

West Lothian Adult Protection Committee Adult Support and Protection Biennial Report 2022–2024



POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA



West Lothian
Council

Foreword	3	Engagement, Involvement and Communication	27
What Our Data Tells You	4	Challenges and Areas for Improvement	31
Outcomes, Achievements and Service Improvements	9	Looking Forward	33
Training, Learning and Development	22	Appendices	35



POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA



West Lothian
Council

I am both delighted and privileged to have assumed the role of Chair for the Adult Protection Committee in West Lothian, a position I have held for just over a year now. Prior to outlining the detail of this report, I would like to take a moment to convey my appreciation to previous chair, Matt Paden for his invaluable input during his term which has greatly benefitted the Committee.

In West Lothian, Adult Support and Protection forms part of established and embedded multi-agency Public Protection protocols which also encompass, Child Protection, Alcohol & Drug Partnership, Gender Based Violence, Offender Management & Suicide Prevention, all of which are governed by the Chief Officers Group.

It is with pleasure that I, on behalf of the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee, present the Biennial Report for the period commencing 1st April 2022 and concluding 31st March 2024.

This biennial report (2022 – 2024) has been compiled to offer a summary of the work undertaken by the West Lothian Adult Protection Committee. It further includes an examination of the various forms of harm investigated and a profile of the adults identified as being at risk. It encapsulates the local activities carried out over the previous two years and the principal actions we have executed under our statutory obligations. Following the publication of the inspection report in September 2022, an Improvement Plan for the period 2022-2024 was developed and implemented.

This Improvement Plan demonstrated our response to the Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection, oversight and scrutiny of this improvement plan was a key area of focus for the Adult Protection Committee and Chief Officers throughout this reporting period.

Continuous learning and improvement activity has been referenced throughout this report. This work is influenced by the identification of learning points from multi-agency audit activity as well as national developments. Furthermore, we have detailed the work carried out in terms of our communication and engagement strategy and also considered some of the challenges we have faced as well as looking at future considerations with a focus on continuous improvement.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the various partner agencies who are members of the Adult Protection Committee each of whom have a critical role to play within the Committee, and finally a very big thanks to our frontline practitioners responsible for Adult Support and Protection for their continued commitment and dedication to keep adults safe and protected from harm in West Lothian.



Stephen Healy

Independent Chair, Adult Protection Committee

The West Lothian Partnership has a range of localised performance data which is collated on a quarterly basis and presented to the Adult Protection Committee (APC) and its subcommittees as well as the West Lothian Chief Officers Group (COG). This performance data supports committee members and Chief Officers to identify trends and areas that may require further exploration or improvement activity, as well as to provide the required assurance to ensure that adults are safe, supported and protected from harm.

Following the conclusion of the Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection in West Lothian and publication of the associated report by inspectors, the partnership developed and submitted a comprehensive Inspection Improvement Plan in September 2022 which focussed on actions agreed to address the areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Many of these improvement actions focussed on key processes within the partnership's multi-agency ASP Procedures and key areas of progress can be evidenced from the performance data collected.

Adult Support and Protection Referrals

Tables 1&2 on page 5 provide a breakdown of the source of referrals based on the dataset from the Scottish Government's annual return in 2022/23 and the new national minimum dataset return for 2023/24. Whilst there has been a significant change in the categories of referral sources that are reported on, there are nevertheless some comparisons that can be drawn from the data.

For example, 135 referrals were received from the NHS and GPs in 2022/23 and a total of 136 referrals were received from the health-related categories in the new minimum dataset (NHS 24, Primary Care, Acute Services, Specialist drug and alcohol services, community health services and mental health services). When calculated as a percentage of the total referrals received this demonstrates a slight increase in referrals from health services from 8% to 9%. Referrals from Police Scotland to social work services have decreased by 8% over the two-year period.

During this reporting period Social Work services in West Lothian have established a dedicated Adult Support and Protection Team which has seen a strengthening of local screening practices alongside a range of improvements relating to a consistent approach to the application of the Three Point Criteria and managerial decision making. Greater detail around this service can be found on page 6.

A challenge for the partnership in terms of referral sources is reducing the number of those recorded as 'other'. It is anticipated that this figure will reduce following the roll-out of Phase 2 of the national minimum dataset (which will further increase the categories available) and the implementation of the new 'Mosaic' social work recording system which can be easily adapted to include all minimum dataset categories.

What Our Data Tells You

Table 1

Source of Principal Referral in 2022/23 Annual Data Return	Number of referrals	% of Total Referrals
NHS	126	8%
GPs	9	1%
Scottish Ambulance Service	121	7%
Police	300	18%
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	56	3%
Office of Public Guardian	3	0%
Mental Welfare Commission	0	0%
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	0	0%
Care Inspectorate	50	3%
Other organisation	286	17%
Social Work	119	7%
Council	347	21%
Self (Adult at risk of harm)	22	1%
Family	105	6%
Friend/Neighbour	0	0%
Unpaid carer	30	2%
Other member of public	12	1%
Anonymous	5	0%
Others	65	4%
Total	1656	

Table 2

Source of Principal Referral in 2023/24 Minimum Dataset Return	Number of referrals	% of Total Referrals
Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland	0	0%
Care Inspectorate	22	2%
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	0	0%
Office of the Public Guardian	1	0%
Police Scotland	135	10%
NHS 24	12	1%
NHS Primary Care	37	3%
NHS Acute Services	0	0%
NHS Specialist Drug and Alcohol Services	0	0%
Community Health Services	76	5%
Mental Health Services – Hospital and Community	10	1%
Other health (eg public health, private healthcare, prison healthcare)	1	0%
Social Work - Adults (including MHOs)	104	7%
Social work - Children and Families	4	0%
Scottish Ambulance Service	81	6%
Scottish Fire and Rescue	55	4%
Scottish Prison Service	1	0%
Care Home	339	24%
Care at home provider	75	5%
Housing	77	6%
Education	14	1%
Other Child Protection agencies (eg Children's Reporter)	0	0%
Self (adult at risk)	14	1%
Unpaid carer	0	0%
Friend, relative or neighbour (who is not an unpaid carer)	71	5%
Other member of the public (not covered by 20 or 21)	3	0%
Third sector organisation (not covered by the above)	1	0%
Financial institution	0	0%
Anonymous	4	0%
Other (please specify below)	252	18%
Total	1389	

Note: 'Other' sources in 2023/24 included 'other agency/organisation', 'social work department from another local authority' and other 'WLC service area'

Appendix 'A' contains data relating to Adult Support and Protection (ASP) referrals received and the 'duty to inquire' (DTI) process. Referrals received in 2022/23 reduced slightly from the increase that had been evidenced in 2021/22. This was in keeping with national trends for that period and most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions coming to an end.

A clear downward trend in referrals can be identified in this biennial reporting period with the number of ASP referrals decreasing by 37% from Quarter 1 of 2022/23 to Quarter 4 of 2023/24. Following an analysis of findings from audit activity in relation to repeat referrals and feedback received from social work team managers and practitioners, a change in recording processes was implemented Quarter 3 of 2023/24. This change was to support welfare concerns being recorded as a specific type of referral. Prior to this, the social work recording system did not provide a 'welfare concern' option when recording this type of referral. Therefore, all welfare concerns were being recorded as an 'ASP' referral. It was expected that, as this change was embedded in practice, a reduction in referrals recorded as ASP referrals would follow and that hypothesis has been confirmed by the data. Despite the downward trend in the number of ASP referrals, the conversion rate of referrals to a Duty to Inquire being undertaken has increased since the change in recording was implemented (see Appendix A). In Quarter 4 of 2023/24 the conversion rate of referrals to DTI's increased to 92% which is the

highest percentage recorded in the two-year reporting period, suggesting that ASP referrals are now being recorded more accurately than they previously were.

The number of repeat ASP referrals in a 12-month period was noted in the previous biennial report as requiring further exploration to ensure that the correct decision making was applied at the time of each referral and that there were no missed opportunities to intervene earlier. The APC's Quality Assurance subcommittee developed a template with an agreed methodology and undertook a multi-agency audit of repeat initial inquiries (DTIs) in Quarter 1 of 2022/23. This audit activity was repeated in Quarter 3 of 2022/23 and Quarter 2 of 2023/24. The audit examined the processes followed for each person referred as well as the outcomes for them. The findings provided assurance that the reason for repeat referrals was not due to missing opportunities to intervene but rather that many were in fact welfare concerns that had been recorded as ASP. Appendix A demonstrates that, as the new recording system for welfare concerns has been implemented, repeat referrals have reduced with Quarter 4 of 2023/24 showing a 43% reduction from the previous Quarter.

Appendix B provides performance data in relation to ASP investigations, case conferences and protection plans. The number of individuals with a live Adult Support and Protection Plan in place has remained fairly consistent over this reporting

period with an average of 21 per Quarter. Similarly, the number of case conferences taking place have been consistent with an average of 34 taking place each Quarter. The partnerships multi-agency ASP Procedures indicate that all initial case conferences should be held within 20-working days of a case conference being agreed by those involved in the Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD).

