

Background

The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 aims to protect adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests and are at risk of harm because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity. The Act places duties on councils and other organisations to investigate and, where necessary, act to reduce the harm or risk of harm.

Section 46 of the Act requires the Convenors of Adult Protection Committees to produce a biennial report analysing, reviewing, and commenting on APC functions and activities in the preceding two years.

While these guidance notes recognise the challenge of matching this to local reporting, following the new reporting format provides a way of consistently recording information, key themes and issues that are comparable locally, regionally, and nationally.

Reporting

The purpose of the summary report is to analyse activity and provide a concise overview of the Adult Protection landscape locally and nationally that can be used and cross-referenced, with experiences, challenges, learning, and good practice shared with the intention of improving outcomes.

To support analysis each section of the report should:

- be focussed, concise, with minimum reference to administrative functions
- use clear and consistent language and terminology
- include relevant data wherever possible

We understand the APC biennial report is used to share information with partners, external agencies and the public, and should be accessible and engaging. The page recommendation is included as a way to provide meaningful, manageable information for compiling, and a level of standardisation across each committee for comparison. Images, graphics, and tables containing information and data should be summarised, and so would not be part of the suggested section size. Where you have large amounts of data please consider highlighting the key points but including as an appendix.

Statutory functions

Previously this has been a separate reporting area, but how the Committees statutory functions have been addressed should always be considered, as it cuts through all ASP work. Please highlight in the relevant section any significant achievements, pressures, developments, complexities or challenges around statutory functions and governance arrangements (particularly those involving cooperation between the council and other public bodies and officials), alongside ways you have addressed them, or suggest potential solutions. You should also provide brief analysis of work that goes beyond legislative requirements - why was this work included, what did you do, and what was the impact?

Template Sections

Each section does not require an exhaustive list of ASP activity over the previous two years. Instead identify key achievements, activities, trends, outcomes, and learning, offer analysis of the work undertaken, what the outcomes were, and the impact following. Where possible, provide case studies, feedback from staff and service users, and transferable learning. This should provide a clearer picture of what the significant themes are across the country.

Reporting and analysis around the support and protection of adults at risk should pay particular attention to areas where there has been:

- significant activity, changing trends, and outcomes
- significant achievements and consistent challenges with management of services, and workforce, practice, and performance
- multi-agency, collaborative practice, communication and cooperation between agencies
- public information, engagement, and involvement
- training, learning, and staff development

Foreword

It is my pleasure and an honour to have been appointed as chair of the Adult Protection Committee in West Lothian just over a year ago now. I would like to take this opportunity to formally acknowledge my thanks for the work of the previous chair, Alwyn Bell, and all the other members who have contributed so greatly to delivering and supporting improvements in practice through true collaborative and multi-agency working.

I am pleased on behalf of the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee to present the Biennial Report for 1st November 2020 – 30th October 2022 and also thank colleagues from the Committee for their patience and assistance in its production. The content of this report will also form part of the recently developed Improvement Plan for 2022-2024.

This biennial report is produced to provide a concise overview of the work of the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee, it further provides an analysis of the types of harm investigated and the profile of adults at risk. This summarises local activity over the past two years and the key actions we have completed under our statutory functions. Within West Lothian there are well established multi-agency Public Protection arrangements in place for Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection, Alcohol & Drug Partnership, Gender Based Violence, Offender Management & Suicide Prevention, which are all overseen by the Chief Officers Group.

As was outlined in our 2018-2020 Biennial Report, following a process of self-evaluation, Chief Officers requested a review of public protection arrangements to ensure enhanced focus and the optimum strategic framework. In October 2019 this supported the implementation of separate Adult Protection and Child Protection Committee structures. Transitional arrangements were agreed to progress to the formation of the current governance arrangements. This is now well embedded in West Lothian and the committee is re-energised with a new vision, focus and identity. It is thriving, with committed management membership at all levels and across all agencies who are determined to fully deliver on all our improvement activity.

In April of this year notification was received, under section 115 of part 8 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, that the Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland would undertake a joint inspection of adult support and protection arrangements in the West Lothian partnership area. This followed a decision in 2020 to suspend the adult support and protection inspection programme, as a result of the pandemic. This inspection has recently been completed with a number of key improvement actions. Senior leaders and Chief Officers have taken ownership of all improvement activity. The partnership was also provided with some reassurance that a number of the recommendations highlighted during the inspection already had improvement activity well underway and where, this was not the case, it has acted swiftly to ensure a program of improvement was commenced immediately.

There have also been significant changes in the membership of the Adult Protection Committee over the last year. I have been hugely impressed by the commitment and drive of the new members to carry on the excellent progress made under the previous committee to protect the safety, wellbeing and rights of adults in West Lothian. We are collectively determined to build on the joint inspection findings, promoting best practice and a learning culture to improve the outcomes for adults at risk.

The Adult Protection Committee has met virtually since 2020 and there has been active oversight from the Chief Officers Group in relation to the discharge of public protection duties during the pandemic and the subsequent return to the workplace of many staff. The challenge for the coming year will be incorporating best practice from our work during the pandemic into future practice and the development of an outward

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looking learning culture which encourages staff to learn from good practice as well as areas where further improvement can be delivered.

Finally, I am strongly of the view that all agencies represented on the Committee have a key role to play in the partnership. I have been hugely impressed by all the efforts demonstrated by frontline practitioners to ensure all adults at risk are safe, supported and protected from harm and would like to express my sincere thanks to each of them.

Matt Paden
Adult Protection Committee Chair

Covid-19

(Suggested page count: 2)

The West Lothian partnership, like all others across Scotland and the UK, has faced the unprecedented and ongoing challenges of recovery and remobilisation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Use of the West Lothian public protection website to communicate and engage with stakeholders and members of the public:

The West Lothian partnership strengthened awareness raising about adult support and protection processes by providing information to stakeholders and the public. The West Lothian public protection website was one such means, providing clear detail on who to contact should someone have a concern about, or know or believe an adult to be at risk. This was promoted at regular intervals on social media and other platforms. Additionally, the Chief Officers Group and Adult Protection Committee issued guidance to reflect the constantly evolving public health messaging to employees and the public to keep everyone safe.

Increased frequency of governance and leadership oversight meetings:

Whilst it is acknowledged that the pandemic had a significant impact upon non-operational activity, the Chief Officers Group continued to provide clear strategic direction and leadership, recognising the need for enhanced scrutiny and support across the partnership. The partnership reacted swiftly by increasing the frequency of scheduled leadership and governance meetings to fortnightly.

Bespoke localised datasets were devised, which, when combined with the Scottish Government's SOLACE data set, ensured the close monitoring of developing trends. This provided a framework which enabled the West Lothian partnership to analyse key adult support and protection activity during the unprecedented challenges faced and prioritised key resources, to ensure all adults at risk of harm were supported and protected from harm. Key areas of focus emerged, these included:

- The impact and management of Covid-19 in care homes;
- Increased adult support and protection referral rates and consideration of additional support mechanisms to meet demand.

Covid-19 adult support and protection procedures and use of new technology:

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The pandemic had a significant impact upon all areas of activity within the West Lothian partnership and required each staff member to quickly adapt to the presenting challenge. This included a risk assessment tool being devised that Social Workers completed prior to undertaking a home visit.

New digital platforms were introduced with staff working remotely and it was recognised that new protection arrangements were of paramount importance. Priority was given to ensuring revised adult support and protection procedures were devised. These were endorsed by the Chief Officer Group to facilitate the safest and most efficient service delivery to adults at risk. The West Lothian partnership adapted to emerging trends, resources and energies were focused on specific areas such as care homes and the most vulnerable in communities, whilst fulfilling the full function of the Adult Protection Committee. Consequently, multi-agency discussions and the convening of case conferences moved to virtual meetings. Initially, some technical issues emerged which proved frustrating for those in attendance at a meeting to resolve. Feedback responses on the rolling professional feedback questionnaire included:

"It is very difficult taking part when some participants are phoning in and others are on WebEx" (digital platform).

A temporary solution was then identified which included holding secure telephone conference calls facilitated by Police Scotland. However again, these were not fully inclusive to all. Feedback responses on the rolling professional feedback questionnaire included:

"I don't know how this meeting would have been possible for the adult at risk to take part in it due to how you access the system; they would have had to have taken part via a phone call if they were able to. It could be distressing for a person with mental ill health who reports symptoms of auditory hallucinations to only hear voices during a phone conference".

Communication and engagement issues improved when the Microsoft Teams platform was implemented across the partnership. This facilitated better engagement and the inclusion of the adult at risk and their carer at their case conference meeting. Feedback from case conferences since this improvement was introduced has been positive. It is considered to be more inclusive, enables clearer communication and contact with invited attendees.

