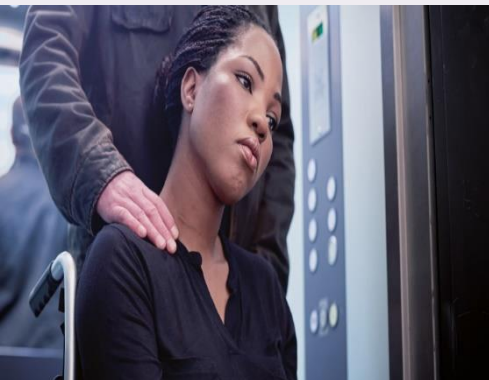
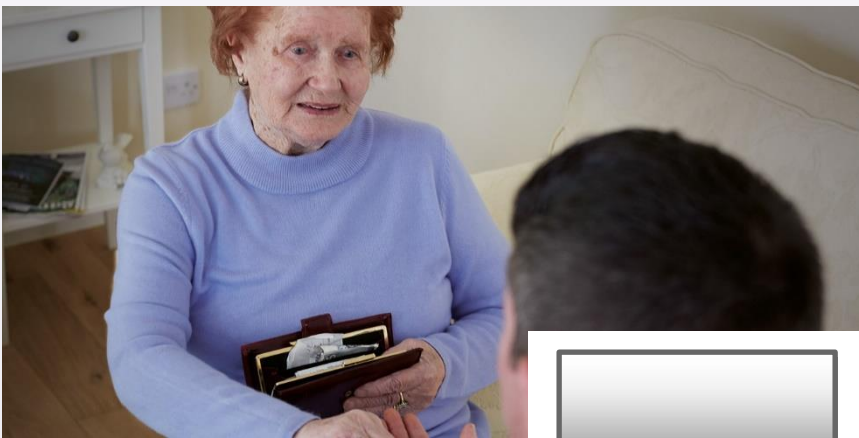


Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007



Protecting Adults at Risk of Harm in West Dunbartonshire



Adult Protection Committee Biennial Report 2020 - 2022

Introduction

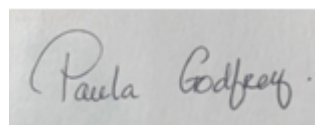
As the Independent Convener for West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee I am pleased to report on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee.

This report reflects the multi-agency Adult Support and Protection work undertaken by partners during the period of 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 and it sets out the achievements and challenges over the past two years, along with our key priorities over the next two years.

Despite the challenges faced by individuals, families, communities and staff, this report highlights that there has been much learning and change as a result of the pandemic. Our Improvement work has been informed by learning from the pandemic, inspection, evaluation and reviews.

I acknowledge and sincerely thank Committee members and staff across the partnership for their commitment, tenacity and flexibility during these unprecedented times, in ensuring vulnerable adults and those at risk of harm in West Dunbartonshire continued to receive support and protection.

We face significant challenges over the next few years with increasing levels of poverty and associated risks, increasing risk related to mental health and wellbeing and other types of harm, at a time where resources are likely to be reduced. Our Adult Protection Committee will continue to be ambitious to achieve and evidence better outcomes based on strong levels of staff commitment across the partnership, and informed by service users and communities participation.



Paula Godfrey

Independent Convener

Adult Protection Committee

West Dunbartonshire Context

In 2021, the population of West Dunbartonshire was 87,790 (National Records for Scotland, 2020/21). This is a decrease of 0.6% from 88,340 in 2019. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.25%. The population of West Dunbartonshire accounts for 1.6% of the total population of Scotland.

In West Dunbartonshire, 17.3% of the population are aged 0-15, slightly higher than Scotland (16.6%), and 9.7% of the population are aged 16-24, which is slightly lower than Scotland (10.1%). In terms of overall size, the 45 to 64 age group was the largest in 2021, with a population of 25,220 (28.7%), which is slightly higher than Scotland (27.1%). People aged 65 and over make up 19.5% of West Dunbartonshire's population, which is on par with Scotland.

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).

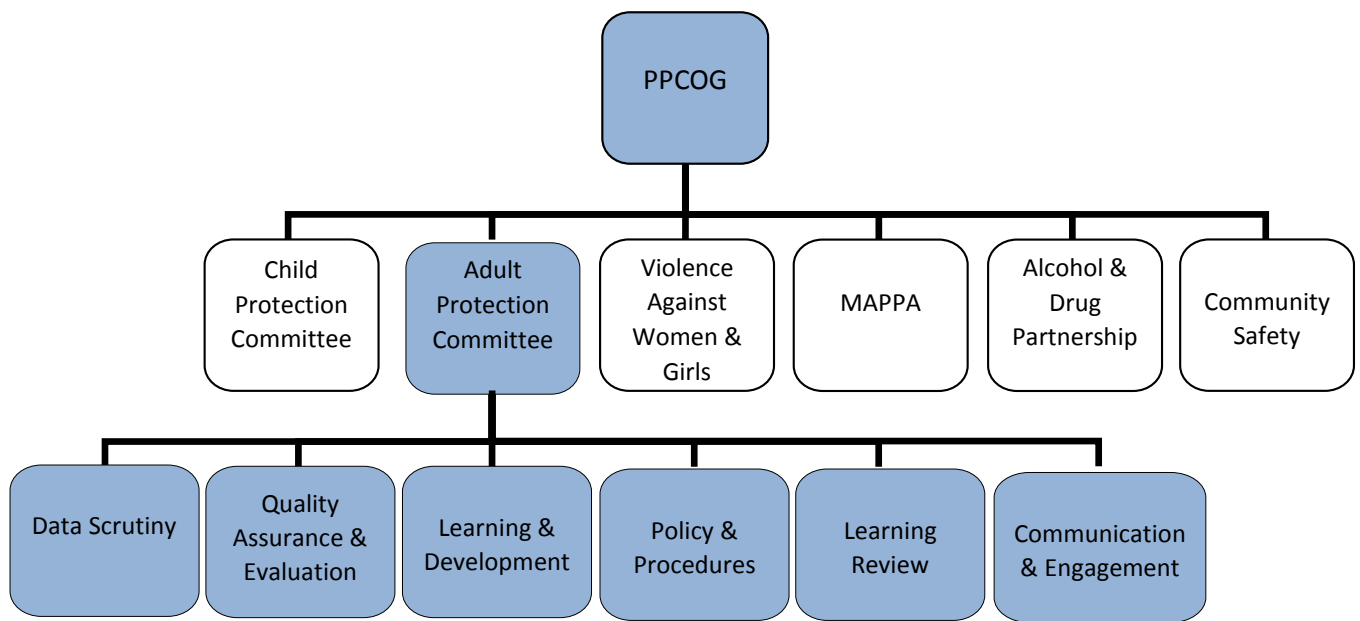
West Dunbartonshire's Adult Protection Committee (APC) is a strategic planning mechanism for inter-agency Adult Support & Protection in West Dunbartonshire. The APC meets on a quarterly basis, members include representation from Police Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Adult Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Advocacy Services, Scottish Care, voluntary sector and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services.

