition, a number of audit reviews have been undertaken during the biennial reporting period.

- i) **Review of Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs) – Winter 2022**
An 'audit' of the quality of IRDs which had taken place since the implementation of the process in October 2021 to end August 2022 was undertaken. Overall, the Audit Team had found that the majority of IRDs were completed to a good standard, albeit IRDs have routinely been delayed, or not held, due to a difficulty in sourcing Health representation, which was largely due to lack of appropriate NHS responder. This had subsequently been addressed via the appointment of an NHS Grampian Single Point of Contact. Further audit work is planned, building on this work, to consider the extent to which IRDs are taking place appropriately.
- ii) **Review of Attendance at Case Conferences – Summer 2023**
The APC agreed that a review of attendance at case conferences would be progressed, to follow up on a review of Health and Police attendance at case conference meetings undertaken in 2019 across all three local authority areas, following feedback from an inspection of adult support and protection in Aberdeenshire. A number of areas of good practice were highlighted, and recommendations were made in relation to improvement of processes to make sure that all relevant parties were invited, and all perspectives heard and recorded – particularly the 'voice' of the adult at risk and their family or representative/s. These changes have all now been implemented and awareness-raising undertaken with those chairing Case Conferences, leading to improvements in practice.
- iii) **Review of themes arising from Learning Reviews undertaken – February 2024**
As part of the self-evaluation work done to inform the development of the APC's Improvement Plan for 2024-26, a review was undertaken of the themes arising from Learning Reviews completed during the reporting period. This was to ensure that any such themes were addressed as part of improvement planning. Themes were identified in relation to the need for consideration of the wider family context, follow-up when an individual is no longer being protected and supported under ASP (Thresholds), and the need for improved information-sharing across partners and services, as well as chronologies. Aberdeen City's Chief Officer Group for Public Protection (COG) agreed with these themes, and, in recognition that they were relevant across a broader context than ASP, identified appropriate pathways via which they would be addressed.

OUR APPROACH TO LEARNING REVIEWS

The APC has delegated authority to the Sub Committee to progress matters relating to case reviews, which will be subject to ratification by the APC (and notification to the COG).

As mentioned earlier, Scottish Government published revised [Guidance for APCs undertaking Learning Reviews](#) in May 2022, to accompany Guidance for Child Protection Committees (CPCs) undertaking Learning Reviews which had been published in 2021. [NB the Guidance for CPCs has recently been updated again.] Following on from this the [Grampian APCs' Learning Review Procedures](#) were reviewed and published in April 2023. In order to further support those considering and undertaking learning reviews in Aberdeen, across both Adult and Child Protection, a 'toolkit' of resources was developed, including:

- a presentation about learning reviews aimed, at review teams;
- a 'chronology of events' template;
- Practitioner Event guidance;
- a Practitioner Event Presentation template;
- Practitioner Events Self Care Guidance;
- A Practitioner Event evaluation template; and
- Guidance on Service User and Family involvement in learning reviews.

In addition to the above, in March 2024, Learning Review Guidance was developed for Social Work staff involved with reviews, and related awareness-raising undertaken.

Although national and local guidance exists, it has been acknowledged by ASP partners across Grampian that there is no locally agreed formal support or training available to those who are asked to be involved in Learning Reviews, and this is therefore under consideration by multi agency partners across the region.

Below are examples of improvement work undertaken as a result of work relating to learning reviews:

- Training and awareness-raising about recognising and responding to domestic abuse, including a [7 minute briefing](#) on the Aberdeen Protects website;
- [7 minute briefing](#) on Aberdeen Protects site, and shared, in relation to Missing Adults;
- Awareness-raising about ASP, in terms of recognising harm, and how to respond, with single agencies and wider public;
- Training and awareness-raising regarding Professional Curiosity, bariatric cases, and Self Neglect & Hoarding;
- Review of a range of single and multi agency systems and processes linked to ASP;
- Recommendation to HSCP Carers' Strategy Implementation Group regarding the value of awareness-raising about consideration of carers' rights / supports.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL & PATHWAY

In June 2024, NHS Grampian's Public Protection Committee endorsed a Pathway for Capacity Assessments for Protection-based decisions which clearly sets out pathways for accessing assessments of capacity to contribute to protection decisions, including decisions relating to the use of Adult Support and Protection, Adults with Incapacity, and/or Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) legislation. The Pathway was developed by a multi agency and multi disciplinary working group of representatives from across the Grampian area. The development of the Pathway arose following the publication of the national NHS Public Protection Accountability and Assurance Framework in October 2022 – having such a pathway in place was one of the success measures identified in the Framework. The new Pathway incorporates use of the existing Grampian Decision Specific Capacity Screening Tool, which is to be reviewed to ensure full alignment. Awareness-raising resources and training are currently being developed, to support the roll-out of the Pathway.





Section 5

Training, learning & development



The role of the APC’s Learning and Development Sub Committee is to oversee the progression of work aimed at achieving the APC’s priority that “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”.

Formal training courses are run by the organisations involved in ASP, on both a single agency and multiagency basis. In addition to this, we have support groups and subject matter groups, learning materials and resources, such as 7 minute briefings, and digital hubs and internet/intranet pages. Centralised multi agency resources are published as a one-stop shop for staff on the [Aberdeen Protects website](#). The voice of lived experience informs, and is central to, training offered.

