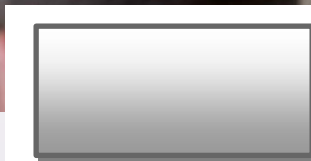
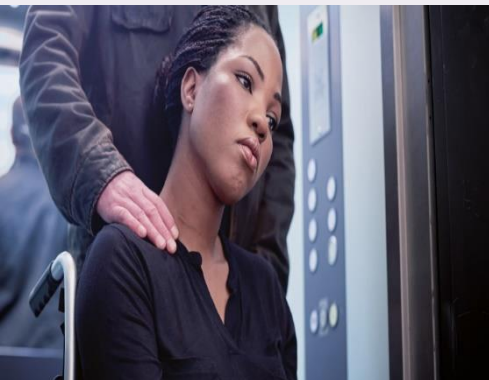
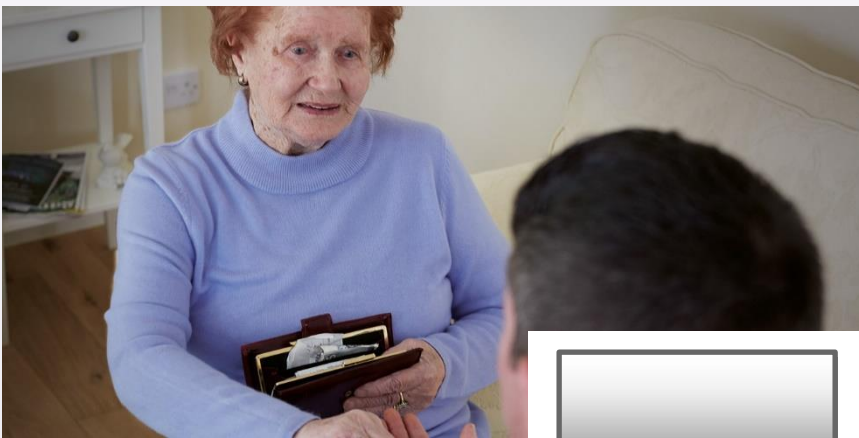


Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007



Protecting Adults at Risk of Harm in West Dunbartonshire



Adult Protection Committee Biennial Report 2022 - 2024

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Introduction

As the newly appointed Independent Chair of West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee, I am delighted to present the Biennial Report in terms of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

This Biennial report reflects the multi-agency Adult Support and Protection work undertaken by partners during the period of 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. It outlines the achievements and challenges over the past two years and sets out our priorities moving forward.

As part of the Public Protection arrangements for West Dunbartonshire the Committee has a key role in the strategic planning and delivery of high quality services to people at risk of harm. Oversight of the work of the Adult Protection Committee has been provided through regular reporting to the Public Protection Chief Officers Group. As part of the Community Planning Partnership the Adult Protection Committee works closely with the other Partnerships leading Public Protection work across West Dunbartonshire – West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee; West Dunbartonshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership; West Dunbartonshire Violence Against Women; MAPPA; Community Safety; Suicide Prevention and across the wider Community Planning Partnership implementation groups. Additional governance and support to the work of the Committee is provided through the Health and Social Care Partnership's clinical and care governance, Chief Nurse and the Chief Social Work Officer.

During the period covered by this Biennial Report our improvement work has continued to be informed by the learning from the pandemic and recovery, self-evaluation through external inspection, audit activity and Learning Reviews.

West Dunbartonshire continues to face challenges arising from increasing levels of poverty and the associated risks relating to mental health and wellbeing, drug and alcohol use and other types of harm. In line with the Public Protection Chief Officer Group the Adult Protection Committee has been working to strengthen its governance arrangements, membership, priorities and delivery structure to better prioritise our joint resources and deliver the local and national improvement agenda. As a Partnership we recognise that we have much to do to strengthen and fully reflect the voice of our communities, Individuals at risk of harm, their family and carers who require support, staff, practitioners and providers of services.

I acknowledge and sincerely thank Committee members, staff and practitioners across the Community Planning Partnership for their commitment and contribution to the Adult Protection Committee and flexibility in ensuring vulnerable adults and those at risk of harm in West Dunbartonshire receive support and protection.