Ensuring that all initial case conferences take place within the required timescales formed part of the partnership's inspection improvement plan. The data presented in Appendix B highlights the progress which has been made with 93% of initial case conferences taking place within procedural timescales in Quarter 4 of 2023/24, the highest percentage achieved over the two-year period.

The number of ASP investigations being undertaken reduced by 29% from Quarter 1 of 2022/23 to Quarter 4 of 2023/24. There are a number of potential reasons for this such as increased capacity in the older people's and addictions social work teams supporting earlier intervention. The APC's Quality Assurance subcommittee also plans to carry out a multiagency audit of the duty to inquire process as part of its' 2024/25 improvement plan which will examine the quality of risk assessment and robustness of decision-making process to ensure that correct decision making was applied and there were no missed opportunities to progress to an IRD and investigation.

Improving the attendance of adults at risk at their case conference meetings as well as improving the attendance of health services at case conferences were two areas highlighted for improvement within the Joint Inspection Improvement Plan. Appendix B demonstrates that a significant amount of progress has been made in both of these areas over the last two years with 71% of adults at risk attending their case conference meetings in Quarter 4 of 2023/24 and health services attendance reaching 100% in the same Quarter.

Attendance of advocates and carers or legal guardians (including those with Power of Attorney) at case conferences remains consistently high. This, along with the increase in adults at risk attending provides assurance individuals identified as being at risk of harm are having their views represented. Attendance at meetings will continue to be monitored by the Quality Assurance subcommittee.

Appendix C provides 8 years of data relating to adults at risk who have been subject to an ASP investigation (including an Interagency Referral Discussion) or an ASP inquiry with investigatory powers (as reported on in the new minimum dataset). Whilst it is important to note that the metrics for this data changed slightly in 2023/24 with the introduction of the minimum dataset, there are still a number of trends evident (please see page 8).

- ➔ Similar to national statistics, females in West Lothian are consistently more at risk of harm than males with a higher percentage of investigations/inquiries with investigatory powers being carried out for women in all of the 8 years and an average of 59% being carried out for women in this two-year reporting period.
- ➔ The age group 40-64 years has the highest number of male and female adults at risk of harm recorded in seven out of eight years and has remained the most prevalent in this reporting period. In 2020/2021 individuals aged 80-84 years were most at risk of harm. Analysis of this information has provided no clear understanding why this may be the case, the working hypothesis for this relates to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic when people within this age range were at higher levels of risk especially if living in residential care for this is that it was a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic when older people were generally more at risk.
- ➔ There has been a consistent trend of the same client groups being identified with infirmity due to age, mental health and physical disability being the most prevalent from 2015 to 2023. 2023/24 saw a slight change with dementia being the third most prevalent client group. This is likely due to changes in recording methods alongside the introduction of the new minimum dataset.

- ➔ The most common types of harm identified have been largely consistent over the 8-year period with physical harm, financial harm and neglect being the most common. This changed slightly with the introduction of additional categories in the new minimum dataset which has resulted in self-neglect being the third most common type of harm in 2023/24.

Analysis of this data supports the APC and its subcommittees in identifying any action required to improve outcomes for adults at risk of harm, for example by helping to shape training and development plans. Representatives from the Learning and Development subcommittee are currently involved in a working group with representatives from Housing and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to develop a Hoarding and Self-Neglect Policy with specific training due to be rolled out once the Policy has been finalised (expected no later than December 2024).

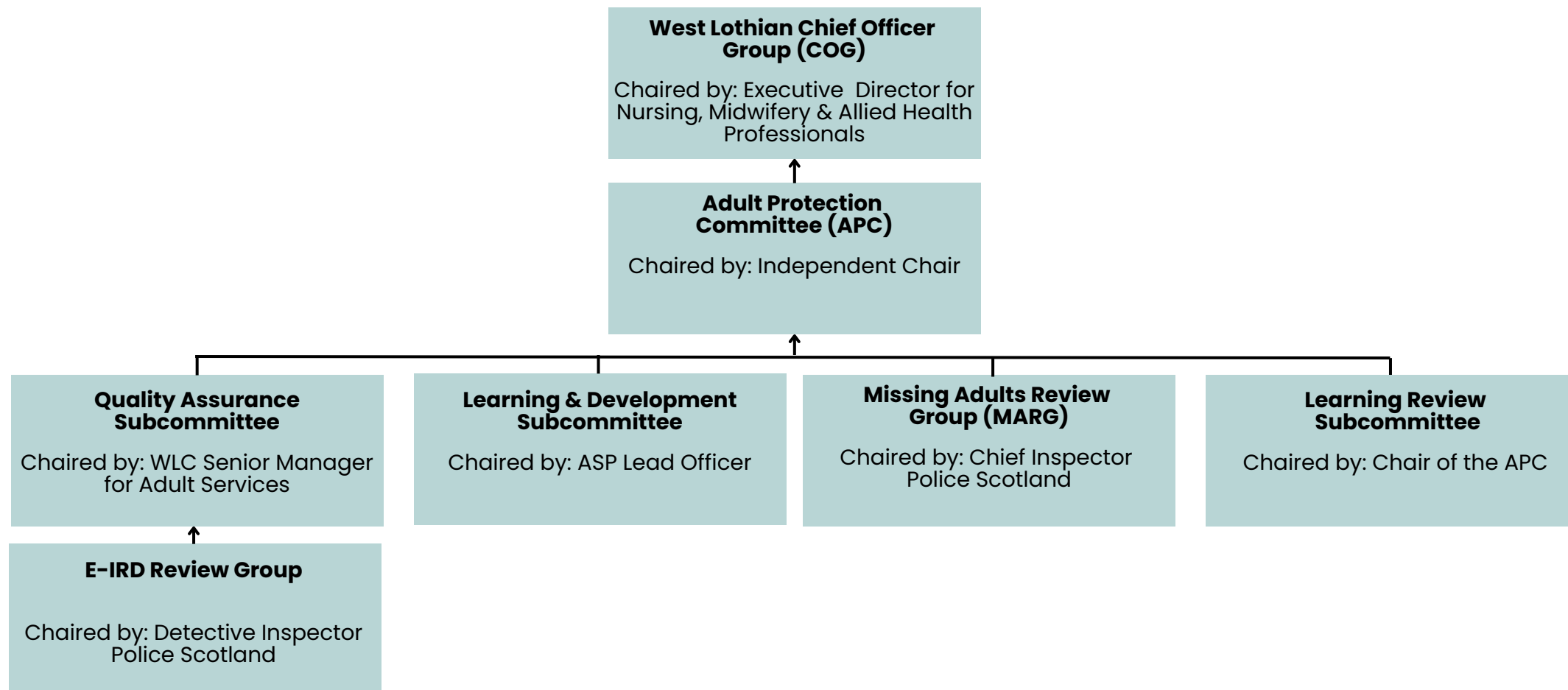
Having a representative from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as a member of the APC and the Learning and Development subcommittee continues to support the raising of awareness about Financial Harm. Information sessions provided by the DWP have benefited operational staff and this along with work being carried out by the National ASP Coordinator in relation to section 10 requests for financial records means that interventions for adults at risk of financial harm can be completed in a timelier manner than in previous years.

Outcomes, Achievements and Service Improvements

Leadership and Governance

The Adult Protection Committee continues to operate with a wide range of members with leaders and managers from all agencies being represented at meetings. The APC appointed a new independent chair in August 2023 to continue to drive forward its vision that **“All adults at risk should be safe, supported and protected from harm”**. Members of the APC are committed to creating a culture of continuous improvement and learning for all.

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



Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection

The joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection which took place between May and July of 2022 identified areas of strength as well as a number of areas for improvement with a particular focus on improvements required to the development of the partnership's key processes and associated recording templates. The APC has therefore focussed much of its work in this reporting period on overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the 2022-24 Joint Inspection Improvement Plan.

In September 2022 social work services created a standalone team dedicated to Adult Support and Protection which allows for adult protection referrals to be screened and managed within one team and promotes a standardised and consistent approach to the application of the legislation.

Out with core office hours the Social Care Emergency Team (SCET) is responsible for following up on any Adult Support and Protection concerns out with office hours. Following the Joint Inspection, it was identified that referrals that were progressed out of hours were not always actioned. During this reporting period, managers have worked to ensure a consistent approach across both day time services and out of hours service.

In addition to this, a dedicated Business Support Officer was appointed in December 2022 with a remit of single-agency public protection training.

In March 2023 the Adult Protection Committee published revised Adult Protection Procedures which built on the interim

procedures that were issued following the joint inspection as well as considering the updated national Codes of Practice as circulated by the Scottish Government in July 2022.