In order to support learning and development two roles, one within Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership and the other within NHS Grampian, have been refocused which has already resulted in positive outcomes.

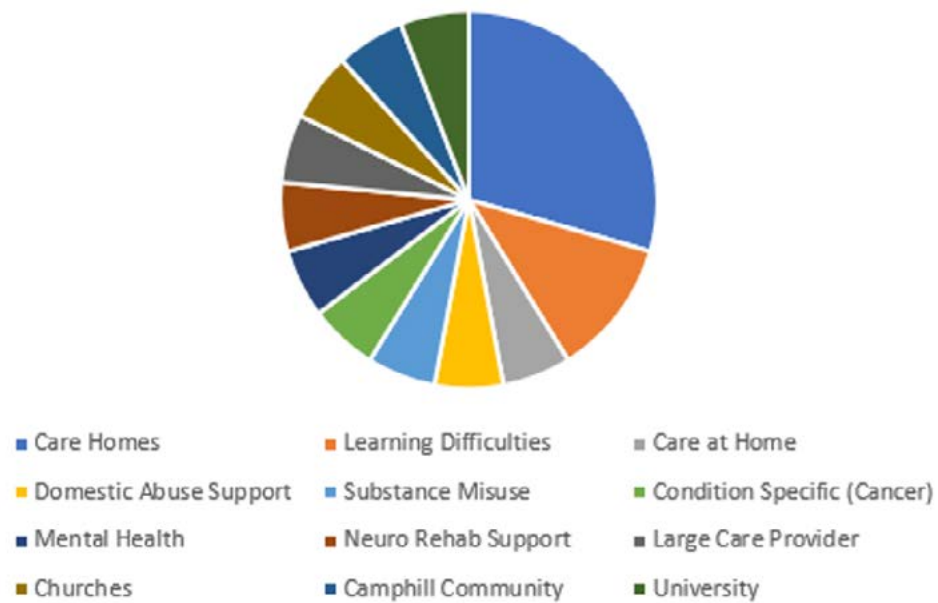
The Health & Social Care Partnership’s Adult Support and Protection Team continue to deliver the core training programme and, in terms of future development of training programmes, we have reviewed and updated the Mandatory Training for all local authority staff, and this will be rolled out over Spring/Summer 2024.

The Adult Protection Coordinator and Practice Development Officer also provide multi-agency training through the Train the Trainer’s programme which was introduced during the Biennial period. This is designed for those who are delivering Adult Support and Protection training to staff in other organisations with more than 15 paid staff or volunteers. Key core content relating to adult support and protection is covered, including reporting thresholds, with an expectation that those attending go on to deliver at least two courses each year, and also attend two follow-on support sessions per annum.

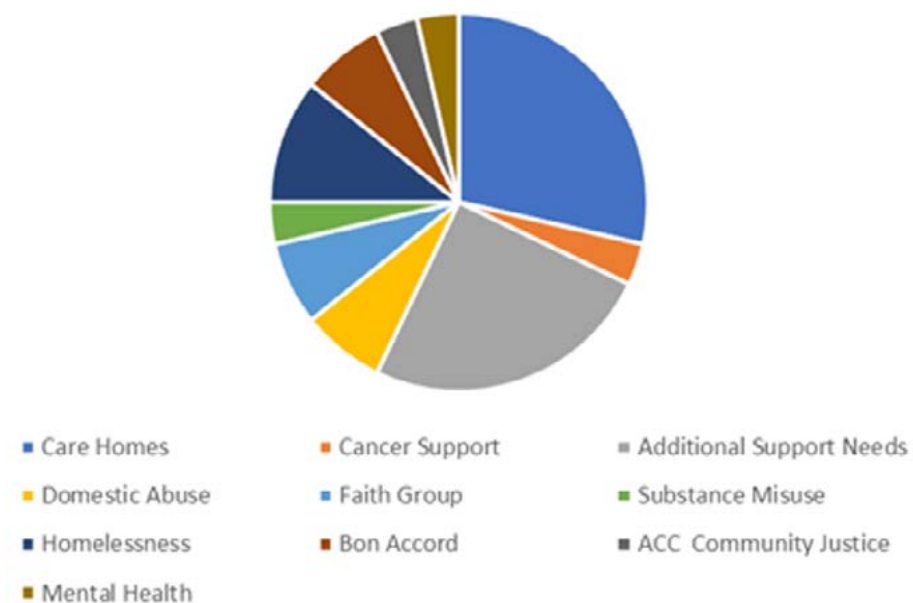
The APC’s Learning and Development Sub Committee undertook an analysis of attendance at this training, by type of organisation. The results can be found below. The aim of this analysis was to target more third sector organisations in these categories to increase training volumes and broaden the reach for ASP referral potential across the city. The next step would be to analyse similar data from referral records to identify impact of this type of targeting and to see if we can further improve our reach in any areas of work and therefore identify more widely, organisations that might benefit from having a closer relationship with APC.

The first chart shows the number of third sector organisations, by Type, which attended the first two cohorts of the Train the Trainer programme, and the second chart shows the same information, but by Staff Numbers who attended, representing each organisation Type.