Shiona Strachan

Independent Chair

Adult Protection Committee

West Dunbartonshire’s Community Planning Partnership has 5 key priorities –

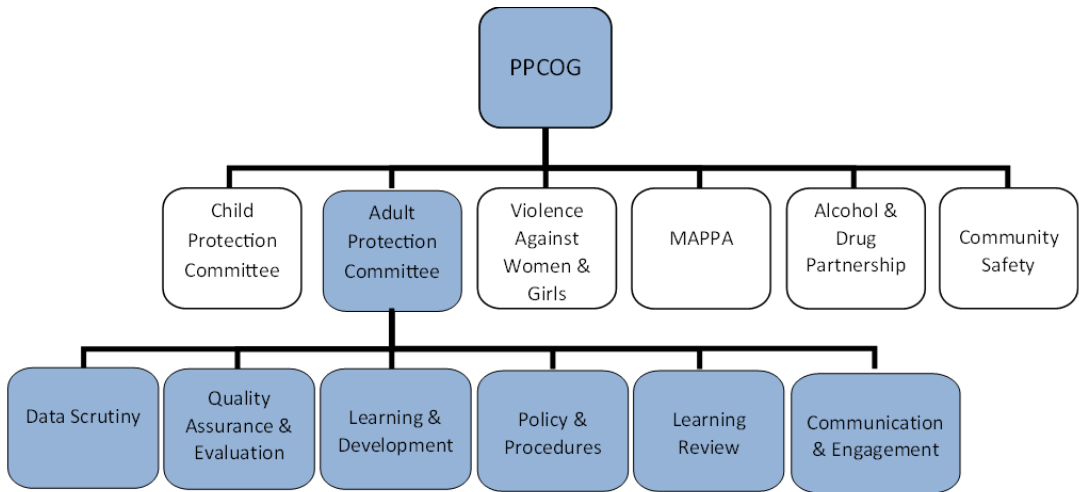
- A *flourishing* West Dunbartonshire
- An *independent* West Dunbartonshire
- A *nurtured* West Dunbartonshire
- An *empowered* West Dunbartonshire
- A *safe* West Dunbartonshire

The Adult Protection Committee is a key part of the Community Planning Partnership’s strategic planning and delivery plan for services to adults who are at risk of harm.

The West Dunbartonshire’s Adult Protection Committee’s vision is to work together to ensure that vulnerable adults in West Dunbartonshire are able to live safely and without fear or risk of harm.

West Dunbartonshire’s Adult Protection Committee (APC) is a strategic planning mechanism for inter-agency Adult Support & Protection in West Dunbartonshire. The Committee has a lead role in the strategic planning, oversight and delivery of improvement of outcomes for people who are at risk of harm. 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, third sector and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services. The membership of the APC has fluctuated during this reporting period due to changes in key personnel across the partner organisations.

The APC reports to the multi-agency Public Protection Chief Officers Groups (PPCOG) which is the leadership group responsible for the development and delivery of shared strategic priorities and collective action to reduce inequality and is chaired by the Council Chief Executive. The Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG) holds responsibility for strategic leadership, scrutiny, and accountability in respect of public protection services. This incorporates a range of measures including multi agency strategic planning and operational services providing protections to children, young people and adults at risk; management of high-risk offenders through Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements (MAPPA); Alcohol and Drugs Partnership; Violence Against Women Group; and Community Safety.



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 is used to identify current and potential risks which are reviewed at each meeting to support effective prevention and protection work across partnerships. PPCOG continue to strengthen their assurance and risk management processes including the strategic and operational approach to risk identification, management and mitigation and the development of the Performance and Assurance Reporting Framework.

West Dunbartonshire

The population in West Dunbartonshire between 2018 and 2028, is projected to decrease from 89,130 to 87,141. This is due to fewer babies being born each year and more people moving out of the area than moving in. 18% of the population are aged 0-15, and 9.7% of the population are aged 16-24. In terms of overall size, the 45 to 64 age group remains the largest at 25,664 (29%). People aged 65 and over make up 19% of West Dunbartonshire's population, which is like the Scottish population.

West Dunbartonshire contains the third equal highest share of the most deprived data zones out of Scotland's 32 local authority areas. 22.6% of children live in low-income families. Life expectancy is lower than the Scottish average with those living in the most deprived communities spending, on average 24 years fewer in good health than those living in the least deprived areas. With those in the most deprived areas also dying younger, they spend more than one third of their lives in poor health. Healthy life expectancy has decreased in West Dunbartonshire to 58.1 years for males and 58.5 for females.

Delivering the best possible outcomes for the people of West Dunbartonshire is contingent on, supporting our staff to deliver high quality care and optimising the use of resources to deliver high quality community-based services, particularly for those with higher levels of need, while keeping more people safe at home. Equally we need to adopt a collaborative approach that ensures people have choice and control over the services they receive.