Following publication of the findings from the joint inspection, an ASP Social Work Leadership Group was established to drive forward the key operational improvement actions for social work services. Membership of this group includes leaders from all levels across social work as well as the ASP Lead Officer and representatives from business support. This group has been responsible for carrying out regular audit activity to scrutinise key ASP processes and ensure that the required improvements are evident as well as identifying any ongoing areas for improvement. The group also analyses single agency data to identify trends around social work processes.

A wide range of audit and quality assurance activity has been undertaken throughout this reporting period on both a multi-agency and single-agency basis. The Quality Assurance subcommittee's improvement and workplan for 2022-24 incorporated a number of actions from the Joint Inspection Improvement Plan as well as a timetable of planned audit activity to provide a level of scrutiny and oversight of the implementation of improvement actions. This included the development of a Quality Assurance Framework, which strengthens the partnership approach to quality assurance and self-evaluation. Standardised audit templates were also developed which would ensure standard application to all audit activity particularly to ensure that learning opportunities were easily identified through this activity.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

The Initial Inquiry Process

The revised West Lothian ASP Procedures provide clarity on how to conduct an initial inquiry (Duty to Inquire) under section 4 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, including the application and recording of the three-point criteria with clear timeframes for completion. The revised Procedures incorporated key changes to national guidance as published in the updated national Codes of Practice, including provisions whereby an inquiry can now be carried out with or without investigatory powers. Practitioners are provided with clear guidance for carrying out and recording the undertaking of a Duty to Inquire with or without investigatory powers.

An audit template was introduced to support required improvements in managerial oversight and scrutiny of all initial inquiries. Regular single agency audits of initial inquiries have been undertaken by the ASP Social Work Leadership Group and additionally, members of the Quality Assurance subcommittee have carried out audits on a multi-agency basis. Analysis of these audit findings has identified a number of improvements to the initial inquiry process throughout the reporting period, for example, the percentage of duty to inquire (DTI) records that demonstrated written evidence of the application of the 3-point criteria increased from 20% in Quarter 1 of 2022/23 to 90% in Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Chronologies

A chronology template was developed in 2022 for use by pan-Lothian partners. Multi-agency audits of DTIs have demonstrated an improvement in the use of chronologies with 77% of DTIs examined in Quarter 1 of 2023/24 containing a completed chronology compared to 66% in Quarter 3 of 2022/23 and just 20% in Quarter 1 of 2022/23. Whilst it is extremely positive that such progress has been made, the consistent use and quality of chronologies remains an ongoing area for improvement.

The new 'Mosaic' social work database implemented in April 2024 allows for the creation and continuation of a chronology within all adult social work records. It has been agreed that social work staff will use this inbuilt chronology tool which will support further improvements in practice. The Business Support Officer for single-agency public protection training has been working with practitioners and leaders to develop written 'Chronology Guidance for Social Policy Practitioners'. Chronology briefing sessions were delivered to Team Managers in Quarter 4 of 2023/24 and training sessions for practitioners commenced in April 2024. Going forward, the Quality Assurance Subcommittee has incorporated robust multi-agency audit activity in to its workplan which will examine the quality of chronologies and how they are used to support risk assessment and decision making.

2022–24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment training commenced for staff in September 2022 following the introduction of a standardised risk assessment template to assist practitioners in considering how best to support adults to manage risks. The new template utilises the TILS (Type, Imminence, Likelihood and Severity) model and ensures that any protective factors or actions taken to mitigate harm are also considered. This is a recognised risk assessment/risk analysis tool which is utilised within Justice services to support the identification and assessment of harm and risk. This model is also included within the IRD recording system, providing a level of continuity from initial inquiries through to investigations and case conferences. A multi-agency audit of the Duty to Inquire process carried out for Quarter 4 of 2023/24 indicated consistent use of the TILS model by practitioners and the standard of risk assessment and associated recommendations were rated 'Good' or 'Adequate' in 89% of cases audited.

Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs)

IRDs promote collaboration and information sharing between partner agencies and provide a forum for the planning and ongoing monitoring of investigation activity. Following the joint inspection, managers were provided with refresher briefings on the IRD process & their associated responsibilities. Multi-agency training was delivered to ensure that IRDs are completed in line with procedure.

The partnership's IRD Review Group is responsible for oversight of all IRDs and the chair of this group provides routine updates to the APC and the Quality Assurance subcommittee. Part of the IRD Review Group's remit is not solely about following process but also identifying key themes and learning points with mechanisms in place for disseminating any identified trends or learning. Revised terms of reference for this group were agreed in 2023, ensuring that levels of scrutiny and quality assurance were enhanced. Feedback from partner agencies, particularly from Police Scotland has indicated that the creation of a dedicated ASP team within Social Work has significantly improved the consistent completion of IRDs in line with procedural requirements.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Investigations and Risk Management Plans

Findings of the joint inspection indicated strengths in relation to the creation and implementation of multi-agency Adult Support and Protection Plans for adults at risk in West Lothian:

“West Lothian Partnership staff collaborated effectively for the implementation of protection plans.”

New standardised investigation and risk management plan templates were implemented in 2022 to support council officers when an investigation is undertaken. The above-mentioned risk assessment tool forms part of the investigation template and this, along with the risk management plan, ensures that a clear analysis of risk is carried out and that any actions required to manage or mitigate risks are clearly documented and align with the SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound). The investigation template also ensures that details of the interview with an adult at risk, as well as their views and the views of anyone caring for or supporting them, are clearly documented.

In December 2023 the APC's Quality Assurance subcommittee undertook an audit of all investigations carried out over a 6-month period from 1st April and 30th September 2023. Records were examined for each individual who had been subject to an investigation (and IRD) with a view to assessing the quality of investigations and risk management plans.

Findings provided assurance that outcomes for adults were positive with no concerns that opportunities had been missed to protect adults from harm. Analysis of findings also indicated strengths in terms of the standardised templates being used consistently by the Adult Support and Protection team. A training need for staff was also identified in relation to ensuring that actions within risk management plans align with the SMART model and that staff across all teams are consistently using the standardised templates in line with procedures.

Following on from these findings, risk assessment and risk management plan training sessions were provided for social work team managers in February and March of 2024 and for council officers in April 2024. A multi-agency audit of risk management plans and investigations will be carried out in August 2024 to ensure that learning points from this training are being implemented in practice. The implementation of the new social work recording system in April 2024 is expected to support with this as it allows for the risk management plan template to sit alongside the investigation template, something that was not possible with the previous database. This is a key area for improvement as discussed in the 'Challenges and Areas for Improvement' section within this report. The Quality Assurance Subcommittee has planned audit activity to commence in August 2024 to ensure that learning from audit findings and subsequent training has been implemented in practice.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

The Lived Experience of Adults at Risk of Harm and Their Unpaid Carers/Informal Support Networks

The involvement of people with lived experience in strategic and improvement work was identified as an area for improvement in the report by joint inspectors. Following some initial work with the West Lothian independent chairs of case conferences to proactively seek feedback from adults at risk, a short life working group was established in August 2023. The aim of this action was to consider how best to ensure that those with lived experience can have their views considered by the adult protection committee, to review the processes used for gaining the views of those with lived experience as well as looking at how attendance of adults at risk and their carers at case conferences can be improved. This group is chaired by the Lead Officer and membership includes representatives from social work practice teams, the Third Sector Interface and independent advocacy partners as well as carers representatives.

The survey that is used to gather feedback from adults and their carers was amended to include an option for feedback to be provided even if the adult at risk chooses not to attend their case conference meeting and an optional section was also added to the survey to allow people to leave their contact details if they would like somebody to contact them to discuss their feedback. Council officers have also been encouraged to document details of any verbal feedback that they may have

received from adults at risk who do not wish to complete the online survey. One council officer provided the following feedback:

"X said that he was struggling to make changes on his own before he became involved with Social Work, and he felt like he was getting nowhere in regards to making positive changes without supports. 'X' said he has found the ASP process helpful and positive and it helped him to turn his life around as he felt supported. 'X' said if he was to give advice to someone going through ASP he would tell them to "believe in the people that help you."

Recent data has shown that attendance of adults at their case conference meetings has consistently improved from Quarter 4 of 2022/23 to Quarter 4 of 2023/24. An analysis was carried out to establish whether or not this was likely due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic coming to an end and more meetings being held in person however findings indicated that slightly more adults attended their case conference meetings when they were held virtually compared to when the meetings were in person. The current working hypothesis for the improvement of attendance of adults at risk is that it is likely due to the consistent approach of the dedicated ASP team.

2022–24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

The Lived Experience of Adults at Risk of Harm and Their Unpaid Carers/Informal Support Networks

Whilst there have been some encouraging improvements, particularly in relation to the attendance of adults at risk at case conferences, the involvement of and feedback from adults at risk and their unpaid carers/informal support networks remains an area for improvement.