Cohort 1&2 by type



Organisation type by Staff numbers



Council Officer Support Groups have been running since the beginning of 2022, meeting on a quarterly basis. These support groups allow Council Officers the opportunity to discuss practice issues and benefit from peer support from other Council Officers. As part of the continued development of the groups we are asking all Council Officers to complete a learning and development survey to ensure that these support groups continue to provide the appropriate support to allow Council Officers to carry out their role. Modules 3 and 4 training (see table below) is run for Council Officers as needed, in terms of specialist learning in relation to that role, eg new members of staff, or linked to recruitment and retention.

Social Work Adult Support & Protection Learning & Development			
Time Period: 01/04/22 - 31/03/2024			
Name of Course	Number of Courses	Number of Participants	Agencies Attended
Core ASP Training:			
Adult Support and Protection – Modules 1 and 2	5	83	Local Authority / Third Sector / Foster Carers
Adult Support and Protection – Module 3	1	17	Local Authority
Adult Support and Protection – Module 4	1	13	Local Authority
Council Officer Learning & Development:			
Council Officer Support Groups	Quarterly	8 – 9 per grp	Council Officers
Advocacy / Service User Engagement Session	1	51	Council Officers
Other:			
Aberdeen City Council Mandatory Online Training	N/A	5730	Aberdeen City Council staff
Training for Trainers	3	32	Third Sector
Self Neglect & Hoarding Practitioner Forum	5	c20 at each	Multi Agency

The self-rating of knowledge levels which participants are asked to undertake before and after training has been shown to evidence the immediate impact of the training, and evaluation feedback has generally been very positive, but there is always scope to improve.

The below are examples of feedback comments to which further consideration is being given:

- In person training (this was a common theme across all trainings delivered. Attendees felt that face to face training would have been beneficial)
- Training could benefit from more scenarios, case examples and discussions, short videos (some attendees felt that it would be good to have more case examples/discussions seeing through the whole process and even input from a Council Officer)

“Great, Informative Training”

“Thank you for training and providing a friendly environment where we could openly discuss thoughts and questions about ASP”

The **NHS Grampian Adult Public Protection Framework** sets out the training requirements of all employees across the health board. This framework is reviewed annually, with the current framework having been reviewed in November 2023. The training framework clearly prescribes the mandatory training expectations for all health care staff in Grampian.

NHS Grampian continues to offer a strong ASP training portfolio including Elearning modules, facilitator led (online) training sessions and face to face training sessions – detail is provided in the table below.

During the Biennial reporting period, 24,960 ASP training activities have been completed over a range of ASP Elearning modules. 348 face to face/facilitator led (online) sessions have been offered with 1905 participants in attendance. Participants attending include both patient facing and non-patient facing roles, Medical students, GP's and Trainee GPs.

All NHS Grampian employees are required to complete the mandatory "Welcome and Orientation" and 5094 individuals have completed this training over the biennial period, this session includes basic awareness of ASP and is mandatory for all employees whether patient facing or not.

Non patient facing and patient facing staff are all required to complete Level 1 Training in Public Protection, ASP, Child protection & Prevent and across the biennial period 11,304 have completed individual modules in these areas. In January 2024 our training portfolio was updated and the modules were combined into one Elearning Module and from January – end of March, 6,731 patient facing and non-patient facing employees have completed the course. The course is a welcome addition to the NHS Grampian Training portfolio as it is time effective and provides all relevant information to ensure all NHS Grampian employees have a basic understanding in the four key areas.

ASP Level 2 is mandatory for all patient facing NHS Grampian employees, with a requirement that training is attended every 3 years to ensure knowledge remains current with the training being reviewed and updated frequently to reflect any emerging ASP themes nationally and locally, including any learning from inspections or learning reviews. Across the reporting period there have been 97 Level 2 courses with 1071 staff members attending.

ASP Level 3 sessions are available to NHS Grampian employees who have a supervisory role and/or a more direct involvement in ASP procedures such as attending case conferences or contributing to investigations. These sessions are mainly delivered online/facilitator led, but face to face sessions are also available, 139 employees have attended across the biennial period.

Specific training has been developed for GP's and GP Trainees at Level 3, to ensure the training covers areas relevant to their practice and involvement. GP training is offered online/facilitator led and sessions are delivered at times to accommodate the role of GP's with sessions during Protected Learning Time (PLT) and evening sessions offered. Across the reporting period 24 GP sessions have been provided with 245 GP's attending. Level 3 training is also available to GP Trainees and these are delivered twice a year face to face. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) facilitate the booking of these sessions and they are delivered by the NHS Grampian Learning & Development Coordinator.

ASP training is also provided for junior doctors at both Foundation Level 1 and Foundation Level 2 which is another opportunity to give ASP input into the career of medical staff. Figures are only available for sessions run in 2024, but detail there were 83 attendees at 2 offered sessions during 2024. It is anticipated that sessions will continue to be offered with at least two courses offered annually.