Membership of the APC has fluctuated during this reporting period, not only in terms of changes in Lead Officer but also changes in personnel for Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue, NHS and Advocacy services.

The Committee has a significant role in ensuring cooperation and communication within and between agencies to promote appropriate support and protection for adults at risk of harm. The role of the APC revolves around Local Councils, NHS Boards and Police recognising the statutory functions of the committee in terms of its authority and accountability.

West Dunbartonshire APC 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 APC reports to the multi-agency Public Protection Chief Officers Groups (PPCOG) which is responsible for the strategic co-ordination of public protection services in West Dunbartonshire and is chaired by the Council Chief Executive.



The APC 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 PPCOG 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.

Covid-19

(Suggested page count: 2)

West Dunbartonshire Partnership, as is likely for all partnership areas, experienced significant impact due to Covid-19 and lock down. This called for unprecedented and rapid responses to how services were delivered and how staff carried out their work and engaged with service users and carers.

Every effort was made to ensure effective communication and collaborative practice continued with measures put in place to capture and monitor the ever evolving situation and ensure resources were focused on minimising risk and mobilising available resources. The partnership increased the frequency of APC and PPCOG meetings and a specific Covid-19 risk register was set up, this not only provided strategic leadership and ownership of inter-agency activity but also sought to ensure employees were supported.

The HSCP set up a centralised Adult Support & Protection (ASP) Duty team to ensure that there was a strong and consistent staffing resource when there were ongoing staffing challenges related to the pandemic. This allowed us to focus on priority work and ensuring vulnerable people were kept safe. Performance around timescales improved during this period and ASP processes were being concluded consistently. The feedback from staff was that this was a good duty system which supported consistent decision making and recording. We have now embedded a centralised duty system for ASP as core practice.

Local multi-agency ASP Guidance was updated and IT solutions sought to facilitate communication and support partners undertake their statutory duties. The introduction of Zoom and MS Teams provided a means of continuing with essential ASP work and maximising attendance at meetings such as case conference, learning review meetings and training sessions during periods of restrictions. The use of online video conferencing was found to be a positive addition enabling partners to work more efficiently whilst reducing unnecessary travel and the time taken to travel between meetings. Police colleagues noted this was particularly helpful and enabled their increased attendance at ASP meetings and case discussions.

Training was somewhat restricted during the pandemic. On line face to face and iLearn modules were developed and delivered to a wide range of staff throughout 2020-22. A relaunch of in person Council Officer, Council Officer Refresher, Second Worker, Chairing Case Conference, and the Role and Responsibilities of the Senior Social Worker and Integrated Operations Manager commenced at the end of 2021

Staff feedback indicates technology may, at times, limit the level of interagency reflection and discussion due to some feeling less confident sharing online. Our future focus will be on finding the balance and best means of delivery so that learning is optimised and enhances outcomes for staff and the people of West Dunbartonshire.

West Dunbartonshire Council's Adult Protection Procedures are clear about the crucial role of independent advocacy for all at risk groups, especially in terms of ensuring that people understand their right to be free from abuse. Advocacy services continued to be involved, where appropriate, throughout the pandemic to ensure that individuals had information and support available to them to exercise their rights within the adult protection process.

The role of Adult Protection Lead Officer continued on an interim basis throughout 2021-22 and the post was covered by three different people over the reporting period. The permanent appointment of Lead Officer in August 2022 will hopefully provide consistency and stability to progress our work.

Capacity to complete the full range of work required in relation to ASP was identified as a significant challenge and funding was agreed in 2021 for two additional fixed term public protection posts. The additional posts will support the public protection aspects of adult and child protection learning and development, and performance, audit and quality assurance. There was a low level of response to adverts and the posts have subsequently been reviewed, regraded and are currently out for advert.

Despite the capacity gap a significant amount of work has been completed around single agency training and development and we are more prepared now to progress multi-agency training and evaluation. That said, the additional resource is key to supporting and driving improvement work and the pace at which progress can be made.

The need for additional whole system support to protect care home residents and staff was identified at the very early stages of the pandemic. There were no changes to Chief Officers or Chief Social Work Officer responsibilities or accountabilities. However, additional requirements regarding accountability for provision of nursing leadership, professional oversight, implementation of infection prevention control measures, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and quality of care required a new model of support to be developed.

An enhanced system of care assurance was developed around the safety and wellbeing of care home residents and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. This support included establishing a West Dunbartonshire multi-agency professional oversight group. The role of the group is to analyse issues, develop and implement solutions, and ensure care homes remain able to sustain services during the pandemic. The oversight group provides access to expert advice on infection prevention and control and enabled care homes to secure responsive clinical support when required. The HSCP Quality Assurance Officer provides reports to the group regarding the themes from ASP reporting any trends or emerging risks identified in a particular care home.

Following the extension of the Executive Nurse Director responsibilities care assurance visits commenced across all partnerships within Greater Glasgow and Clyde in May 2020. In West Dunbartonshire some homes received more than one visit, and augmented support was provided during outbreaks.

The role and responsibility of the Executive Nurse Directors with respect to older peoples care homes has been extended with an expectation that the multidisciplinary assurance process continues. A cycle of care assurance visits have been established, involving all adult and older peoples care homes. These are undertaken by a Senior Nurse and Senior Social Worker from the HSCP. The assurance visits focus on three areas, Infection Prevention and Control, Resident Health and Care Needs, and Workforce Leadership and Culture.

The learning and relationships that this work has fostered have strengthened early identification of risk to care quality in care homes, enhanced partnership working with care homes, and our ability to anticipate support requirements earlier and respond more effectively. This places us in a strong position to work together to address ongoing challenges for the care home sector caused or exacerbated by the pandemic.