Strategic and operational communication strategies:

Operating alongside use of online platforms, were clear communication strategies to identify, respond to and continue to prioritise adult support and protection matters. The communication strategies included:

- Weekly multi-agency partnership briefings, noting key adult support and protection data activity which identified those most impacted and affected by the pandemic and imposed restrictions. This information was cascaded to the full range of stakeholder's networks to convey and encourage them to publicise key messages to the public about how they could still access help or support during the pandemic;
- Supporting staff welfare and wellbeing during the pandemic was of also of the utmost importance, as people adapted to new ways of working. There was acute awareness on the impact of the pandemic on people's mental health and the strain of balancing work/home activity. The Employee Health & Wellbeing Framework was developed with an integrated Four Pillars of Wellbeing toolkit. The aim of this was to amalgamate all the different strands of support and information available into one area which was easily accessible for staff and managers to create a healthy workplace for all. All agencies were acutely aware of the requirement to support staff welfare and ultimately ensure their health in order for them to fulfil their role and responsibilities to others;
- Managers provided peer support to staff to prevent them from becoming isolated. Opportunities to promote morale and access available support were regularly communicated via the Chief Social Work Officer blog, Divisional Commander via Police Intranet, Health's Intranet and was replicated across other media where possible. These communications included regular procedural updates and positive collaborative initiatives demonstrating invaluable partnership work to support the vulnerable and those in need;
- The development of the West Lothian Adult Support and Protection Newsletter shared adult support and protection information and promoted available learning opportunities;

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- The delivery of online multi-agency adult support and protection training during the pandemic.

Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection in the West Lothian partnership:

The joint inspection of the West Lothian partnership took place between May and July 2022. The joint inspection scrutinised the records of adults at risk of harm for a two-year period, April 2020 – April 2022. Inspectors commented that:

“The partnership managed adult support and protection well during the Covid-19 pandemic”.

“It successfully maintained business continuity for adult support and protection despite the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic and its associated restrictions”.

“It effectively supported its staff to carry out their duties and offered them support for their health and wellbeing”.

The joint inspection found that the partnership’s leadership for adult support and protection was effective and a comprehensive rolling quality assurance programme for adult support and protection was in place. Partnership staff collaborated and shared information purposefully to support adults at risk of harm. Nevertheless, Inspectors recommended significant areas for improvement around a number of our key processes, as well as, applying rigour and improved methodology to the partnership’s approach to quality assurance, ensuring that experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm are improved.

Targeted provision of resources:

The impact and effect of Covid-19 on older people and especially, those living in residential care homes, was a particular area of focus and development in the West Lothian partnership.

The pandemic led to the Scottish Government delegating to Health Boards responsibility for the oversight of care homes. The multi-agency Care Home Oversight group established a Care Home Assurance team in West Lothian, by developing the existing Care Home team. This team developed a framework of support to care homes that included Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance and support, symptomatic management of residents with Covid-19, care planning support and onsite visits to offer assurance on measures in place to staff and visitors. The Team assisted care homes to adhere to the highest standards of PPE use and infection control practices to ensure peoples’ health, well-being and safety.

The impact of the pandemic and developments such as the National Care Service will change the way in which services are delivered for years to come. West Lothian will continue to be an active participant in these consultations to ensure that resources are targeted effectively.

West Lothian has a strong culture and history of partnership working that we will use to build and develop a revised 2022-2024 Improvement Plan, to progress key priorities. The partnership’s plan provides a clear pathway to build upon the good practice achieved during the pandemic. This has included the embedding of the best elements of online and virtual practices to hybrid working arrangements being established.

What your data tells you

(Suggested page count: 3)

The partnership has developed a range of localised performance information which assist members of the Adult Protection Committee and relevant sub committees to identify trends and areas requiring assurance activity and self-evaluation. This local data, covering a two-year period, allows trends to be readily identified and is considered as part of

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the wider national data published by SOLACE on behalf of the Scottish Government. This performance activity is also shared regularly with members of the Chief Officer Group to provide the necessary assurance.

The data provided in Appendix A provides some of the key trends over the last two years. A constant trend over that period has been the increasing numbers of referrals and associated adult, support and protection activity. For example, in Q1 for 2022/23, there has been a 31% increase in referrals in comparison to the same period in Q1 for 2021/22. This is also in keeping with other partnerships across Scotland.

Table 1 below is an extract of the Scottish Government's annual Adult Support and Protection data set return in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Table 1:

Source of referrals	Number of Adult Support and Protection referrals received between 1 April 2020 & 31 March 2021	Number of Adult Support and Protection referrals received between 1 April 2021 & 31 March 2022	% increase/ decrease in referrals from Source of referrals
NHS	62	134	+116%
GPs	7	7	
Scottish Ambulance Service	25	72	+188%
Police	402	436	+8.4%
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	58	62	+7%
Office of Public Guardian	0	0	
Mental Welfare Commission	0	0	
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	0	0	
Care Inspectorate	13	20	+54%
Other organisation	172	254	+48%
Social Work	0	108	
Council	74	187	+153%
Self (Adult at risk of harm)	16	22	+37%
Family	66	82	+24%

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Friend/Neighbour	14	14	
Unpaid carer	31	28	-9.7%
Other member of public	2	3	+50%
Anonymous	4	6	+50%
Others	170	56	-67%
Total Number of referrals	1116	1491	+34%

The sources of referral show a year-on-year increase in referrals from those services (NHS, Scottish Ambulance Service, Police, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, other organisation, Social Work and Council) who had ongoing engagement with the public during the pandemic. It also illustrates that the categories of, self (adult at risk of harm), family, other members of the public and anonymous referrals know how to, and do make, adult protection referrals. This data positively indicates that agencies and members of the public know how to make a referral to the West Lothian partnership.

During the course of the past two years the data collated indicates that there has been a 37% increase in repeat adult protection referrals. The Quality Assurance sub-committee has been directed by the Adult Protection Committee to undertake a review of this trend through the auditing of a proportion of these referrals, to ensure, that correct decision making was applied at the time of each referral and that there were no missed opportunities to intervene earlier. This will form part of the wider improvement plan for 2022-24.

In response to the trend relating to increase of adult protection referrals to social work services, social work services have created a standalone team dedicated to Adult Support and Protection. This allows for all adult protection referrals to be managed within one team and promotes a standardised and consistent approach to the application of the legislation.

The West Lothian partnership closely scrutinises case conference data (Appendix B). Our procedures outline that all initial case conferences should be held within 20 working days of a case conference being agreed by the Interagency Referral Discussion. Social Work administrative staff now collate reasons for any delays in proceeding with a case conference, following a recent slippage in performance. The most common reason for a meeting being delayed is staff availability. A full review of chairing arrangements for case conferences has been commenced by the partnership, including a review of what happens nationally.

In order to address the instances of case conferences taking place out-with procedural timescales a direction has been issued to all practitioners and managers. In the exceptional circumstances where this needs to take place out-with 20-day, then authorisation from a senior manager must be sought. Revised procedures also reflect the requirement for case conferences to be held within the 20-day timescale. Over the last two years there has also been fluctuation in the percentage of reports being submitted to case conferences within the agreed timescale of 5 days prior to the case conference. Work has been undertaken with the Adult Protection Lead officer and Team Managers to improve this area of practice through the issuing of clearer guidance about the timeframes for the completion of reports. It is expected that this area of practice will continue to see improvements.

Appendix C contains data on attendance at case conferences which is another area of focus. Over the last two years attendance at case conferences by Police Scotland consistently remains very high. There has been limited improvement in the percentage of Health attendance at case conference. In recognition of this, Health have taken steps to address this through the development of a localised procedure where invite requests will be sent to a dedicated administrative mailbox. The administrative staff will ensure invite requests are timeously forwarded to the correct Health professional with a time line identified for the submission of their report. The impact from this new service improvement will be monitored to measure its effectiveness.

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The numbers of adults attending their own case conference remains consistently low and further work is required to fully understand the reasons for this. This is a key action for the Adult Protection Committee over the next two years as part of the Improvement Plan.

Attendance at case conferences for advocates, carers or legal guardians (including those with Power of Attorney) remains consistently high. This provides some assurance that those supporting individuals identified at risk are having their views represented. This area of engagement will continue to be monitored by the Quality Assurance subcommittee.

Our recent joint inspection of adult support and protection identified a number of key areas for improvement within a number of key processes, including:

- The handling of initial inquiries into the circumstances of adults at risk of harm, the partnership should ensure sufficient managerial oversight;
- The recording and application of the three-point criteria;
- All three areas of the management of risk – chronologies, risks assessment and risk management plans.

All of these will form part of the 2022-24 Improvement Plan. Social work services have also reviewed and revised all chronology, risk assessment and risk management plans to ensure a standardised approach to all areas.

