

Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007



Protecting Adults at Risk of Harm in West Dunbartonshire



**Adult Protection Committee
Biennial Report 2018 - 2020**

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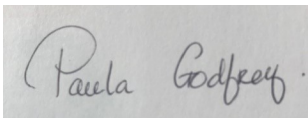
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Introduction

I am pleased to provide this biennial report on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee which reflects the multi-agency Adult Support and Protection work undertaken by partners and with the community across the period April 2018-March 2020. This report predominantly reflects the leadership of my predecessor Peter Jennow, whom I succeeded as independent convener in August 2019 and the Coordinator for Public Protection Heather Irving who moved to a new post in December 2019. We are very grateful for their leadership and support to the work of Committee, leaving us with a sound basis to progress our journey of continuous improvement. This report also seeks to outline the plans and actions we will take forward in the next two years.

A review in 2018-2019 identified capacity as an area which could be enhanced to support continuous improvement work in Adult Support and Protection. In recognition of this a new Lead Officer Post has been established for Adult Support and Protection, previously the post remit included both Adult and Child Protection Committees. As a result of this enhancement, we are now much better placed to implement planned work informed by national and local priorities. We are also enhancing our assurance and reporting arrangements which are fundamental to ensuring we continue to fulfil our legislative requirements as well as meet the needs of those adults who are vulnerable and at risk in West Dunbartonshire.

It is evident from observation, performance reports and assurances provided to Committee that all partners and agencies across West Dunbartonshire remain committed to enabling timely and effective support and protection for adults at risk of harm, and are committed to overcoming any challenges to ensure continuous learning and improvement. With additional capacity now available to support Committee, I am confident good progress can be made.



Paula Godfrey

Independent Convener

Governance

West Dunbartonshire's Adult Protection Committee (APC) is a strategic planning mechanism for inter-agency adult support and protection in West Dunbartonshire. The APC meets on a quarterly basis, members include Police Scotland, Trading Standards, Care Inspectorate, Adult HSCP Social Work and Health Services, Community Health, Advocacy Services, Scottish Care, Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The Committee seeks to provide strategic leadership and ownership of inter-agency activity to protect adults at risk of harm, and ensure employees are supported to undertake this work.

The Adult Protection Committee reports to the multi-agency Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG) which is responsible for the strategic co-ordination of public protection services in West Dunbartonshire and is chaired by the Council Chief Executive. Core membership includes the Chief Nurse, Head of Public Protection (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde), the Divisional Commander (Police Scotland), the Chief Officer (HSCP) and the Chief Social Work Officer. The Council's Chief Education Officer and the Locality Reporter Manager (Scottish Children's Reporter Administration) are also part of the PPCOG. The group scrutinises the strategic direction and performance of services for child protection, adult protection, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) for the management of high risk offenders, violence against women and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

The PPCOG implemented guidance as per the National Child Protection Review which is positively impacting on the approach and scrutiny of Adult Support and Protection, with similar oversight and reporting expectations. On going review and improvement of PPCOG approaches, learning from elsewhere and the widening of remit to consider all the public protection agenda, and consideration of interconnections of key strategic groups, are supporting a more coherent approach and consistent oversight of protection arrangements and activity across the partnership.

The Adult Protection Committee provides advice to PPCOG in relation to emerging trends, responses to significant incidents and actions required. In addition to receiving updates on progress of activities and performance to support effective prevention and protection work across partnerships the Public Protection Chief Officers Group Risk Register is used to identify current and potential risks which are reviewed at each meeting to support effective prevention and protection work across partnerships.

West Dunbartonshire Context

In 2019, the population of West Dunbartonshire was 88,930 (National Records for Scotland, 2020/21). This is a decrease of 0.2% from 89,130 in 2018. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.5%. The population of West Dunbartonshire accounts for 1.6% of the total population of Scotland.

In West Dunbartonshire, 17.6% of the population are aged 0-15, slightly higher than Scotland (16.9%), and 9.8% of the population are aged 16-24, which is smaller than Scotland (10.5%). In terms of overall size, the 45 to 64 age group was the largest in 2019, with a population of 26,075 (29.3%). People aged 65 and over make up 18.8% of West Dunbartonshire's population, which is slightly lower than the whole Scotland population (19.1%).

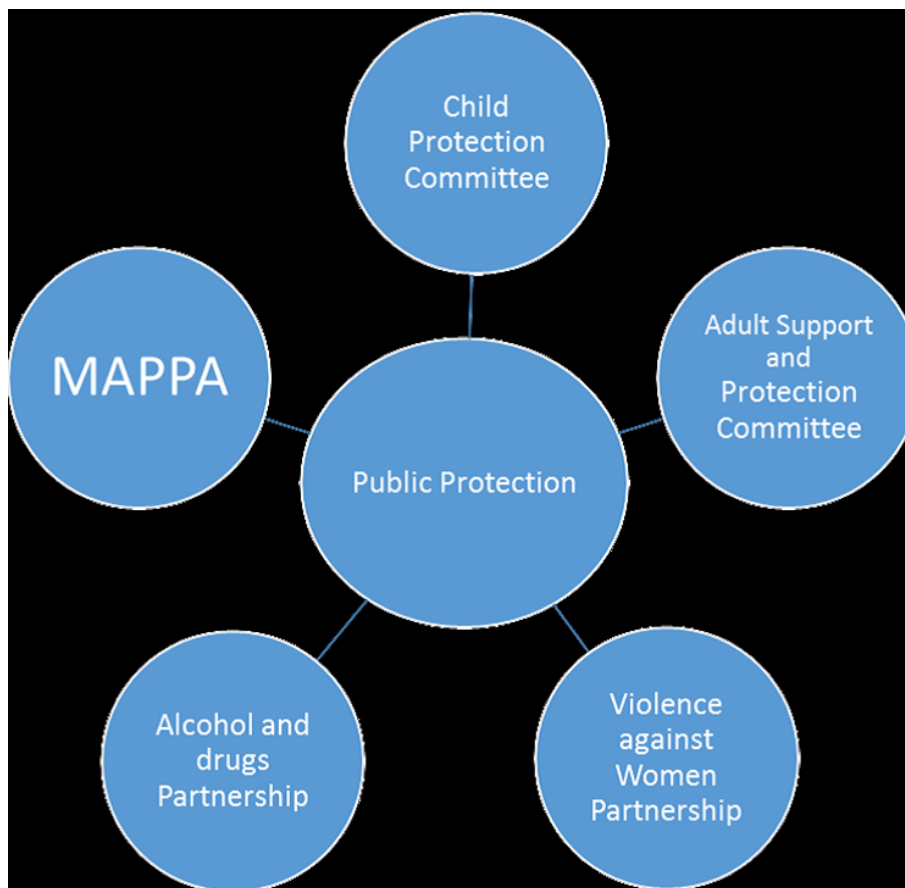
Currently West Dunbartonshire ranks the third most deprived area in Scotland (equal with North Ayrshire) with 40% of data zones being among the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. Only Inverclyde (45%) and Glasgow City (44%) have higher deprivation (Scottish Government).

Management of staff is undertaken within individual partner agencies and no significant issues were identified regarding staffing levels which would impact on duties related to adult support and protection. Work to augment Public Protection arrangements by creating two lead officer posts, one for Adult protection and one for Child protection, has been progressed. Learning from practice has been promoted within reflective learning, staff supervision arrangements and peer-to-peer support.

