



North Lanarkshire
Adult Protection
Committee

**North Lanarkshire
Adult Protection Committee's Biennial Report
2022- 2024**

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Preface

This is the eighth Biennial Report from the North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee (APC) and covers the period April 2022 to March 2024.

This report highlights the multifaceted areas of development undertaken during this reporting period as our aims for the two years to come. At the time of the previous biennial report, we were awaiting the Care Inspectorate's joint multi-agency adult support and protection inspection.

The Care Inspectorate's report was published in November 2022 and highlighted key strengths and areas for improvement. Significantly it recognised that "Adults at risk of harm had improved safety, health and wellbeing because of the diligent work of partnership staff." (Care Inspectorate, 2022). Other areas of strength included the prompt, efficient and effective conduction of inquiries; a significant strength was the use of independent advocacy, and risk assessments were mostly highlighted as good with some areas for improvement. The inspection has supported us to celebrate the good practice of adult support and protection practice across multi-agencies in North Lanarkshire, evidencing progress and building on this to consider areas for improvement.

The multi-agency inspection, national and local learning have assisted us to develop a focused business plan presenting a high-level framework for the period of 1st of April 2024 to 31st March 2026, to reflect the next biennial reporting period.

We have welcomed the support from national bodies with the publications of various guidance including the new Adult Support and Protection Codes of Practice by the Scottish Government (2022) and the subsequent implementation of the four National Implementation Groups. The national consideration of best practice around Adult Support and Protection has assisted our work on a local level.

The Learning Review Guidance for Adult Protection Committees published in 2022 by the Scottish Government has added significant value to how we consider and undertake learning reviews. We continue to work towards strengthening the relationship between local partners' learning review processes to ensure that learning is shared among all partners

Furthermore, we recognise and appreciate the work of Iriss with the many research and development opportunities that they have supported including the publications of the Chronologies in Adult Support and Protection: moving from current to best (2023) and the Adult Support and Protection: everyone's business (2023).

We have seen some changes to committee membership over the last two years however the commitment of all members, new and existing continues to be high and a culture of collaboration and shared governance remains.

There have been a few changes to the adult protection committee team during the reporting period with the departure of Marian Martin as interim convenor, and my arrival as the new independent convenor in April 2023. Heather Irving who came into post in January 2020, has continued to lead as the Adult Protection Co-ordinator. Also in 2023, Johanna Johnston joined the committee team as a learning and development senior officer and Audrey McGhie as the new administrative assistant.

Our last biennial report highlighted the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. This information in this report reflects our drive to look forward as we moved out of Covid restrictions and our commitment to continue to support our communities, adults and services, ensuring through our vision that adults in North Lanarkshire are safer as a result of the support, protection and services they receive.

Supporting information for this biennial report can be accessed on the North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee website at www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/adultprotection/



Judith Tait

Independent Convenor

North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee



Heather Irving

Adult protection coordinator

What your data tells you

Summary of Adult Support and Protection Activity 2022-2024

The following overview is based on data collated from adult at risk referrals received by social work services. The data is collated via internal monitoring and recording systems, and the data gathered refers to adult support and protection inquiries and investigations. North Lanarkshire Council is currently in the process of implementing a new recording system across social work services for children and adults. MOSAIC will help us strengthen our data reporting arrangements in line with the minimum data set requirements.

For the purpose of this report, we will report on inquiries with and without investigative activity.

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a detailed breakdown of the data

Overview of data

In 2022/23 social work received a total of 3,037 adult at risk (AAR) referrals with an increase to 3,315 AAR referrals in 2023/24. This meant that a total of 6,352 AAR referrals were submitted to social work in the reporting period, an increase of over 30% (1,492 referrals) from the previous reporting period (2020/22). The referral rates over the last two years are the highest recorded in North Lanarkshire. Trends continue to be monitored and analysed to understand the significant increase. Collated data shows that there has been an increase of referrals being submitted by care home staff. In the previous reporting year (2020-2022), care home referrals accounted for 18% of the overall AAR referrals submitted. This increased to 32% of the AAR referrals in 2022-2024.

Types of harm and presentation

Physical harm has been recorded as the primary harm type during the reporting years 2022/24 rising to 3,038 (48%) of the referrals. Emotional and psychological harm was the second highest reported harm at 1,656 (26%). This is a shift from the previous biennial reporting period where emotional and psychological harm made up the highest number of AAR referrals and physical harm was the second highest reported primary harm type.

Self-neglect remains the third highest reported primary harm type with a total of 589 referrals followed by financial harm of 488 referrals.

The percentage of AAR referrals received from care homes remained consistently high during the reporting period and made up 32% (2,060) of all referrals with a slight increase from 2022/23 to 2023/24. This is likely to have contributed to the overall increase in physical harm referrals as a small survey relating to AAR referrals

from care homes (also discussed below) found that physical harm was the most common harm type recorded with 48% of adults audited experiencing physical harm. This was further broken down into specific categories to support our understanding of the type of physical harm that has occurred. The most common type of physical harm found in care homes was unwitnessed falls (37%), medication errors (27%) and service user altercations (22%).

Source of adult at risk referrals

We continue to see a wide range of AAR referral sources, reflecting good awareness of adult protection across all partners. This information is monitored through our Monitoring, Reporting and Practice Improvement Sub Committee, and reflects the ongoing investment by partners in both training and procedures.