Over the last 6 months a bespoke training course has been developed and offered to hospital inpatient settings. This specialist session operates on a face to face basis and covers ASP topics a hospital setting will likely experience. The sessions were delivered using written ASP scenarios and group discussions to work through what the response should/could be in each scenario, with materials such as the NHS ASP Ecard and the Grampian Thresholds Good Practice Guidance offered as resources to aide discussions. The feedback and evaluation from these sessions was overwhelmingly positive and further development is ongoing with a view that these sessions will be rolled out further and bookable through TURAS in the future.

The work of the Grampian ASP Learning and Development Subgroup has been ongoing throughout the reporting period. The group has continued to support multiagency trainers across the partnership and the frequency of meetings has increased to support and meet the needs of a number of new members to the group. The Grampian L&D Group has also developed a direct link into the National ASP Learning & Development Network via the Joint Learning & Development Co-ordinator.

Key Achievements in terms of Learning and Development during the reporting period included:

- Significant levels of core and bespoke training was delivered during the reporting period (see table below);
- The Grampian L&D Group has supported the delivery of an Inter Professional Learning Event alongside the Robert Gordon University. This took the format of two day workshops aimed at third Year Medical Students and second year BA Social Work students. There is a commitment from the L&D Group to continue supporting the development and delivery of this programme.
- Grampian wide Multi-agency Risk Assessment training was developed and delivered twice during the reporting period to over 150 participants. This training is aimed at anyone who is regularly or likely to be attending ASP Case Conferences and has brought together a diverse range of professionals from Social Work, NHS, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Housing, Advocacy, Third Sector and more. Evaluation feedback has highlighted that participants particularly valued the opportunity to engage in multi-agency discussion about risk and input around unconscious bias and how it impacts decision making. This will be delivered as a rolling programme with dates arranged for the remainder of 2024.
- Revision of the Grampian Learning & Development Strategic Framework.
- Agreement to initiate a 3 stage 'deep dive' into Learning & Development requirements around Trauma Informed Practice in Adult Support & Protection, with stage 2 focussing on those with lived experience and frontline practitioners.

NHS Grampian Adult Public Protection Training Output		
Time Period: 01/04/22 - 31/03/2024		
Name of Course	Number of Courses	Number of Participants
Adult Support and Protection - Level 2	97	1071
Adult Support and Protection - GP Level 3 (Full course)	24	245
Adult Support and Protection - Level 3	218	139
Adult Support and Protection - Multi Agency Risk Assessment	1	264
Adult Support & Protection Scenario Session	4	31
Adult Support & Protection GP Trainees	2	71
Medical Students Foundation Year 1 *figures for 2024	1	43
Medical Students Foundation Year 2 *figures for 2024	1	40
Adult Support & Protection Champion Session	3	84
Totals	348	1905
Elearning Public Protection Level 1		6731
Elearning ASP Level 2 Recorded		1223
Elearning ASP IRD		67
Elearning GBV		200
Elearning Human Trafficking		341
Elearning Welcome & Orientation		5094
Elearning ASP level 1 (retired 24/01/2024)		6757
Elearning Public Protection (retired 24/01/2024)		4038
Elearning Prevent (retired 24/01/2024)		509
Totals	N/A	24960
Professional Curiosity	3	9
Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP)	6	118
Totals	9	127
Bespoke: Health Assessors/Resettlement	4	20
Bespoke: International Nurses	3	36
Bespoke: Vaccinators	1	22
Bespoke: Tissue Viability Champions	1	14
Bespoke: Tissue Viability Day	1	120
Bespoke: Elgin Emergency Department Nursing	2	20
Bespoke: Dental School	1	40
Totals	13	272
Overall Total	370	27264

Aberdeen City Council **Housing & Support Officers** undertake ASP e-learning as part of their mandatory training. We also have a training/informational video that officers are all required to watch when beginning their role which outlines ASP and the ASP Team in Social Work.

POLICE SCOTLAND

A national Protecting Adults at Risk of Harm online training course provides officers and staff with an understanding of Adult Support and Protection and is mandatory for all officers up to the rank of Inspector. In the time covered by this biennial report 554 local officers have completed this course.

In 2022, briefings on Adult Protection Orders were given to staff in North East Custody Division following a recognition that there was a lack of understanding of Banning Orders with Power of Arrest. Information is now available for Custody staff to refer to.

In August 2023, an Adult Support and Protection Development Day was held at the Scottish Police College to which Officers from A Division attended. Inputs were given by Officers from other Divisions, Social Work and the National Appropriate Adult Coordinator.

In November 2023, a new national 2-day Adult Support and Protection Tier 2 training course was run at the Scottish Police College. Officers from A Division attended to enhance their knowledge and skills and assist in the evaluation and improvement of the course for future attendees. Officers from A Division will be supported to attend this training in future.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Community Action Team and Operational crews are required to complete a number of online learning modules in relation to Adult Support and Protection, and to review this learning on a regular basis. Modules in relation to Prevention and Protection include:

- Adult Support, protection and Wellbeing
- Child Protection and wellbeing
- Reporting and Recording
- Home fire safety
- Hoarding
- Safeguarding

DOMESTIC ABUSE

In Autumn 2023, Social Workers and Council Officers undertook 'Dynamics of Domestic Abuse' training delivered by Grampian Women's Aid. This training was organised following a recommendation from a learning review in June 2023, that training should be put in place, across agencies, around staff recognition of and response to domestic abuse and coercive control. 245 members of staff attended. The proportion of attendees rating their knowledge at the highest levels (on a ratings scale) increased from 32% at the start of the sessions, to 92% at the end. Feedback about the training was overwhelmingly positive, and participants indicated that they had taken away learning including in relation to how to start conversations about domestic abuse, what supports are available, and understanding of why people do not leave.