During 2018-2019 West Dunbartonshire APC improvement and development plan focused on strategic and performance improvements informed by data trends and service information. The plan reflected learning from thematic inspection and national and local priorities. Progress has been made on key areas with details on achievements and challenges incorporated in this report.

Continued development of Clinical and Care Governance arrangements with oversight of clinical risks and quality provides further assurances, monitoring and improvement in the quality of care provided including Adult Support and Protection. Reports from Committees are presented to Clinical and Care Governance and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) of the Health and Care Partnership.

Reports are provided via PPCOG to the West Dunbartonshire Community planning partnership. Both the Community Planning Partnership and the Integrated Joint Board include local elected representation.



Processes, Procedures and Guidance Developments

Improvements in processes:

- Key process improvements in this period related to improved multiagency working following extensive multiagency training.
- Improved consistency of response and investigation activity with the allocation of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in the Hub.
- Clinical and care governance arrangements enhanced to ensure the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred health and social care services within those services delegated to the local HSCP Board. These provide oversight and assurance regarding the quality and safety of care including public protection, and support for staff in continuously improving the quality and safety of care.
- Specific focused multi-agency work on addressing financial harm, with a greater consistency of response across partners.
- Development of oversight and reporting arrangements of all Adult with Incapacity referrals.

Procedures and Guidance developments:

- West Dunbartonshire - Working together to protect adults interagency guidance – amended October 2017. This is being further updated following the release of the revised WOS Guidance (October 2019)
- Adult protection standard operation procedure was updated in May 2018 to reflect the changes to data protection.
- Protocol for Large Scale Investigation of Adults at Risk of Harm – (July 2017) This is currently subject to further work and updating.
- West of Scotland Inter Agency Adult Support and Protection Practice Guidance – Oct 2017-19, Updated October 2019
- Good Practice Guidance in Joint Working between West Dunbartonshire APC and Care Home Providers in West Dunbartonshire – Adult Protection and Adults with Changing Needs. This guidance provides a framework for good practice and an ASP threshold guidance to support consistent standards for ASP practice within care home provision and regulated services, Updated November 2019

- Multi agency Financial Harm Protocol for West Dunbartonshire. Guidance was released following a piece of work around Financial Harm being carried out by Council Officer & the Public Protection Coordinator (November 2019)
- Development of The Performance and Assurance Reporting Framework (PARF), provides performance against targets for child protection, high risk offenders, adults at risk and vulnerable adults. The main purpose of the report is to ensure that the PPCOG reviews performance, outcomes and demand levels and takes any necessary action required or request the provision of further analysis and review.
- ASP Guidance booklet for care and support staff – Reviewed August 2019
- Adult Protection Significant Case Reviews :Interim Framework (November 2019)

Training

An ambitious and robust training programme was developed following an audit of need across all agencies for staff at every level.

Total Number of People Trained Between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2020 are as follows:

	2018-19	2019-20
Total Training Sessions	35	21
Total Number Trained	410	279

Training continues to be an ongoing priority for Adult Support and Protection in West Dunbartonshire. Year on year training continues to be reviewed and updated in order to reflect the ever changing landscape of adult protection.

Our training programme has continued to develop and grow over the last two years, and in 2018-20 over 680 people received Adult Support and Protection Training. These sessions included:

- 293 people received Basic Awareness. Those attending include key workers across all services within West Dunbartonshire.
- 142 people received Detailed Awareness Training. Those attending managers and senior staff members across all services within West Dunbartonshire
- 55 local authority staff members within HSCP attended the Peer to Peer sessions which were introduced in to the 2019-20 training programme.
- 134 people attended ASP Briefing sessions. Those attending included bus escorts, catering staff and volunteers.

In addition to the above, a number of bespoke training sessions were delivered by the Public Protection Coordinator. These sessions were provided to:

- Clydebank & Dumbarton Job Centre x4
- Police Hub x2
- Castle View Care Home x4
- LA Housing x2
- Education x2
- Criminal Justice Team x1

Further to the ASP specific training other training delivered included:

- ACES Adverse Childhood Experience Multi Agency Training.– multi-agency training 2019, and now Trauma informed practice is discussed within all levels of ASP training.
- Self evaluation and training workshop (multi-agency) August 2018.
- Joint public protection programme of training completed in 2018/19
- Housing Support Service staff trained in Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB), which enables better understanding of the factors which may trigger behaviours that challenge as well as strategies and best practice for assisting people with complex support needs. This has improved not only the safety and environment for our service users but has built a more confident and reflective staff team.
- Mate crime & cuckooing awareness training is also included in the training calendar and delivered in 2018-19.
- Hate Crime review of policy and procedures in the police and delivery of awareness training for all officers, ensuring a consistent approach is taken. 2018-2019
- Implementation of Peer to Peer Sessions in April 2019 in order to provide an opportunity for the sharing of experiences, approaches and advice. Sessions included, Hate/Mate Crime, Financial Harm, Hoarding, Crossing the Acts, ASP Investigation & Risk Assessment.

It should be noted there was a significant increase in referrals from a wider referral base following the Basic Awareness Training and the Briefing Sessions. Training was impacted by COVID-19 and a number of sessions had to be cancelled in Quarter 4.

It is important to note the following has now been included in all levels of training:

- Greater emphasis on intentional and unintentional harm
- Greater emphasis on the analysis of risk
- Recognising repeat incidents and giving consideration to them all not just as single events.
- The recognition of escalating risks by service providers
- Thresholds of risk
- Moving societal views away from a blame culture

When asked what participants would do differently following training responses included

Able to notice signs of abuse, how to report findings

I am more knowledgeable of what risk means

Be more aware of all situations, and always report any concerns

Be more mindful when visiting clients of any potential type of harm

More aware of policies and procedures, my role and responsibilities to report anybody I feel may be at risk

Communication and Cooperation Between Agencies

Triangulation of information from all key partners and feedback from staff and audit information tells us staff consider they have good working relationships and feel able to contact each other for advice and guidance when considering situations/cases. Strong links have been developed between Social Work and staff in the police concern HUB, and these good relationships enable concerns to be discussed and advice sought before issues escalate.

As part of Police Scotland's assessment of Adult Protection, HUB processes are being reviewed to develop a national model to ensure consistency, aligning processes more closely to Child Protection to ensure best quality of service to vulnerable adults and stakeholders

Joint partnership work is evident from regular Adult Protection Multi Agency Forums where Mental health services, social work and police from the concern hub all come together to discuss the most complex and challenging cases. These have provided a number of positive outcomes over the last eighteen months. These often lead to specific adult protection meetings for individuals, where all agencies work towards the best outcomes for that adult.

Staff advise that ASP meetings have been a good way of building partnership working with well established relationships and key contacts for Police partners with adult learning, mental health, social work, health, addictions and other partners. This has enabled staff to pick up the phone and speak with partners who have the ability to assist within their area. These close working arrangements have helped partners gain a better understanding of respective services, and how partners can work effectively to address and respond jointly to risk and need.

Police now attend the suicide prevention group along with partners in order to improve prevention approaches and responses within the West Dunbartonshire area. This is an incredibly challenging piece of work as staff recognise that people who complete suicide have often had little interaction with any of the services, and the aim is to raise awareness and prevention.