What your data tells you

The data provided in this section covers the period from April 2022 – March 2024 and shows the local trends for Adult at Risk Referrals, Investigations, Case Conferences and Vulnerable Adult Referrals.

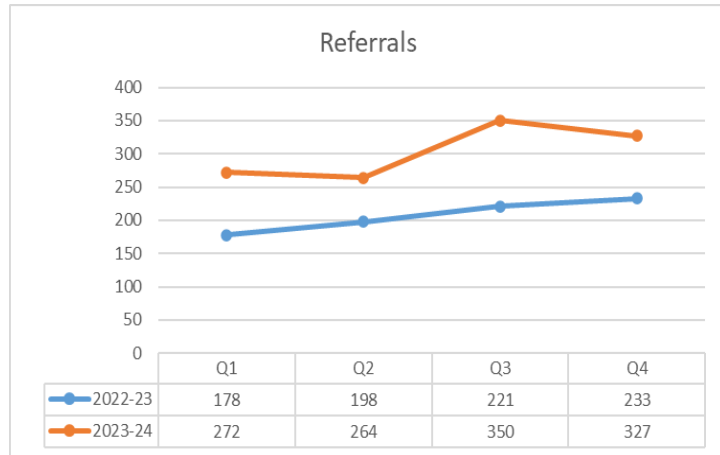


Table 1

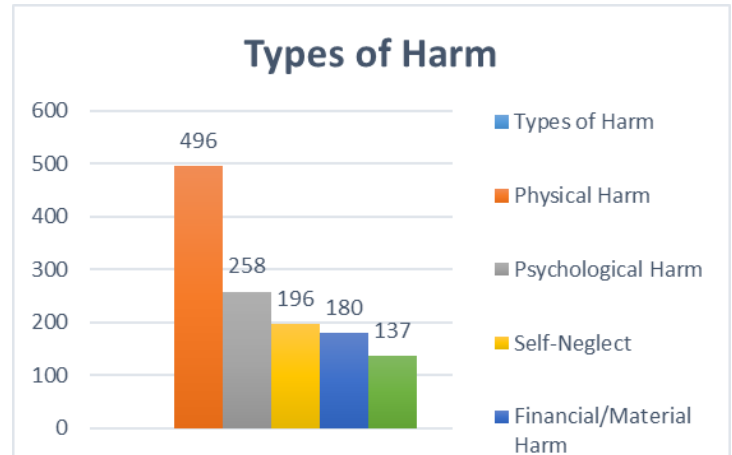


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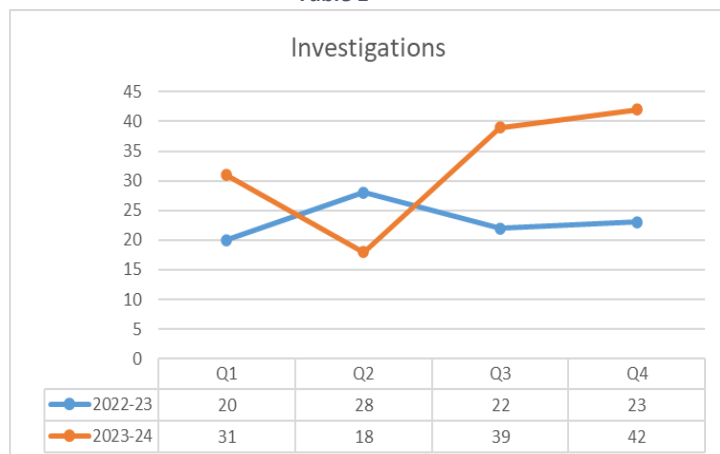


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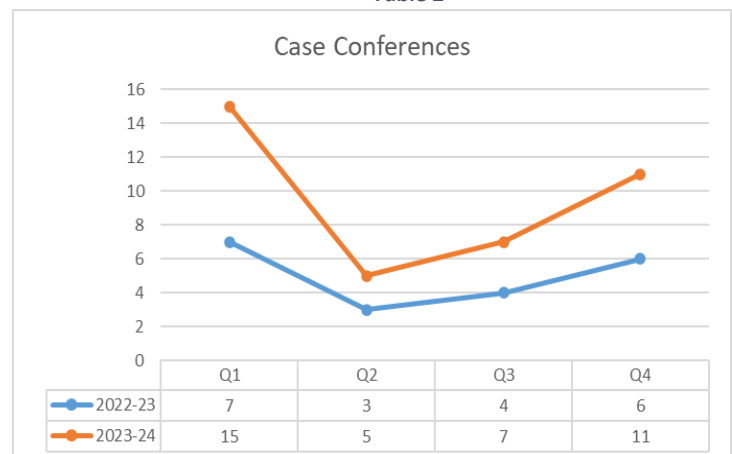