A Development Officer for Public Protection came into post in July 2023, funded by the Delivering Equally Safe Fund to support the implementation of Equally Safe across local public protection policies and guidance. Early in the role, a guiding document was created to identify key considerations for such documents, which has been applied in areas such as updated guidance on self-neglect and hoarding, ensuring a gendered perspective. Following on from one of the recommendations of a learning review undertaken by APC, further work began on measuring the success of domestic abuse training commissioned by Grampian Women's Aid, (as described above), evaluating reach and impact on practice through quantitative data and staff focus groups. The learning review also led to recommendations for developing multi-agency domestic abuse and adult protection guidance, producing resources on domestic abuse within a local context, and strengthening links between adult protection agencies and specialist domestic abuse services. These recommendations were approved for implementation by the APC in December 2023, and this work is ongoing.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT EVENT 4th SEPTEMBER 2023

The Stakeholder Engagement sub-committee held an engagement event on 4th September called “Let’s shout about Adult Support and Protection.” We invited a cross sector group of professionals and people with lived experience of adult protection.

The event, which was attended by just short of 30 stakeholders, including professionals and members of our Lived Experience Forum, was hugely helpful in informing a refresh of the Adult Protection Committee’s document on ‘How we communicate and engage with people about Adult Support and Protection’ which was endorsed by APC on 19th June 2024.

APC DEVELOPMENT SESSION – NOVEMBER 2023

As part of self evaluation activity to inform the APC Improvement Plan for 2024-26, a development session was held in November 2023, which also included members of the APC Sub Committees and the Lived Experience Forum. The session considered progress made against the current Improvement Plan, and areas for future focus. The benefit of the session became apparent when the APC Improvement Plan 2024-26 was developed and was a useful exercise to ensure a wide range of views were considered locally against significant change nationally. Additional value was derived from the face-to-face format of the event, in terms of building on relationships across the partnership. Given current demand and ongoing national work such as the implementation of the Code of Practice, the session enabled the APC to focus on prioritising improvement while balancing the increase in demand.

During the Biennial period, the APC has moved further towards a more holistic approach to public protection. This has resulted in not only taking part in COG-related events, but also attending Child Protection Committee Development Sessions and working more closely with Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and the Violence Against Women Partnership. The APC is also represented on the Public Protection Leads forum which was established by COG during the period and has the following remit:

To coordinate, on behalf of the COG, the improved alignment of the public protection agendas, wherever possible, with a view to preventing harm and improving outcomes for people impacted by harm, with an additional aim of streamlining processes to make the strands more efficient and effective.

This may include but is not limited to:

- sharing of information across PP agendas;
- facilitating collaboration of ‘strategic’ work (policies, strategies, consultations, funding applications, etc) across the PP agendas;
- ensuring the coordination of the progression and embedding of improvement work on cross-cutting issues (eg Learning Reviews, Learning & Development, and the introduction of the Homelessness Prevention Duty);
- maintaining and further developing the Aberdeen Protects website;
- the organisation of multi agency cross-partnership events, and related follow-up actions;