Good joint work with the Fire Service exists with referrals for fire safety checks and reciprocal referrals from the Fire Service following visits where they identify concerns. Fire Services are consistently represented and are strong contributors to the Adult Protection Committee providing good objective challenge and support, as well as supporting communication through their networks.

Joint working arrangements between mental health services and police has been of great benefit allowing appropriate and timely responses to vulnerable adults and those in need of protection. These arrangements were further enhanced during the COVID 19 crisis with specific focused prompt joint responses between mental health and police. These arrangements achieved quick and appropriate responses which are now subject to evaluation with a view to sustaining the best of practice from this period.

Advocacy Services provide key supports for communication with adults at risk and were essential to providing support to families during a Large Scale Investigation in 2019. Advocacy services provided drop in clinics as well as one to one support for individuals involved and this enhanced communication between services and families during a very difficult period.

Communication with Service Users

The Adult Protection Committee uses existing communication channels to gain feedback and is also planning to develop further more direct communication mechanisms to enable service users to have a say in Committee business.

West Dunbartonshire Addictions Team conducted a survey of people with lived experience of services. Responses indicated that people were highly satisfied with the services they accessed and the support they received. Some suggestions for improvement were made and are detailed in the overall West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (WDADRP) Survey of People with Lived Experience of Services.

Dumbarton Joint Hospital Addiction Team: 93% clients felt their views on their care and support were listened to. 94% strongly agreed that treatment options met their expectations. Findings from individual service reports will allow service providers to gain insight on what is working, what needs improved and if support is needed within the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) structures to facilitate further change. This will also reflect adult support and protection work.

Learning Disability service providers, service users and their carers meet regularly to benchmark progress implementing the Keys to Life, (Scotland's Learning Disability Strategy) within our local services. Carer and service user participation is encouraged to drive future service provision including ASP responses, based on local need.

Housing Support Services (HSS) users have Person Centred Plans including responses to identified risk and need. These are specifically produced in co-operation with the individuals and their families where appropriate including management of risk and need. Plans are constructed in a format that suits the individual with some being digitally stored on hand held devices and others in pictorial format.

Community Connections hold annual 'Conversation Cafes' with service users and carers to help develop person centred approaches used within the service. Feedback is provided to the service users/carers about how their suggestions will be implemented. These conversations opportunities can be used in relation to discussions on Adult Support and Protection issues.

District Nursing Services actively seek service user feedback every six months. This enables them to engage on a regular basis with patients and carers and seek feedback which can then be reviewed and changes implemented.

Residential and Day Services ensure residents have person centred care plans, which outline all aspects of their care including risk, and how they wish to be supported. These plans are compiled with the resident, power of attorney, or family members of their choice and are reviewed and updated on a monthly basis or as situations change. A range of methods are used to engage with clients; six monthly reviews of their service, monthly residents' forum meetings, relatives meetings, newsletters, feedback questionnaires for resident's, relatives and other professionals.

Advocacy services support vulnerable clients to have their say and support them through key processes to ensure their views are reflected.

The Good Life Group is a group of people with learning disabilities who address the inequalities they face in order to educate about discrimination in all its forms via training, presentations, workshops, attending and meeting with other groups, and providing representation on interest groups. All training programmes are based on Group members' own experiences and members are actively involved in the development, delivery and review of this work. Their work has raised awareness on numerous issues and for many services locally or out with West Dunbartonshire. Their work has included Violence against Women, Safety in the Community, Palliative Care, Epilepsy Focus, Future Health Planning, Adults with Incapacity, Adult Support and Protection, Vision Awareness and Self-Directed Support.

Care at Home Services have worked jointly with Police, housing and trading standards during 2019 to ensure the people they support are kept safe. Multiagency walkabouts were undertaken in our sheltered housing complexes to raise awareness of bogus callers and provide opportunity for feedback.

We continue to strengthen our Local Engagement Networks (LENs) for each locality area. These offer opportunities for engagement with carers, patients, service users and their families. Each LENs looks at issues around services and gives people the chance to share thoughts on how the service could be improved.

In 2019 LENs focused on Resilience in Older People, the HSCP Strategic Plan and NHSGGC Moving Forward Together Programme, and the Substance Use Prevention Strategy which also included Carers' organisations and Addiction organisations.

We have continued to develop our locality arrangements in tandem with our support for the development of local primary care quality clusters. These provide forums for professionals, communities and individuals to inform service redesign, transformational change and improvement. This provides a means for ongoing engagement with local residents.

Significant Clinical Incident Reviews of all drug related deaths that occur within West Dunbartonshire are commissioned by the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services. The main theme that emerged both nationally and locally was the increase in the prevalence of illicit benzodiazepines implicated in, or contributing to the cause of death. In response, the service provided a very clear harm reduction message to service users regarding the dangers of illicit benzodiazepines by providing 1:1 conversations, the provision of information booklets and posters and the sharing of information with partner agencies. They also encourage individuals to address benzodiazepine dependency by providing a detoxification treatment plan.

Public Information

WDC distributed ASP Posters to local businesses and council/NHS buildings in Clydebank, Dumbarton & Alexandria with public areas.

Social and local Media used to deliver key messages around domestic violence.

Social and local media used to deliver key messages around risk of fraud.

Information regarding adults at risk provided to local groups.

ASP information is available on the WDC public facing website which signposts the public to the HSCP website. The HSCP website offers information on the following:

- Social Work Duty Contact Numbers
- How do we know who may be at risk
- Who may be causing harm
- Where may an adult be harmed
- Who are adults at risk of harm
- Adult Support and Protection Training
- Adult Support and Protection Committee

leaflets providing information on the following:

- Protecting Adults from Harm
- Adult Protection Investigations
- Adult Protection Case Conferences
- How an individual can protect themselves from harm

A good relationship has been established with WD Carers and they now include information on ASP within the introductory pack they provide to the carers they support.

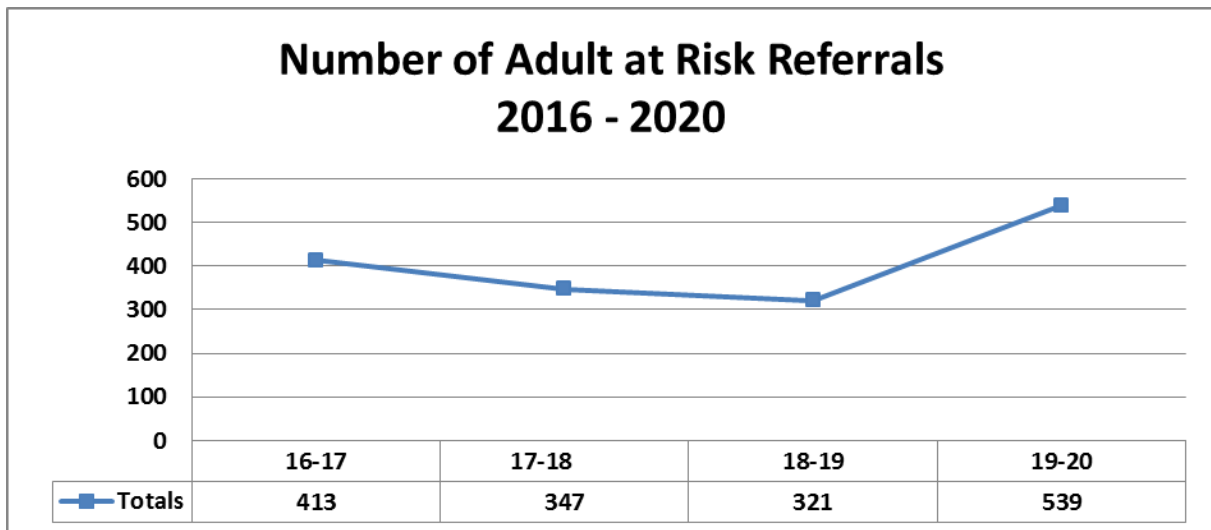
ASP Sessions are provided to support services across West Dunbartonshire. These sessions include Briefing Sessions, Basic Awareness & Detailed Awareness Training. Both Staff and volunteers attend these sessions.