Health and GP practices submitted 1228 (19%) referrals during the reporting years, which reflects an increased awareness and activity from NHSL partners regarding clinical concerns. Social work colleagues submitted 808 (13%) and Police Scotland submitted 739 (12%) of all AAR referrals.

There has been a steady increase of referrals between 2022/23 and 2023/24 from most agencies, however it is worth noting that referrals from Police Scotland increased by 24% between the two years which is a further increase from the previous reporting period. Similarly, a high number of Adult Concern Reports are also submitted by Police Scotland. This refers to reports where Police Scotland did not deem the adult met the adult protection threshold and are not subject to the same legislative requirements. A total of 4,706 Adult Police Concerns were submitted in 2022/23 and 4,340 in 2023/24.

As indicated in [Appendix One](#), we continue to see appropriate referral rates from partners such as Housing Services and Scottish Fire & Rescue (SF&R). We have seen a rise in referrals arising from these areas in relation to self-neglect, and hoarding issues. SF&R have also been notably active regarding risks identified through their timely responses to home fire safety activity. This links with the ongoing work between the APC and the Monitoring, Reporting and Practice Improvement Sub Committee to ensure multi-agency scrutiny.

Adult at risk referrals for residents in care homes

As highlighted above, AAR referrals from care homes have significantly increased over the last two years and work is ongoing to provide support and advice to the care home sector in North Lanarkshire. The work within this area commenced in the previous reporting years with strong links developed between the Care Home Assurance Team and partner agencies across North and South Lanarkshire. A joint approach across both North and South Lanarkshire has been essential to ensure consistent practice and support are established. The Adult Protection Coordinator continues to be a member of the Care Home Collaborative Group as well as other working groups that have been established to support this area of work.

The Pan-Lanarkshire Care Home Task Group has been established which incorporates members from multi-agency partners across Pan-Lanarkshire with direct or indirect links with care homes as part of their regular core roles. Members include representatives from Care home Liaison Team, NHS Lanarkshire, social work with a link

to Adult Support Protection and Quality Assurance Roles and a representative from the Care Inspectorate.

Audit activity

The task group undertook a small audit with a total of 40 cases reviewed (20 in North and 20 in South). The audit focused on the type of harm, case type, whether the referral met the criteria for an adult at risk of harm referral and the outcomes for the adults at risk of harm. Although this was a small-scale audit, it identified key themes – including that most of the referrals (83%) were deemed to fit the criteria for an adult at risk of harm referral. 17% of referrals did not meet the criteria for adult support and protection.

A survey was also circulated to the care homes within North and South Lanarkshire. Managers and staff members (including nurses and care staff) were encouraged to respond to the survey. Although a limited number of replies were received – 7 in North Lanarkshire, a theme which emerged Pan-Lanarkshire related to inconsistent messages about what constitutes an adult support and protection concern from public bodies including the Care Inspectorate, social work, and NHS.

The Pan-Lanarkshire Care Home Task Group are currently working on brief guidance for care homes considering the roles of all the public bodies relating to Adult Support and Protection.

Action taken

A pan-Lanarkshire safety huddle has been established and meets on a fortnightly basis. The group has representatives from NHS Lanarkshire, including mental health nurses and Care Home Liaison Team, Infection Prevention team, senior officers from social work in both North and South Lanarkshire, Quality Assurance Team from North Lanarkshire, and a representative from the Care Inspectorate. The purpose of this group is to consider any emerging trends of concerns relating to any specific care home. Information gathered and analysed forms the basis of any intervention required to prevent escalation of actual harm to residents.

In addition, adult support and protection referrals submitted by care homes within North Lanarkshire are being reviewed on a weekly basis by the senior officer in social work for Adult Support and Protection and the North Lanarkshire Quality Assurance Team. This again supports social work to consider any emerging trends and patterns which are also shared with locality social work teams to ensure that they are aware of any ongoing concerns.

The North Lanarkshire quality assurance team continues to play a vital role in supporting the development of staff across care homes. They continue to promote and share learning and development opportunities for relevant staff.

Following scrutiny pan-Lanarkshire there are some key themes emerging such as adult support and protection referrals from care homes which highlight concerns regarding falls and frailty. A working group has therefore been established which is looking at this specific theme with the aim of a guidance being produced for care home staff.

It is worth noting that there have been significant endeavours to establish the reasons for the increase of adult

support and protection referrals being submitted and ensure that these concerns can be addressed. Anticipating the continuation of high volume of referrals, we foresee this as ongoing work.

Adult support and protection inquire without and with investigative activity 2022-2024

As per the legislation and North Lanarkshire procedures, all AAR referrals received by Adult Social Work services received at least an inquiry without investigative activity.

A total of 902 referrals led to the investigative activity over the two reporting years with an overall conversion rate in both years of 14%. This is a decrease since the previous reporting period.

The new adult support and protection procedures for North Lanarkshire was published just after the end of the reporting period, in April 2024 and in line with the Scottish Government's new Adult Support and Protection Code of Practice (2022), it introduced the new language of inquiries without and with investigative activity and with the clear guidance of what it considered an investigative activity, in line with legislation. Although now out with this reporting period, we are already seeing a change in the conversion rate reflecting an increase in the usage of investigative activity. In addition, a new social work case management system is being implemented which will support the change of language and recording.