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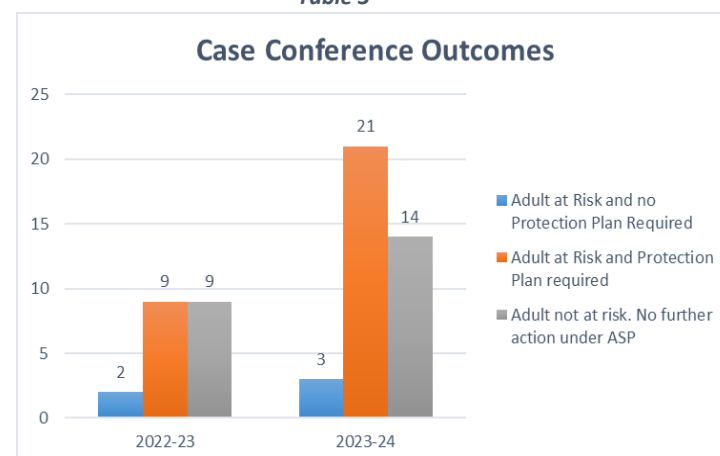


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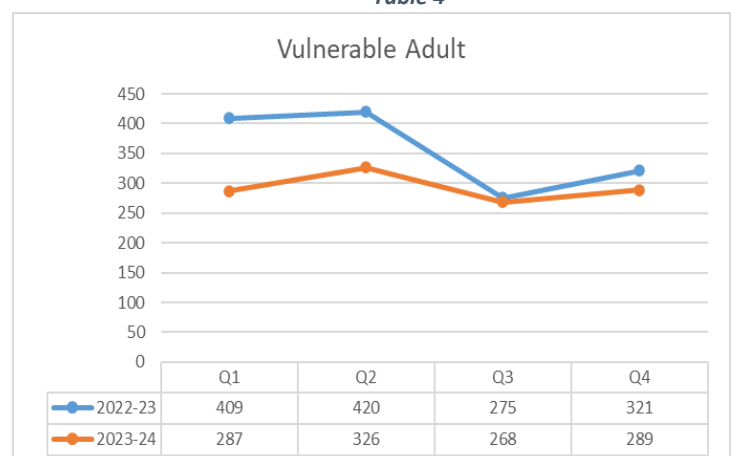


Table 6

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

The number of adult at risk referrals (**Table 1**) reached 1213 in 2023-24 comparable to 830 the previous year which is an increase of 46%.

The top 5 types of harm being reported (**Table 2**) continue to be Physical Harm, Psychological harm, Self-Neglect, Financial Harm and Self Harm. Physical Harm and Psychological Harm 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 fluctuates year on year.

Investigations (**Table 3**) reached 130 in 2023-24 comparable to 93 the previous year which is an increase of 40%.

38 case conferences (**Table 4**) were held during 2023-24 in comparison to 20 the previous year which is an increase of 90%.

We are continuing to see the number of cases carried through to case conference stage increase year on year. In addition to the increase in the number of case conferences, there continues to be 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 5**).

The number of vulnerable adult referrals (**Table 6**) decreased by 18% with 1170 received in 2023-24 comparable to 1425 the previous year.

Year on year the number of ASP orders being applied for have remained at a low level with no ASP orders being applied for during this reporting period.

The new Minimum Dataset was developed and implemented by the Scottish Government in this reporting period. In preparation for the implementation of the Minimum Dataset work was undertaken to ensure our reporting mechanisms were able to pull the information being asked for by the Scottish Government. Additionally, we held a joint Adult & Child Protection Committee session in February 2023 to focus on our data and how we could utilise the data to improve quality assurance processes and better inform identified improvement activity. Following on from the implementation of the National Minimum Dataset and as the questions being asked continues to evolve, we will continue to look at ways to utilise the data to better inform improvement activity, processes, guidance and practice.

The Partnership has faced a significant challenge around data scrutiny due to capacity issues. Work continues to develop and refine the information presented to Committee for scrutiny. The newly established Quality Assurance and Data Scrutiny subcommittee 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 Partnership.

Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements

Despite the necessary national and local health and social measures put in place during the pandemic and in the early stages of recovery, the Partnership continued to drive forward improvements and strengthen its approach in responding to and achieving the best possible outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

There have been some gaps in key personnel providing support to the Adult Protection Committee during the period covered within this report. Most notably the role of Adult Protection Lead Officer had temporary, partial cover though 2022-2024 with a permanent appointment made in June 2024. This has had an impact on the overall capacity of the Committee.

For the period 2022-2024 the subcommittee structure was as follows:



Data Scrutiny

This report has highlighted the need for a robust, reliable data set from across all partner agencies to inform planning, manage workload efficiently, target resources on key issues, to inform improvements to practice, and to demonstrate outcomes. This is an area where the Partnership recognises it requires further development and additional support has been provided via the HSCP to help provide data and analysis to better inform our practice.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation

The APC Quality Assurance and Evaluation subgroup took forward work relating to multi-agency audit, quality assurance and evaluation. A multi-agency audit was completed in February 2024. Thirty case files were evaluated of referrals processed in the previous two years. The tool used was based on the criteria and standards used in the Care Inspectorate in the Multi Agency Inspection (Webropol). The audit did not incorporate the views of service users and carers, which is recognised as a significant limitation. The aim of this activity has been to produce an accurate picture of Adult Support and Protection work carried out within West Dunbartonshire and to clearly identify shared priorities for improvement work across the partnership.

The Key findings highlighted that practice was rated as good or very good in 80% of cases at Duty to Inquire 80% cases at investigation and 79% at Case Conference stage.

Some of the actions the audit highlighted were: -

- Social Work Supervision needs to be strengthened to reflect that managers are required to complete authorisation comment and provide a signature as proof of authorisation and oversight.
- Strengthen content of initial referral (single agency).
- Application of the Three Point Test in all inquiries.

These actions are incorporated into Improvement plan 2024-26.

Policy and Procedures

The APC Policy and Procedure subgroup 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. This group is a key forum for progressing operational and collaborative working amongst the partners for adult protection. The action plan was developed and reviewed at each meeting providing an overview of progress reached.

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:

- A good practice guidance for ASP Case Conferences (2022)
- West Dunbartonshire Partnership Guidance for staff working with people who have a hoarding disorder (April 2023)
- 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).
- 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)

Chronologies

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 Learning and Development subgroup.

The Partnership has been invited to participate in the IRISS working group looking at chronologies and developing national guidance based on research and practice. This will be a good opportunity to learn from good practice elsewhere as well as find solutions that will work in the HSCP.

Learning Reviews

National Learning Review Guidance was published by the Scottish Government in May 2022 for the Adult Protection Committees, replacing Initial and Significant Case Review Guidance. A Learning Review is multi-agency, bringing practitioners together with the review team in a structured process to reflect, increase understanding and identify key learning. They provide a means for public bodies and office holders with responsibilities relating to the protection of adults at risk of harm to learn lessons by

considering the circumstances where an adult at risk has died or been significantly harmed. They are carried out by the Adult Protection Committees under their functions of keeping procedures and practices under review, giving information and advice to public bodies, and driving and supporting improvement.

During the timeframe of this report the Adult Protection Committee has commissioned three Learning Reviews. Two are nearing conclusion and one is ongoing. The considerations arising from the Learning Reviews allied to self-evaluation activity both through external inspection and internal activity are now being used to set priorities within the Improvement Plan for the Committee. Significant work has since progressed on the recommendations which will form the basis for the priorities of the APC over the next two years.

Large Scale Investigations (LSI)

One Large Scale Investigation has been carried out in the period covered by this report. The Partnership worked closely with the Care Inspectorate and the supported living provider. Additional support was provided by the Care Home Collaborative Team. All residents care needs were reviewed by the Health and Social Care Partnership. The care home management and staff groups were supported through proactive guidance, targeted training and nursing support. The input resulted in an improved and safe service to users which was also reflected in the quality grades evaluated by the Care Inspectorate.

Adult Support and Protection Duty Team

As a result of self-evaluation activity including an audit of duty a centralised ASP duty system was introduced in April 2022. The structure has continued to develop, and cover expanded, to include a range of staff from adult and older peoples service teams. Further work is currently underway to strengthen input from mental health and addictions services. A rota system provides a Council Officer, second worker and Senior Social Worker cover. The Case Conference Chair rota provides a layer of check and balance.