The Care Home Collaborative Group was set up to support care quality in care homes. NHSGGC Care Home Hubs were introduced specifically to support enhanced assurance and mutual aid required to keep residents safe in terms of driving improvement and having robust infection protection control practices, correct use of PPE, implementation of food fluid and nutrition standards, promoting activity and reducing stress and distress within care homes. The Care Home Hubs offer learning and development sessions over a range of topics.

The joint inspection of Adult Support & Protection services in the West Dunbartonshire partnership took place between May and July 2021. The report noted that Partnership Leaders responded well to the unprecedented strategic and operational demands of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Support was provided to staff and the partnership ensured good oversight of protection risks and recovery planning and the Partnership had made a sound decision to increase the capacity of their duty service at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. As a result, screening and triage of Adult Support & Protection referrals was accurate, timely, effective, and collaborative. Staff from the partnership had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to Adult Support & Protection. Adult Support & Protection investigations were routinely undertaken and effectively determined if the adult was at risk of harm.

The full report can be found here [Joint-Inspection-of-Adult-Support-Protection-West-Dunbartonshire \(1\).pdf](#)

What your data tells you

(Suggested page count: 3)

The data provided in this section covers the period from April 2020 – March 2022 and shows the local trends for Adult at Risk Referrals, Investigations, Case Conferences and Vulnerable Adult Referrals.

The graphs below show an increase at each stage of the ASP process over the reporting period.

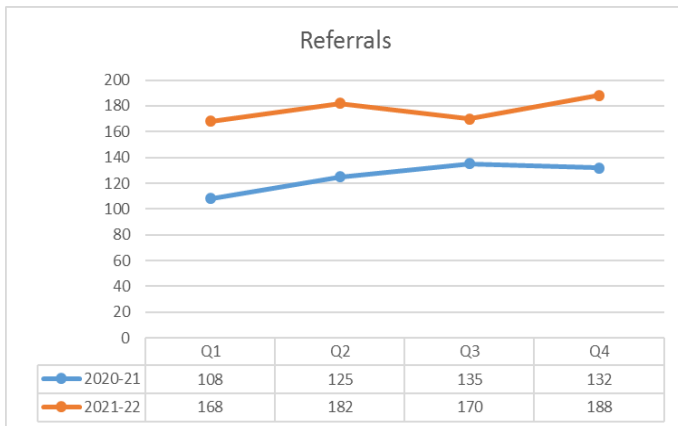


Table 1

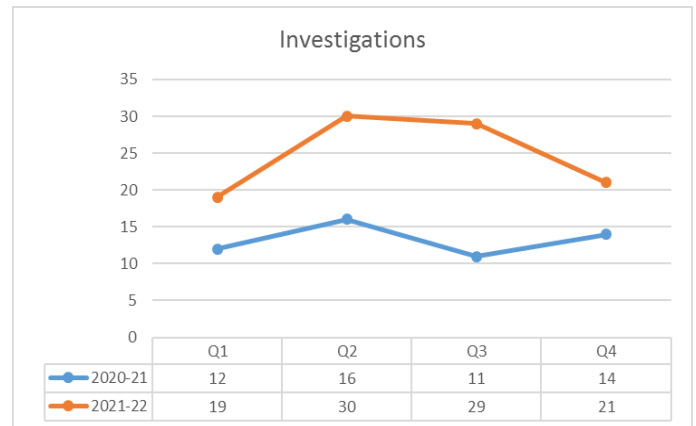


Table 2

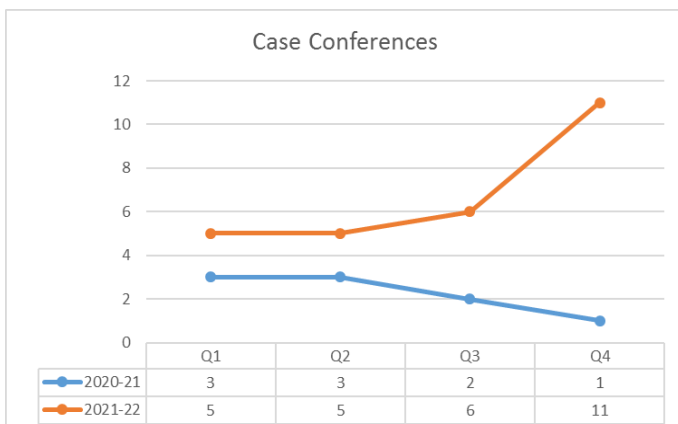


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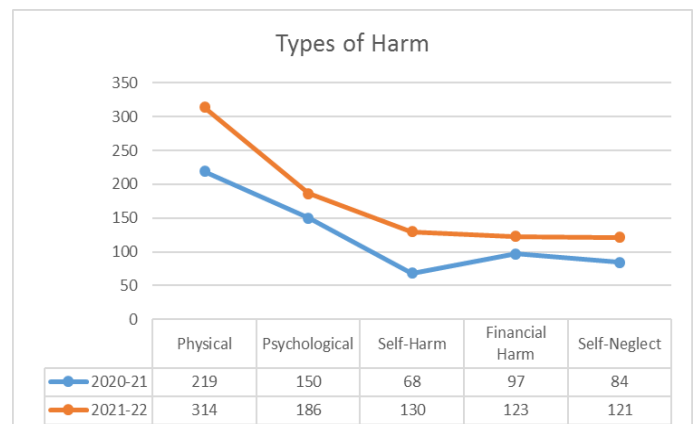


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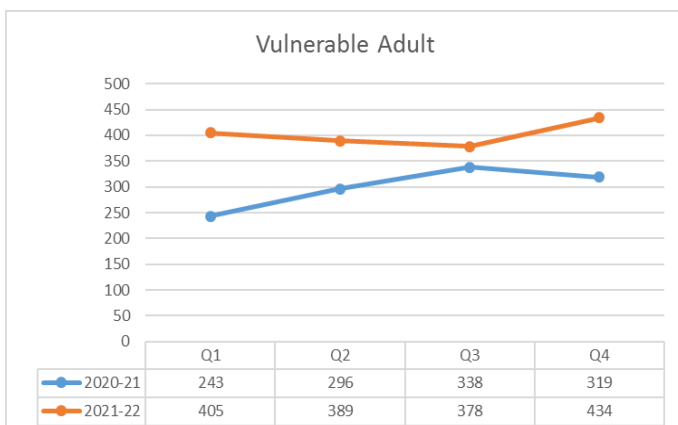