Following the conclusion of the short life working group, members plan to continue meeting on a quarterly basis to review feedback from individuals with lived experience and their families & carers and also to continue exploring alternative methods to further involve individuals with lived experience. In addition, the Quality Assurance subcommittee plans to explore the idea of expanding the remit of this group to carry out wider engagement within local communities. Whilst we are striving to improve direct feedback and involvement from adults with lived experience, independent advocacy partners continue to have representation at the Adult Protection Committee and its subcommittees to represent the voice of adults at risk and they regularly provide feedback on behalf of adults at risk of harm.

Case Conferences & Review Case Conferences

The joint inspection report concluded that:

“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”.

The partnership’s 2022–2024 improvement plan contained a number of actions focussing on quality assurance activity to ensure that risk is robustly explored, managed and recorded at case conferences. Following the development of a standardised audit template, multi-agency audits of case conferences were carried out throughout July and September 2023. A number of strengths were identified within the analysis of audit findings with one auditor commenting:

“I felt the meeting was well chaired, there was adequate explanation of process and all participants engaged with process. It ran over time but this time was needed to explore potential supports that could be implemented, actions were identified and allocated clearly”

Points of learning were also identified mainly in relation to the length of some meetings and reporting templates used by Council Officers and other professionals. Whilst some meetings were lengthy due to the complexity of the presenting risks and it was felt that perhaps this could be improved by exploring the possibility of reducing the narrative in reports and setting the templates out in a way that focuses more on analysis of risk. A short-life working group has been established to review multi-agency assessment reporting templates for case conferences.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

National Learning and Improvement Activity

Members of the Adult Protection Committee have represented the partnership at the National Adult Support and Protection Implementation Group and all of its subgroups throughout this reporting period. The Chair of the Adult Protection Committee has represented West Lothian at the National Convenors Group meetings. The partnership is committed to working collaboratively at a national level to achieve the aims and objectives of the National Implementation Group. This collaborative approach is particularly useful in areas that are known to present challenges at a national level such as chronologies and involvement of adults at risk in ASP processes.

The Quality Assurance subcommittee takes learning from nationally published learning reviews and inquiries/investigations and disseminates it locally. Recommendations within these reports are also examined by members and any associated local improvement actions are then incorporated in to the subcommittee's workplan. Examples of this type of learning at a national level in this reporting period would include the Mental Welfare Commission's investigation in to the death of 'AB' and the 'Remember My Name' report which detailed the Significant Case Review of the life of Margaret Fleming.

Transitions

In January 2024 the partnership introduced a guidance document 'Transition Between Children's and Adult Services' which is specifically aimed to support decision making for 16 and 17-year-olds who may be at risk of significant harm. The guidance was developed to complement existing Child and Adult Protection Procedures and is designed for use by all professionals working in the public, private and third sectors in West Lothian. The guidance aims to provide clear principles on how to effectively support young people at risk of harm at a key transition point in their lives.

Looking forward, the Quality Assurance subcommittee plans to carry out an audit of Adult Support and Protection referrals received for 16 and 17-year-old individuals with a view to identifying any trends or learning points.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Learning Reviews and Large-Scale Investigations

Following the publication of the 'National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews' the partnership developed and implemented a local multi-agency learning review procedure in March 2023. Following publication of the procedure, there was an initial increase in notifications to review specific cases, evidencing the developing culture of learning within the partnership.

The partnership established a Learning Review subcommittee to review notifications and to make a recommendation indicating whether or not the criteria for carrying out a learning review has been met. The Learning Review subcommittee is chaired by the independent chair of the APC with membership including key leaders from all agencies. The subcommittee makes recommendations on the requirement of a learning review to the APC and COG for approval and notifications of this decision are then reported to the Care Inspectorate as required.

In this biennial reporting period a multi-agency thematic review took place in relation to concerns that had been raised about the potential risk of forced marriage for three individuals. The review included oversight from a Detective Chief Inspector within Police Scotland who has significant experience in cases of Forced Marriage.

A number of key local learning points and actions required to address these were identified as a result. The Adult Protection Committee and COG had oversight of both the review process and the associated action plan with progress updates provided. Action taken to disseminate learning from the review process included increased awareness raising amongst staff by ensuring that local Forced Marriage Guidance was reissued along with a 7-minute briefing on Forced Marriage. Staff were also provided with contact details for a local organisation who can offer support and advice as well as details for a contact within the Home Office who can be contacted for advice.

There have also been a number of cases where the Learning Review subcommittee found that whilst the criteria for a learning review was not met, there were nevertheless key learning points that could be identified. In these cases, plans to disseminate key learning points and any associated improvement actions required are collated with progress reported to the APC and COG.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Learning Reviews and Large-Scale Investigations

During this reporting period the APC have been exploring various methods to disseminate learning to staff across the partnership. In December 2023, key members of the APC planned and held a multi-agency online learning event to share learning that was identified from cases that did not progress to a learning review but where learning points were identified. The event also addressed learning from a published investigation by the Mental Welfare Commission into the death of 'AB'. The event also included guest speakers from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the DWP who provided topical input on Hoarding and the supports offered by the DWP's advanced customer support team. Examples of feedback and suggestions for improvement from this event are included below:

What were the key learning points that you found useful and will take away from the event?

"The complexity of joint working, importance of communication and good working relationships."

"I personally found the speakers useful re services provided and the contact information given out/where to find this information."

Three Large-Scale Investigations were carried out within this Biennial reporting period, two for Care at Home providers and one for a Care Home. The partnerships' multi-agency Care Home Collaborative Team continues to benefit adults at risk in West Lothian by ensuring that multi-agency professionals are able to intervene early to minimise risk. This was highlighted in November 2023 when concerns were raised in relation to a local Care Home following a complaint by a residents' family. The Care Home Collaborative Team immediately implemented a plan to carry out reviews with residents and their families and followed up by meeting with the Care Home's management team. This resulted in risks being mitigated and an LSI was therefore not required.

The Care Home Collaborative team has been undertaking work in this biennial reporting period to implement the recommendations within the "My Health, My Care, My Home" framework with a focus on prevention of hospital admissions. Multi-agency staff within the Care Home Collaborative team work jointly to ensure that annual social work reviews are conducted simultaneously with an annual health review which ensures that there is a holistic approach to reviewing an individual resident's health, care and support needs.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Critical Review Team (CRT)

The Critical Review Team protocol is an escalation protocol whereby practitioners and/or their managers within the partnership can escalate concerns via a notification to senior managers within their respective agency to consider the requirement for a CRT meeting.

The purpose of a CRT meeting is to ensure that senior leaders from all core agencies have oversight of the management of risk for individuals whose circumstances are complex or 'high-risk'. The CRT continues to be seen as a strength within the partnership as it ensures that support of senior managers is provided in the most complex and challenging situations.

Missing Adults Review Group

The Missing Adults Review Group meets on a bi-monthly basis to enable partners to better understand and monitor performance and interventions relating to Adults who go missing in West Lothian. The key objective of this group is to ensure that the approach taken maximises the partnership goal to keep Adults safe, providing support and assistance where required. There is a focus on all adults, in particular those who present as the most vulnerable or at the highest risk of harm as well as focussing on partnership priorities and the work commenced on the Scottish Government's National Missing Person Framework protocols including the Herbert Protocol and NHS Missing Person's Protocol.

The biennial report for 2020-2022 highlighted the launch of "The Herbert Protocol" by Police Scotland in 2021. This protocol is a nationally recognised scheme which was designed for people living with dementia who may be reported missing. It encourages the completion of a form which contains vital and personal information relating to individuals with a diagnosis of dementia including key locations where they may be likely to venture to if they go missing. The partnership and the Missing adults Review Group continue to promote the use of the Herbert Protocol as an early and preventative approach to keeping people with dementia safe with plans to refresh training for Care Home staff in West Lothian over the next biennial reporting period.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

Health Records

Following the joint inspection and subsequent recommendation that increased oversight should be introduced to improve the consistency of recording of Adult Support and Protection related matters by health staff, NHS Lothian updated their Adult Support and Protection Procedures in March 2023 to support improvement.

NHS Lothian's staff intranet pages were also updated to introduce a section providing specific guidance to staff for recording Adult Support and Protection matters on the NHS recording system, TRAK. An annual single-agency audit of TRAK notes was introduced and carried out for the first time in 2023 on a pan-Lothian basis and there are plans to introduce quarterly audits in West Lothian in 2024 which will allow for scrutiny of an increased number of local files.

Recommendations actioned from the findings of the audit of health records in October 2023 included:

- ➔ Sharing information on the importance of accurate record keeping in relation to Adult Support and Protection with teams.
- ➔ Promoting awareness of the NHS Lothian Adult Support and Protection Procedures (March 2023) and ensuring all staff are familiar with them.
- ➔ Increasing awareness of the Adult Support and Protection Advisors so that staff are aware that they can be contacted for advice and support.
- ➔ Staff prioritisation for attendance at Case Conferences and subsequent meetings.
- ➔ Staff to be encouraged to conform with best practice by submitting a report and chronology in advance of a Case Conference.
- ➔ Staff to meet their statutory duty to co-operate in all Adult Support and Protection processes.
- ➔ Information about record keeping standards to be incorporated in all Adult Support and Protection Training.