The work of the duty team is 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. Weekly reports are sent to team and service managers highlighting active ASP work and timescales for completion.

The feedback from the duty staff and from partner agencies has been overall positive with a single point of access for ASP referrals being considered a more direct and accessible resource. Following on from our recently completed peer audit of duty and considerations arising from Learning Review activity we have highlighted the need to further refine this area of service.

An audit of Social Work and Social Care Supervision activity was completed in July 2022. An increase in inquiries, investigations and case conferences over this reporting period has presented challenges for staff and services in terms of timescales, quality and standards. The Partnership will continue to scrutinise data to inform priorities and capacity to deliver alongside proactive recruitment to vacancies.

Multi-Agency Forum

The Partnership's Multi Agency Forum (MAF) has oversight of the complex needs of people who have frequent and often unplanned contact with a range of services. The MAF provides a forum for multi-agency discussion, risk identification, integrated care planning and response.

Work has been undertaken to refresh the Terms of Reference, membership and frequency of meetings. Membership has increased to include colleagues from Criminal Justice and Housing Services, Police and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services. Feedback from staff indicates that the MAF is a valued forum.

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. 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 complex risks who may not routinely fit into services as currently structured. In the next planning cycle, a further review of MAF and an approach aligned to Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) processes will be explored.

Mental Health

Within Community Mental Health Services in the reporting period, we have seen a lot of changes in our staffing complement. We successfully recruited to a permanent Senior Social Work post which covers staff in both Community Mental Health Teams in our area, ensuring a consistent, high standard of care across both of these teams. Our teams have experienced a high turnover of Social Work staff; however, we have successfully recruited to all posts, including two additional Social Work posts to support outstanding reviews and delayed hospital discharges which were negatively impacted on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Social Work staff are co-located with our health colleagues in Community Mental Health Teams and continue to work in a close, collaborative way to support the health and social care needs of the residents of West Dunbartonshire. Staff are adjusting to better define social care roles and tasks, but this is having a positive impact, with the Social Work service being able to meet their targets for assessment, delivery of service and review.

Since the start of 2023, the focus of the MHO service has been on improving data collection and statistical reporting, decreasing turnaround times for delayed discharge cases awaiting applications for intervention under Adults with Incapacity legislation, improving workforce capacity and increasing the number of completed Social Circumstances Reports as per the requirements of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Alcohol and Drug Partnership

The Scottish Government requires all Alcohol and Drug Partnerships to develop a local alcohol and drugs strategy to align local and national priorities, planning and investment. The National Mission Plan 2022, which as of 2023 includes an alcohol focus, runs until 2026. The West Dunbartonshire ADP strategy refresh aims to deliver an ambitious programme of priorities that will improve the quality of life for people, families and communities in West Dunbartonshire.

The strategy outlines five strategic priorities:

- Substance Use Prevention
- Young People and Families

- Improve services to support those with co-existing mental health and substance use and/or multiple complex needs
- Tackling alcohol and drug related stigma
- Reducing the harm associated with alcohol and drug use

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) published both the “Drug-Related deaths in Scotland in 2022” and the “Alcohol-Specific deaths in Scotland in 2022” reports which provides some of the details of those individuals who sadly lose their lives to drug-related deaths (DRDs) and alcohol-Specific deaths (ASDs) registered within that year. Addiction services during 2022-23, the service received 826 referrals for people experiencing problems with drug or alcohol requiring assessment for treatment and support. 96% of referrals were seen within 21 days, exceeding the Scottish Government HEAT target of 90%. This highlights how our health and social care staff have continued to ensure our most vulnerable and high-risk adults with chaotic and complex drug and alcohol use could engage with services.

The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards were developed by the Drugs Death Taskforce who brought together voices from a wide range of stakeholders including those with lived experience. The standards aim to drive improvement within those services and reduce harm from drug use. The Alcohol and Drug Partnership will continue to work closely with all partners to ensure continued implementation of the standards.

Care Homes

In West Dunbartonshire there are ten care homes, eight owned and operated by independent or third sector providers and two owned and operated by West Dunbartonshire Council. Nine of these care homes are for older people and one for adults with a non-acute mental health diagnosis.

The Collaborative Care Home Support Team, (CCHST), NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, established in the period of post pandemic recovery, continues to work in collaboration with care homes to focus on the delivery of high-quality care and improved outcomes for residents. This ensures that local assurance and support arrangements link effectively with, rather than duplicate, wider regulation activity by the Care Inspectorate. 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 learning and relationships that this work has fostered has 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.