Appendix D, provides 7 years of data about adults at risk subject to a multiagency Interagency Referral Discussion to initiate a plan to proceed to an investigation and interview the adult. This is reported on to populate the Investigation data in the Scottish Government annual Adult Support and Protection data set return. This data shows a picture of who is most likely to be an adult risk and how harm impacts upon and affects them in West Lothian:

- Women consistently remain more prevalent to harm than men. 2019-2020 figures returned the highest volumes of both sexes in the past seven years.
- The age group 40-64 has the highest number of male and female adults at risk of harm recorded in six out of seven years. This changed in 2021 to older people aged 80-84 as the most prevalent. This was during the pandemic and this may have a bearing on this stark change in trend.
- There is a consistent trend of the same client categories being identified. Indeed, since 2015 the same three categories have remained:
 - Infirmary due to age;
 - Mental health; and
 - Physical disability.
- Similarly, since 2015 the most common harm types identified were:
 - Physical harm;
 - Financial harm featuring throughout whilst,
 - Neglect has recently replaced psychological harm in 2019-2020 & 2020-2021;

A change in trend is seen in 2021-2022 by the listing of sexual rather than financial harm. The location of harm continues to be either in an adult's own home or in care home settings throughout the seven year period.

This analysis over the last two years has led to specific activity to improve outcomes for the profile of adults at risk of harm in West Lothian. Training has been offered to frontline staff to meet the challenges of the reported harm types and trends, including:

- Early and preventative interventions, prompt sign-posting to other specialist agencies for support and assistance in particular for the vulnerable and older people;

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- The development of a recording tool to identify the number of self-neglect and hoarding cases;
- The establishment of short life working groups to develop solutions to new and emerging trends seen during and post the pandemic, such as online crime and sexual harm;
- The attendance of a representative from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as a member of the Adult Protection Committee has assisted in raising awareness about Financial Harm. Increased connections with this service have benefited operational staff. These and other collaborative approaches have led to increased and timely interventions for adults at risk of financial harm and the consideration of wider prevention measures.

Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements

(Suggested page count: 8)

Despite the challenges of the pandemic the Adult Protection Committee has continued to evolve, with an almost complete change in membership, including the appointment of a new chair. The Committee is thriving with enthusiastic and committed management leads across all agencies. A positive culture of continuous improvement, self-reflection and collaborative working has been embraced to support and protect adults at risk of harm.

The outcome of previous self-evaluation exercises resulted in the re-establishment of the Adult Protection Committee. Over the reporting period a regular schedule of self-evaluation and quality assurance activity has followed. This has led to the embedding of improvements in local procedures and operational practices. This progression and the inclusion of learning from Initial Case Reviews has enabled the Committee to continuously improve.

Nevertheless, the joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection which took place between May and July 2022 identified substantial areas for development in our key processes. The inspection concluded the partnership's key processes for adult support and protection required considerable revision and improvement to ensure adults at risk of harm are safe, supported, protected, involved, and included. However, the strengths highlighted the potential for the partnership to support the identified areas for improvement if methodology issues with its quality assurance framework were resolved. These findings are currently being progressed as a priority in the Adult Protection Committee's 2022-24 Improvement Plan.

Since the publication of the joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection in the West Lothian partnership, Social Policy implemented a Social Work Leadership Group to drive forward the key operational recommendations outlined. This Group will undertake single agency audit activity on a monthly basis to provide scrutiny and reassurance of improvement activity in all key adult protection processes, which will be reported to the Adult Protection Committee on a quarterly basis. It is anticipated that this will enhance our approach and improve recording of all key processes in relation to adult support and protection. Additionally, Social Policy has also revised their reporting templates to ensure consistency is applied across the service.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priorities

Initial Inquiry Process:

The new Adult Support and Protection procedures provide clarity on how to conduct an initial inquiry (Duty to Inquire), including the application and recording of the three-point criteria with clear timeframes for completion. A template has been introduced which will support improved management oversight and scrutiny of this area of practice. Audit activity has commenced to closely monitor progress. Further training is also being commenced to embed the new Adult Support and Protection procedure in operational practice. Findings from the joint inspection, 2022 found:

“Almost all initial inquiries following the receipt of an adult protection referral are prompt and done in line with the principles of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007”.

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Chronology Use:

In February 2022, a chronology template based on that being designed by the pan-Lothian multi-agency chronology working group was implemented locally. Single agency social work chronology training was delivered to assist practitioners in preparing a chronology.

Chronologies are now used at the start of an initial inquiry and added to throughout an adult's adult protection journey. The Quality Assurance subcommittee audited the quality and use of a chronology in the records of adults at risk of harm. This remains an area of practice which requires on-going improvement.

West Lothian continues to participate in the pan Lothian multi-agency chronology working group to devise and implement a multi-agency chronology. The replacement social work recording database in 2023 will allow the continuation of a chronology within an adult at risk's record, improving current practice.

Risk Assessment:

The partnership has also devised a risk assessment template to assist practitioner's in considering how best to approach and manage any risks that the individual is either exposed to or presents. This sits within a recently devised Investigation template which supports practitioners to analyse risk in the context of risk and protective factors. Alongside this we have also trialled a similar approach to our Critical Review Team reports to support improved risk management planning.

Inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD):

Inter-agency Referral Discussions promote collaboration amongst partners and to plan an investigation visit for an adult at risk. Following the joint inspection findings, in respect of this, managers have been issued with refreshed briefings about the function and their responsibilities in this process. Multi-agency training is underway to ensure Inter-agency Discussions are completed in accordance with the procedure. The Terms of Reference for the IRD Review Group, are being reviewed to ensure enhanced quality assurance. This will ensure improvement and identify ongoing learning at this stage of the adult protection process.

Investigation:

A new Investigation template has been implemented which supports council officers to ensure a comprehensive investigation is undertaken. This report provides a clear section for the recording of interviews of the adult at risk and their carer. As previously indicated, the risk assessment tool makes up part of this document where a clear risk analysis is required to ensure that all risks are fully considered. The quality of such investigations will be reviewed on a monthly basis initially by members of the Social Work Leadership Group and a quarterly report will be provided to the Adult Protection Committee.

The Quality Assurance subcommittee has reviewed and is refreshing its quality assurance framework to agree the key principles for undertaking audit activity. This is to ensure that the quality assurance methodologies deployed identify areas for realignment or improvement whilst, creating a cycle of continuous learning. The Adult Protection Committee will be provided with clear and succinct analyses of audit activity findings for improvement and recommendations on how to address these.

Risk Management Plan:

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A Risk Management Plan is now used in each stage of the adult support and protection process. The plan follows an adult throughout their adult protection journey. This approach strengthens the management of risk at each stage of the adult protection process. The joint inspection, 2022 noted:

“West Lothian Partnership staff collaborated effectively for the implementation of protection plans. Staff persevere with adults at risk of harm who did not readily engage with efforts to protect and support them.”

The lived experience of adults at risk of harm and their unpaid carers:

The Adult Protection Committee has commissioned a review with other stakeholders to identify how it can increase its approaches to include, listen and collaborate with those with a lived adult protection experience.

Independent Chairs who chair case conferences have been requested to proactively seek feedback from an adult at risk or carer by asking them to complete the evaluation feedback questionnaire or appointing someone to assist an adult to do this. Since re-enforcing this expectation, feedback from one carer identified that the evaluation feedback questionnaire was more suitable for the adult at risk to complete rather than them:

“I believe the questions were designed more for the person in care”.

The carer who provided this feedback has agreed to trial and test the new evaluation feedback questionnaire by completing it before it goes live. The intention is to include this questionnaire in all circulated case conference paperwork sent to an adult or carer to request feedback consistently and add to the ways feedback can be sought.

The carer participating in the trial and test of the feedback questionnaire also said:

“The conference was very helpful and matters were discussed open and honestly. I am encouraged by the professional commitment of all present and was only disappointed by the lack of representation of the Nursing Home. I see only further progress in the near future”.

An adult with a lived adult protection experience commented on how their case conference had helped them to feel safer:

“It went ok, was positive and very clear. No issues”.

Boosted confidence. Getting taken off protection. Felt the timetable and support network beneficial”.

The partnership is prioritising improvement activity to ensure the consideration and appointment of an advocate is provided, when needed, to an adult at risk. This will be the subject of ongoing scrutiny to identify the most common reason(s) for an adult at risk not having an advocacy worker and to identify ways to improve this area of practice.

The joint inspection, 2022 also found:

“Those adults at risk of harm who want an independent advocate get one promptly. Independent advocates skilfully represent adults at risk of harm at case conferences”.

Case Conferences/ Review:

The set-up, holding and running of case conferences and reviews will be a focus of quality assurance activity to ensure risk is adequately explored, managed and recorded. This exercise will also provide both quantitative and qualitative data to fully understand the reasons why an adult at risk of harm or their carer didn't attend a meeting and to identify ways to enable them to attend a future meeting.