Table 5

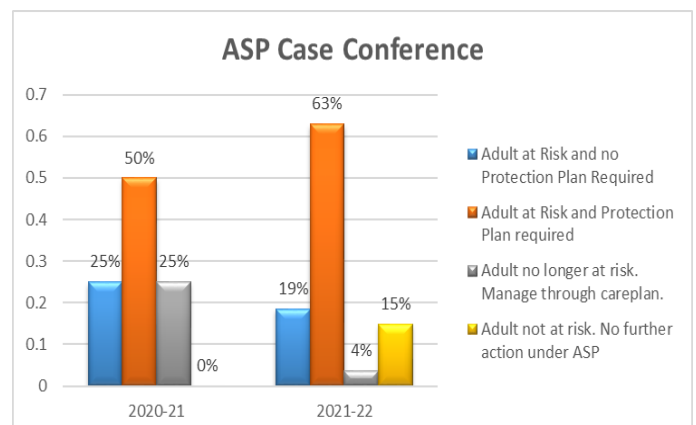


Table 6

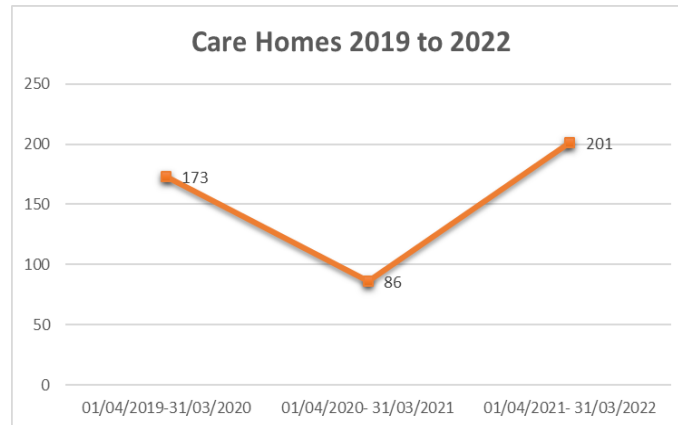


Table 7

The number of adult at risk referrals (**Table 1**) reached 708 in 2021-22 comparable to 500 the previous year which is an increase of 42%.

Investigations (**Table 2**) reached 99 in 2021-22 comparable to 53 the previous year which is an increase of 87%.

27 case conferences (**Table 3**) were held during 2021-21 in comparison to 9 the previous year.

The top 5 types of harm being reported (**Table 4**) continue to be Physical Harm, Psychological harm, Self-Harm, Financial Harm and Self Neglect. Physical Harm and Psychological Harms continue to be the predominant harm reported year on year and whilst Self-Harm, Financial Harm & Self Neglect continue to be in the top 5 their positioning within the top 5 has changed in comparison to 2020-21.

The number of vulnerable adult referrals (**Table 5**) increased by 34% with 1606 received in 2021-22 comparable to 1196 the previous year.

Year on year the number of ASP orders applied for have remained low with no ASP orders applied for during the reporting period.

Referrals where care home was noted as location (**Table 7**) increased by 134% from 86 referrals in 2020-21 to 201 in 2021-22. The data tells us that the number of referrals significantly dropped during periods of lockdown when many residents were cared for in their rooms, contact with other residents was reduced and, in some settings, occupancy levels were lower. Contributing factors for the increase in local referrals include the opening of a new care home which provides support to adults with complex care needs, repeat referrals and the easing of lock down restrictions.

We have given attention to all repeat referrals and implemented a process to trigger a multi-agency case discussion or an investigation where three referrals are received for a person in a 6 month period. This involves senior operational managers having oversight of those adults for whom multiple referrals have been made, undertaking a review of the case and considering what, if any, further action or interagency discussions are required. The aim is to ensure a proactive response for early intervention, and where appropriate consideration of the case via our Multi Agency Forum (MAF) if there is particular complexity or issues arising with engagement to address concerns. We have seen a significant decrease in the number of referrals from the new care setting as a result of this work and will continue to monitor the impact of the new process in respect of referrals.

ASP reports are also provided to the Care Home Oversight Group via the HSCP Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) who provides a rudimentary analysis of the data, however, it is recognised that more work is required if we are to be able to make robust inferences from the data provided; this will be addressed through the work of the APC Data Scrutiny and Quality Assurance and Evaluation sub groups.

The increase in the number of cases that are carried through to case conference stage (**Table 3**) is proportionate given the increase in referrals and investigations. In addition to the increase in the number of case conferences, there has also been an increase in the number of cases continued under a protection plan and fewer cases are being managed through care management once they reach this stage (**Table 6**). This was an area we identified for improvement following audit, and figures now show that improvement has been made. Consideration is being given to how we may gather and report information on longer term outcomes, again this will be taken forward through the APC sub group.

The Partnership has faced a significant challenge in the area of data scrutiny and quality assurance due to capacity issues. We are gradually refining the information that comes to committee and work around this continues. The reconvened APC Data Scrutiny sub group will undertake a review of local data needs and develop more robust processes around data collection, analysis and reporting to enable us to be in a better position to inform practice and development across the local partnership.

We welcome the development of the national data set as we believe it will add to the information APC use to inform improvement. We plan to hold a specific session in January 2023 to focus on our data and how we can utilise it better alongside improved quality assurance processes to inform necessary improvement activity.

Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements

(Suggested page count: 8)

Despite the challenges and restrictions faced during the pandemic, the partnership has continued to drive forward improvements and strengthen its approach in responding to and achieving the best possible outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

Two Independent Audits of Adult Support & Protection were commissioned in 2021. These were single agency audits that considered HSCP activity and early response approaches; as such they did not specifically cover police or health records.

One audit sampled a number of cases from initial referral through to assessment, planning and management of risk. The other considered how the current action plans were being carried out in the context of the previous inspection findings of Adults Support & Protection locally and in other areas to assist in identification of any gaps in our processes and quality of interventions.

Both the Independent Audits and the joint Inspection of Adult Support & Protection services (2021) identified several key strengths and West Dunbartonshire scored particularly high on multi-agency participation and involvement. There was clear evidence of good practice in complex case work where there were chronic, unresolvable problems in the day to day lives of some of the vulnerable adults involved in the ASP process. Evidence indicated investigations were routinely undertaken and it was effectively determined if the adult was at risk of harm. Staff from the partnership also were found to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to Adult Support & Protection.

In response to the independent audits and findings of the joint inspection, the HSCP has developed an Improvement Plan. This covers the period 2021-24 and regular updates are provided to HSCP senior management, APC and the Public Protection Chief Officers Group. Multi-agency aspects of the plan will be progressed through the APC subgroups.