The profile of adults involved in inquiries with investigative activity saw 319 (36%) identified as having a physical disability. This was followed by mental health (173 - 20%) infirmity due to old age (147 – 17%). This follows the same trend from the previous reporting year.

Case conference and reviews

There were 356 adult protection case conferences during 2022-24, which included 207 initial case conferences and 149 review case conferences. This shows a conversion rate of 16% (2022-23) and 14% (2023-24) from inquiries with investigative activity to case conference.

Some caution should be applied when considering inquiries to case conference data as local audits have highlighted that data from social work performance database is not a fully accurate reflection of the inquiries progressing to case conference. This is mainly due to non-completion of some recording screens and there is ongoing work to rectify this. It is expected that the implementation of MOSAIC in the near future will mitigate some of these discrepancies.

Statutory Orders

In 2022-24, the Council sought and were granted 15 protection orders which is similar to the previous reporting period:

- 2 Removal Orders,
- 8 Temporary Banning Orders, and
- 5 Full Banning Orders (all with a power of arrest).

Large Scale Investigations

Notification and updates of LSIs are standing items on both the adult protection committee and Chief Officer Group for Public Protection agendas. There has been two Large Scale Investigation in the reporting period. One of them commenced in the previous reporting period and concluded in the end of April 2022. This related to a care home facility for adults over the age of 18 with complex support and care needs. The second one pertained to one care home facility for adults over the age of 65 with complex nursing care needs.

Although no other Large-Scale Investigations commenced, there was consideration for the requirement of this regarding other care home facilities. Multi-agency partners have worked closely with care homes to address any identified concerns out with the formal Large Scale Investigation process.

A new Large Scale Investigation procedure and tool kit was published during the time which highlighted the need for flexible approaches to address concerns with a least restrictive approach for service users and their loved ones.

Learning Reviews

North Lanarkshire has an established Learning Review Executive Group with senior representatives from APC partner agencies. This ensures multi agency engagement and decisions regarding progression of notifications are taken jointly between partners.

There is ongoing work to ensure that local systems are in place to strengthen the link between the APC Learning Review notifications, NHS SAER and fire fatalities processes to ensure that learning is shared among partners. Although it does not fall within this this reporting year, we feel it is important to highlight that specific learning review training was commissioned in early 2024 and has now been undertaken by representatives from child and adult protection committees and their partners which aims to strengthen our approach to systems learning.

In the current reporting period, North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee has received a total of 12 notifications for consideration for a learning review. This has been a significant increase since the previous reporting period where there were four notifications. However, with the support of the Scottish Government's 2022 Learning Review Guidance the partnership has strengthened the processes and understanding of the criteria for a notification for learning review with additional training offered to staff who may submit and or provide information relating to a notification.

Although outwith the reporting period, five notifications have been received so far this year and four of them have been recommended for learning reviews. The training mentioned above has supported staff to feel equipped and skilled to undertake learning reviews. We recognise that the significant increase in notifications and commissioning of reviews may cause challenges in resourcing learning reviews.

Seven of the notifications were received from social work, three from health colleagues and two from Police Scotland. There was no learning reviews completed during the reporting period however five learning reviews

and one strategic overview report pertaining to three of the learning reviews were commissioned. No further actioned was agreed for two of the notifications as they did not meet the criteria for a learning review.

The Learning Review Executive Group agreed that the other five notifications that did not meet the criteria for a learning review still had learning identified and reflective reviews were agreed for these. One such reflective learning review identified concerns of a long lie within a care home setting which contributed to a service user's death. Following this review long lie guidance is being produced which aims to support the care home and care at home sector.

Another reflective review considered the need for clearer understanding from multi-agency partners regarding the impact of Domestic Abuse and links with multi-agency risk assessments. This continues to be a key consideration and the learning from this is being taken forward with joint working across multi-agency partners and links across the APC and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) workplan. A joint guidance on Adult Support and Protection and Domestic Abuse is underway.

Specific reviews pertaining to a care home facility

A significant piece of work pertains to the three learning reviews and one overview strategic review mentioned above. This work commenced during this reporting year and is now reaching the final stages. This relates to a care home facility that was subjected to a Large Scale Investigation in 2021-2022.

The scope for the reviews was created to be sufficiently practice informed to ensure that the learning from the LSI and the individual residents' experiences would be drawn out. It is likely that several individual residents would have met the criteria for a Learning Review however, it was agreed by the APC that a formal learning review of all cases would not be proportionate to the learning it would bring. The APC therefore agreed to commission separate learning reviews for three individuals as representatives of a proportionate sample from the residents at the time of the LSI, whose experiences includes key profiles and concerns of residents in the care home. These three individual reviews have their own separate review teams. Given the potential local and national significance of these reviews, it was agreed that the three individual reviews would not be published but rather an overview, strategic review would be undertaken with the findings and learning of each individual review combined into a final published report with recommendations.

These reviews are particularly complex and consider the many complex needs and impact on the service users, the high level of scrutiny at the time of the Large Scale Investigation and the ongoing requirement of significant multi-agency involvement from partners across Scotland.