Findings from the joint inspection, 2022 found:

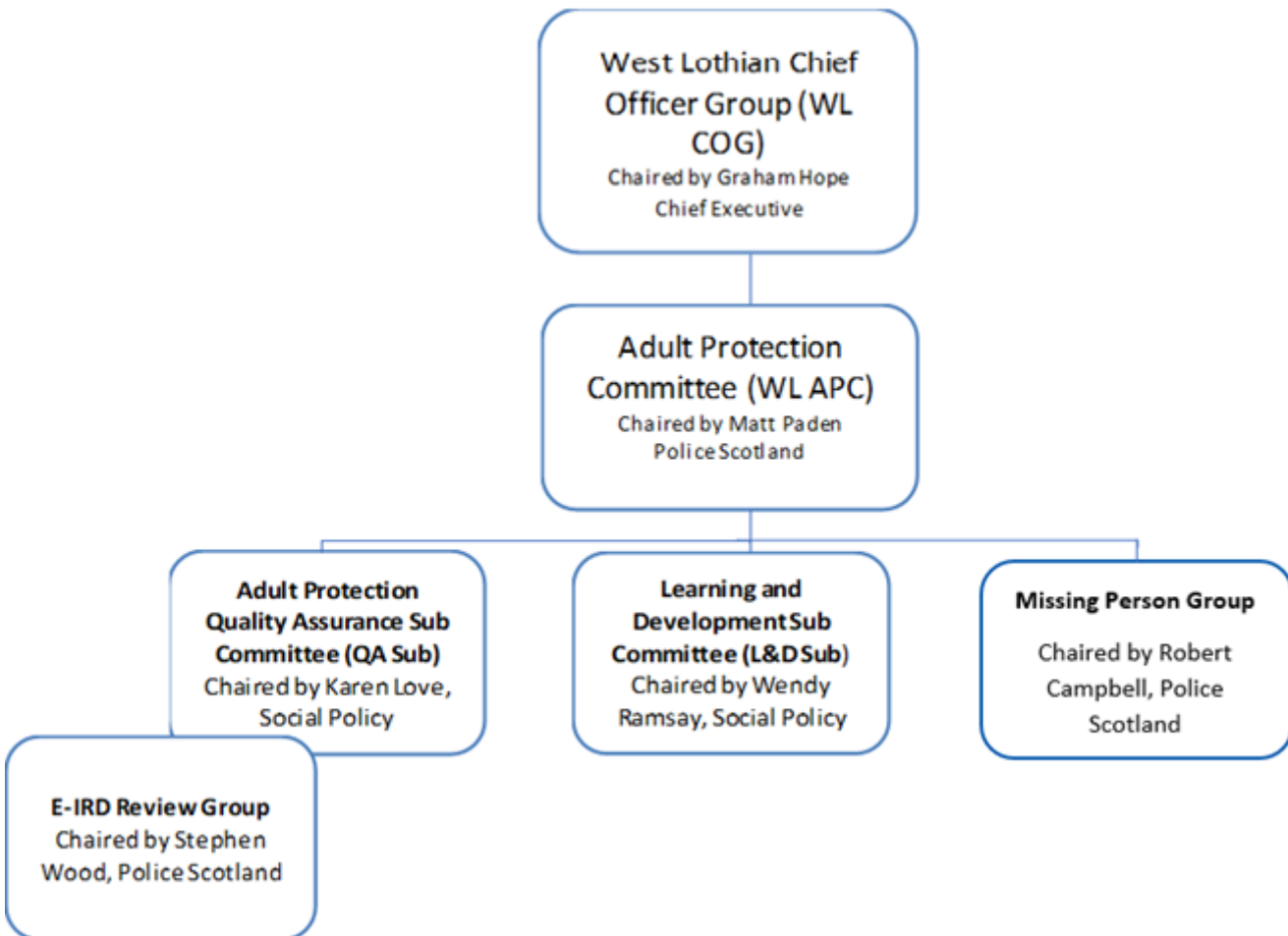
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*“Almost all case conferences effectively determine actions to ensure the adult at risk of harm is safe and supported.”
“Positively, all unpaid carers invited to case conferences attend”.*

Review and refresh of the Adult Protection Committee’s governance and leadership structure:

In response to a self-evaluation exercise with core agency staff members (Police, Health and Social Work) in 2021, they requested increased and visible communication and engagement approaches between operational and strategic and governance leadership arrangements. The Adult Protection Committee sought to promote engagement and visibility by creating a membership chart, governance and leadership structure chart and increasing the number of practitioners in attendance at its subcommittees. This identified that two of the key operational structures were not affiliated directly with the Adult Protection Committee. Consequently, the Adult Protection Committee expanded its subcommittee structure, to four subcommittees to support its ongoing work: Quality Assurance, Learning and Development, Missing Persons Group and Interagency Referral Discussion Review Group.

The West Lothian governance and leadership structure for Adult Support and Protection is outlined below:



Adult Protection Committee Vision and Engagement:

The newly formed Committee recognised the importance of having a clear and coherent vision statement. Work was undertaken to publicise and hold an accessible and open consultation with partners and members of the public. The benefits from this inclusive approach to customer feedback was reported on in the joint inspection, 2022 findings:

“The partnership’s vision statement for adult support and protection is clear and known”. It highlighted it was “communicated effectively to partners, staff, and the public through the West Lothian public protection website”.

Making an Adult Protection referral:

The importance of conveying clear information to the public and professionals about how to make a referral is of the upmost importance. The Adult Protection Committee’s communication strategy prioritised continuous awareness raising, in order for others to easily make a report of concern or an adult protection referral to Social Work or the Police in an emergency. Sharing this information regularly on a variety of social media platforms and on the West Lothian public protection website has made it accessible for everyone. This may have contributed to the year on year increase in adult protection referrals as evidenced in Table 1. The Adult Protection Committee intends to expand the variety of ways a referral can be made by creating a digital form.

Learning culture:

By devising, agreeing and implementing a localised Initial and Significant Case Review approach the partnership communicated and refreshed its approach to learning. More recently the national Learning Review process was also introduced to further strengthen this approach. Notification submissions to review specific cases have increased. These included a learning review involving a fatal fire and the provision of support to those who are housebound. 7-minute topic specific briefings have been delivered to cascade knowledge from the learning identified in the Initial Case Reviews held within the partnership.

The creation of, and increased investment in, resources to expand the multi-agency Care Home Assurance Team has benefited adults. This early preventative and specialised service has effectively supported older peoples’ residential and registered care homes to provide high quality care, in keeping with the National Health & Social Care Standards to those living in a registered service. It has minimised risk and positively contributed to no Large-Scale Investigations being instigated for older peoples’ residential and registered care homes within this Biennial reporting period.

Two Large Scale – Investigations have proceeded within this Biennial reporting period for an adult’s residential service and a care at home provider. The joint inspection, 2022 commented that:

“The West Lothian partnership carries out large-scale investigations appropriately and proficiently, and in line with national guidance. The Care Inspectorate is purposefully involved in large-scale investigations. Residents of care homes, subject to a large-scale investigation, are safer as a result.

Operational escalation request to senior management:

The Critical Review Team (CRT) protocol is an escalation protocol whereby partnership practitioners and/or their managers escalate a notification request to senior managers within the respective agencies to consider a CRT meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to bring together senior representation from all core agencies with the purpose of providing a level of oversight and support regarding the management of risk for complex or high-risk individuals.

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The Adult Protection Committee reviews the outcome of CRT reports and has regularly noted the real benefits of this bespoke risk management process. This specifically brings benefits where there are complex risks that are causing difficulties to those working with the case. Providing real support to operational staff and improved outcomes to adults at risk.

The CRT process is seen as a key strength in West Lothian. It provides direct senior management support to complex and challenging cases.

Good Practice example:

The adult at risk posed a risk to them self and a public protection risk to others when distressed. This created a high frequency of emergency response, and presented insurmountable operational challenges. By escalation to a Critical Review Team it enabled senior leaders to support operational staff to effectively manage this situation.

Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan:

The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing fund is open. The fund is managed by Third Sector Interfaces (TSI's) and the Voluntary Sector Gateway will be administering applications for West Lothian. The Fund seeks to contribute to the four key areas of focus from the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan:

- Promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing at population level;
- Providing accessible signposting to help, advice and support;
- Providing a rapid and easily accessible response to those in distress;
- Ensuring safe, effective treatment and care of people living with mental illness.

The partnership is actively promoting this project in light of the increased prevalence of mental health related issues for adults at risk.

Herbert Protocol:

In 2021 Police Scotland launched "The Herbert Protocol". The protocol encourages the compilation of a form which contains vital and personal information relating to an individual diagnosed with dementia. The information within the form is designed to assist Police attending a missing person call and reduces risk to the adult. It provides quick access to relevant information about the individual which, avoids unnecessary delays in commencing any search activity that is required.

The partnership collaborated together to deliver Herbert Protocol training to care home staff across West Lothian to raise awareness. This was delivered to each of the 13 care homes in the area via the Care home Forum. The Care Home Forum is run by the Council for staff from both local authority and private care homes to meet together, discuss prevalent issues and share good practice. Following delivering this training and in recognition of the high turnover in staffing in the care sector. It was identified that the creation of a 7-minute Herbert Protocol briefing would enhance the delivered training programme. The 7-minute Herbert Protocol briefing is hosted on the West Lothian public protection website for staff or primary carers to download and complete a Herbert Protocol. This provides a free and early preventative approach for all to access and use to keep a person with dementia safer.

Good practice example:

The Missing Person Group identified a trend of a higher incidence of people absconding from one location. The identification of this trend led to discussions with a representative from the location where the missing people events were taking place. A solution was found to mitigate against this by fitting an intercom system on the door of the location. This resulted in a reduction in those going missing from the location and contributed towards keeping people safe and protected from harm.