Care Assurance Visits are undertaken by the CCHST twice per year for each care home and more often if required. Visits provide the opportunity to discuss with care homes areas of strength as well as key improvement priorities. Following visits liaison with NHGGC Care Home Collaborative (CHC) supports access to support for care homes to help them secure identified improvements in care equality. The visits focus on four key themes:

- Theme 1 - Infection Prevention Control; Environment, Cleaning, PPE, Handwashing Laundry and waste Management.
- Theme 2 – Resident Health Care Needs; Anticipatory Care Planning, Caring for People at end of life, Caring for People with Cognitive Impairment.
- Theme 3 – Workforce Leadership and Culture; Staffing resource and Staff Wellbeing.

- Theme 4- Action Planning for Assurance and Continuous Improvement.

The Collaborative Care Home Support Team (CCHST) is focusing on implementation of the Healthcare Framework for Care Homes, with multidisciplinary support to care home residents and a quality management approach based on the Health and Social Care Standards.

The HSCP's Contract and Commissioning Team hold monthly Care Assurance Meetings and there is a report on all ASP activity in Care Homes highlighting any service where there has been increased reporting or where an inquiry has escalated to investigation.

Adult Support and Protection is a standing item on the agenda for our Care Home Manager meetings which take place quarterly, and issues raised are feedback to the appropriate team(s).

Training, Learning and Development.

The Adult Protection Committee understands the importance of its function in “improving the skills and knowledge of staff”. Our Learning and Development subcommittee sets out learning priorities for our specialist workforce who are Council Officers. In addition to specialist training for Council Officers, basic awareness and thematic training is provided to staff from across the Partnership through both online and face to face training.

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

- This I-Learn ASP minute taking module continues to be available for business support staff to support understanding of role and function of recording.

Course	Complete
Adult Support & Protection and Minute Taking	81

- This I-Learn ASP Basic Awareness module continues to be available for West Dunbartonshire staff. Whilst mandatory for social care staff, all council staff can access this training.

Course	Complete
Adult Support & Protection - Basic Awareness	430

- Briefing Sessions on Chronologies and updated Codes of Practice

We have continued to develop training and learning opportunities to support the workforce and ensure staff are confident, knowledgeable and supported in adult protection work. In person sessions have taken place during the reporting period covering the roles and responsibilities in relation to Adult Support and Protection in relation to Council Officer; Council Officer (refresher); second worker; case conference chairing and multi-agency evaluation and audit. These have been supplemented by development and planning sessions to support reflection, self-evaluation activity, operational and strategic planning.

Feedback from these sessions were positive with suggestions for improvement taken forward into future training and professional development opportunities.

Very informative, relaxed & a safe place to learn & grow as a practitioner - Thank You

Really enjoyed the scenario exercises. Helped cement learning really well

I found the course very interesting & engaging and feeling confident about becoming a council officer

I found this course really helpful & Interesting and absolutely relevant to be able to carry out council officer duties

We are now relaunching an in-person training calendar consisting of training in relation to Multi Agency Basic Awareness, Multi-Agency Detailed Awareness, Council Officer, Council Officer Refresher, Second Worker, Supportive Decision-Making and Crossing the Acts training. The feedback from the Adult Protection Inspection and the recent Learning Reviews highlighted a need for ongoing staff training in relation to coercive control, impact of alcohol and substance abuse on older people, disguised compliance/working with resistant families, chronology, consent and capacity, assertive practice, professional curiosity, line of sight. These key learning sessions highlighted from the improvement plan will be evaluated when delivered.

Further plans are in place to develop the provision of basic and detailed awareness training through a supported “Train the Trainer” programme. This will be led by the Adult Protection Lead Officer and will be key to moving forward and modernising the approach for learning and development activities.

Practitioner’s Forum

Linked to the above has been the re-introduction of the frontline Adult Support and Protection Practitioner’s forum. This allows representatives of the forum to collate views and questions to allow continued feedback of Adult Support and Protection related information to front-line teams. This will ensure those workers views continue to be heard. These sessions will introduce key themes and introduce short learning workshops on the topics raised above.

Adult Support and Protection Committee Development

The Partnership held a development session in August 2022 to review the national guidance in relation to Learning Reviews and develop our local approach. The APC agreed to mirror the approach of the Child Protection Committee and create a Learning Review 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 and to share and strengthen skills and knowledge.