Data Analysis of Harm and What it Tells Us

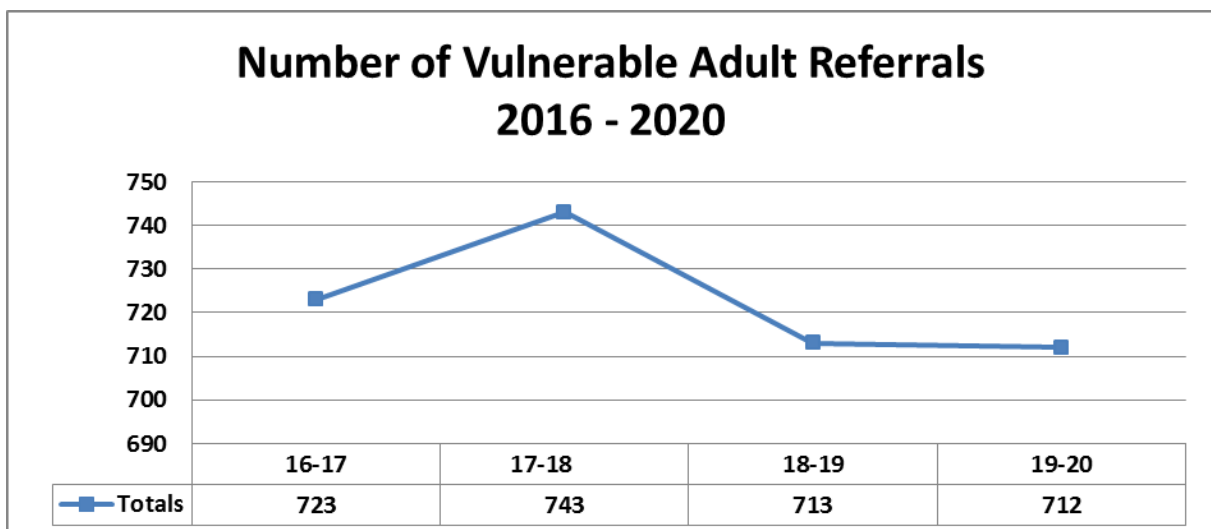
Our data provides opportunity for oversight and assurance regarding the quality and safety of responses to adult protection concerns. Reports are provided quarterly to the Adult Protection Committee and to the Public Protection COG. We are aware other data could further assist our understanding of risk, need and effectiveness of responses. We will work with the national group to support development of a national core data set, as well as reviewing data we can capture locally. Current data provides assurance on how we meet our legislative requirements in relation to identification and responses to adults at risk and vulnerable adults.

Following an audit of general concern for wellbeing in 2019 the decision was taken to remove general concern from the types of concern. The audit showed that there were a number of alternative types of harm which should have been identified as the primary concern and as a result the use of general concern was not providing a clear enough identification of the presenting concerns.