2022-24 Improvement Plan Priority Areas

The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing fund is managed by Third Sector Interface and the Voluntary Sector Gateway has administered applications in West Lothian since the fund was established. The fund aims to contribute to the four key focus areas from the Mental Health Transition 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; and
- Ensuring safe, effective treatment and care of people living with mental illness

A total of approximately £500,000 of funding per year was awarded to a range of third sector organisations across West Lothian to support mental health issues and reduce social isolation for adults. Additional funding will be available for 2024/25 and the partnership will continue to promote and encourage applications to support adults at risk of harm.

Feedback to Referrers

It was recognised in the joint inspection findings and the associated improvement plan that feedback to agencies who make Adult Support and Protection referrals is not always consistently provided. In response to this, the partnership implemented a 'test of change' pilot with colleagues in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service whereby the manager of the Adult Social Care Enquiry Team, which processes all referrals received, provided feedback for each ASP referral that was submitted by the Fire Service, providing them with assurances that their concerns are fully assessed and that any identified risks are investigated.

This approach worked effectively in terms of providing feedback to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and therefore enabling them to provide feedback to individual crews about the positive impact that their reporting of concerns has on keeping adults at risk of harm safe in West Lothian.

The partnership is committed to upscaling its approach to providing feedback not only to partner agencies but to all referrers. Some challenges to this have been noted particularly in situations where individuals are clear that they do not wish for information about them to be shared. The Social Work Leadership Group is working to develop standardised feedback templates which can be used to provide feedback to referrers whilst still maintaining confidentiality and adhering to General Data Protection Regulations.

The Adult Protection Committee's Learning and Development subcommittee is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing a continuous professional learning approach in West Lothian. The subcommittee is comprised of multi-agency members with representatives from all key partner agencies attending meetings and contributing to the development and delivery of training and development.

The Learning and Development subcommittee developed a workplan for 2022-2025 which contains a number of improvement actions from the joint inspection improvement plan which the subcommittee assumed responsibility for implementing and overseeing. The subcommittee's workplan has been continually reviewed throughout this biennial reporting period and has adapted as progress has been made and priorities have evolved. For example, when new training needs have been identified either by staff across the partnership or through audit activity, the learning and development workplan has adapted to incorporate this and prioritise it's work accordingly.

A comprehensive calendar of multi-agency training is planned and delivered to staff of all grades from all agencies in West Lothian including those who work in our out-of-hours Social Care Emergency Team. There are also a range of single-agency training opportunities available to staff within each individual agency. A dedicated Business Support Officer was appointed by

the Council in December 2022 with a remit for single-agency public protection training. This appointment has enhanced the partnership's training opportunities not only by refining and improving single-agency training but also by creating more capacity for key staff within the partnership to deliver more multi-agency training.

As the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic came to an end, this biennial reporting period has seen a return to face to face training for staff with feedback suggesting that this is often the preferred option. Some training continues to be offered virtually and, wherever possible, when new training opportunities are developed staff are given the option of choosing whether they would prefer it to be delivered virtually or in-person.

The Health and Social Care Partnership has established a Trauma Informed Practice Project Board with a remit to co-ordinate the rollout of the National Trauma Training Programme to support cultural and organisational change through the development of a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce across West Lothian. The Adult Protection Committee is represented in the membership of this board which aims to work with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that the work of the board is closely aligned with national and local outcomes as well as workforce development plans.

The Learning and Development subcommittee is committed to measuring the impact of training and continuously improving the learning experience for staff to ensure that they feel confident in implementing their training into practice. This reporting period has seen some key changes to training based on feedback from staff.

For example, feedback indicated that there was an appetite for some training courses such as the Level 2 and Level 3 ASP multi-agency training to be reviewed and refreshed with a return to in-person training taking place. Members of the Learning and Development subcommittee took this on board and in 2023 revised training was delivered in-person and this was very well received by staff. Some examples of feedback and suggestions for improvement are as follows:

Level 2 multi-agency ASP training (in-person training with one course offered online)

- “More case studies would be good. Videos are really useful”
- “The most useful part was enhancing knowledge about the processes of reporting adult protection concerns”
- “I will put processes in place to raise awareness in our organisation and how to record and the process to escalate when required.”

- “Learning about adult protection and capacity was the most useful part.”
- “I would have preferred for the training to be in person rather than on teams”

Level 3 multi-agency ASP training (in-person training)

- “Case Studies and group discussions were most useful”
- “Was very informative, I will put this in to practice by informing staff of their duties...”
- “Training material could be reduced as some info repeated.”
- “Maybe sessions over 2 days”

Council Officer Skills Training (in-person training)

- “I am new to ASP and found the course informed me but was also easy enough for me to understand the information”
- “The trainer was very knowledgeable and allowed ample room for discussion and sharing of experiences.”
- “More examples of completed paperwork to get better idea of what is expected would be helpful”

2022/23 saw a change in the way that Council Officer training is delivered in West Lothian. Previously, this was delivered as 'Level 3 multi-agency ASP training'. Feedback from Council Officers via team managers and the Council Officer Forum indicated that staff did not feel this training was working well as a multi-agency training course. In West Lothian, it is only social workers who undertake the role of a Council Officer and therefore staff felt it would be more beneficial to have a single-agency training course that focused in detail on the council officer role and the associated processes and procedures.

Senior leaders acted on this feedback and in 2023, single agency 'Council Officer Skills Training' was created and began to be delivered by the Business Support Officer for single agency public protection training. Feedback from Council Officers has indicated that they have felt confident in carrying out their duties as a Council Officer after completing this training. It was however acknowledged that there was still a need for a Level 3 multi-agency training for senior staff and managers who will be involved in ASP processes but will not be carrying out the role of a Council Officer and as a result, the Level 3 multi-agency ASP training was reviewed and a revised version of this training has been incorporated into the training calendar.

The West Lothian partnership is committed to a multi-agency approach to much of its Adult Support and Protection training with members of the Learning and Development subcommittee collaborating to deliver various courses across the training calendar. Partners in the voluntary sector (including advocacy) the DWP and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have continued to provide invaluable input to various training courses and learning opportunities throughout this biennial reporting period.

The Learning and Development subcommittee supported the promotion of Adult Support and Protection Day on 20th February in 2023 and 2024. In 2023 Adult Support and Protection Day was promoted on social media platforms of all agencies to raise awareness with a particular focus on the theme of neglect, utilising the media items and resources that were published nationally to provide a consistent message. In 2024 a multi-agency learning event was planned and delivered twice on the day with one session being held online and one being held in-person. The session focussed on general ASP awareness raising as well as some specific learning on the topic of 'Sextortion' which was the national theme for 2024. Police Scotland collaborated to provide a presentation covering the topic of sextortion and a total of 66 people attended across the two sessions which were well received by staff across the partnership. Attendance included representatives from Social Policy, the NHS, Police Scotland, Housing, Education and the Third Sector.

Work within the partnership commenced in 2023 to begin developing a new Social Policy Learning and Development Prospectus which went 'live' in March 2024 meaning that all training opportunities, including courses related to Adult Support and Protection, are now collated on one section of the website with a user-friendly search function and descriptions of each course including learning outcomes and instructions on how to sign up.

This has seen a move to an online booking system which encourages staff to take ownership of their continuous professional development by allowing them to explore and book themselves on to any training courses to enhance their professional development. The Prospectus is available for all partner agencies to access as well as to staff working within the Council.

A dedicated Microsoft Teams channel for "Social Policy Learning and Development" has also been established. This can be accessed by all Social Policy staff and it functions as a hub to promote training and learning opportunities. The channel is regularly updated with new and emerging articles and research information that staff may find useful.

Feedback from the voluntary sector representative on the Adult Protection Committee has highlighted the benefits of staff from third sector providers being able to attend multi-agency Adult Support and Protection training:

"The training has been very welcome and an invaluable resource for the Third Sector. Having these courses available to the Sector means organisations working in these fields have access to high standard training that will really make a difference in understanding and reporting. These courses also mean a lot of organisations will be able to better understand the statutory services and it really helps develop stronger working relationships between statutory services and third sector organisations."

Throughout this reporting period a range of training and learning opportunities relating to specific themes and topics have been highlighted to staff by the Learning and Development subcommittee as and when they become available. This has included opportunities to attend conferences and events such as national ASPIRE ASP events as well as highlighting learning opportunities that arise from the media such as podcasts or links to useful online learning such as the wide range of courses available via the TURAS website which is hosted by NHS Education for Scotland.

The Learning and Development subcommittee is keen to ensure that the range of Adult Support and Protection training available is tailored to the needs of the people who are accessing it. At times when specific training needs have been identified within individual teams, members of the subcommittee who facilitate training have been able to adapt materials in order to accommodate the bespoke needs of individual teams. For example, in this reporting period, individual ASP awareness sessions have been provided to foster carers, staff at West Lothian College, community nursing teams and the contracts and commissioning team within business support.