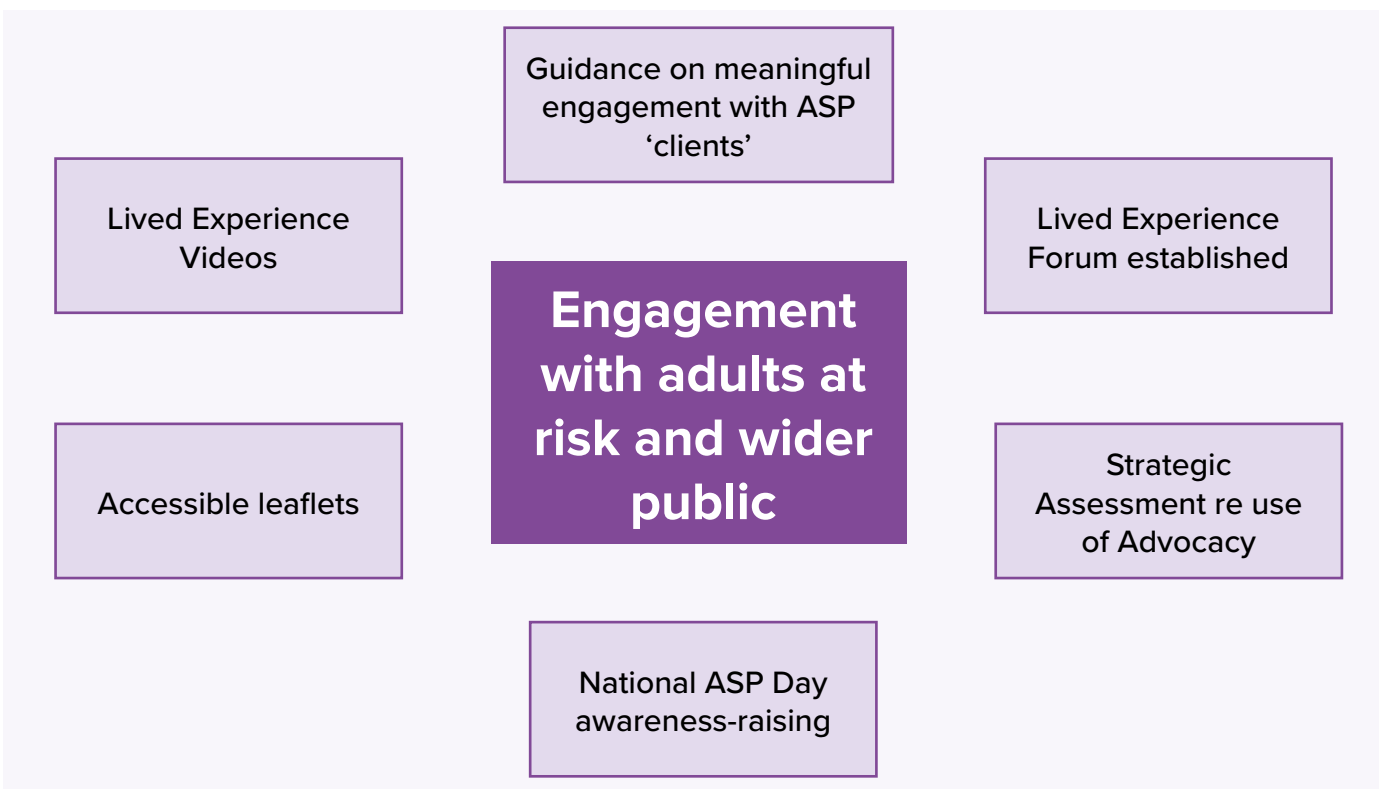
and contributing towards the development of an integrated public protection dataset, and risk register for COG, and public-facing ‘public protection’ reporting (eg annual / biennial report, public messaging).





Section 6

Engagement, involvement and communication



The role of the APC's Stakeholder Engagement Sub Committee is to oversee the progression of work aimed at achieving the APC's priority that *"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)."*