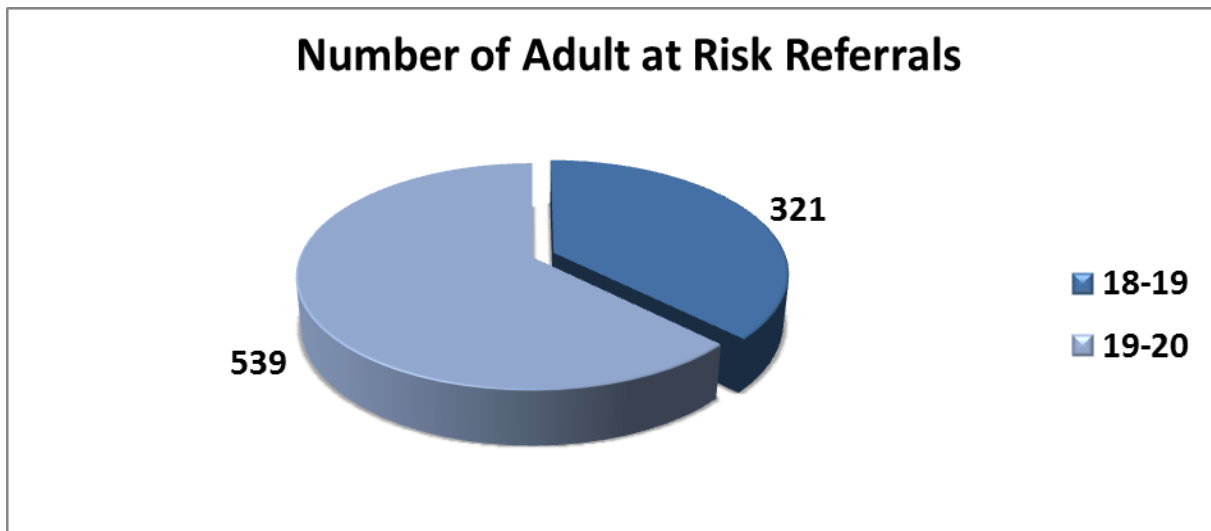
Adult at Risk Referrals Trend



Vulnerable Adult Referrals Trend

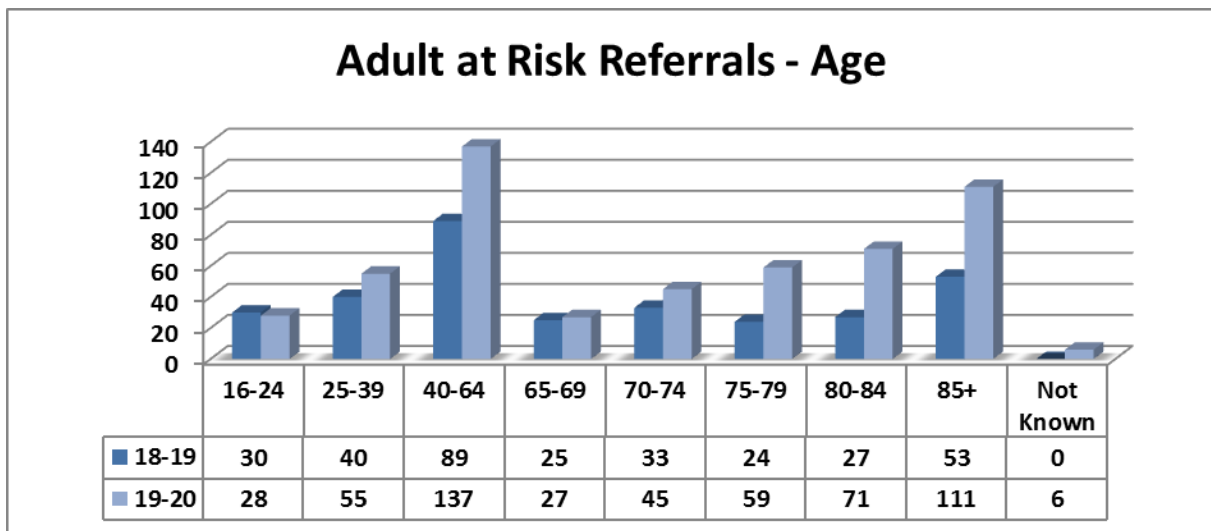


Number of Adults at Risk



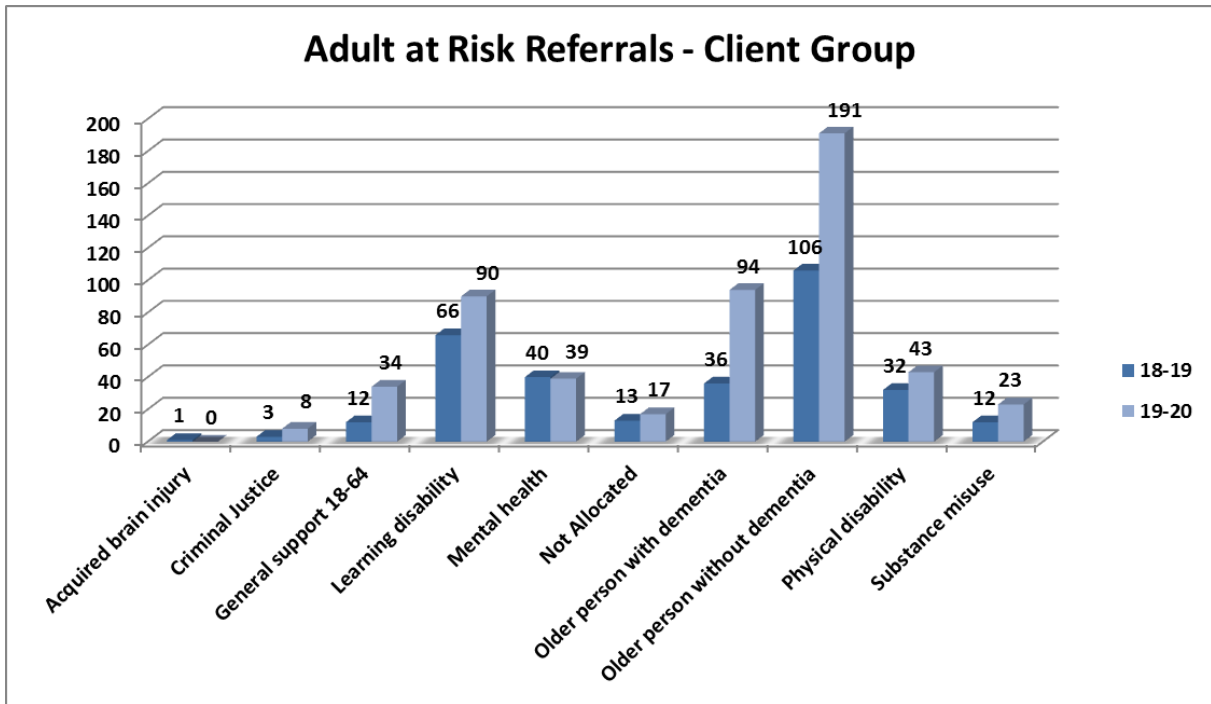
This increase is in part due to the considerable training programme rolled out by the public protection officer, which improved awareness and understanding of risk and need. In addition the LSI and subsequent training of care staff and provision of guidance resulted in a significant number of new referrals. Some referrals initially did not meet the threshold for referral so more work and support/guidance has been provided which has helped.

Adult at Risk Referrals by Age

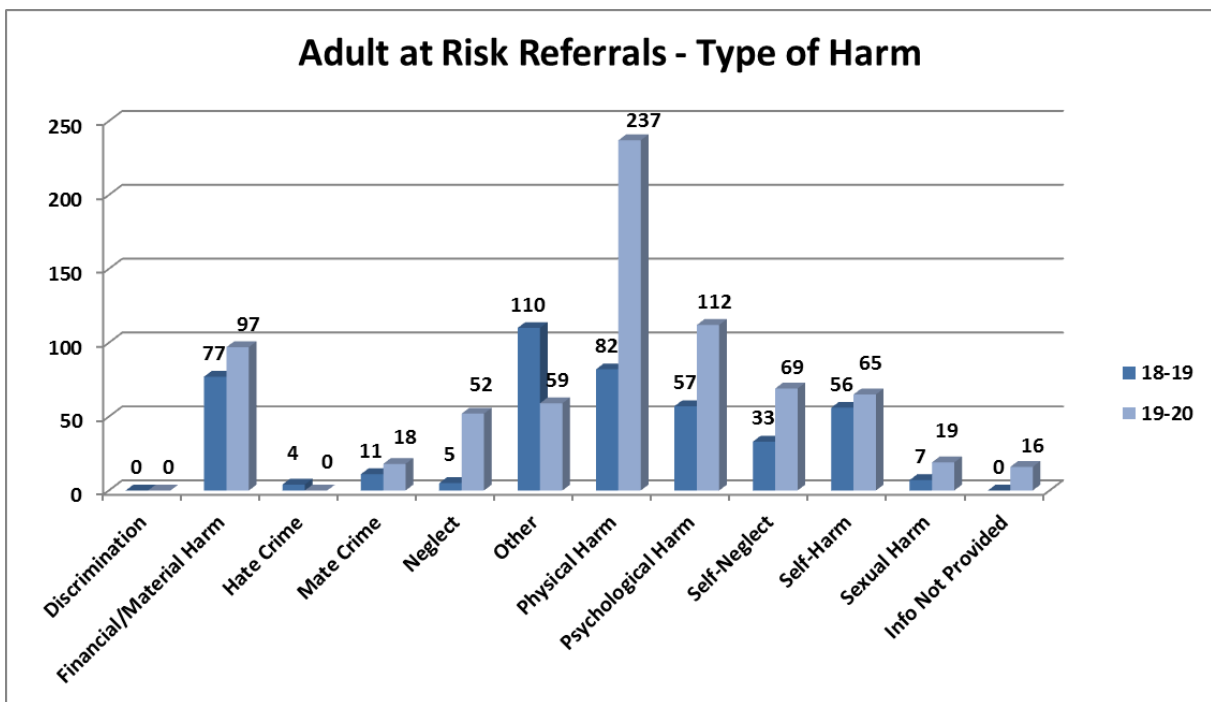


Referrals by age range reflect increased referrals following the LSI in the 70+ age range. Increased referrals in the 40-64 age group reflect increased knowledge across a wider number of partners in relation to risk. Learning disabilities, addictions and mental health are the biggest reasons for referral in this age group.

