

NATIONAL ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION RESOURCE

Good Practice for Effective Participation by the Adult in Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences

Developed by:

The National ASP Implementation Group

Subgroup:

User Voice subgroup

Endorsed:

This national ASP Resource was formally endorsed by the National ASP Strategic Forum on 10/09/2024

Development of this Resource:

In August 2022 the National Implementation Group and its Subgroups were set up to assist Adult Protection Committees with the implementation of changes to policy and practice that may be required as a result of the introduction of the Revised ASP Code of Practice, which was published in July 2022.

The Intended audience for this specific resource has been specified as:

This guidance is aimed at any (multi agency) professional involved in Adult Support and Protection case conferences.

The proposed review date of this Resource is intended to be no later than March 2027. This will generally be three years from the date of introduction, though this can be amended if required.

The Responsibility for overseeing reviews and revisions of this resource currently lies with the National ASP Implementation Group. However, in future, should that Group have ceased to operate, this responsibility will move to the National Adult Support and Protection Coordinator, who will call upon appropriate support and assistance – consulting with relevant parties.

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Good practice for effective participation by the adult in Adult Support and Protection case conferences

Introduction

“The adult’s views and wishes are central to adult support and protection, and every effort should be made at each stage of the process to ensure that barriers to the adult’s participation are minimised.”

“There should be a basic assumption that the adult will be involved in all meetings that are about them. It should be the responsibility of the relevant adult protection practitioners and of those chairing case conferences to ensure that the adult has been invited to meetings and that they are involved to maximise the likelihood of their attendance.”

(From national [Code of Practice for Adult Support & Protection](#) July 2022 – see Chapter 4 for full details about Adult Participation).

What is the purpose of this guidance?

This document offers good practice guidance to effective participation of adults being supported and protected under the [Adult Support & Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#), particularly in relation to ASP Case Conferences. It provides pointers as to how to facilitate meaningful engagement, taking a holistic view of the perspective and circumstances of the adult, including experience of trauma.

How was the guidance developed?

This guidance was developed by representatives from a range of agencies and services who participated in the work of the ‘User Voice’ Subgroup of the national Code of Practice Implementation Group which was set up to implement the revised ASP Code of Practice (2022).

The guidance draws upon existing practice already taking place across Scotland, which was collated via a feedback survey to all APC areas. It is also based on a literature review and interviews with ASP practitioners and people with lived experience as part of a doctoral research study currently being undertaken within Scotland.

Prior to publication, views and feedback about the draft guidance were sought from a range of stakeholders, including the Authentic Voice / Resilience Learning Partnership.

What does the guidance cover?

The guidance starts with an overview of the principles underpinning working with individuals being supported and protected under the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, alongside the six principles of trauma-informed practice. An overview of the

challenges and barriers which may impact on an adult's participation are set out, followed by practical steps to facilitate positive and meaningful involvement and engagement, before, during and after case conference meetings.

Key points in relation to the offer and involvement of independent advocacy are provided, and the guidance includes a specific section which shares a good practice checklist for those chairing case conferences – a critical role.

A series of appendices provide templates which may be helpful, and also signpost to additional resources.

When an ASP Case Conference is being held about my situation...



...put yourself in my shoes!

Potential barriers

It is important to anticipate potential barriers which may impact on an adult's participation.

Be professionally curious:

What is preventing the person from participating and/or wishing to attend?

Emotional Factors	Practical Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety, shame, mistrust based on experience• Cognitive and mental health needs• Trauma & re Traumatism• Undue Pressure• Discussing Personal & Sensitive Topics in a group setting• Rigid Procedures (lack of flexibility – breaks etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific Communication needs• Accessible Advance Information• Technical (internet) access• Venue Accessibility• Meeting size, attendees, duration, procedural jargon

How can you facilitate participation?

Stop & Think

*What will work best for **this** person?*



Before the Meeting

- **Participation begins with the first contact** and wording of introductory communication: How are formal ASP letters worded? Formality can frighten people and they may believe they are being blamed. Guilt Shame Anger Fear can impact on someone's desire to attend and/or participate.
- Written materials need to be accessible (easy read; larger print; audio?) – Check the person's understanding of the process and of their expectations of the meeting. Will you send the agenda in advance? Do you have an APCC Video which they can watch?
- Ask the person **where** they want to attend – virtual or in-person meeting and provide necessary support for this choice (transport, IT, advocacy etc)
- Ask the person **how** they want to contribute to the meeting (i.e. When they would like to speak...at the beginning or after the other people) Would they like advocacy to support them to have their say? Do you have a template to capture their views?

- Consider **who** may affect their ability to participate (i.e. police (have I done something wrong?), the psychiatrist; the cause of harm (fear, undue pressure, untrustworthy relationships)
- Consider **how many** people really need to be there? Can one person represent a team or service? Does a practitioner's manager really need to attend? Can some of the work be done before the APCC via information sharing communication? i.e. resource discussions; 3rd party information. Could legislative options or SOME decisional capacity considerations be explored via phone call or email in advance?