During these reviews, it has been important for us to ensure that we had a robust wellbeing strategy for the staff involved. Many staff had considerable involvement with the care home at the time of the LSI and it was clear that reflecting and analysing the period of their involvement came with some anxiety. Our wellbeing strategy ensured that we had representatives from NHS Lanarkshire Psychological services on hand at every workshop and individual wellbeing sessions were held prior and during the review period. Each staff member

was also made aware that they could contact psychological services for support at any time – prior, during and after the process. From evaluations, staff have been very clear that this approach had significant value in how they managed the process, and they felt supported and valued.

Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements

As highlighted in the Scottish Government Guidance for Adult Protection Committees (2022) North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee has a self-evaluation strategy that plans quality assurance activity throughout the year. This aims to maximise learning and identify areas of good practice and areas of improvement to ensure that adults within the council area are living free from risk of harm. All findings are routinely submitted to the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection for consideration and action.

We have also been members of the Self-evaluation National Implementation Group as well as part of this group working closely with in consultation with with the Care Inspectorate on their ongoing work regarding the Quality Improvement Framework for adult support and protection.

Adult support and protection procedures

In line with the new Adult Support and Protection Code of Practice from the Scottish Government (2022), North Lanarkshire has updated the local adult support and protection procedure. NHS Lanarkshire updated their procedures in August 2023. The social work procedure was published on the 1st April 2024 and introduced significant changes in the way adult support and protection is practiced in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire has had representatives on all the National Implementation Groups which has supported the implementation of the procedures. National and local audits and understanding of practice have also supported the changes to procedures which incorporated the improvement areas highlighted by the Care Inspectorate inspection in 2022.

The procedures highlight the significant change of the use of language – no longer considering inquires and investigations but the adult support and protection process as an inquiry without or with the use of investigative activity. This makes it clearer for practitioners when an inquiry requires the use of a council officer (utilising investigative activity) to ensure best practice for adults at risk of harm and the legislation to be followed.

As expected, this requires an increase in council officer capacity and social work services are considering how to best support the training and development of social workers who are ready and able to undertake the council officer role.

A key area for improvement which was highlighted in the previous biennial report and the Care Inspectorate inspection in 2022 was the use and quality of risk assessments and chronologies. As a result, a significant change to the ASP procedures has been made to introduce a multi-agency risk assessment and information request form. This document can be utilised by council officers to request information from partner agencies under section 5 and section 10 of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The aim is to support early information sharing and improve multi-agency risk assessments. It allows partner agencies to consider their role

in the adult's life, their views and assessment of risk. The request also asks for any significant event in chronological order that they may hold of the adult.

Lifelong chronologies

The adult and child protection committees are working together with partner agencies to improve the lives of adults and children at risk of harm living in North Lanarkshire. Single and multi-agency chronologies serve as an important part of any adult and child protection process. The ability to review significant events, identify and understand the impact of trauma and loss in a chronological order, from all relevant parties, will support risk assessment by identifying key risk and protective factors. This facilitates the development of effective shared protection plans in order to mitigate risk of harm.

Agencies involved with both adult and child committees have together agreed that implementation of lifelong chronologies is vital to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and adults. This approach has also been agreed at the North Lanarkshire Public Protection Chief Officers Group.

A lifelong chronologies working group has been established to support this work with the recognition that the approach requires a wider scope when focused on protection concerns – and the aim is to ensure that chronologies are embedded in everyday assessment practice across partners, not only commenced when a threshold of risk has been met. The focus of the group has been on scoping current practice around chronologies/significant events as well as what members feel is required to implement lifelong chronologies. This work is anticipated to be long-term and requires significant commitment from partner agencies to support.

Contextual and Transitional Safeguarding

The child protection committee and adult protection committees are working closely to support young people. We recognise the overlaps in legislation and agencies responsibilities to safeguard young people. The child protection committee holds the governance for the developing approach to Contextual Safeguarding in North Lanarkshire which is also promoted and supported by the adult protection committee.

Transitional Safeguarding - 'safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives' (Holmes & Smale, 2018).

North Lanarkshire APC has recognised the importance of supporting young people regardless of whether they are care experienced or not. The governance of this work is sitting within the adult protection committee but incorporates actions with the APC and CPC.

We have through a small pot of funding been supported in our scoping and discovery work by Professor Gillain Ruch and Dr Nathalie Huegler for the University of Sussex. Through this, we are also being supported by Dez Holmes, Director of Research in Practice, who developed the transitional safeguarding approach.

This support has already proved crucial and has led to a number of sessions supporting our scoping of how transitional safeguarding may look in Scotland and specifically North Lanarkshire. This provides a real opportunity for supported scope and development in how we offer early and protection focused support to young people/adults.

Our work is further supported by the learning from the development of contextual safeguarding approaches via the CPC, and agenda which has a clear and positive relationship with transitional safeguarding approach.

Multi-agency and collaborative practices

Multi-agency work has been high on the agenda for partners within the APC. One such example is Police Scotland's initiative in response to improvement required following the multi-agency inspection regarding police attendance at case conferences and involvement in ASP processed.

On 1st November 2023, Risk & Concern Hub launched a dedicated ASP Team consisting of two civilian members of police staff and one police officer supervised by a Detective Sergeant.