Adult at Risk Referrals by Client Group



Adult at Risk Referrals by Type of Harm



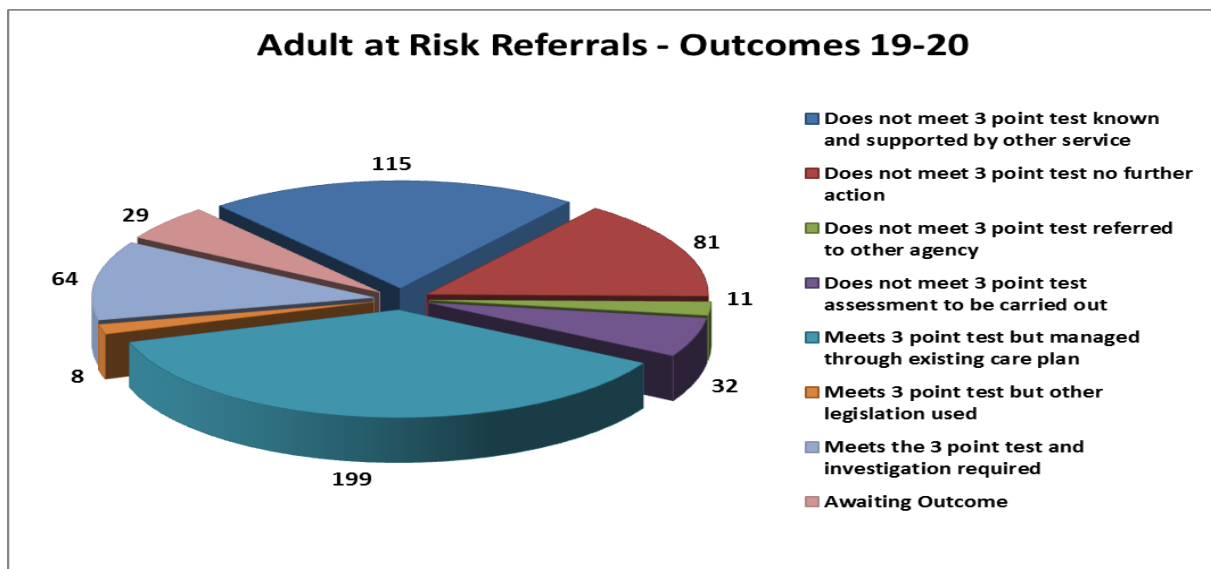
We have seen higher levels of financial harm, physical harm, self-neglect and self-harm. The teams work collaboratively with other community services including home care to ensure ongoing care management, support and protection of those at risk. We also work closely with the police to identify cases where a crime has been committed.

Investigation Timescales

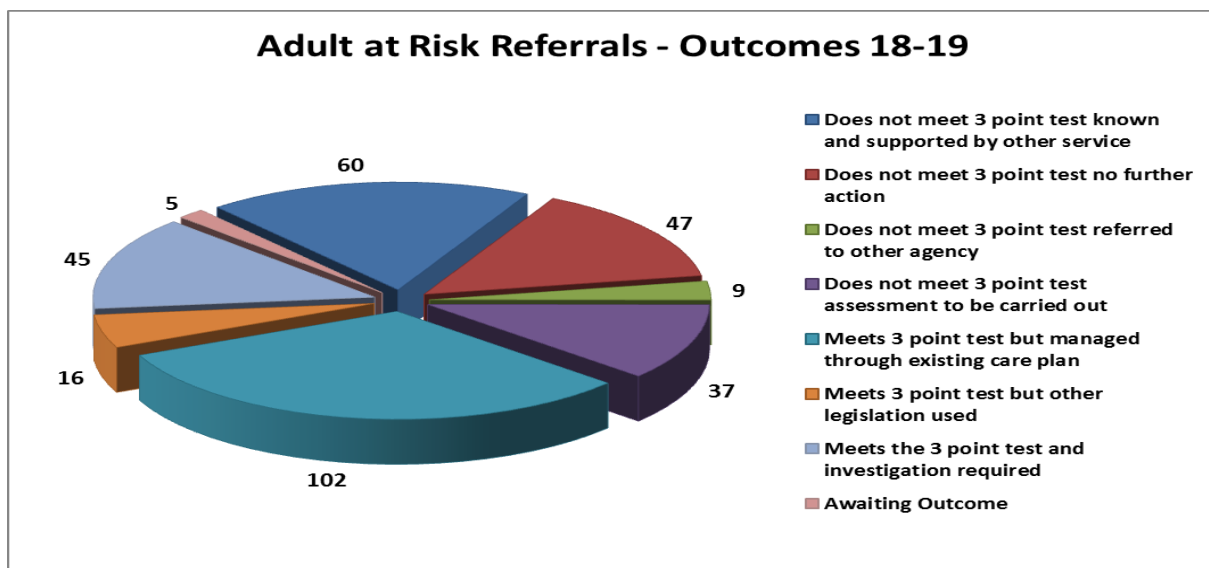
2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Value	Value	Value	Value
87%	74%	100%	92%
55	54	44	64

Data in 2017-18 indicated a need to improve timescales for ASP investigations and over the past 2 year period a focus on timescales for ASP investigations and interventions resulted in significant improvements in timescales being met .This combined with improvements in attendance at conferences has resulted in better collaborative decision making, and supportive informed responses.

Adult at Risk Referrals 19-20 by Outcome



Adult at Risk Referrals 18-19 by Outcome



Adults with Incapacity (AWI)

From 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019	
Referrals	24 Local Authority referrals for case conference
	54 Private referrals
Guardianships granted	16 Local Authority Guardianships granted
	47 Private Guardianships granted

Adults with Incapacity (AWI) activity has remained consistent over the period of this report

During 2019 three Serious Case investigations were commissioned. These Investigations identified the following actions to drive the necessary improvement to manage risk:

- Standardised approach to Risk Assessment and Management has been implemented throughout NHSGGC Mental Health Services via the introduction of a new Risk Management Tool, Clinical Risk Assessment Framework in Teams (CRAFT).
- Remind staff of the need to work with families when developing risk management and crisis plans. Family involvement is a key principle of CRAFT.
- A review of policy and practice in relation to management of calls to the Out of hours Community Psychiatric Nurse particularly when patients voice suicidal intent.
- Dissemination of details of supports and information sources available to families supporting somebody with Personality Disorder.
- Ensure that family involvement and support is addressed in the Board-wide review of pathways for Borderline Personality Disorder.

Achievements - Strengths

Improved joint work and focus on suicide prevention. This is an incredibly challenging piece of work as we recognise that people who complete suicide have often had little interaction with any of the services.

Multi agency attendance at the regular ASP meetings has resulted in better outcomes for adults who are vulnerable and at risk that frequently come to attention of police. For example; Police Scotland were the primary drivers of a case review for an individual they identified that was being frequently reported as a missing person. Without a proper risk assessment in place for the individual when traced the interaction with the police caused more stress for the individual. Police pressed for a case conference which ultimately led to procedural changes in the management of the individual. Partnership working within a case conference provided the opportunity for professional discussion regarding risk and resource implications. This facilitated sharing of information on the mental health and capacity status of the individual. The male's actions continued resulting in his arrest with appropriate information supplied to the court. The male's behaviour ceased following court intervention and the individual was better supported. There was better guidance for care staff, less police involvement, and a significantly more stable environment established for the individual.