CAUTION: PERSON SHOULD NOT BE DELIBERATELY EXCLUDED FROM DECISION MAKING FORUMS WITHOUT DUE EXPLANATION

Stop & Think

What can we do to make it easier for the person to attend?

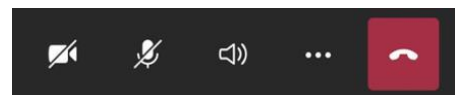


- If the person does not wish to attend, how are their views and wishes going to be represented? (Advocacy/other person; written or audio record)
- At this point, the opportunity could be taken to capture the views of the individual (regardless of whether or not they attend ASPCC) based on the following Questions:

- What things in your life are most important to you?
- What is difficult in your life?
- How safe do you feel?
- What do you think should happen to keep you safe?

During the Meeting: *Whose meeting is it anyway?*

- **Person Centred** — Please Do Not let the person be waiting around to be invited into the meeting. **This is not person centred. It is process driven.** Consider an alternative – could the meeting begin with the person, supporter, chair and council officer and then other people join them? This would allow the person to meet the chair who could explain the meeting format and ask how the person would like to participate in the meeting. If they are joining the meeting after others, consider ways to reduce the impact of this - ask the others to leave the room and re-enter; turn their cameras and microphones off until the person is settled.
- **Duration** — APCCs can be tiring. Keep it to 1 hour or take breaks. It may be helpful for some resource & admin discussions to occur outside the meeting with a summary of these to be provided so that the person hears, understands, and is included in the final discussion. But be careful **not to** conclude decisions in the person's absence.
- **Inclusive communication** — Some (but not all) people actually appreciate the structure and formality of an APCC. But we still need to ensure that the terminology is



inclusive (avoid professional jargon) and that interpretative services, supports for communication (e.g., Talking Mats, advocacy) are arranged in advance.

- **Format** — Chair introduces and sets the scene but then who speaks next? Consider asking the person if they would like to tell the meeting their views about their situation or would they rather hear the others present their reports before they share their views and comments?
- **Wellbeing** — the person may not be confident to interrupt or ask for a break or time out. The chair (or advocacy worker) should periodically check their wellbeing. 🖐️
- **Understanding** — The Chair should periodically (perhaps after each speaker) check the person's understanding and provide a summary if necessary. After each presentation/ report, the adult may be invited to ask the professional/s questions.
- **Collaboration** — Consider (in advance) whether the person is able and/or willing to be involved in the support & protection plan.

After the meeting

- Share the minutes of the meeting with the person/advocacy worker.
- Nominate someone to explain what has happened, and to check their understanding of the decision making and the support & protection plan.
- At this point, the opportunity could be taken to check in with the individual about their experience of the process so far – questions along the following lines might be helpful:

- Have you felt listened to?
- Have you felt involved in decisions made about your safety?
- Do you feel safer?

Top tips about use of advocacy

- Provide accessible information and give adult time to consider advocacy.
- Explain to family members/carers to help in providing information about advocacy.
- Refer to advocacy as early in the ASP process as possible so that they can get to know the person well in advance of any meetings. Consider re-arranging the meeting if the referral has been too late to allow advocacy to meet the person first.
- Advocacy helps people speak up when they find it difficult.
- Advocacy is independent and not part of the Council or the NHS.
- Advocacy will help the person understand their rights and options.
- Advocacy will make sure professionals know what the person wants but they will not share their own views.

Good practice checklist for chairs to promote the participation of the adult in case conference.

- ✓ **Ask** yourself why an adult may not be willing or able to participate (see list of barriers on page 4)
- ✓ **Ask** the adult/supporter what supports they need to participate.
- ✓ **Consider** alternative, creative approaches to overcome barriers as suggested above
- ✓ **Consider** meeting the adult beforehand to involve them in planning their participation; to explain the formalities and allow them the opportunity to ask questions.
- ✓ **Consider** ways to reduce the impact of a restricted information section (could this be conducted separately or at a different time?)
- ✓ **Explain** information clearly before/during/after the meeting. Written information to be provided in an accessible format, and advocacy offered at the earliest opportunity.
- ✓ **Ensure** the adult's voice is captured & expressed, whether or not they are present.
- ✓ **Check** with the adult that they have understood any information or decisions.
- ✓ **Confirm** that decisions and outcome will be conveyed to the adult after the meeting.

Appendix – Useful Resources

Iriss e-learning:

- [Working together in adult support and protection](#) / Iriss
- [Multi-agency adult support and protection conferences \(case conferences\)](#) / Iriss
- [Working Together in Adult Support and Protection – Bitesize](#) / YouTube