Evaluation of training is sought from those in attendance at the end of each training course with each person being asked to complete a short survey. The survey questions have been refreshed by Learning and Development subcommittee members in this reporting period and a QR code linked to the survey was created to support with encouraging staff who attend training to complete the survey on their mobile devices. This has seen a positive increase in the number of attendees providing feedback.

The Learning and Development subcommittee reviews all of the training feedback and agrees any required amendments to training materials based on the views of attendees. This process creates a culture of learning and ensures that staff feel confident that their feedback will be heard and acted upon.

The Learning and Development subcommittee provides an analysis of feedback from training on a quarterly basis in the form of a report which is presented to the Adult Protection Committee and supports its members with fulfilling the function of the APC to “promote the continuous improvement of adult support and protection work through... the promotion of good practice, training and staff development.”

In addition to the comprehensive suite of core ASP training which is currently available in West Lothian, there are also a number of specific training courses which are under review and/or in the process of being developed either following changes nationally or been identified as a result of audit activity that has been progressed.

Examples include:

- ➔ independent chair training for managers who chair case conferences;
- ➔ hoarding and self-neglect training to be refreshed and rolled out with the hoarding and self-neglect policy which is currently in development;
- ➔ Training around professional curiosity and how to support workers to be naturally curious when progressing ASP investigations.

The Adult Protection Committee's Communication and Engagement Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the aims of the APC in four key messages:

Key Message 1 - Providing awareness and Understanding about the Adult Protection Committee and its leadership and governance arrangements:

Throughout the course of this reporting period, the partnership has endeavoured to achieve this in various ways. Examples include:

- ➡ Utilising the Adult Protection Committee's Dissemination Strategy to distribute and disseminate information about Adult Support and Protection using various platforms and mediums and encouraging partner agencies to share information across their networks to achieve as wide a reach as possible across all communities in West Lothian;
- ➡ Developing a calendar of training which is available to all agencies and incorporating information on the leadership and governance of Adult Support and Protection in West Lothian in to Level 1, 2 and 3 Adult Support and Protection training;
- ➡ Engagement with local stakeholders and community groups to raise awareness about Adult Support and Protection. Examples include West Lothian College and the Senior People's Forum;
- ➡ Utilising national Adult Support and Protection Day and other learning events to raise awareness of the APC and its functions and responsibilities;
- ➡ Attendance by representatives from the APC at national groups such as the National Implementation Group and all of its subgroups; and
- ➡ Attendance by APC members at other local groups/committees such as the Suicide Prevention Leadership Group, the Gender Based Violence committee, MARAC and the Trauma Board.

Key Message 2 – Providing clear and relevant information, where appropriate, on adult protection processes:

The Lead Officer has prioritised maintaining and updating the partnership's Adult Protection website to ensure that it is kept up-to-date and provides clear information and instructions to anyone needs to report concerns about an adult at risk of harm as well as ensuring that it contains the most up to date guidance documents, policies and procedures for professionals and stakeholders to access.

Following publication of the partnerships revised Adult Support and Protection Procedures and the implementation of new standardised templates for key processes, a number of briefing sessions were created and provided to practitioners in early 2023 and managers to ensure provide an overview and highlight key changes. These sessions were offered to staff again at the beginning of 2024 to refresh learning and to gather feedback from practitioners a year in to implementing the revised procedures.

The Adult Protection Committee's Dissemination strategy ensures that all guidelines, policies and procedures are shared with staff across the partnership so that they always have the most up-to-date documentation.

Key Message 3 – Providing information on how to access help about adult protection matters:

The Adult Protection website has a section which is specifically aimed at members of the public and individuals who may be at risk of harm. This section of the website contains clear and accessible information and instructions on how to access support with any Adult Support and Protection issues and it also includes a range of information, media items and links in various formats on specific topics for people to access.

The public protection website also has a section specifically targeted towards carers, parents and guardians of adults at risk of harm with a view to providing information and links to support them with navigating Adult Support and Protection processes in West Lothian including information about Independent Advocacy services. The website also provides links which signpost people to agencies that can provide support to carers such as Carers of West Lothian.

Key Message 4 – Promoting awareness of national and local developments:

As well as using the APC's Dissemination Strategy to cascade the most up-to-date information to staff, the partnership has also utilised national initiatives to raise awareness locally. For example, Adult Support and Protection Day, National Hoarding Awareness Week and Police Scotland's 'Shut Out Scammers' campaign were all widely publicised across local platforms along with information and guidance on how to get help or report any concerns that people might have about individuals at risk of harm. The Lead Officer for Adult Support and Protection worked collaboratively with Police Scotland's Public Protection Unit to attend the local senior people's forum in April 2024 to deliver a presentation on the topic of avoiding telephone and doorstep scams as well as providing some general awareness raising information on the topic of Adult Support and Protection.

A range of 7-minute briefings have been developed and disseminated across the partnership to support learning around national developments in a concise way by providing key information. 7-minute briefings are based on a technique developed by the FBI in the United States of America. The model is centred around research which suggests that seven minutes is an optimum length of time for people to concentrate and learn.

Examples of local 7-minute briefings include those created in relation to the topics of Criminal Exploitation, Forced Marriage, Trauma Informed Practice and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All 7-minute briefings are also stored on the Public Protection website for ease of access.

Having representation from the third sector on the Adult Protection Committee and the Quality Assurance subcommittee has ensured that the reach of awareness raising efforts has been extended with support from the Third Sector Interface. Offering places on Adult Support and Protection training courses to third sector providers has further enhanced the reach of attempts to raise awareness.

The involvement of people with lived experience was highlighted as an area for improvement following the joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection. As we have referenced in the service improvements section of this report, a short life working group was established to oversee actions within the inspection improvement plan to:

“Review the current mechanism for collating feedback from adults and carers involved in key ASP processes; and improve attendance of individuals, parents/carers to their case conference/case conference review meetings”.

Key Message 4 - Promoting awareness of national and local developments:

The short life working group, which was comprised of operational practitioners and key representatives from advocacy and third sector partners, explored a range of options to meet its intended outcomes and members reported on progress regularly to the Adult Protection Committee and Quality Assurance Subcommittee. The work of the above-mentioned short life working group has seen some positive achievements. The attendance of adults at their case conference meetings has improved significantly with support from Council Officers in building positive relationships and encouraging adults to attend their meetings.

Adult Protection Committee members are represented within the membership of a range of other key projects, committees and initiatives across the partnership in West Lothian that have links to Adult Support and Protection matters. Examples include the Carers Strategy Implementation Group, the Trauma Informed Practice Board, the Gender Based Violence Committee, the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, the Home First Programme and the Suicide Prevention Leadership Group. This not only provides an opportunity to raise awareness about Adult Support and Protection matters within these groups but it also ensures that there is a joined-up approach to work that crosses over various projects.

Whilst the Adult Protection Committee's Communication and Engagement Strategy has supported a range of efforts to raise awareness amongst the public and staff, the partnership has nevertheless recognised that engaging with and gathering feedback from individuals with lived experience of the ASP process in West Lothian can be challenging and is something that has been recognised as challenging on a national level. Representatives from the partnership have been engaging with the National Implementation Subgroup for Service User Engagement, Advocacy and Trauma Informed Practice to develop tools and guidance to support improvements in the area of engagement. As previously mentioned, the Quality Assurance subcommittee also plans to expand the previous short-life working group for lived experience to a wider community engagement group that will aim to further improve the partnerships approach to communication, engagement and involvement with adults at risk and their carers and/or relatives.

Throughout this biennial reporting period, the Adult Protection Committee, senior leaders and Chief Officers within the West Lothian partnership have prioritised areas for improvement as identified by the joint inspection in 2022 and the associated improvement plan. It was acknowledged by inspectors at the time of inspection that a number of recommendations for improvement had already been addressed by the partnership however, in areas where improvement actions were still required, senior managers and leaders took ownership of the actions to drive forward the required improvements.

The wide range of improvement activity carried out has been highlighted throughout this report and the resulting improvements in practice have been highlighted by the performance data that is collected and scrutinised by the Adult Protection Committee and Chief Officers. Whilst a number of notable and significant improvements have been made to date, there have also been some challenges which have arisen, identifying some key areas for improvement as we move forward in to the next biennial period.

Implementation of the inspection improvement plan has seen revised Adult Support and Protection procedures and standardised templates for key processes introduced. As these standardised templates have been embedded, the associated audit activity to monitor progress has highlighted some areas where the quality of these key processes could be further enhanced and these have been incorporated in to the Quality Assurance subcommittee's 2024-25 improvement plan.

Self-Evaluation

The Adult Protection Committee is committed to creating and maintaining a culture of continuous learning and improvement. A wide range of improvement activity has been undertaken in the last two years and the committee and its members intend to focus every effort to build on this and continue to improve the outcomes for adults at risk of harm in West Lothian. The partnership has implemented a Quality Assurance Framework document and the Quality Assurance subcommittee has adopted a revised approach to quality assurance using standardised templates for audit activity. In addition to this, membership of the Quality Assurance subcommittee was also refreshed during this biennial reporting period to ensure improved multiagency representation.