Police deal with all types of harm and vulnerability and have identified one of the biggest benefits to them in the past 2 years has been the joint work with the Community Psychiatric Nursing services provided locally within WDC area. The joint work/response approach has enabled Police to get assistance for most people experiencing mental health crisis very quickly.

Development of the vulnerable adults multi-agency forum (MAF) has led to better communication between agencies and improved co-ordinated support to vulnerable individuals across agencies. This forum meets to address the needs of those individuals who don't readily fit into or engage with existing services, requiring more flexible and effective joint responses to address their risk and need.

Development of multi-agency short life working groups on Financial Harm ,Hoarding and Self-neglect and provision of dedicated staff time to focus on these has greatly improved knowledge and have allowed for specific focus to work with dedicated staff time understanding of staff groups. Greater agency understanding of these issues and protocols and guidance developments have led to improved responses and outcomes.

Given increased numbers and complexity of financial harm concerns in West Dunbartonshire, and following peer learning and profiling of the concerns all partners agreed there was a need for a comprehensive Multi agency Financial Harm Protocol for West Dunbartonshire.

Work has progressed towards ensuring a standardised approach of HSCP notification to police where there are concerns regarding financial harm. A banking protocol was implemented in partnership with Police, trading standards, Social Work, banks and post offices to prevent vulnerable customers falling victim to fraud. The protocol aims to increase knowledge of fraud methods, ensure consistency of approach and response from financial institutions and police and partners. Financial harm is embedded in all levels of Adult Support & Protection training.

Police now attend Adult Support and Protection meetings and there is a coherent response. The work around financial harm is ongoing and involves profiling an 18 months period of concerns, collaborating with Police, Office of Public Guardian, Care Homes and Banks.

During the past year, the Mental Health Officer service developed an outreach link worker system to increase accessibility to services, where MHOs were assigned to each designated service area to offer advice, guidance, and support. Following an initial trial in the Learning Disability Service, it is expected that this will result in more streamlined and efficient collaborative working arrangements, while enhancing shared understanding of practice issues and outcome priorities. Over the next year, the service plans to develop a consultation/evaluation exercise with service users and carers as a key quality assurance and feedback activity.

Recognising the high level of domestic violence referrals in WDC, the Violence against Women Partnership has been key to driving forward approaches to support those at risk and subject to abuse as well as work with perpetrators. Work to establish and launch the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) model in West Dunbartonshire was completed in 2019 and MARAC meetings commenced in April 2020. MARAC involves representatives from local statutory and voluntary agencies meeting to discuss the highest risk victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse in the local area. Information about the risk faced by those victims, the risk posed by the domestic abuse perpetrators, the actions needed to ensure safety and the resources available locally to do so are shared and used to create a risk management plan involving several or all of the partner agencies. This work will continue to be supported to develop active and appropriate responses and supports to adults at risk of harm

Multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approaches to the care of adults with learning disabilities in our local area has proved to be successful in reducing and managing the risks faced by this client group, as well as improving overall practice and understanding for those providing support. We have seen significant improvements over the last year in terms of adherence to Adult Support and Protection timescales.

Significant Clinical Incident Reviews of all drug related deaths that occur within West Dunbartonshire are commissioned by the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services. The main theme that emerged both nationally and locally was the increase in the prevalence of illicit benzodiazepines implicated in, or contributing to the cause of death. In response, the service provided a very clear harm reduction message to service users regarding the dangers of illicit benzodiazepines by providing 1:1 conversations, the provision of information booklets and posters and the sharing of information with partner agencies. They also encourage individuals to address benzodiazepine dependency by providing a detoxification treatment plan.

Continued development of Clinical and Care Governance arrangements with oversight of clinical risks and quality ,creating connections with all governance structures in the HSCP to ensure monitoring and improvement in the quality of care provided including Adult Support and Protection.

The revised and improved Performance and Assurance Reporting Framework (PARF), provides performance against targets for child protection, high risk offenders, adults at risk and vulnerable adults. The main purpose of the report is to ensure that the PPCOG reviews performance, outcomes and demand levels and takes any necessary action required or request the provision of further analysis and review.

Quality assurance work undertaken by Adult Protection Committee members was led by the Public Protection Lead Officer, it centred on case file audits to inform learning and improvement. An outcome of learning was the refinement of the training programme to include and support partners in Care Homes.

West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service achieved its goal for targeted distribution of naloxone medication administered by intra muscular injection to reverse opioid overdose and continues to be proactive in the supply of kits.

Trained family members/friends, individuals likely to witness an opioid overdose and statutory and non-statutory services working with individuals at risk of opioid overdose, are all supplied with naloxone kits at the time of training.

Local Authority Care Homes:

There have been a number of processes implemented within the local authority care homes to improve support for staff and residents:

- Threshold guidance
- Case study sessions with managers
- Sessions at team meetings
- Reflective practice during supervision
- Assertive outreach team engage and provide support to vulnerable individuals who are most at risk.

Service Developments

The Keep Safe initiative through “I am Me” charity was established in West Dunbarton with 17 premises in West Dunbartonshire and local libraries fully signed up .

Community Officers developed a drop-in café in May 2018, this was a joint initiative between Police Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Council. The cafes were devised as an informal way to provide security and safety advice to the vulnerable, elderly population within the area. Subsequently four cafes were opened across the area where the local community were welcomed to attend. The conversations’ were focused on door step crime and online scams with partners from victim support and trading standards also contributing to the discussion.

In response to challenges around information sharing when responding to out of hours reports of missing care home residents, the police hub worked with partners to introduce the National Missing Persons Framework, improving information sharing and aiding quicker responses.

Police have introduced the Adult Protection Single Point Of Contact within the concern hub and learnt to focus on individual needs as opposed to generic responses.

Challenges

In February 2019, the HSCP commenced a Large Scale Investigation under the auspice of the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Robust methodology was applied, including the involvement of advocacy to promote and ensure that residents of the care home were afforded the opportunity to participate in the review of their care, and have their voice heard in the Large Scale Investigation. Council Officers, nurses, and other appropriate clinical professionals from West Dunbartonshire and Argyle & Bute conducted reviews of the care and support delivered to all residents of the care home. This entailed consulting the individual, liaising where appropriate with their legal proxy/nearest relative, conducting a review meeting and reviewing care plans held and developed by care home staff in relation to each resident.

This process incorporated learning from involvement with a previous care home where issues had been raised, challenges of cross boundary working, the importance of the involvement of a range of professionals, and the need to work closely with residents, families and the staff, recognising the anxiety generated during such a period.

The work was extremely time consuming for a range of staff with 28 members of staff removed from their day to day duties to conduct the reviews, which in turn impacted on service provision.

The partnership's work was commended by the Care Inspector and significant learning was gained and improvements made, supported by extensive training, to identifying and reducing risk within care homes. The positive learning and positive outcomes with improved supportive relationships developed with Care Homes continue to be of benefit to staff and residents.

A review of guidance for conducting such reviews in light of learning has commenced and will be considered alongside national guidance which is in development, with a view to updating local guidance.

Capacity to deliver improvements at pace continues to be a challenge in a small authority with finite resources. Despite this, good progress has been made and the appointment of a Lead Officer for Adult Support and Protection provides us with real opportunity going forward.

Increasing ASP referrals has placed significant demands on services and this continues to be addressed and monitored.