Examples of achievements and service improvements during the reporting period are noted below:

Procedures and guidance documents reviewed and updated to support practitioners undertake their statutory duties :

- Social Work and Social Care Staff Supervision Policy and Guidance (December 2021)
- The HSCP Community Care Case Recording Standards (June 2021)
- West Dunbartonshire Working together to protect adult's interagency guidance (2021). This will be further updated to reflect the 2022 National Suite of Guidance.
- Adult Protection Standard Operation Procedures (2022 draft)
- A good practice guidance for ASP Case Conferences (2022 draft)
- West Dunbartonshire Partnership Guidance for staff working with people who have a hoarding disorder (2022)
- West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care (HSCP) Carer Assessment and Support Plan and referral pathways (June 2022)

- HSCP Adult and Children Services Audit Framework (2022)
- West Dunbartonshire Adult and Child Protection Committee Learning Review Process and Guidance (2022).
- Child Protection and Adult Protection Committee Critical Incident Protocol (2022 draft)
- The My Life Assessment / MLA-S (2021) and Review (2022) introduced following a review of HSCP Assessment and Care Management tools and processes.
- HSCP Carer assessment and support planning tools and processes reviewed and referral pathways developed between the HSCP and Carers of West Dunbartonshire (June 2022)

The APC Policy and Procedure sub group have responsibility for the ongoing review and development of local ASP procedures and processes and ensuring they promote multi-agency and collaborative practices which are aligned with national policies and procedures.

A scoping exercise has been undertaken to identify the Partnership needs and approach to developing practice around chronologies. Plans are underway to develop a joint adult and child protection guidance and local training programme. This will be taken forward through the APC & CPC Learning and Development subgroups.

Building on the duty system model adopted during the pandemic, a centralised HSCP ASP duty system was introduced in April 2022.

The structure has been strengthened and cover expanded to include a range of staff from adult and older peoples service teams. A rota system provides second worker, Council Officer, Senior Social Worker and Integrated Operational Manager cover for duty and chairing of Case Conferences. The Case Conference Chair rota provides independent cover and the opportunity for Chairs to engage in self-evaluation and improvement activity with SSWs.

The new system is closely monitored by Heads of Service and Integrated Operations Managers to ensure it provides a more streamlined and focused approach to supporting and responding to adults at risk of harm, and, triage of ASP referrals continue to be accurate, timely, effective, and collaborative. Weekly reports are also sent to team and service managers highlighting active ASP work and timescales for completion.

We are evidencing a more consistent approach, response and scrutiny of referrals. There has been an increase in referrals post lockdown which was to be expected, but it also reflects the awareness raising and training activity of the past year. Staff and agencies are better able to identify risk and there is more consideration of the ASP risks and needs for individuals who were previously supported under a care management approach.

At this early stage, HSCP staff feedback indicates that they benefit from and welcome the opportunity to work with and share professional knowledge and expertise with colleagues across HSCP teams. Feedback on the duty system from partners has been positive with a “One point” of referral for ASP referrals seen as more direct and accessible.

The Partnership’s Multi Agency Forum (MAF) was reviewed over the last 12 months. The overall aim of this forum is to have first line sight of individuals who repeatedly make contact with services and to provide a platform for multi-agency discussion to decide on the most appropriate response. The MAF

also liaises with the Vulnerable Young Persons Multi-Agency Forum (VYP MAF) which provides a multi-agency framework for vulnerable young people (16-21yrs) whose level of risk taking behaviour and vulnerability requires further assessment and consultation. This process runs alongside the Child Protection process for young people under 18yrs.

Work has been undertaken to refresh the Terms of Reference of the group to ensure it is fulfilling its role in line with current policy and practice and also to ensure the right partners are round the table to facilitate appropriate sharing of information and to create a space for a range of agencies and partners to consider alternative future responses to recurring complex issues that have not been previously resolved at service level or through reflective practice.

Standard operating procedures, information sharing protocols have been reviewed along with the way in which alerts are sent to agencies and services that may not attend the MAF itself, meetings are more frequent, and, membership increased to include colleagues from Criminal Justice and Housing Services.

Feedback from staff indicates that the MAF is now better placed to fulfil its duty of care to those it serves. More regular meetings ensure early identification of people who frequently contact or present to a range of services, particularly those where an immediate pathway may not be clear.

Feedback from Police Scotland's Concern Hub has been very positive, noting that early discussion leads to good outcomes and frontline officers are able to see the importance of their recording. Police Scotland in West Dunbartonshire is in the process of restructuring and it will have an 'Adult Protection Team' with 3 officers and 1 member of Police staff dedicated to this team by mid October 2022. The Police team, the MAF team and the Concern Hub will work closely together to continue to improve their collective response to those with recurring needs and risks who do not routinely fit into services as currently structured.

Police Scotland L division have reviewed their processes and have made changes to ensure that their recordings of inter-agency discussions are strengthened and implement a more robust audit, compliance and governance regime. Work has been undertaken to improve processes for concluding investigations and can demonstrate a significant reduction in the backlog of work.

Following a patient complaint and staff consultation, Community Mental Health teams introduced Mentalisation Based Therapy. This 2 year old service has provided evidenced based care for people with borderline Personality Disorder that did not exist previously both in direct care as well as acting consultation and advice giving to the wider service. This includes offering individual and group therapies. This new team's specific skills supported review and delivery of new pathways for people with Borderline Personality Disorder has reduced hospital admissions, emergency assessments and incidents of deliberate self-harm for our local population.

A peer audit of the HSCP ASP Duty System is underway. The focus of the audit is on process and referral pathways, quality of recording, outcomes and timescales.

An audit of Social Work and Social Care Supervision activity was completed in July 2022. Plans are underway to audit a sample of supervision notes and ensure discussions are taking place around ASP management, reflective practice, and staff learning and development.

A reconstituted APC Quality Assurance and Evaluation sub group will take forward work relating to multi-agency audit, quality assurance and evaluation.

The WDCVS made a successful application to Life Changes Trust to support the distribution of Call Blockers to people living with dementia and their carers to try to reduce instances of possible financial harm and have worked closely with Police Scotland to implement this with positive effect.

Following an ICR Learning Review, a number of improvement activities were initiated via Health and Community Care service to improve outcomes for those at risk of harm. This included Care at Home, District Nursing and Integrated Adult Services and has demonstrated benefit to staff and service users.