As the inspection improvement plan 2022-2024 draws to a close, the Adult Protection Committee plans to draft a revised improvement plan which will include undertaking an exercise in self-evaluation. Members of the Committee have been involved in workshops to review the Care Inspectorate's draft of a new Quality Improvement Framework with the finalised document due to be published in the summer of 2024. The Quality Improvement Framework and associated guidance will underpin the planning of our self-evaluation activity and will help to shape the resulting improvement actions.

Engagement and Lived Experience

The previous section of this report highlighted work undertaken to date to improve the involvement of individuals with lived experience in ASP processes and also noted the challenges that have been recognised both locally and nationally. The Adult Protection Committee and Quality Assurance subcommittee intend to focus on further improvements in this area as we move in to the next reporting period with plans to develop a community engagement group. The work of this group will be supported by the development of tools and guidance documents by the Care Inspectorate and the National Implementation Subgroup for Service User Engagement which are expected to be published in 2024/25.

Recording of Adult Support and Protection Matters by Health Staff

It has been noted that NHS Lothian have carried out improvement activity and implemented quality assurance measures to improve the consistent recording of Adult Support and Protection information on the health recording system. This remains an area for improvement and there are plans to introduce quarterly audits in West Lothian in 2024 which will allow for scrutiny of an increased number of local files.

The Quality Assurance subcommittee has incorporated this in to its 2024-25 workplan with plans to carry out case review audits in December 2024 which will examine the records for all agencies involved in a random sample of Adult Support and Protection investigations.

Cost of Living

There is no doubt that cost of living continues to present challenges both locally and nationally. The West Lothian partnership will continue to publicise and promote information and support available to individuals who may find themselves experiencing financial hardship. The Adult Protection Committee will also continue working collaboratively with the DWPs Advanced Customer Support Team to raise awareness of specialist supports available to staff who are supporting individuals in receipt of benefits who may be at risk of financial harm.

Online harm and Artificial Intelligence

It has been noted that some collaborative work between the ASP Lead Officer and Police Scotland was carried out in this reporting period with the West Lothian Senior People's forum to raise awareness and provide advice on how best to avoid being scammed. As technology continues to advance at a rapid pace with the capabilities of artificial intelligence ever increasing, it is anticipated that this will present new challenges in the form of online criminal activity. The Adult Protection Committee is committed to working collaboratively with partner agencies to manage the threat posed by online criminal activity with topic-specific training and awareness raising efforts that are targeted to specific groups of people who may be most at risk of harm.

The West Lothian Partnership is fully committed to an ethos of continuous improvement in order to meet the central aim of the Adult Protection Committee's vision that *"All adults at risk should be safe, supported and protected from harm"*.

Looking forward, the partnership aims to ensure not only that a culture of continuous improvement underpins all Adult Support and Protection activity but also that the positive messages from the joint inspection and the resulting improvements in practice are sustained. As the Adult Protection Committee begins work to draft its new improvement plan for 2024-2026 some key areas of focus over the next reporting period will be:

- ➔ Building on the work undertaken to improve the involvement of adults at risk in their case conference meetings and exploring new approaches to engaging with and gathering feedback from individuals with lived experience of the Adult Support and Protection process in West Lothian
- ➔ Further enhancing the suite of training and learning opportunities available to staff across the partnership with a focus on increasing opportunities for staff to take part in topic-specific training sessions that are targeted to improving knowledge and understanding on key issues for adults at risk of harm
- ➔ Implementing Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's national minimum dataset and analysing any findings published by the Scottish Government to identify any potential local areas for improvement
- ➔ Continuing work to build on the improvements achieved in relation to key Adult Support and Protection processes with a focus on refining quality by carrying out audit activity to identify learning points
- ➔ Utilising the Adult Protection Committee's dissemination strategy and local learning events to ensure that any key learning points from audit activity or learning reviews are shared with staff across the partnership in a consistent manner
- ➔ Utilising the Care Inspectorate's Quality Improvement Framework to plan and undertake an exercise in self-evaluation of Adult Support and Protection across the partnership and incorporating any identified areas for improvement into the Adult Protection Committee's improvement plan
- ➔ Having an awareness both at a local and national level of any new and emerging issues and prioritising these accordingly

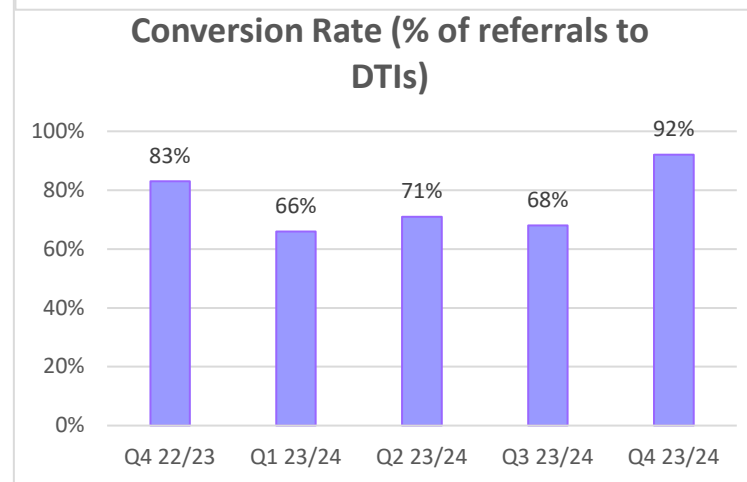
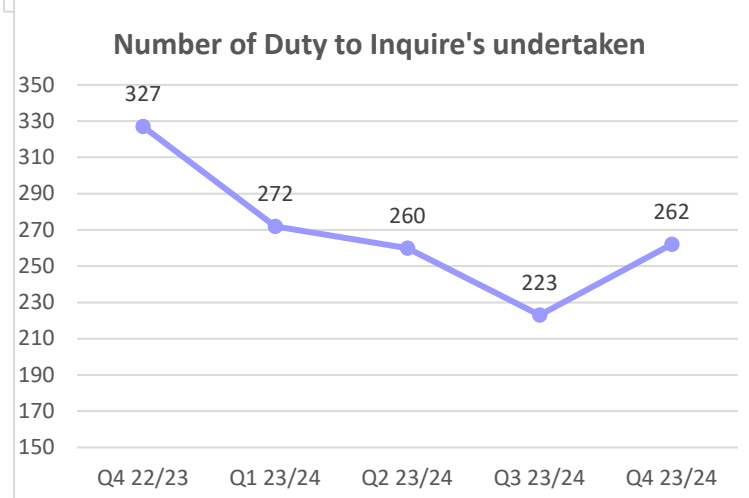
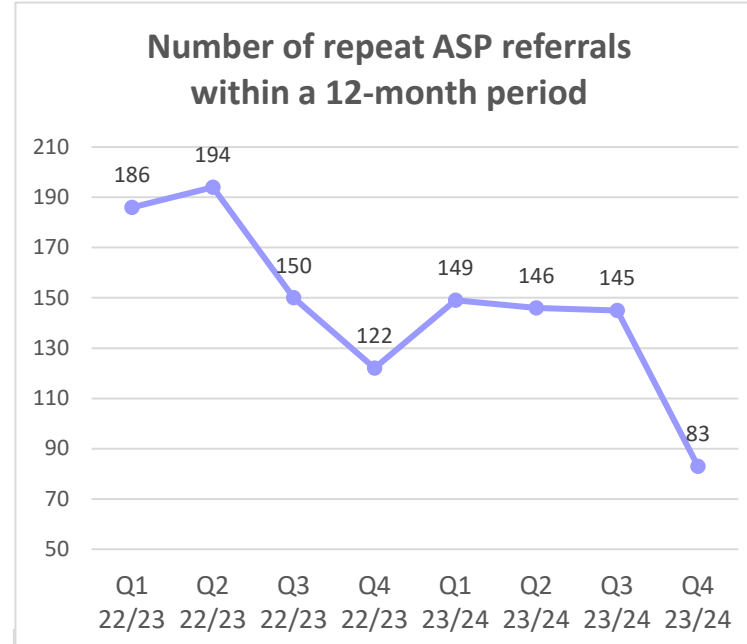
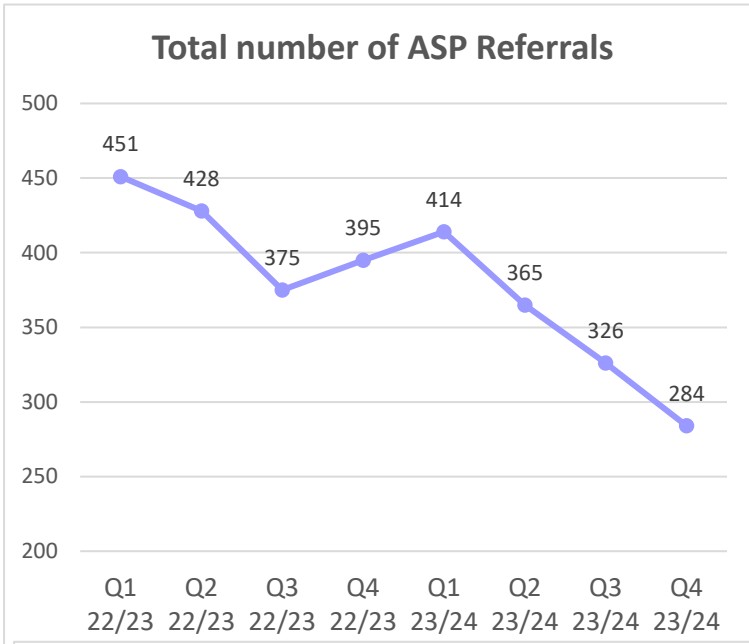
As the Care Inspectorate begins Phase 2 of its joint inspections in August 2024, the West Lothian partnership is satisfied that positive progress has been made and that plans are in place for ongoing continuous improvement. Throughout this report we have highlighted a range of improvement activity and the associated positive impact in practice and performance data which have helped to improve outcomes for adults at risk of harm in West Lothian. Potential challenges have also been recognised and discussed in detail and as we move forward we intend to dedicate efforts to overcoming these barriers wherever possible.