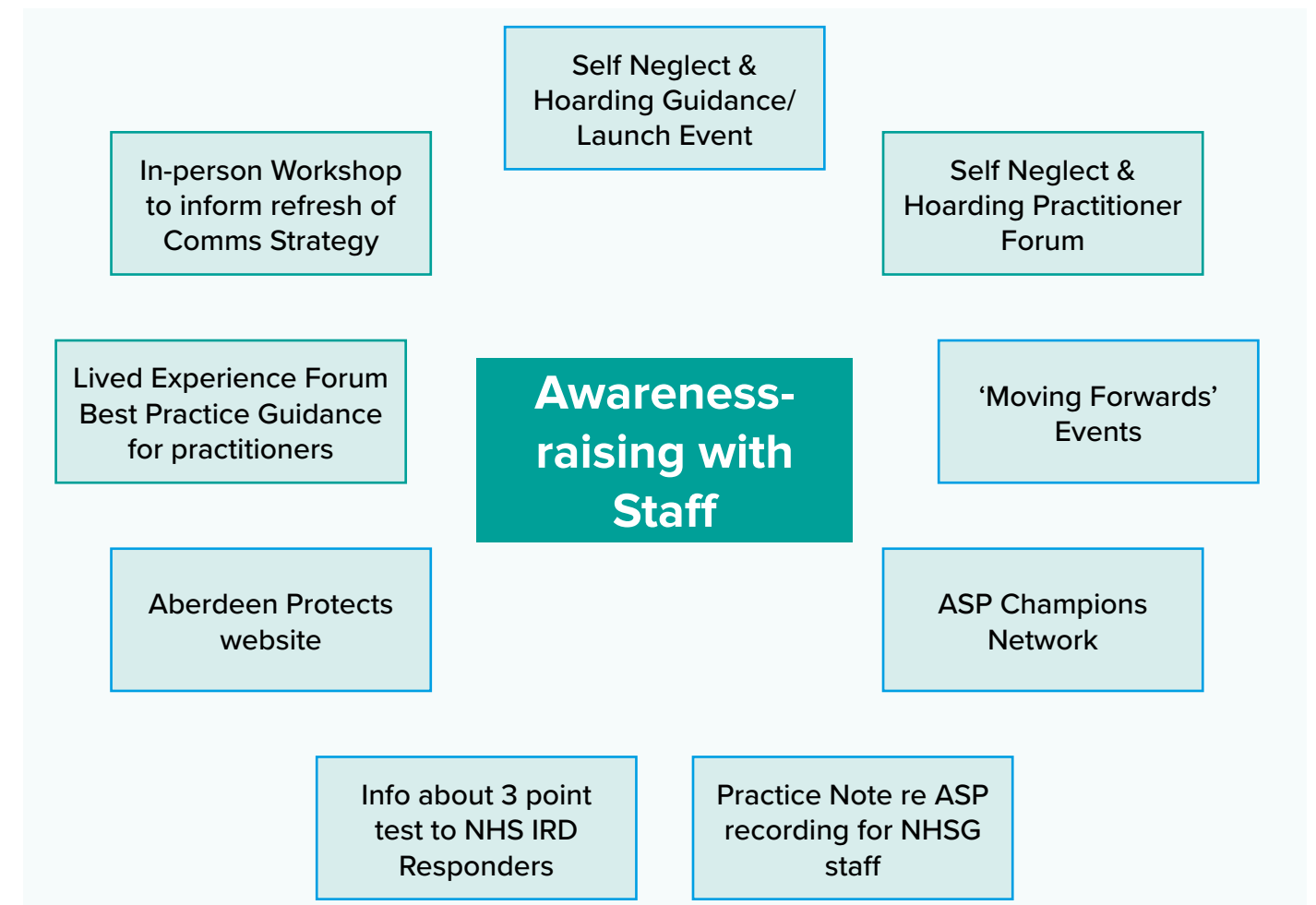
LIVED EXPERIENCE FORUM

The Lived Experience Forum has been established for over two years, with more members joining recently. The group is facilitated by the local Advocacy service, which has been of significant benefit, not only to the members themselves, but the wider APC partnership also. The Forum has been involved in a range of activities :

- Development of a 'Best Practice' document and inclusion in the review of guidance documents/ information materials/resources (the resources are available on the [Aberdeen Protects website](#))
- Developing visual material
- Currently working on a peer support video
- Consulted about Learning Review guidance
- Involvement in academic research being undertaken by Kate Fennell of Napier University in relation to the voice of the adult in Case Conferences

The Chair of the Stakeholder Engagement Sub Committee is also the Chief Executive of ACVO, our local third sector interface. This has been of huge benefit to the partnership in developing stronger links between statutory partners and third sector who play such a significant role in adult protection within Aberdeen City. The Stakeholder Engagement sub-committee has representation from advocacy and carers organisations who contribute valuable information from the people they work with. The Lived Experience group, supported by Advocacy Aberdeen, have members who have given advice and guidance on documentation and also attended development sessions in person to share their views.

A video made by a member of the Lived Experience Forum regarding their experience of being supported by independent advocacy is used during training for multi agency staff, and also Council Officers. The video has proved effective in increasing understanding about the impact that advocacy support can have.





‘MOVING FORWARDS TOGETHER’ EVENTS

In October and November 2022, two online awareness-raising ‘Moving Forwards Together’ events were held, which were attended by over 50 multi agency professionals. The event started with a showing of a video made by a member of the APC Lived Experience Forum, regarding their experience of ASP and being supported by Advocacy Service Aberdeen. This was followed by updates regarding the findings of the Joint Inspection, and national developments, and then discussions around how to better involve staff in change and improvement in relation to ASP, and on progressing Trauma Informed approaches. All those who completed the evaluation found the sessions useful in updating them about ASP in Aberdeen.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF USE OF INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

Strategic Assessment of the use of Advocacy undertaken as a result of inspection recommendation resulted in awareness-raising with Social Work and wider staff about the role and benefits of independent advocacy for adults under ASP.

This has resulted in both an increase in referrals for advocacy support from the local authority, and an increase in advocacy uptake. An increase has also been seen in the numbers of advocacy workers present at ASP case conferences. All this has resulted in an improvement in outcomes, which is demonstrated by the below case examples:

Person A

Concerns were around hoarding issues. This person had no previous involvement with Social Work and was referred to ASP by paramedics responding to a call. They were very suspicious of anyone coming to their home, especially if the visit was unannounced. In this case our advocacy worker never met them in-person - all contact was via telephone and Case Conferences were held on Teams.



Within conversations held with the person they required a detailed explanation of the ASP process and the role of everyone involved. They had many questions - e.g. would police involvement mean they would have a criminal record?, could they be forced to leave their home? etc.

They stated that they would not attend the ASPCCs unless the advocacy worker was available to take part in them. the advocacy worker did have to talk the person through the joining instructions prior to each case conference and have a lengthy debrief afterwards. With knowledge gained from advocacy input they gained confidence during the ASP process, became more trusting of services and began to engage leading to removal from ASP measures.

Feedback sent in an email by Person A to the advocacy worker below:

Hi, many thanks for your patience, support and perseverance over the period of my being scrutinized. It has caused me many sleepless nights and troubled days even though on the surface it might have seemed that I wasn't flapping. Your being there for me boosted my confidence and has been very comforting.

Hopefully the Clutter Busters will enable me to return to more comfortable and manageable living.

Once again, many, many thanks for your support.

Kind regards.

Person A

Person B

Concerns were around self-neglect issues. They had a dementia diagnosis as well as a history of mental illness. They had not left their flat since returning from a stay in ARI in May 2023. They also had an elderly dog which was also confined to the flat. This resulted in the dog using the bathroom floor as a toilet, making the environment unhygienic.



Person B wouldn't have been able to attend ASPCCs in person so case conferences are held via Teams with advocacy supporting him by use of ASA's iPad's. This was done by visiting him in his flat. Without this it would have been more complex trying to support Person B to participate in the meeting or to air their views on the issues raised.