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The partnership's application to work with the National Missing Persons Framework Implementation Project this year was successful. The Missing Person Group is currently collaborating with the National Missing Persons Framework Implementation Project to further expand and improve its approach to managing missing persons consistently. A review of all existing protocols and procedures has taken place and improvement actions identified to strengthen our approach. This has included adding information about the Missing Person's services; helpline and on-line toolkit to the West Lothian public protection website for everyone to access and including missing people in the new Adult Support and Protection procedure.

Care Home Assurance Team:

A multi-agency Care Home Assurance Team was established, it provided vital support to care homes during the pandemic. This team continued to effectively support care homes when restrictions ended. Building upon this learning, there has been increased investment within NHS and Social Work teams to develop an enhanced care home assurance model. This team works collaboratively with care homes to support improved outcomes for older people and prevent/reduce the incidence of large-scale investigations. This model of service provision has proven to be an effective early and preventative approach which, enables remedial action to occur in a timely manner to benefit adults at risk.

Good practice example:

By sharing information about an adult at risk's circumstances with the Care Home Assurance Team. The Care Home Assurance Team was able to deploy an early and preventative approach to manage the different agency perspectives of the care needed for an elderly person living in an older people's care home. The Care Home Assurance Team promoted the duty to cooperate by engaging with all staff. Then agreeing and creating a person-centred care plan for staff to consistently follow when providing care to the adult at risk of harm which, promoted his rights and interests too.

Feedback to referring agencies:

It was recognised that feedback is not consistently provided to referring agencies within the partnership. In recognition of this a small 'test of change' pilot was undertaken alongside colleagues in the Scottish Fire and Rescue service. The Team Manager of the Social Work Enquiry Team which, manages all referrals received, provided feedback on the action taken for each of the AP1 (Adult Protection) forms submitted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. This engagement provides an assurance to members of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service that their concerns are fully assessed and any risks identified investigated. This approach has effectively provided feedback to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and, in turn, enabled them to provide feedback to their crews about the invaluable support they provide by reporting concerns for adults at risk.

This small 'test of change' pilot has led to a commitment by the partnership to scale-up its approach to provide referral feedback to a greater number of agencies.

Training, learning and development

(Suggested page count: 4)

The Adult Protection Committee Learning and Development subcommittee is multi-agency in attendance and has representation from a range of key agencies as members. This includes representation from the voluntary sector, including Advocacy. All members assist in the facilitation of training sessions to impart their knowledge on their area of specialism.

A comprehensive multi-agency rolling programme of training is delivered. This is integral to the Adult Protection Committee fulfilling its function to-

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- Keep under review the procedures and practices of statutory public bodies and office holders which, **promote a collaborative approach of working together to support and protect a person who has been identified at risk of harm.**
- To provide leadership and **direction to any public body and office-holder on the undertaking the functions relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk within West Lothian.**
- To make arrangements for **improving the skills and knowledge of officers or employees of the public bodies and office holders with responsibilities relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk** within West Lothian.
- To **support good multi-agency working** across all public bodies, the Care Inspectorate, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, the Scottish Mental Welfare Commission, Office of the Public Guardian, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service and Trading Standards who work collaboratively to progress Adult Support and Protection work.

The Learning and Development subcommittee prioritises and coordinates training opportunities by harnessing and agreeing the best skillset of its membership or of external agencies to progress improvement actions. This approach delivers continuous professional learning and development opportunities for staff. This is inclusive of all grades of staff from any agency to equip them to confidently and competently undertake their role and responsibilities when progressing an adult protection matter.

Due to the restrictions related to the pandemic it was not feasible to provide face to face training therefore the Learning and Development subcommittee quickly altered its approach to training and effectively delivered virtual and online training to staff, on a range of topics. Additionally, a range of topic specific 7-minute briefings were developed which supported the need to share new learning quickly. Seven-minute briefings are based on a technique developed by the FBI. It is based on research which suggests that seven minutes is an ideal time span to concentrate and learn. Learning for seven minutes is memorable and provides key information to improve staff's knowledge on a topic. The local seven-minute topic specific briefings provide information including links to documents or forms related to the subject as a quick reference guide for staff's use.

The Learning and Development subcommittee undertook a full review of all of its training programmes' content and feedback evaluation surveys to enable them to become more interactive for online virtual training delivery. This has enabled the Learning and Development subcommittee to intertwine a number of adult support and protection animations from national institutes which promote best practice based upon research. This has contributed to including a variety of learning materials to suit individual attendees preferred learning styles.

A focus of the Learning and Development subcommittee has been to include updated information to promote the benefit from adopting a trauma informed and person-centred approach when engaging with people to progress adult support and protection work.

Measuring the impact from the training delivered to develop and enhance members of staff's practice is an area for continuous development by the Learning and Development subcommittee. Ways to consistently achieve this have included adding quality assurance findings into the content for training presentations and by asking staff for evaluation feedback.

Staff evaluation feedback is sought from each attendee following a training session. Attendees are asked to complete a short survey for the course attended by them. The Learning and Development subcommittee carefully reviews all received feedback, then acts on this by making modifications to courses to enhance them and develop new learning and development opportunities. This process is dynamic and creates a culture of learning.

It was recognised that a more robust communication method was needed to inform attendees that their feedback had been acted upon. This is now achieved in two ways. Feedback is included in the West Lothian Adult Support and Protection Newsletter and a summary report from each training session is sent to the cohort who attended it.

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The Learning and Development subcommittee writes a summary report on each course delivered. Included in this is the evaluation feedback which led to improvement actions being identified in order to be accountable for the learning opportunities given to course participants. The prepared report is sent to attendees and to the Adult Protection Committee to act as a “*You said, we did*” approach to customer feedback. This approach develops the purposeful work of the Learning and Development subcommittee and identifies what programmes of training should be prioritised based on staff’s learning needs and adult support and protection activity data trends.

The Learning and Development supported the February 2022 annual national Adult Support and Protection day. It did this by organising and arranging for the National Adult Support and Protection Coordinator to deliver an online presentation on Self Neglect and Hoarding and for Shakti Women’s Aid to deliver several Forced Marriage online training events. These events were attended by multi-agency staff and the evaluation feedback provided insights for new learning opportunities for staff as part of the 2022-2024 Learning and Development training programme.

Staff evaluation response rates, feedback on learning and suggestions for further training on topic attended to expand learning:

Self-Neglect and Hoarding

Feedback on learning:

- *“The need for a multidisciplinary team and support, there is no quick fix;”*
- *“To have empathy and raise the need for help from other departments within the Council”;*
- *“I found all aspects of the training useful to my role as a social worker with safeguarding responsibilities. Also, the requirement to share information and work with other professionals cannot be overemphasised in children and adult protection. This requirement was very much reiterated in today’s training”.*

Suggestions for further training on topic attended to expand learning:

- *“It would have been really useful to have partner agencies there i.e. Fire Service, Police, Housing and health to give us their experience and information on support they are able to provide”;*
- *“Having speakers from other disciplinary agencies talks about hoarding i.e. from a fire and rescue service perspective”;*
- *“Self-neglect and hoarding relative to specific groups i.e. learning disability / children with parents/carers who hoard”.*

Forced Marriage

Feedback on learning:

- *“All was worthwhile and interesting”;*
- *“Greater appreciation now of the reasons that women who are subject to violence may not feel able to make a plan / or stick to the plan due to the pressure they are subjected to”;*
- *“Understanding about the action that can be taken for those experiencing or at risk of forced marriage in Scotland”.*

Suggestions for further training on topic attended to expand learning:

- *“It would have been helpful to have more input around the forced marriage perspective for a male and supports available for them”;*
- *“Supports for older adults who perhaps experienced the topics discussed when a young person or access to information on support for elderly people”;*
- *“Might be useful to use a case study from start of referral to outcome. Helps to understand process further”.*

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Inter-agency Referral Discussion

Feedback on learning:

- *“Issues to consider when completing IRD form and different agency responsibilities”;*
- *“The important aspects for how and why in Adult Support and Protection processes an IRD is done and a form completed”;*
- *“Was unaware that GPs were to be consulted. Thought information provided from the NHS was only from case records”;*
- *“Found the session to be very informative and helpful surrounding information sharing...sign off requirements to agree an action plan”.*

Suggestions for further training on topic attended to expand learning:

- *“Opportunity for feedback about completed IRDs would be interesting to get”;*
- *“I am unable to have an IRD log on until I attend Level 3 Adult Protection training, I feel that I would like to attend the IRD session again after I have attended the Adult protection level 3 session”;*
- *“It would be useful at times for health to be included as early as possible”.*

The findings from the above self-evaluation feedback returns led to the Learning and Development subcommittee establishing a:

- Self-Neglect and Hoarding short life working group to develop multi-agency facilitated training sessions on this topic and creating a presentation to cover the points requested by staff;
- Gender based violence and coercive control programme of training;
- Promotion of West Lothian’s information sharing protocol by including it in all training programmes and where appropriate in 7- minute briefings;
- Refreshing its Inter-agency Referral Discussion training programme.