Members of the Adult Protection Committee and its subcommittees will continue to represent West Lothian in national forums and working groups, working collaboratively to improve outcomes for adults at risk at a national level as well as locally.

The Adult Protection Committee is intent on continuing with the momentum that has built over the last two years to further improve and enhance Adult Support and Protection processes in West Lothian. This will be achieved by further enriching the culture of learning in West Lothian by providing current and relevant learning opportunities to staff on an ongoing basis and continuing with the effective collaborative partnership working arrangements already in place across the partnership.



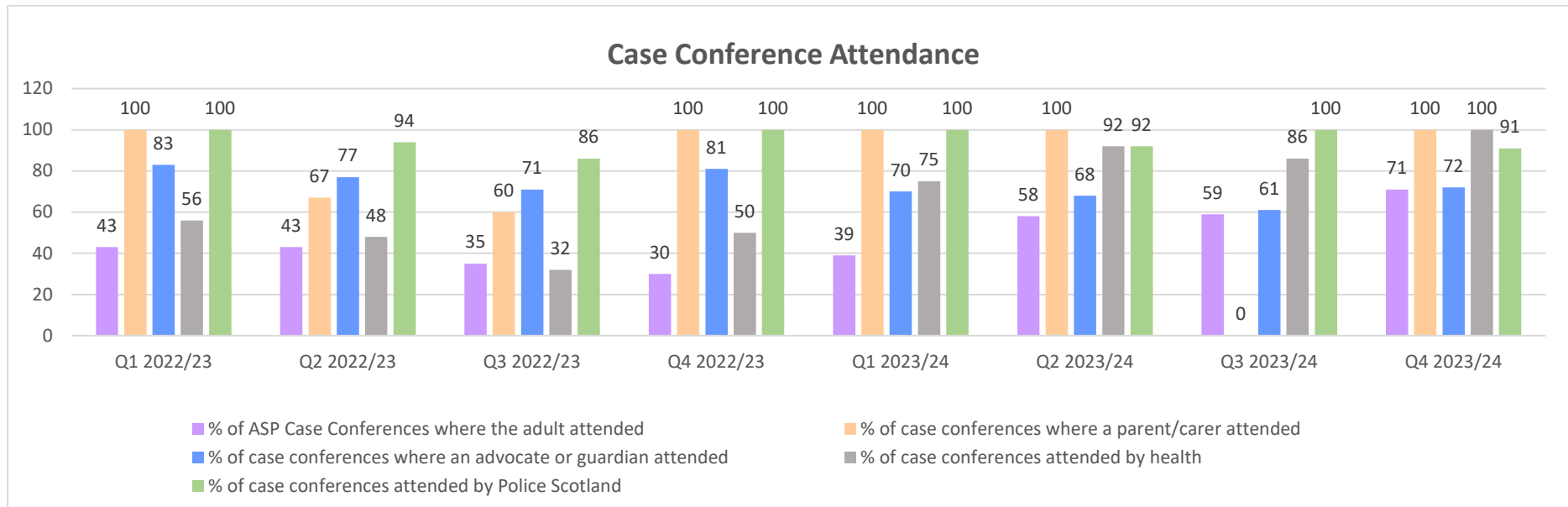
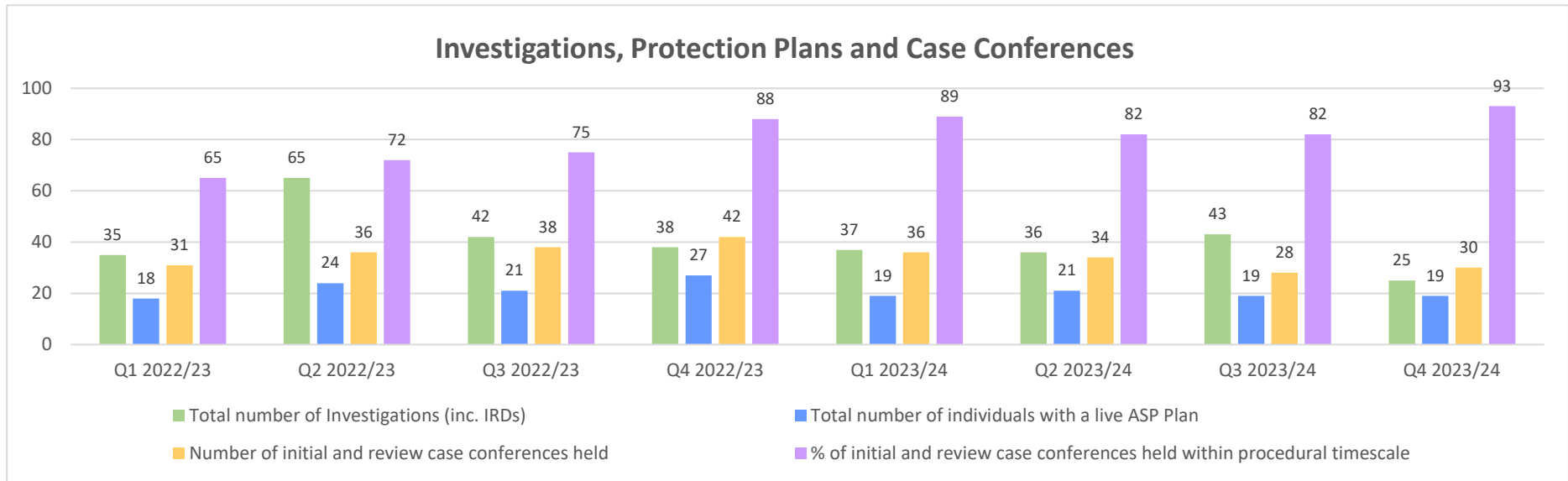
Appendix A



*Note the recording of this data commenced in Q4 of 2022/23 therefore we do not hold two years' worth of data for this key process.

*Note the recording of this data commenced in Q4 of 2022/23 therefore we do not hold two years' worth of data for this key process.

Appendix B



Appendix C

Investigations/Inquiries with Investigatory Powers

*Note that the metrics for gathering this data differ slightly due to the introduction of the new minimum dataset.

Year	% of investigations/ inquiries with investigatory powers carried out for Females	% of investigations/ inquiries with investigatory powers carried out for Males	Top age category	Top three client groups	Top three primary type of harm	Top three location of harm
2015/2016	60%	40%	40-64	1. Infirmary due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Financial Harm 3. Psychological Harm	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Not Known
2016/2017	53%	47%	40-64	1. Mental Health 2. Infirmary due to age 3. Joint Dementia and Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Psychological Harm 3. Financial Harm	1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home
2017/2018	70%	30%	40-64	1. Infirmary due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Financial Harm 3. Psychological Harm	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Other private address
2018/2019	62%	38%	40-64	1. Mental Health 2. Infirmary due to age 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Other 3. Financial Harm	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Not Known
2019/2020	66%	34%	40-64	1. Infirmary 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	51%	49%	80-84	1. Infirmary 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	55%	45%	40-64	1. Mental Health 2. Infirmary due to age 3. Physical Disability	1. Physical Harm 2. Sexual Harm 3. Neglect	1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home
2022/2023	60%	40%	40-64	1. Physical Disability 2. Mental Health 3. Infirmary due to age	1. Neglect 2. Financial Harm 3. Physical Harm	1. Own Home 2. Not Known 3. Care Home
2023/2024	57%	43%	40-64	1. Infirmary due to age 2. Mental Health 3. Dementia	1. Financial Harm 2. Physical Harm 3. Self-Neglect	1. Own Home 2. Care Home 3. Public Place