The ASP Team's remit:

- Completion of all ASP meeting research
- Recording and monitoring of divisional ASP meeting attendance
- Attendance of ASP multi agency meetings (prioritising initial case conferences and meetings for nominals deemed to be highest risk within the division)
- Continuous professional development of ASP knowledge/experience via training/CPD events

The launch of the ASP team has significantly improved police attendance and contribution to ASP meetings and by January 2024, the ASP team achieved their goal of 100% attendance rate at ASP initial case conferences and ASP planning meetings.

The ASP team's performance has resulted in:

- Lanarkshire police division's increased profile within ASP meetings thus improved information sharing, protection planning and mitigation of risk to the most vulnerable adults in our community
- Strengthening partnership working between Police, social work and NHS Lanarkshire in the area of ASP
- Lightening of the workload of divisional Community Police

GP Practices

There is also ongoing work to strengthen the relationship between local GP practices and social work department during the adult protection process. A local survey was completed where locality social work teams were asked to comment on the involvement of GP practices in the ASP process. It was highlighted that few teams felt that they were receiving proportionate support and information from practices when they contacted them. Local social work teams recognise the considerable strain GP practices are under, and the APC is currently in the process of considering how best support GP practices to be part of the process and provide relevant information.

Audit activity analysis

The APC organises regular multi-agency audits of practice. One such audit was undertaken in March 2024 and focused on the use of investigative activities under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The

audit utilised the Care Inspectorate audit tool. In terms of findings, good practice was noted across partner agencies with strengths in collaborative working and multi-agency information being shared, timescales were adhered to, there were examples of high-quality risk assessments and evidence of trauma informed practice.

Improvement areas centred on the need for more consistent high standard practice around risk assessments, risk management plans and chronologies.

In addition, there have been specific audits to take a closer look at practice in care homes, financial harm and police concern reports. All which have highlighted strengths in partnership working and collaborative practice.

Training, learning and development

The Learning and Development Sub-Committee workplan details the breadth of single and multi-agency training provision and learning opportunities for the adult protection committee partners in order to maintain and support skills and knowledge. In 2020, the APC Pandemic Recovery Plan recognised the impact of, and challenges arising from the pandemic. A priority was to ensure staff remained skilled and confident in an evolving environment. Multi and single agency adult protection training provision was redesigned and developed as a virtual model. This had a positive impact on staff development and evaluated well. Since then, this model has partially remained to support more staff to attend the training. It was however, also recognised that some staff prefer face-to-face learning, and some training sessions have therefore been facilitated in this way. The 2024 training schedule provides a blended model with some sessions being online and some being face-to-face to support different learning needs.

As highlighted in the previous biennial report, the COGPP jointly funded a temporary senior learning and development post for the adult protection committee to support the continues improvement activity. The post was filled on a temporary basis from July 2023. Funding was extended and the post has since been made permanent.

Multi-agency adult support and protection training, briefings and events were delivered to a total of 389 people across 19 teams/agencies in 2022-2023 and 2157 people from 21 teams/agencies in 2023-2024. Some of the increase in attendance across services is as a result of the increased capacity of the NL APC to facilitate more training and development sessions for, and with, partner agencies since the appointment of the senior officer for learning and development. This included increasing the number and frequency of training sessions for existing training, the reintroduction of Multi-agency Forums and development of Second Worker Training. The increased capacity has also enabled the NL APC to provide support for single-agency training and development.

There has been a significant increase in Home Support Workers and Managers receiving Adult Support and Protection training. This had been a recognised gap within the service and the NL APC supported in the training and development of home support workers. There were also two bespoke Multi-agency Adult Support and Protection Training delivered by the NL APC to Service Delivery Managers.

Additionally, there was also a significant rise in other North Lanarkshire employees being trained. This increase was mostly contributed by the Streetscene winter training programme.

The APC's multi-agency training continues to be adapted to reflect national and local learning, strengthening input on executive and decisional abilities and considering any adverse impact of executive dysfunction, consideration around "unable and unwilling" to work with services, increased understanding of Trauma and importance of Trauma Informed Practice.

We evaluate all courses and consistently receive excellent evaluation from attendees of 88 to 100% rating. We adapt the courses in direct response to comments, for example, introduction of separate webinars considering how to complete an Adult Support and Protection referral.

We ask participants to identify how they will change their practice following training. The responses below reflect common comments:

“Being aware that sometimes subtle clues of abuse could be significant and not to ignore or assume. Having the confidence to acknowledge or question it with the individual”

“To show more patience and to listen more with my service users and not to judge them too quickly.”

We also circulate a six-monthly post training evaluation form where we ask attendees how (if) the training has had an impact on their practice. Some of the responses are reflected here:

“I have been involved in submitting an Adult Support and Protection referral. When raising this referral, I was questioned on my reasoning for submitting the referral and I feel the information obtained during training supported me in my argument to justify why I was submitting the referral.”

“I have used my learning to better understand the analysis I undertake looking at AP1 referrals from Care Homes and Independent Providers.”

We have also gathered anecdotal information on the impact of training including the impact a bespoke training session had on the North Lanarkshire Quality Assurance Team. As a result of the training day and the discussions which were facilitated, various actions were agreed to ensure consistency in approach, on-going learning and to build upon data collated and analysed – including the development of procedure and processes.

We also established, in early 2023, an Assessing the Impact of Training working group with the aim to develop tools and approach on how best to assess the impact of training out with the gathering of data. The development of an APC competency framework has supported shaping the initial consideration around Support Conversations. A pilot for this is currently ongoing.