The Learning and Development subcommittee recognises that whilst online training provides a mechanism to bring people together and deliver learning opportunities via break-out rooms and comments in the chat bar, it does not provide the same interaction and engagement within and between participants as previous face to face training sessions offered. Therefore, as we emerge from the pandemic we will review our approaches.

Engagement, involvement, and communication

(Suggested page count: 4)

The Adult Protection Committee’s Communication and Engagement Strategy 2022-2024 clearly sets out and builds upon the partnerships previous plans, where we set out our commitment to the promotion of Public Information, Engagement and Participation of service users.

There are four distinct messages within this strategy:

- To provide awareness and understanding about the Adult Protection Committee and its leadership and governance arrangements;
- To provide clear and relevant information, where appropriate, on adult protection processes;
- To provide information on how to access help about adult protection matters;
- To be aware of national and local developments.

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One of our first key objectives has been to provide awareness and understanding of the Adult Protection Committee and its leadership and governance arrangements.

The partnership has achieved this in several ways:

- The distribution / dissemination of information about adult protection on various platforms and mediums;
- The development and wide distribution of a regular Adult Protection Committee Newsletter hosted on the public protection website for all to access;
- A rolling programme of e evaluation survey questionnaires;
- An Adult Protection Committee Induction Pack. This includes a Leadership Pledge, operational structure and membership chart. This has been shared and promoted through our public protection website;
- A detailed annual training calendar for all stakeholders to benefit from within the West Lothian partnership
- Promotion of the Scottish Government's annual Adult Support and Protection day held in February 2022 and specialist training inputs delivered;
- Attendance by representatives from the Adult Protection Committee at national, other Local Authority and local meetings including short life working groups to progress improvement activity for adult support and protection. This creates capacity to learn and identify best practice in order to create change to continuously improve;
- The completion of a multi-agency adult, support and protection Self Evaluation exercise with core agency staff.

Our second key message is to provide clear and relevant information, where appropriate, on adult protection processes. This has, over the period, seen a review and update of all our West Lothian procedures. These have been uploaded onto our recently re-developed website. We have ensured that guidelines, procedures and other relevant information is published here. We recognise that further work is required to ensure consultation with relevant stakeholders to develop easy read documents to ensure full accessibility to all.

The third component of our communication strategy has been to provide information to service users and members of the public on how to access help about adult protection matters. We have developed a range of activities to provide information in a variety of media and publicised these on the public protection website. The West Lothian partnership has delivered topic specific training inputs addressing key trends and concerns. We have recently developed an Adult Protection Committee Dissemination Strategy, ensuring that all guidelines, policies and procedures are shared with staff members to enable them to be up to date with new documentation.

There has also been concerted efforts to develop and distribute relevant information leaflets in communities. Despite the restrictions during the pandemic this was achieved through existing mechanisms, such as Community Care Forums, Community Councils and other Community Groups. Recent developments to raise awareness and extend the reach of the Committee has enabled it to expand its membership. There is now representation from the third sector, through the inclusion of the Voluntary Sector Gateway. This has developed stronger links across a range of services at a time, where during the pandemic, the 3rd sector has played an important role in the recovery. This enhanced engagement with the 3rd sector has been a key strength to communicate and engage with over 600 charities covering a range of supports in West Lothian.

The West Lothian partnership recognises further work and continuous improvement is required to develop new ways to interact and engage with the public and stakeholders on a range of topics. The partnership has made active steps to promote a learning culture, embrace learning reviews and seen the development of a series of 7 - minute briefings on key subjects. Publicising and circulating 7 - minute briefings imparts information to promote free, early and preventative services to support and protect adults at risk. These have been shared and promoted through the public protection website and associated hyperlinks.

The final strand of our communication strategy approach is to promote awareness of national and local developments. We have demonstrated our approach to embedding an outward looking learning partnership culture. We have undertaken pan Lothian collaborations to develop a Large-Scale Investigation protocol, improve other key processes and

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improve cooperation and engagement. By sharing and considering good practice methodologies we have enhanced local practices with improved outcomes for adults at risk.

As we have referenced, the West Lothian partnership has recently engaged fully in a joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection practices. This has provided the opportunity to build on recommendations for improvement. The Adult Protection Committee is committed to embracing each and every one of these identified areas for improvement. They are part of its new 2022-2024 Improvement Plan. A key focus of this plan outlines our actions to improve practice and take forward activity which will improve the partnerships approach to engagement, involvement and communication with adults at risk and their carers.

We have recognised that developing an easy read advocacy leaflet with our Advocacy partners will be of benefit to adults at risk. The easy read Advocacy leaflet will be left with the adult to let them think through the benefits of receiving this service to represent their views and support them to attend a case conference.

The West Lothian public protection website has an identified section for carers to assist them in understanding adult support and protection processes, including a short video presentation reflective of a family member with a lived experience of adult protection. The website also has links to agencies that can provide support to carers. This is to signpost those accessing the site to available supports.

Targeted training was provided to Elected Members in November 2021 regarding core components of adult support & protection. This contributed towards raising awareness, increasing engagement and collaboration across the wider community to deliver on key objectives of the Communication and Engagement Strategy.

A range of activity has been undertaken to further strengthen governance arrangements using a whole systems approach across each of the Public Protection Committees. This has increased both strategic and operational staff's networks and ability to promptly identify expertise and resources to benefit adults at risk. Effective lines of two-way communication between operational and strategic staff within and across disciplines has benefited local adult support and protection arrangements.

Challenges and areas for improvement

(Maximum page count: 4)

Looking ahead, the challenges and areas for improvement for the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee are:

As we have discussed the joint inspection of Adult, Support and Protection in the West Lothian partnership took place in 2022. The inspection reviewed adult support and protection arrangements from the period between 11/04/2020-11/04/2022. The inspection concluded there were areas of strength but, areas for improvement within the partnership.

The key areas identified were:

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- Social Work should improve its initial inquiry process. Staff should always record the application of the three-point test. A newly introduced template should support better management oversight;
- Management of risk for adults at risk of harm needed improvement. All who require a chronology, a risk assessment and a risk management plan should have them. The partnership should use a standard template for adult protection risk assessments;
- The partnership should revise its processes for adult protection investigations. It should make sure investigations are carried out in line with legislation. Council Officers carrying out investigations should routinely interview adults at risk of harm;
- The Partnership should strengthen its operational management oversight and improve strategic governance of social work adult protection practice. This will ensure strategic leaders are better informed about key process weaknesses;
- The lived experience of adults at risk of harm and their unpaid carers were not represented at the adult protection committee. It should make sure that they are involved.

In response to the findings of the joint inspection, the Adult Protection Committee has included all of the areas for improvement in its 2022-2024 Improvement Plan. It has prioritised activity in the necessary key areas to drive forward an ambitious programme of reform. Senior leaders and Chief Officers have taken ownership of all improvement activity. The partnership was also provided with some reassurance that a number of the recommendations highlighted during the inspection, already had improvement activity well underway, and, where this was not the case, it has acted swiftly to ensure a program of improvement was commenced immediately. This and the new and invigorated quality assurance programme will support the key improvements identified.

The progress made to date, will be further enhanced and supported by welcoming the appointed Care Inspectorate Inspector to the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee in November 2022. The Committee has already collaborated with the Link Inspector to identify best practice nationally to quality assure and bench mark local adult support and protection key processes against. This is to enable the Adult Protection Committee to take an outward looking approach and response to learning and adapting its approaches to improvement activity.

The Adult Protection Committee continues to participate in national and regional discussions to contribute towards the Scottish Government's adult, support and protection work-streams.

The Committee is committed to improving its communication and engagement with adults at risk and carers to hear their lived experience of adult protection. This will enable us to act on this feedback to continuously improve and adapt responses to local needs.

The Committee has shown commitment to, and achieved a positive culture of information sharing and collaboration between and amongst all stakeholder groups. This benefits local adult, support and protection arrangements by creating strong networks of support to form the right membership to progress improvement needed. The Committee recognises the invaluable benefit from doing this to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided by the most appropriate agency to benefit vulnerable people and those most at risk of harm.

One of the keys to maintaining and sustaining a culture of information sharing and collaboration, in our view, is effective communication and engagement between each member of the Adult Protection Committee and its subcommittees. Then by the dissemination of information from a member to their networks.

The Adult Protection Committee has improved its communications and engagement strategy through use of a Dissemination Strategy. The Dissemination Strategy effectively acts as a two-way communication method between

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operational and strategic and governance leadership arrangements. The benefit from these closer alignments and the inclusion of operational management leads at strategic governance and leadership meetings means that the adult support and protection system as a whole operates seamlessly. This requires vigour to promote and sustain but, it is an essential ingredient for continuous learning and improvement.