Driving forward these improvements was challenging throughout the pandemic however the activity required to address the issues was prioritised across the teams. Despite this commitment, there were times when progress was delayed due to ever changing service requirements during the pandemic. An oversight group has been established to ensure work continues to be progressed.

The Head of Health and Community Care set up 4 weekly meetings with key stakeholders to monitor the progress and embedding of the action plan. This has allowed a clear governance structure reporting to both the APC and the HSCP Clinical Care and Governance process.

The teamwork between the managers of the services involved is recognised as a strength, demonstrating a collaborative and integrated approach. There is now a 2 weekly multi-disciplinary meeting to provide a platform from which to discuss service users that staff have concerns about, thus reducing risk of escalation. This format facilitates closer professional relationships, recognition of roles and skills and the wider ethos of integration in improving person centred outcomes.

The APC began the process of refreshing and renewing committee priorities in 2021. An initial development session took place with the support of the Health Improvement Scotland Team in (2021) this has been followed up with a local session in May 2022 and plans are in place for a further session in January 2023.

The outputs of this work are to progress with a review of membership, roles and responsibilities, production of an induction pack for new members, APC sub groups to drive forward the APC strategic priorities and associated improvement plans, and, align governance and Terms of Reference with the recently released national reviewed guidance for APCs.

Recognising the benefits of a focused PPCOG risk register during the period of the pandemic, we have reviewed our processes for identifying, managing, reporting and governance of risk.

Training, learning and development

(Suggested page count: 4)

An ASP Training Survey was conducted in 2021 consulting partners across key statutory, third and independent sector agencies. Although a low number of responses were received they were representative of organisations across the Partnership, and provided an overview of where and how agencies accessed ASP training and suggested improvements.

Suggestions for improvement included exploring different methods of delivery to increase capacity, developing training for administrative staff, and ensuring consistency in ASP training across partner agencies and exploring an ASP Training Network to increase capacity and flexibility to deliver training.

Arising from the recent self-assessment and inspection activity, a question around Adult Protection training was added to the third sector 2022 census question set. Organisations were asked if they provided Adult Support & Protection awareness training for staff and volunteers.

Responses received suggest that while 70% of the third sector cohort provide staff and volunteer access to training, only 42% of community organisations offer any structured inputs. In the main, these organisations reported using induction processes as a way of outlining organisational expectations. While 'regulated' services relied on maximising existing in-house capacity and on-line delivery options over the period of the pandemic, community organisations, in the main, could not. In addition, a significant number of community organisations confirmed that, while committed to the principles of adult protection, they had not accessed or offered training pre-pandemic.

As previously noted, delivering training and development sessions presented challenges, across the partnership, due to changing working arrangements and restrictions faced throughout the past 2 years different methods of delivery have been utilised to support ongoing training and development.

The Partnership focus has been to ensure staff understand their role responsibilities and duties in relation to Adult Support & Protection and that sufficient numbers of staff are trained and able to undertake their statutory ASP duties.

Examples of training, learning and development delivered during the reporting period are noted below.

- An ASP minute taking module was developed on the iLearn platform in 2022 in response to staff feedback from the training survey. This supports administrative staff in understanding the role and functions of ASP procedures and recording.
- Basic Awareness training was delivered via MST throughout 2021 and an iLearn module launched on the West Dunbartonshire learning platform in July 2022. Whilst mandatory for social care staff, all council staff are able to access the training. Work is now being undertaken to explore how this may be rolled out across the partnership.
- Care at Home services recruited a training officer who delivered service specific ASP training to frontline staff.
- This service area employ a significant number of staff and support a large number of people living in their own homes. Delivering online training, particularly throughout the pandemic, helped raise awareness of ASP, types of harm and staff roles and responsibilities in relation to identifying and

supporting adults at risk of harm. Work is underway to align training with the basic awareness iLearn module developed on the WD iLearn platform.

- Council Officer and second worker training was delivered in 2021 along with Senior Social Worker, Integrated Operational Managers and Heads of Service sessions covering their Roles and Responsibilities in relation to ASP and Case Conference Chairing and a regular programme of face to face training has resumed in 2022.
- A joint APC and CPC Learning Review session took place in August 2022 and local guidance has been agreed. The APC will mirror the approach of the CPC and create a Learning Review Sub group of the APC to progress and report all Learning Review work. The aim of the joint approach is to ensure a consistent approach to learning and improvement planning to share and strengthen skills and knowledge.
- A short life working group are currently developing a multi-agency reflective practice forum. The forum will cover adult and child protection with the aim of embedding a culture of shared learning. The group have met and agreed draft terms of reference and the first reflective session will take place in January 2023.
- DASH-Ric Assessment & Human Trafficking Sessions (delivered by WD Violence against Woman and Girls Partnership via MST).
- Hoarding and self-neglect development session (delivered by NASPC via MST).
- Capacity/Consent briefing for Council Officers/SSW's (Lead Officer via MST).
- PREVENT Seminar (delivered by Police Scotland MST).
- In person sessions, delivered by the Care inspectorate following this year's Children at risk of Harm inspection were attended by members of adult services and APC. the sessions covered :
 - Multi-agency record reading
 - Initial Referral Discussions
 - Using Data
 - Self-evaluation
 - Involvement of children & young people 1
 - Involvement of children & young people
 - Quality Assurance
 - Leadership 1- Leadership Qis & Leadership 2 - Self evaluation

The opportunity and benefits of local partners, who work across adult and children's services, coming together at in person facilitated sessions, enabled the sharing of ideas as to how we could improve collaboration and processes. Additionally, it supported the partnership to align thinking around the work of our APC and CPC.

Technology has supported online face to face training throughout the period of Covid-19 restrictions, without this it is unlikely essential training would have taken place. The facility for online sessions provides benefits in terms of reducing travel time and increasing attendance. That said, we recognise the value in staff having the opportunity to meet, reflect and learn in person.

Going forward, we will progress with a hybrid model of training and consider the best approach for future events. Staff feedback from events will inform future methods of delivery.

The APC Learning and Development subgroup will focus on developing and taking forward a 3-5 year multi-agency training plan that is responsive to the needs of the workforce and provides a platform to share learning resources across partner agencies.

When participants were asked what they had gained from the training and what would they do differently responses included

I feel I have a better understanding around ASP

The course provided me with a very good overview of the issues with regard to capacity, consent and how they relate to responsibilities towards adults at risk

The facilitators were able to relay the legal tests and principles for ASP clearly and comprehensively such that my understanding in this respect has been enhanced.