Specific training

As well as the Multi-agency Adult Support and Protection training Level 1 and Level 2 training, North Lanarkshire APC and partners are committed to address specific areas for improvement. Some of these are highlighted below.

Each year, NLC supports qualified social workers to attend the Adult Services, Support and Protection Post Graduate Certificate at University of Stirling. In 2023, the council supported two places. This annual commitment means that a significant number of social workers and senior practitioners can cascade expertise within their locality teams and support wider training delivery as applicable.

Council Officer training

The council officer training programme in North Lanarkshire is led by social work services. Prior to attending council officer training social workers will require to attend the multi-agency adult support and protection training facilitated by the APC. Following this and in agreement with their senior social worker, social workers will undertake an additional three-day training council officer training. A further half day has been added to support council officers to complete the procedural paperwork. During this reporting period a total of 55 social workers across community care, addiction and mental health services were supported through the council officer training.

Neglect and Hoarding

North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire deliver joint neglect and hoarding training which is always well attended and appreciated. This reflects the significant profile of neglect, self-neglect and hoarding harm currently identified across Lanarkshire. The training is provided to reflect identified need in this area and evaluation confirms this training is helpful. This also supports the continued work of the Pan-Lanarkshire Neglect Task Group who support best practice in this field. The Pan-Lanarkshire group has worked on a Neglect and Hoarding Toolkit which will be launched in early 2025.

North Lanarkshire has also hosted a “Neglect across the Lifespan” event which was hosted jointly by the adult and child protection committees and focused on the importance of working with a full family approach. Pan-Lanarkshire APCs continue to develop this area of work including being one of learning partners the newly formed Hoarding Taskforce led by Iriss.

Second Worker Training

It was highlighted in local audits and the Care Inspectorate Audit in 2022 that an area for improvement was that professionals such as health professionals should accompany the council officer when there is a clear health role. North Lanarkshire recognises the importance of supporting the role of the second worker to ensure that the person performing the role is skilled and knowledgeable. It has, as mentioned earlier in this report also been highlighted that because of the increased pressure on council officers, that utilising second workers from different teams/agencies to support would be beneficial.

To support this approach, a briefing document has been developed and distributed to agencies and staff who may perform the role of the second worker, as well as locality social work teams to ensure that there is a consistent understanding of the second worker role in North Lanarkshire.

FGM and Forced Marriage training

Our FGM and Forced Marriage training is facilitated by the Violence Against Women and APC Co-ordinators. This popular course is facilitated four monthly to a capacity attendance. Reference to forced marriage is also included in the multi-agency ASP training.

Police training

The Learning and Development officers for the adult and child protection committees, together with the Safe and Together coordinator delivered Public Protection briefing sessions for 74 front-line Police Officers during the winter of 2022.

All members of the Adult Support and Protection team at the Police Concern Hub have attended the Multi-agency Adult Support and Protection training and are actively involved in various development sessions.

Multi-agency forums

The APCs multi-agency locality forums were re-established as virtual events during 2022 and have been well-subscribed to. These share national and local learning at a locality level and give practitioners the opportunity to discuss adult support and protection practice.

Service and agency specific training and awareness raising highlights include:

- Each year, NLC supports qualified social workers to attend the Post Graduate Certificate at University of Stirling. This annual commitment enables social workers and senior practitioners to cascade their expertise within their locality teams.
- The newly qualified social worker training programme in NLC includes all areas of public protection, including level 2 Multi-agency ASP training and trauma informed practice. The learning and development officers from child protection and adult protection committees also facilitate an annual bespoke session for the newly qualified social work staff.
- Compulsory adult support and protection training is also in place for all NHS Lanarkshire (NHSL) staff, for example, the adult support and protection Learn Pro module is available to all NHS staff, with 6,153 staff completing modules during 2022/2024. The NHS Lanarkshire Adult Protection Advisor has offered and support adult support and protection in the acute hospitals in Lanarkshire. There are ongoing discussions in relation to these sessions.
- The NHSL Care Home Liaison team conduct collaborative visits to care homes with social work colleagues and deliver specific training to staff as and when required.
- Multi-agency adult support and protection training continues to be attended by community officers from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Community and voluntary sector involvement in multi-agency training continues to be widespread, and North Lanarkshire Council commissioned services are encouraged to attend the same.

Appropriate Adult Service

Appropriate Adults (AA) facilitate communication between vulnerable individuals and the police (and other governmental bodies such as immigration officers) during investigation processes. People who are eligible for support will be over the age of 16 years and who, as a result of a mental disorder, appear to the Police to be

unable to understand sufficiently what is happening or communicate effectively. AA support can be provided for those who are officially and not officially accused, victims and witnesses.

For governance and reporting arrangements, our Appropriate Adult (AA) Service sits within Public Protection and wider remit of the adult protection committee with a standing item on the Monitoring, Reporting, and Practice Improvement Sub-committee.

Our AA Service is well established and operational throughout both business hours and out of hours. Currently, there are 40 employees trained to perform the AA role whilst balancing the day-to-day commitments across Council Services e.g. Social Work, Residential Services for Children and Locality Support Services.