The effective collaborative partnership working arrangements within West Lothian, enabled the partnership, as we have discussed to respond to Covid-19 and manage this well. It is clear that new global issues impacting on the world at this time, require a local response too. The partnership is currently identifying and developing an infrastructure to participate and contribute to the assistance needed for those affected locally by global matters. This will support the workforce to respond to the challenges being faced by many.

Members of the Adult Protection Committee are actively involved in a number of workstreams and initiatives to respond to and support refugees affected by the conflict in the Ukraine. Planning to coordinate and manage the provision of services within the partnership is well underway but, it is recognised new developments may be needed in the future. Including, the provision of Ukrainian easy read leaflets about adult protection. The Council's community regeneration service is already working with the third sector in its programme to help families.

As winter approaches, there has been an increased impetus and focus within the partnership to inform and support those affected by the Cost of Living Crisis by publicising available help, entitlements and advice. The cost of living crisis will undoubtedly affect all of us over the winter, with many people concerned about how to keep warm and heat their homes. Consequently, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are hosting an event for partners across all sectors to come together to collectively consider how we can identify those at the highest risk to provide advice and support, around, what the cost of living crisis means to our communities and how this may potentially increase fire risk. The Adult Protection Committee will continue to support initiatives of this sort and contribute to the specialist work of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness about how people can keep warm and safe from fire during these unprecedented times for many.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the partnership will take the opportunity to reflect on both the impact and learning of the past two years. Across the partnership, key services have continued to operate and support adult support and protection arrangements. Services have adapted and deployed new ways to manage key processes and leadership activity. Quantifying what worked well and provided efficiencies and what could be improved to create capacity or developed will also assist with workforce development opportunities.

The Adult Protection Committee is invested in having a rolling programme of multi-agency training which, effectively equips and prepares all personnel to confidently and competently fulfil their role and responsibilities, when progressing adult support and protection matters. This requires ongoing review and a refresh of the learning and development materials used and research shared to ensure it remains relevant and current.

Alongside all of the above matters the Adult Protection Committee will continue to review and scrutinise its adult support and protection performance information and statistical data to:

- Respond to an increasing number of reports of concern and increased adult support and protection activity whilst maintaining service delivery standards;
- Understand and address the prevalence of repeat adult at risk referrals and investigations and mitigating against this to increase support and protection, as needed, to an adult at risk of harm;
- Map out the impact from changing demographic trends and incidents of harm to deliver targeted and bespoke topic specific training to staff to upskill them to meet these circumstances;

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- Manage the unseen threat, risk and harm from crimes committed online with specific targeting of people by sextortion, cuckooing incidents which, are connected to County Lines gangs targeting adults at risk and placing them at risk of harm;
- Continuing to raise the public's and stakeholder's awareness about how to report a concern or make an adult, support and protection referral for an adult they are concerned or worried about.

Looking forward

(Maximum page count: 2)

The West Lothian Partnership and the Adult Protection Committee is resolute in its focus to continue its improvement journey with the aim of fully delivering on its vision, which is that:

"All adults at risk should be safe, supported and protected from harm."

Looking forward the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee is keen to achieve the high-level areas highlighted within the Improvement Plan 2022-2024 by:

- Quality assuring key adult support and protection processes to identify learning for updating procedures and imparting learning across the partnership;
- Creating a Practitioners Forum for staff to reflect on case work, identify learning and develop responses to improve practices and processes;
- Develop an integrated pathway for the management of self-neglect and hoarding and develop a procedure to consistently respond to these circumstances;
- Building upon the evaluation feedback questionnaire approaches to hear adults at risk and carers' views with the aim of creating co-production materials together;
- Supporting and enabling adults at risk and carers to be represented at the Adult Protection Committee;
- Delivering current and relevant learning and development opportunities utilising research, animations and assimilation exercises to increase staffs' knowledge, confidence and competence when undertaking adult support and protection key processes;
- Implementing, integrating and adhering to the Scottish Government's minimal national dataset guidance locally when live;
- Being alert to and responding flexibly to new and emerging subjects to prioritise these as required.

Sustaining the positive messages that the joint inspection of adult support and protection contained is also vital. As a partnership we are committed and focused on ensuring that we work together effectively to address each of the priority improvement actions we have outlined in our new two-year Improvement Plan. These will be progressed with impetus into the next reporting period. Within the Improvement Plan the partnership has documented the specific measures

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and timescales for delivery on each of these key areas. As we have previously referenced, we have worked closely with the Link Inspector in devising this plan to fully support the work of the partnership and have taken a fully collaborative approach.

The joint inspection, it should also be added, highlighted a range of positive areas of practice across West Lothian. This included the work of the partnership to improve safety outcomes for those at risk and the provision of supports where needed. As a partnership we are focused on building further on these strengths and the positive culture of continuous improvement, information sharing and collaboration that is embedded in the ethos of the Committee.

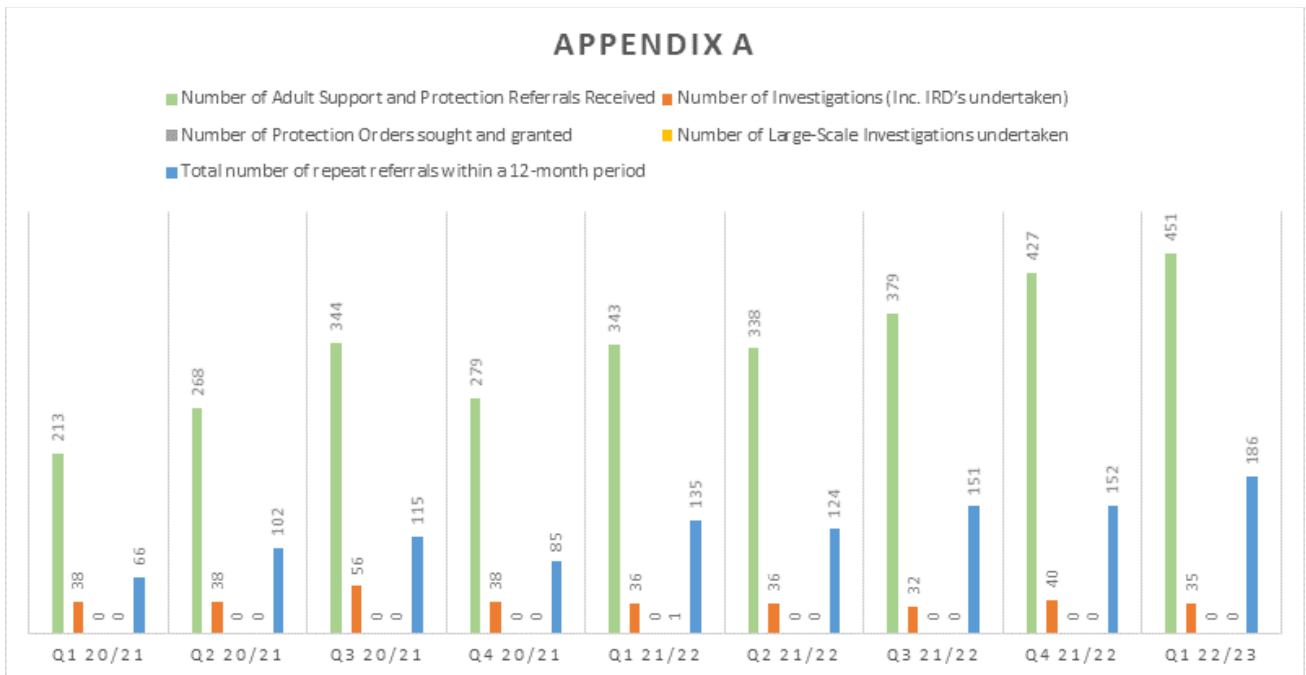
There is no doubt the last two years has proved a challenging period for services however with this it has created opportunities for improvement. Services have begun to remobilise and many have adopted new ways of working, embracing aspects of service delivery that worked well during the pandemic. We recognise the potential barriers, which have been discussed in detail within this report, ranging from the impact of the pandemic, to the cost of living crisis, more recently the war in Ukraine and political uncertainties within the UK.

The Adult Protection Committee is determined to build further on its learning culture in West Lothian. It will offer staff in all agencies across the partnership its support, supervision and opportunities to meet as professionals to learn from each other. We view this as vitally important to promote a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities to meet statutory responsibilities and embrace change wherever this is required. In taking this approach, we are confident we can deliver a vision where all adults at risk of harm in West Lothian are safe, supported and protected from harm.