Use my learning in my work with service users subject to ASP procedures. Share my learning with my colleagues. Request that ASP Practice is included as a standing item for my Supervision.

Communicate with staff and record information. Become more familiar with the asp forms and procedures & risk assessments.

Ensure everyone gets access to the training. Encourage everyone to own their responsibilities in relation to the act. Uphold the principles

I feel more confident in recording/reporting

I have always been aware of ASP but now realise how decisions are made and what powers they have to enable change

I feel more confident in being able to be Council Officer"

Engagement, involvement, and communication

(Suggested page count: 4

Capacity to undertake the desired improvements at pace is always a challenge for smaller partnership areas and, for a variety of reasons, we have not progressed as well as we would have hoped in enhancing our partnership engagement, involvement and communication.

Traditionally this work has been completed via public communication methods, notices, agency feedback surveys, websites etc., through our third and voluntary sector engagement and community planning processes. The APC and Inspection Improvement plans both identify this as a key priority area of work and we recognise the need to work together to refresh and renew our approach.

Examples of good work undertaken during the reporting period include;

- The Lead Officer working closely with Carers of West Dunbartonshire during 2021 to explore how best to reach carers and raise awareness of ASP. A YouTube ASP Awareness video was released in November 2021.
- Independent Advocacy services continued throughout the restricted period of the pandemic and ensured that individuals had information and support available to them to exercise their rights within the adult protection process. The outcome of these discussions, whether in the course of an investigation or at case conference is recorded on minutes and action plans.
- Partnership staff continue to ensure participation and gain feedback in practice at each stage of the ASP process. This is monitored through manager scrutiny of case recording and professional supervision. However, this information is not aggregated or reported on. We hope to build capacity to gather and report this information, from all partners, going forward.

Feedback from staff at training events tells us there is good awareness of the need to listen to and act on what our service users tell us about effectiveness of service interventions so we can continue to learn and improve.

- Families are invited to engage when we undertake Learning reviews and are provided with feedback on findings and informed how our learning will lead to changes in practice.
- Arising from the recent self-assessment and inspection activity, questions around Adult Protection awareness were added to the third sector 2022 census question set. Organisations were asked if they were aware of their Adult Support & Protection obligations and if they had an Adult Support & Protection policy in place.
 - The findings show that within the third sector cohort, only 72% (59 respondents) considered themselves fully aware of their obligations. With a further 11% recording some level of awareness. This number dropped to 64% (110 respondents) across the community organisation cohort, and identified a significant confusion around the connection between PVG membership and ASP responsibilities.

- The census returns showed that within the third sector cohort, 57% considered themselves to have an appropriate and regularly updated AP policy, dropping to only 40% across the community cohort. A significant number of Third Sector organisations reported delays in re-activating their usual policy review procedures due to ongoing pandemic pressures. Within the community cohort and beyond those organisations most closely aligned to the care agenda, it is possible to identify the drivers for policy creation as being largely internally driven/motivated by the efforts of a key stakeholder or in response to the needs of a funder. As with all policies, it is important that a focus is placed on ensuring that these documents remain updated and fit for purpose.
- The report findings will be presented to November 2022 APC along with its proposed action plan as to how issues and suggestions may be progressed.
- The HSCP participated in the national “What Matters To You,” campaign led by Health Care Improvement Scotland which aims to encourage more meaningful conversations between people who provide health and social care and the people who receive care and support. Asking what matters most to people involved with health and social care enhances the development of high quality compassionate support, care or treatment focused around what people really need and want. The campaign culminated in What Matters to You Day, we asked for the people of West Dunbartonshire to get involved by joining the conversation. An online survey was created to help us gather information from citizens to help us refine the services we provide to ensure that we meet the health and social care needs of the people we serve. This information is to be used to inform strategic planning.

We believe we are now in a better position to develop a fresh approach to communication and engagement and have agreed to take this forward through a joint APC and CPC Communication and Engagement sub group. It is hoped this joint approach will ensure we maximise our resources, can develop coherent multi-agency arrangements to strengthen our approach and methods to assist engagement of service users in the designing, coproduction and implementation of ASP policies and procedures.

This subgroup is chaired by a lead representative from the voluntary sector and a draft communication and engagement strategy has been developed. Whilst early days for this joint committee approach, we believe the sub group will be instrumental in strengthening our approach to engagement and the partnership approach to delivering the best outcomes possible for those at risk of harm in our communities.

We seek to benefit from the gains in use of technology to aid communication and engagement opportunities as well as maximising opportunities for face to face engagement to gain meaningful participation and feedback. We are mindful that the work of APC and the sub group sits within a context of a wider partnership review of communication and engagement arrangements based on learning from Covid-19 which supports a coherence of review and improvement.

Challenges and areas for improvement

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Despite the challenges and restrictions faced during the pandemic and the current recovery period, the partnership has continued to drive forward improvements to strengthen its approach in responding to and achieving the best possible outcomes for adults at risk of harm, significant improvements can be evidenced as a result of reviewing our local MAF and the introduction of an ASP Duty system.

Whilst we are working to an agreed improvement plan, we are aware that capacity gaps across the partnership, may impact negatively on the pace in which we are able to progress future improvement work.

We are mindful the scale and pace of change in the health and social care system, as a result of the pandemic, has exceeded anything we have experienced in the past. Service provision has changed at pace and some services may not return to their former delivery models. Health and Social Care Services remain under pressure due to Covid-19 and demographic change, it is therefore more important than ever that we continue to focus on the quality of care delivered as services adapt and evolve to meet the needs of communities in West Dunbartonshire.

There is uncertainty about the future of services locally and nationally in light of development of a National Care Service .Large organisational and structure change impacts on the day to day delivery of services over a long period of time, therefore, sustaining improvement through such a process will be a significant challenge and hard to plan for given the lack of certainty.

Current economic circumstances are impacting on people's everyday lives and will impact at a number of levels, from financial squeeze on councils and agencies/organisations that deliver services, to the quality of life for individuals and families on low incomes struggling with the cost of living crisis. Risks will increase as a result of increasing poverty levels, and capacity to deliver and support effective responses will likely be compromised as a result of reduced resources.

There is no doubt that this ever changing local and national landscape will present a significant challenge over the next few years so we welcome every opportunity to be involved with the ASP national implementation group and sub groups, national forums and practice networks. Where possible we would welcome the opportunity to join forces and undertake work with other partnership areas to share resource, training and learning.

The key challenges and improvements identified for the partnership during this reporting period are summarised below.