In May 2023, the service appointed a social worker to the role of Appropriate Adult Coordinator (AAC) in post which has greatly benefited the service. There have been various developments internally, such as, a staff survey to capture employee views on areas of training and service development, the implementation of self-evaluation framework, refresher training, recruitment of AA's and data collation and management. Further developmental work is planned such as local oversight groups with police colleagues, obtaining AA ID badges and developing operational policy and procedures. The AAC has recently set up supportive resource for all AAs to prepare and reflect upon interventions via practice briefing, debriefings and employee development sessions.

There were 71 AA referrals for the period October 2022/23 and 74 AA referrals for the period October 2023/24, representing an increase of 3 referrals and 4.2%, respectively.

The national AA training programme was developed by West Lothian College (funded by the Scottish Government) in April 2022 and is accessible to Local AA Coordinators. North Lanarkshire are part of the Scottish Appropriate Adult Network (SAAN). SAAN arrange and deliver the refresher training with Appropriate Adult Coordinators, which is available to each local authority within Scotland to attend. NLC were involved in the delivery of the most recent national refresher training in September 2024.

The APC continues to develop training to ensure that the need of the workforce is being met. Although out with the reporting period there has been significant interest in the recently developed bite-sized learning sessions where specific topics are discussed including – undue pressure, professional curiosity, defensible decision-making and online harm. These continue to evaluate very positively.

Engagement, involvement, and communication

Processes to ensure meaningful engagement with adults, carers and family are embedded in adult support and protection operational procedures, highlighting key aspects of involving adults throughout the full adult support and protection process.

We are committed to consistent access to and effective use of independent advocacy throughout adult support and protection activity. Strong links between advocacy and adult support and protection services have been demonstrated in a number of areas over this reporting period. The Care Inspectorate Multi-Agency Audit in 2022 highlighted the use of Advocacy within Adult Support and Protection Process as a particular strength in North Lanarkshire.

Current contracts for both advocacy and carers services focus on the protection of children and adults at risk. This stipulates those services must adhere to local procedures and work in accordance with inter-agency guidelines.

Advocacy providers are active members of the North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee Network, a sub-committee which includes third sector organisations. Providers report they have positive relationships with social workers and discussions at the Network reflect a well-established referral process involving staff trained in adult support and protection, supporting positive partnership working across all agencies.

In 2022, the Network held the first face to face event in two years which focused on debunking myths and stereotypes in adult support and protection and making more effective use of legislative powers. This highly successful event saw people with lived experience, carers and practitioners come together to explore difficult but vital subjects. The event aimed to demystify and destigmatise adult support and protection. The event was evaluated as excellent, with specific praise for the positive tone and language used. Learning from this event has proven crucial in the development of a better understanding and has been incorporated into the regular training and development for multi-agency partners.

As reflected in the Lanarkshire's Carer Plan 2020-25, carers with responsibility for adults (where adult support and protection is a concern) are provided with a Carers' Assessment and additional support. The North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee Network has active membership from all the main local carer organisations, as reflected in the statement prepared by these members in evidence for inspection. Large numbers of carer support staff attend our multi-agency training and work closely with other agencies to support adults and their carers.

Lived Experience

The APC continues to actively consider how we sustain and develop representation of the voice of those with lived experience within the APC itself. We recognise that this is an area for improvement, which was also highlighted in the Care Inspectorate inspection in 2022. The Network partners already actively influence the direction of the committee. We consider this an area for improvement and is on the business plan for 2024-2026. Together with members of the Network we are also considering how best to gather feedback of the experience of participating in adult support and protection process from adults with lived experiences and their families and carers. We are considering best approaches to this and are considering guidance from the National Implementation Group Advocacy, voice of the service user/carer

Public Protection Communication and Information Sharing Subcommittee

The four pillars of public protection in North Lanarkshire, adult Protection and child Protection committees, MAPPA and Violence Against Women and Girls continue to have a joint Communication and Information Governance Subcommittees, reflecting the joint agendas and shared membership. This subcommittee continues to support distribution of material and vital messages on Public Protection to multi-agency partners and the public.

This meeting has an annually rotated chairperson, shared across the Public Protection.

North Lanarkshire Public Protection team have, over the last year, been developing a stand-alone Public Protection Website which aims to support children, families, adults, carers, public and professionals to gain increased knowledge and understanding of the different Public Protection agendas. The website will also contain learning and development material and opportunities.

Challenges and areas for improvement

Challenges and areas if improvement have been highlighted throughout this report however the below are examples of key areas.

Involvement and representation of people with lived experience on the adult protection committee is referenced above in this report. Work continues to be ongoing with the Network to take this forward.

Information Management Systems

Collation of accurate data has been particularly challenging due to the Council's current information management system. However, the new system MOSAIC is due to come live within the next few months and significant work has been undertaken to ensure that Adult Support and Protection processes and data is captured accurately and in line with the National minimum data set.

There is ongoing discussion on how to ensure that the information is shared proportionally across other partner agencies.

Lifelong Chronologies

Work to improve our Chronologies continues to be a priority for the APC, as reflected in our Improvement Plan and discussed earlier in this report. Out audits demonstrate progress in that most audited files contain a chronology, and we see some chronologies being developed before trigger thresholds of risk are met. The quality of chronologies is still variable. This work will be supported through the new information management system for social work.