Because of Person B's poor short term memory they required to be reminded that there is a meeting, the reasons behind it and the role of advocacy just before each ASPCC began. With this level of support they were able participate well in these meetings but looked to the advocacy worker to clarify anything they did not understand.

As of a few weeks ago Person B is no longer under ASP measures. ACC are applying for Welfare Guardianship and the advocacy worker who supported them through ASP will continue to support them through the guardianship process, helping them to understand what this means and to obtain their views on the powers sought.

Section 7

Challenges and areas for improvement

As we emerged from the global pandemic, we entered a cost of living crisis which has impacted significantly on Adult Protection and resulted in many challenges not least poverty and a substantial increase in displaced persons. These challenges have continued throughout this biennial reporting period. There is no doubt that lessons were learned from the pandemic which has ensured we are more agile as a partnership, using data and technology to ensure we can quickly understand and respond to emerging issues and trends.

Both cost of living and displaced persons are standing items on our APC agenda, where we can quickly understand the impact and where appropriate escalate concerns to COG. They are also identified as risks on our risk register, albeit we, as a Committee, are only able to mitigate certain elements of same. We have worked along with IRISS to develop the National Minimum Dataset which is of real benefit, albeit at the same time Aberdeen City introduced a new IT system, namely D365. This is already providing benefits, and there is a real confidence about the robustness of the data produced.

It is also worthy of note the demand for services which continues to increase and the challenges across the workforce, not least capacity. Notwithstanding these challenges as an APC we have delivered on our improvement plan and benefitted from our self-evaluation against the new Code of Practice. In addition, we have identified key themes from recent Learning Reviews which we have incorporated into our Improvement Plan 24 – 26, ensuring alignment, where appropriate, with the four national implementation workstreams.

The following, though not exhaustive, have been delivered and we are in the process of developing a Quality Assurance Framework, so that we can audit improvement areas and measure what impact the change has made. This will closely follow the CPC model.

- Improved recording of ASP information by multi agency staff
- Instigation of 'ASP Champions' model across NHS Grampian
- Improved quality assurance arrangements within Social Work
- Review of Decision-Specific Capacity Assessment Tool
- Mechanisms in place to ensure feedback provided to referrers, and related quality assurance of this
- Training for Social Work staff around Risk Assessment and Management
- Comprehensive ASP Operational Procedures for Social Work staff launched
- Awareness-raising online 'Moving Forwards Together' events held for multi agency professionals in October / November 2022
- Strategic Assessment of use of Independent Advocacy undertaken
- Ongoing development of dataset for APC
- APC approach to communication and engagement reviewed, with significant contribution from those with lived experience
- Tools and processes developed for undertaking Learning Reviews, in light of revised national guidance
- APC Supervision Statement developed and implemented
- Calendar of Learning & Development in place across agencies, and Train the Trainer programme initiated



Section 8

Looking forward

On 23 April 2024, the APC approved its overarching [strategy for 2024-2026](#), which has been fully aligned to our Improvement Plan. The timeframe also aligns with other plans across the partnership, particularly in relation to the Child Protection Committee, which ensure we are working collaboratively. In addition to Performance and Quality Assurance; Stakeholder Engagement; and Learning and Development; we have added Learning Reviews. We believe that there is much to learn both nationally and locally and as such we wish to ensure we fully embed the relatively new process throughout the partnership. As we know it is not only about identifying learning, but also about, where appropriate, changing practice and thereafter measuring better outcomes for individuals.

It would also be fair to say that demand for services continues to increase for varying reasons, not least an ageing population and the challenges currently being faced across the Health and Social Care Partnership, which is not unique to Aberdeen City. As such we must continue to become more efficient and effective with our workforce and embrace new opportunities to tackle these challenges. As we await the detail of the National Care Service, work is ongoing locally to better align all areas of Public Protection (see below).

As a partnership we are well represented at the national implementation workstreams relating to the updated Code of Practice and we also benefit from our local working arrangements with both Aberdeenshire and Moray.

Our four APC Sub Committees continue to drive forward improvement, via the APC Improvement Plan, in relation to our four strategic priorities: Performance and Quality Assurance; Learning and Development; Stakeholder Engagement and Learning Reviews.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Building on our ambition in our previous Biennial Report, the Aberdeen City Chief Officer Group has formally established a Public Protection Leads Group, chaired by the APC and CPC Convener. This Group, which meets every two months, looks at cross-cutting themes and opportunities to collaborate, including information sharing, strategic work, Learning and Development and the Aberdeen Protects website. In its initial year it has delivered a Public Protection Learning Review Tracker and reviewed all policies relating to Violence against Women and Girls. It is developing a joint communication strategy for Public Protection and working across the partnership on an overall L&D strategy, in addition to work on transitions and data. It is anticipated that this will also link in well with the nationally proposed Public Protection Leadership Group.

OTHER AREAS

It would be remiss not to mention the National Care Service and the ongoing workstreams both nationally and locally. It would be fair to say that Aberdeen City have established positive links with the national team as everyone strives to deliver the best outcomes for those we serve. As we continue to deliver our improvement plan against a very challenging landscape, we must ensure that we, where appropriate, continue to influence the proposed changes, against increased demand and reduced budgets.