Resource and Recruitment

We have experienced a significant level of staff changes, across all service areas, which has impacted on capacity to deliver improvement activity at the pace we would have hoped.

The pandemic impacted on staffing with high infection rates at times and ever changing restrictions impacting on how services were provided and how staff were supported. It is fair to say Covid-19 resulted in critical and crisis management to deliver essential services, thus reducing capacity to deliver training, and a sufficient level of quality assurance and evaluation during the pandemic period.

Inspections of Adult Support & Protection and Children at Risk of Harm during the time frame of this report, drew significantly on resources, again reducing capacity for improvement activity. Inspection scrutiny and audit activity have helpfully informed our current and future improvement work plan, but we still face challenges in terms of our capacity to drive forward developments.

Recruitment has been a challenge locally, as it has been nationally, and we continue in our efforts to recruit key staff, including the two additional posts identified as essential to support the work of multi-agency quality assurance, evaluation and training.

Communication and Engagement

Capacity to develop our approach to communication and engagement has been a challenge and, despite the developments in the use of technology, opportunities were reduced due to restrictions around the pandemic. We believe we are now in a better position to drive improvement forward and explore meaningful means of engaging and gaining feedback from stakeholders. Work is underway to finalise a joint APC & CPC Communication and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan to direct this key aspect of AP work.

A national approach to learning from research and what works well elsewhere to inform effective communication strategies would be welcomed.

Data Scrutiny, Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Although we have made progress toward improving our data set and associated analysis over the past year, we recognise further improvements are needed. Our aim is to continue to develop a multi-agency approach to data collection and analysis, and ensure this is meaningful and informative in identifying local patterns and trends, what's working well and what we may do better.

PCCOG has supported the request to consider data from all agencies with a view to gaining a more robust understanding of what our data tells us.

The introduction of the National data set is welcomed and will allow more informed comparisons and benchmarking. Whilst we await this we have decided to introduce an APC multi- agency data scrutiny group with the aim of progressing improvements with local data analysis and reporting.

Quality assurance and evaluation work has been limited to single agency monitoring reports ,audits and reviews during the Covid-19 period and we are now focused on our multi- agency approach and developing a schedule of multi-agency audit recommencing in 2023.

Learning Reviews

The partnership has agreed a joint APC and CPC process for learning reviews and we have agreed that a multi-agency Learning Review sub group will conduct reviews and oversee improvement planning and implementation/actions with a view of providing robust oversight of assurance and evidence of improvements and impact. We are keen to promote a learning culture and embed this new guidance into practice and would welcome supports to do so.

Governance

The APC has conducted a review of its role, function and effectiveness. Key priorities and action plans have been reviewed to ensure they are aligned to the key function of committee and support a collaborative approach to driving forward the strategic role of the APC.

We have agreed annual reviews will take place to evaluate our performance and review memberships, and, additional APC meetings are being considered to cover key improvement areas throughout the year. The National Guidance issued in July 2022 will also assist us when updating our terms of reference and understanding of the role and function of the APC.

The Public Protection Chief Officers Group will undertake a review of its role, function, governance and effectiveness in January 2023. This review will be supported by an independent consultant to assist organisation and constructive challenge and support open and honest scrutiny.

Policy and Procedures

Whilst ongoing review of local policies and procedures has taken place, we have faced issues around capacity to undertake the associated work to implement and raise awareness. We are hopeful the introduction of the APC Policy and procedures sub group will provide more structure around both single and multi-agency aspects of this area of work and that they will work closely with the Learning and Development sub group to support implementation.

The Partnership are keen to be involved in the National Implementation Group and associated sub groups and welcome the coordinated national support arrangements to drive forward work around implementation of the national suite of ASP Guidance.

Looking forward

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West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Partnership experienced significant impact due to Covid-19 and lock down. This called for unprecedented and rapid responses to how services were delivered and how staff carried out their work and engaged with service users and carers.

Every effort was made to ensure effective communication and collaborative practice continued with measures put in place to capture and monitor the ever evolving situation and ensure resources were focused on minimising risk and mobilising available resources.

During this reporting period, there is no doubt we have faced uncertainty and significant challenges, however, the partnership has continued to drive forward improvements to support and enhance our work in protecting adults at risk of harm and delivering the best outcomes possible.

The outputs from the HSCP independent audits, the joint inspection and the review of the APC have helped identify what we do well and what we could do differently or better. As a result, I believe, having used the feedback to review operational and strategic action plans, the Partnership are in a strong and informed position with updated improvement action plans in place that provide structure and governance around our key priority areas. Many improvement actions are referenced to throughout this report.

We are mindful that we face challenges in terms of capacity to progress improvements at the pace we would wish and, where possible, we welcome the opportunity to work with national groups and join forces with other partnerships where possible.

During the next reporting period, we will focus on :

- Ensuring our vision and purpose are clear and known by staff across agencies and our governance and reporting arrangements to PPCOG and Community planning are robust and inform scrutiny and improvement.
- Strengthening APC Governance and function. Updating terms of reference, reviewing membership and producing induction pack/process for members. (2023).
- Ensuring APC sub groups are effective and able to progress multi-agency improvement work.
- Streamlining our processes and meeting structures working jointly across committees (where possible). AP and CP Lead Officers will continue to work together to support and align aspects of public protection work such as local policies and guidance and multiagency training and development. There are capacity challenges, which will remain if the additional posts are not filled.
- Implementing the national data set and continue to refine our data scrutiny and reporting arrangements to inform improvement activity and multi-agency evaluation.
- Establishing an updated calendar for multi-agency quality assurance and evaluation with a particular focus on outcomes.

- Finalising our communication and engagement strategy, implement and review impact. We aim to engage individuals and communities through supporting service user and carer participation and involvement.
- Ensuring ASP policy and procedures are up to date and in line with national policy and guidance with clear support arrangements to keep these current.
- Implementing the suite of National Guidance on Adult Support & Protection.
- Embedding our Learning Review practice and processes and reviewing how we continue to learn from reviews, sustain and evidence improvements.
- Develop our processes for multi-agency reflective practice based on learning from recently established reflective practice meetings.

Our partnership has a realistic understanding of what we are doing well and areas for improvement. There are significant challenges for us going forward because of the lack of certainty regarding plans for a national Care Service and the pressures arising from the current economic challenges.

Our Adult Protection Committee will continue to be ambitious to achieve and evidence better outcomes based on strong levels of staff commitment across the partnership, and informed by service users and communities participation.