A multi-agency learning event involving the HSCP, Police, Fire Service, 3rd Sector agencies and advocacy took place in February 2023 which explained the role and function of the APC and offered the opportunity to reflect on the positives and challenges experienced since the Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection. It provided a forum to reflect on Adult Support and Protection Practice including what was working well and how we could work better together to improve outcomes for people at risk of harm in West Dunbartonshire.

In June 2023 there was an APC & CPC Development Day to clarify the role of the Committee, reflect on current practice and opportunities for collaboration and to agree priority actions for improvement.

The training calendar now includes information on training opportunities from the following sources – Equally Safe; Iriss; Trauma Informed Practice and Police Scotland – PREVENT.

Engagement, Involvement, and Communication

Through self-evaluation activity we have identified improvement actions to better involve adults at risk of harm and their unpaid carers where appropriate in adult support and protection activity. This is a key area of the Improvement Plan moving forward.

The Joint Inspection report findings (Care Inspectorate, 2021) commented favourably on our engagement with adults at risk of harm in relation to involvement and support for adults at risk of harm. From examining casefiles and conducting a staff survey they found: -

- 89% of adults at risk of harm had support throughout their adult protection journey
- 91% were rated good or better for overall quality of support to adult at risk of harm
- 76% concur adults at risk of harm are supported to participate meaningfully in ASP decisions that affect their lives, 6% did not concur, 18% didn't know independent advocacy
- 78% of adults at risk of harm were offered independent advocacy • 39% of those offered, accepted and received advocacy
- 91% of adults at risk of harm who received advocacy got it timeously.
- 83% concur they are confident adults subject to ASP investigations can access independent advocacy, 11% did not concur, 6% didn't know

It was clear from the staff survey that most staff agreed that adults at risk of harm were involved in decisions that affected their lives.

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 harm. Advocacy services continue to be involved, where appropriate, throughout the individual's journey to ensure that they have information and support available to them to exercise their rights within the adult protection process.

Those supported to attend case conferences included people with learning disabilities, mental health disorders, older adults and carers. Increasing the number of people offered/accepting advocacy support was identified as an area for improvement in the inspection, having been already recognised as such and incorporated into our Improvement Plan moving forward.

Whilst acknowledging the informal ways in which we glean feedback from individuals which assists us in identifying areas for improvement within adult protection. We recognise the inherent challenges of capturing the voice of the adult and carer and the risk of them "not being heard" through the process. We have identified the need for improved user feedback within our Improvement Plan moving forward. We will work with Advocacy services to review our approach in ensuring we appropriately ensure feedback from the service user group and ensure their views are heard.

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.

We recognise the inherent challenges of capturing the voice of the adult and carer and risks of them “not being heard” within the adult protection system. The APC has an established Communication and Engagement subgroup which is progressing the work relating to this identified priority. This sets out their approach to ensuring the voice of service users, their unpaid carers and representatives (where appropriate) is heard. In addition, a Communication Strategy and Action Plan which was endorsed by the APC.

We believe we are now in a better position to develop a fresh approach to communication and engagement. We will strive to develop coherent multi-agency arrangements to strengthen our approach and methods to assist engagement of service users.

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 subgroup 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.

ASP information is hosted on the WDC public facing website which signposts the public to the HSCP section. The 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

Looking Forward

The delivery plan for the Committee is currently being developed and will be informed by the following areas of activity -

- The Partnership is developing a self-evaluation framework which will help to prioritise and agree our approach to self-evaluation. The considerations arising from Learning Reviews, reviews of service areas and the multi-agency audit carried out in February 2024 have helped to focus our understanding of 'how well we are doing' and to identify areas for improvement.
- Further work is being undertaken by the Committee and by PPCOG in relation to developing our data sets locally.
- The further development of our risk framework and risk register to support the identification, management and appropriate mitigation of risks
- Provision of updated, clear and user-friendly guidance and procedures which reflect best practice and national developments
- Strengthen our approach to carers and user voice through accessible information, self-evaluation activity and operational processes. Build on our joint work with Independent Advocacy services to promote involvement in case conferences and provide feedback to services.
- Develop and improve our multi agency training and professional development offer including recruitment to key posts to support delivery and the reflective practice forums
- Establishment of joint subcommittees across the Child and Adult Protection Committees to develop common areas of practice in learning and development, communication, policy and practice.
- Annual Review of the Committee including membership, priorities, performance and alignment to national guidance