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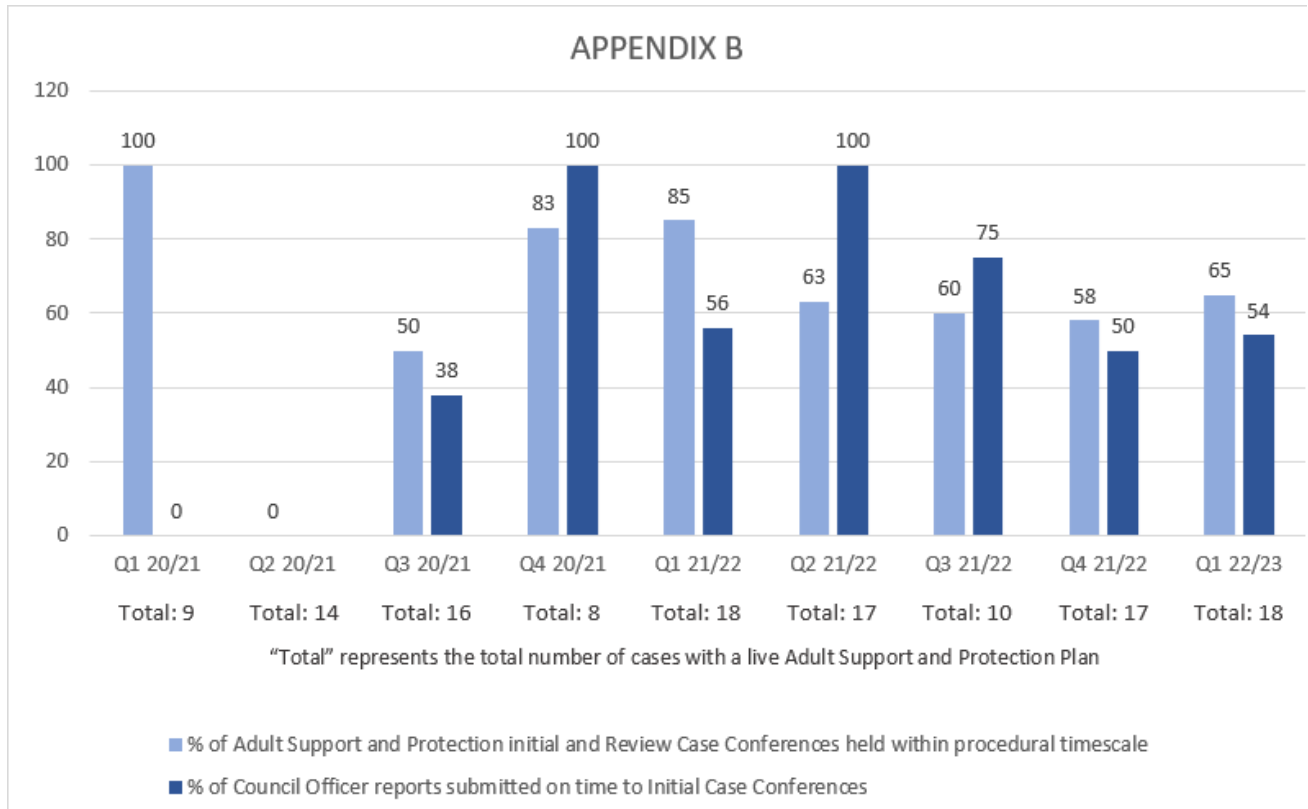
Appendix A:

- Q1 2020/2021 - Q1 2022/2023 There is a recurring trend of increased adult support and protection referrals;
- Q1 2020/2021 - Q1 2022/2023 There is a recurring theme of repeat adult support and protection referrals in each quarter;
- Q1 2020/ 2021 - Q1 2022/2023 There is two spikes of increased activity noted (Q3 2020/2021 & Q4 2021/2022 to the normal pattern seen. Although a reduction in investigations was notable in Q3 2021/2022;
- Q1 2020/2021 One large Scale Investigation was held for a residential care service for adults.



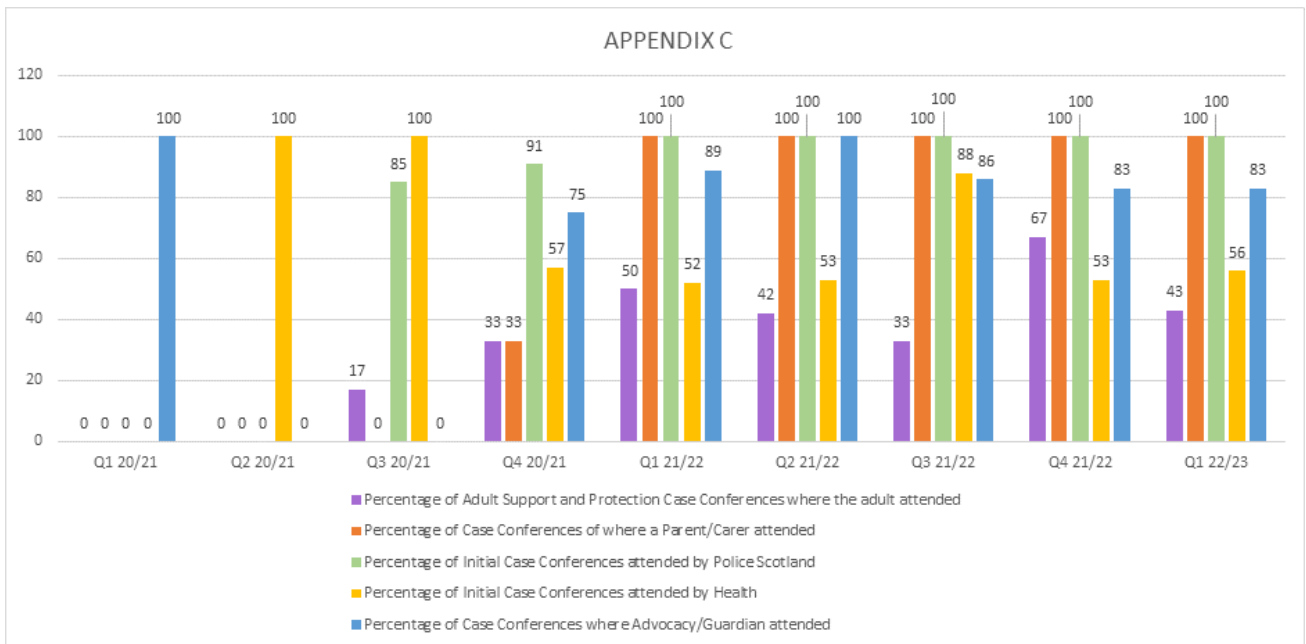
Appendix B:

- The number of people with a live Adult Support and Protection plan increased again to 18 in Q1 2022/2023 to that previously seen in Q1 2021/2022;
- Performance to hold a case conference within procedural timescales has fluctuated and not returned to performance seen in Q1 2020/2021;
- Performance for Council Officers submitting their reports on time is an area for improvement and being monitored closely to increase performance from 54% in Quarter 1 2022/2023.



Appendix C:

- The attendance of an adult at their case conference reduced in Q1 2022/2023 from the highest attendance figure seen in Q4 2021/2022;
- There has been a positive trend of 100% of carers attending a case conference across five reporting quarters; Q1 2021/2022 – Q1 2022/2023;
- There has been a positive trend of 100% of Police attending a case conference across five reporting quarters; Q1 2021/2022 – Q1 2022/2023;
- Health’s attendance fluctuates and this is seen across the last six quarters; Q4 2020/2021 – Q1 2022/2023. Previous attendance of 100% was seen in Q2 2020/2021 and Q3 2020/2021;
- Advocacy’s attendance fluctuates and this is seen across the last three quarters; Q3 2021/2022 – Q1 2022/2023.



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Appendix D:

Summary extract of West Lothian’s 2015-2022 Data on Investigations reported on in the Scottish Government annual Adult Protection data set return:

- For seven years, 2015 – 2022 more females than males have been assessed as adults at risk of harm;
- For six years the predominant age category of an adult at risk of harm was 40-64. This changed in 2020 – 2021 to the age category of 80-84 before returning to 40-64 in 2022 – 2023;
- For seven years, 2015-2022 the most common client groups subject to harm are Mental Health, Physical Disability and Infirmity due to age;
- Across seven years, 2015-2022 the most common harm types have been physical harm, financial harm and psychological harm. However, the identification of sexual harm and neglect have featured since 2021-2022 replacing psychological harm;
- For seven years, 2015-2022 the most common locations of harm have been own home, care home and other address/ not known.

Year	Gender Female	Gender Male	Top Age category	Top three Client categories	Top three Harm Types	Top three Location of Harm
2015-2016	68	46	40-64	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infirmity due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Harm 2. Financial Harm 3. Psychological Harm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Not Known
2016-2017	39	35	40-64	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health 2. Infirmity due to age 3. Joint Dementia and Physical Harm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Harm 2. Psychological Harm 3. Financial Harm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home
2017-2018	49	21	40-64	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infirmity due to age 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Harm 2. Financial Harm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Own Home 2. Care Home

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				2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability	3. Psychological Harm	3. Other Private address
2018-2019	91	56	40-64	1. Mental Health 2. Infirmity due to age 3. Physical Harm	1. Physical Harm 2. Other 3. Financial Harm	1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home
2019 - 2020	125	70	40-64	1. Infirmity due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Financial Harm 3. Neglect	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Not Known
2020-2021	87	84	80-84	1. Infirmity due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Neglect 3. Financial Harm	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Public Place
2021-2022	77	62	40-64	1. Mental Health 2. Infirmity due to age 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Sexual Harm 3. Neglect	1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home