Multiple recording systems results in duplication of recording requirements across agencies, which can be onerous for staff. This can result in information not being shared as fully and timeously as required for early identification and prevention work.

There are a number of challenges that are anticipated over the next 2 years:

Mental health and adult protection are growth areas at this time with more and more focus being given and more need identified. This will impact on all services in terms of capacity to meet need and deliver key processes and supports across agencies.

It is anticipated that the number of ASPs will rise following the initial lockdown phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. ASP referral rates to the community teams (community older people's team, adult care team and community hospital discharge team) were 185 in 2018-19 and 365 in 2019-20 demonstrating an existing rise in referral rates pre pandemic.

There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries that are then followed through to an investigation; 12 cases in 2018-19 and 24 in 2019-20 indicating increasing trends are likely.

There have been challenges in keeping up with a steady pace of improvement activity primarily related to the vacancy for the Public Protection Coordinators Officer's post.

A key component of the quality assurance work undertaken by the Adult Protection Committee continues to be the completion of regular case file audits for the purpose of learning and improvement. Learning from these audits prompts improved processes and is embedded into our training programme. Gaps arising as a result of the coordinator post vacancy are now being addressed and a programme of virtual training is being developed.

Working groups were established to develop local policies and procedures in relation to Large Scale Investigations, hoarding and financial harm – It has been a challenge to complete aspects of this work due to vacancies. This is now being progressed with the appointment of an interim Adult Protection Lead Officer.

Statutory functions under ASP legislation require the ability to continue with the ongoing training of Council Officers and to provide regular refresher training to current Council Officers. This presented a challenge as the Public Protection Coordinator normally delivers much of this training. Training needs are being attended to with interim arrangements in place and we look forward to the enhanced capacity the newly created ASP post will bring.

We had hoped to further build on work around meaningful participation to inform service practice and development. This has proved to be a challenge due to capacity issues related to vacancies and COVID-19. A programme of work will be progressed by the Lead Officer.

Our review and development meeting had to be postponed due in part to the vacancy but also as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. A new date is being set for December where we will review performance, take account of emerging trends and learning following COVID-19 to ensure our improvement activity is appropriately focused.

Looking Forward, Future Improvement Plans

Our improvement plan going forward was agreed at committee in November 2019 however the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic over the last six months has provided a considerable amount of additional challenge and learning. We intend to review and refine our improvement plan in light of this experience with a view to holding a review and development day later this year with an updated improvement plan agreed for progression at that point.

Key areas identified for improvement action have been identified:

Governance:

Continued development of PPCOG and associated Governance across partners and strategic groups. Focus will be on ensuring strategic links are effective, clear communication is in place, with coherence and consistency of actions whilst minimising duplication. Continuing to review and refine our operations will ensure we continue to do our best to prevent and protect vulnerable and at risk adults from harm whatever the source of that harm.

Continue work towards an integrated approach to public protection, with more joint work between Adult and Child Protection committees. Joint sessions with specific topics of mutual interest have commenced.

Implementation of proposed National Guidance and Code of Practice for Committees when available.

Assurance:

Ensure oversight of strategic and operational responses to high levels of domestic violence and outcomes from the MARAC approach.

Continued scrutiny of what the data and quality assurance work tells us. Enhance level of routine quality assurance audits and other review arrangements. This will be further supported with establishment of specific service user engagement arrangements in order to gain meaningful feedback on service users lived experience of services.

We will support national efforts to establish a minimum data set but also work on our local data to ensure we continue to do our best to support and protect adults at risk and vulnerable adults.

The recent creation of an Adult Protection Lead Officer post will further support the work of Committee and ensure we continue to progress the national and local protection agenda, informed by local need and priorities.

Support to staff:

Continue to review and update policies and procedures to support staff.

Update training programme to reflect training need analysis across agencies.

Work will be undertaken to enhance our approaches for communication between staff and committee. Review and consider our arrangements for staff engagement and feedback at every level.

Engaging more frontline staff in working groups and strategic planning.

Continue to support development of a learning culture with support of peer reviews and reflective practice approaches.

Enhance local understanding of trends among frontline staff through provision and scrutiny of detailed reports. Engage staff in analysis of data to inform priority areas of activity, service development and resource requirements.

Communication:

Enhance public awareness and engagement.

During the next year, the service plans to develop a consultation exercise with service users and carers to inform quality assurance and feedback activity.

Work with our colleagues across agencies' Communication sections to ensure we maximise opportunities for public communications across all mediums.

Engage with the public through existing groups and extend our use of technology supported communications based on positive learning through the COVID-19 crisis period.

Consult and engage to ensure that the work of Committee is informed by the experiences of service users, carers and staff

Link with and maximise use of national and West of Scotland communication network arrangements.

Key priorities for action:

Consider and include how we best respond and support staff to identify issues of poverty and neglect to inform the anti poverty strategy and provide the best supports to vulnerable adults and adults at risk.

Facilitate closer work with Children's services - more joint working for APC and CPC to ensure appropriate support to vulnerable service users particularly those who are parents.

Continued focused work on a strategic response to reducing risk of Financial Harm.

Working Groups in key areas Financial Harm, Hoarding, and LSI approaches will continue to progress work on improvements in our responses and prevention approaches.

Continue to engage with and support the review of HUB processes to develop a consistent national model, aligning processes more closely to Child Protection to ensure best quality of service to vulnerable adults and stakeholders.

Develop our strategic approach/response to increasing levels of online offending

The COVID-19 crisis experience and learning is invaluable and we will build appropriate learning into our improvement plans, with a view to ensuring services are flexible and responsive to emerging needs. Our COVID-19 experience demonstrated how well services work together to find solutions, and solution focused approaches enabled quick improvements. We want to take this approach and reflect what has worked well in our improvement activity.

Consider how we continue and enhance use of technology to support our work and bring efficiencies where this meets user and service needs best.

Review and enhance advocacy arrangements

Develop the skills of our own staff and our approaches to ICR's and SCR's through a learning together approach

Conclusion:

Much has been achieved with evidence of improved outcomes in how we responded to adults at risk and vulnerable adults and we want to continue to improve how we understand the impact of service provision and interventions. Our aim is to continue to enhance our mechanisms for capturing outcomes with improvement of service user feedback arrangements, to ensure services continue to identify and respond to risk and meet needs.

We welcome the National Review of Social Care and look forward to proposals, and hope for a coordinated and consistent approach to standards for practice and ambitions for quality service improvement. Our request for the national strategic group and national conveners group would be to consider the challenges surrounding information sharing across services for vulnerable adults, with a view to enabling earlier identification and response to concerns. In addition we recognise the challenges for integration of case recording systems but consider it is essential to make progress in this area as current arrangements are inefficient requiring duplication of entries in multiple systems. Resources will be required to implement improvements and these should be factored into improvement considerations.

I will conclude with a message of thanks to all staff and individuals across agencies and partners involved in protecting adults from harm in West Dunbartonshire for their continued dedication, hard work and engagement over the past two years. It is also important again to acknowledge the strengthening strategic oversight, engagement and leadership from the Chief Officers Group who continue to demonstrate a real drive and commitment to all aspects of public protection with a focus on improving outcomes for all.

Paula Godfrey Independent Convener
West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee.