The implementation of sound chronology practice is proving challenging which is not isolated to North Lanarkshire and the APC are keen to support the ongoing work that is being undertaken on a national level.

Risk Assessment

As part of the NLC Adult Protection Procedures, the risk assessment tool for council officers and the protection plan template has been updated to support multi-agency collaboration and accountability.

In addition, a new multi-agency risk assessment and information request form has been created with the aim to support sharing of risk assessment and information across all partner agencies. This is a fairly new implementation and there is ongoing work to consider how to assess the impact that this information request form has had on risk assessment.

Learning and Development

The APC continues to have actions linked to strengthening our established learning and development programme, including strengthening the circulation of multi-agency training and ensuring learning and

development opportunities are shared across all partners.

One aspect to highlight is the development of understanding for staff to consider the interlink between Adult Support and Protection and Domestic Abuse.

Transitional Safeguarding

Local and national audits and learning reviews have highlighted a need for cross agency improvement when considering safeguarding across transitions for young people and adults. This is an area we are committed to continue developing.

Neglect, Self-neglect and Hoarding

We have throughout regular local audit noted an increase of concerns regarding Adult Support and Protection and welfare concern referrals relating to Neglect, Self-neglect and Hoarding. We also hear, anecdotal accounts of the complexities for professionals when supporting adults who are self-neglecting and hoarding. The APC continues to consider how we can best support adults who are self-neglecting and/or hoarding and the professionals who support them.

We continue to offer and provide training for professionals on the subject with the focus on best practice.

We are also working across Pan-Lanarkshire to identify the best way forward – linking with the ongoing work nationally with the Hoarding Taskforce.

Looking forward

Looking forward, North Lanarkshire recognises the national and local challenges and opportunities over the next two years. Key areas for improvement are highlighted in the above sections which links with our business plan.

The North Lanarkshire APC business plan presents a high-level framework for the period of 1st of April 2024 to 31st March 2026, to reflect the biennial reporting period. This includes priority improvement outcomes that have emerged from the APC partnership activity, self-evaluation and national ASP development. The plan is underpinned by workplans setting out the role of supporting sub-committees in delivering our outcomes in a way that enables the APC to demonstrate the impact of its collective activities on improving the safety of adults at risk in North Lanarkshire. The work plan will be reviewed routinely during APC meetings and its subcommittees to ensure identified targets are being met.

The business plan priorities are aligned to those of the child protection committee, identifying three high-level outcomes:

Priority outcome one: Strengthen joint operational practice with a focus on the quality of assessment and planning for individual adults and families

Priority outcome two: Strengthen the use of data to drive improvements

Priority outcome three: Strengthen Voice within the delivery of APC functions

We continue to take active roles within national adult support and protection activity including the implementation groups. The output from these groups will continue to support our local approaches to adult support and protection process.

We are experiencing a continued and significant rise in activity and service demand as a result of changes to national guidance, the newly implemented Adult Support and Protection procedures and the broadening of the criteria for undertaking learning reviews. Whilst we remain committed to supporting the wider workforce and ensuring that the service and support to adults at risk are not impacted upon, the impact on capacity and finite resources must be noted.

Ultimately, North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee continues to be committed to our vision:

Adults who experience or are at risk of harm are safer as a result of the support, protection and services they receive.

Appendix 1

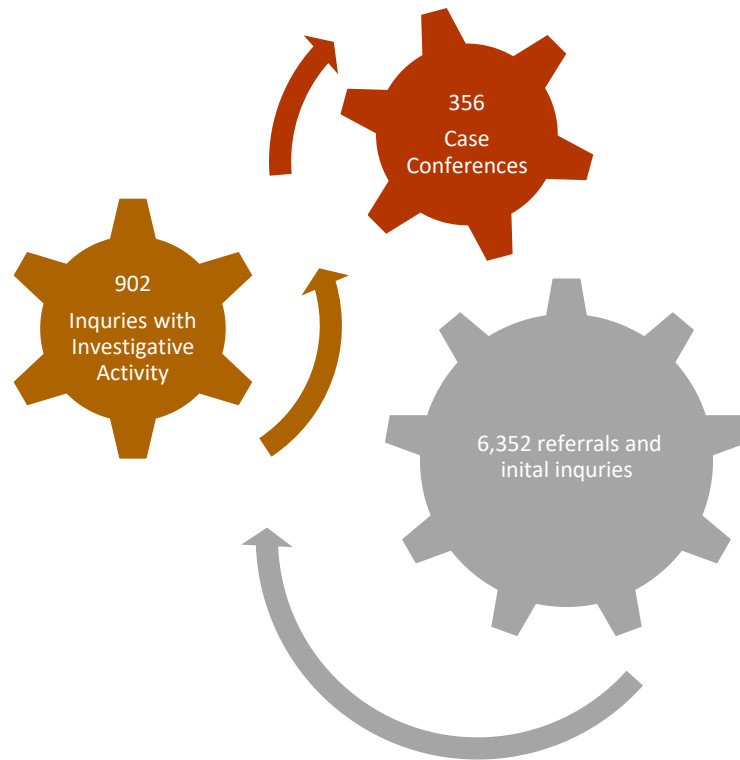
1. Summary of Adult Support and Protection Activity 2022-2024.



2. Referral Activity 2022-2024



3. Breakdown of decisions 2022 2024



4. Distribution of referrals per harm-type

