



# APC Annual Report 2022 - 2023



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Foreword by the Chair of the Adult Protection Committee**

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Adult Support and Protection Committee (ASPC) in Perth & Kinross for the financial year 2022/23. The ASPC has a statutory responsibility to provide a biannual report for Scottish Ministers but for many years the ASPC in Perth & Kinross has produced an annual report for the years which are not covered by a biannual Report. This provides scrutiny and governance of the work undertaken in Perth & Kinross to support vulnerable adults and their families and also covers plans for improvements for the coming year

The trend in the last few years has continued to be one of rising cause for concern reports for vulnerable adults and an increase in the number of referrals for consideration by statutory agencies. Whilst the majority of concerns involve those over 65 years there has been a continued rise also in those facing mental health issues. Despite the rise in concerns being submitted, over 90% of these have been appropriately considered by Social Work Teams within the agreed timescales. The ASPC considers the rise in referrals a reflection of the work done to heighten awareness of vulnerable adults amongst professionals and the public and this is evident in health services where an investment by NHS Tayside in specialist adult protection staff and training for all staff has seen an increase referrals coming from that agency.

The ASPC has built up over the last few years a variety of self-evaluation and improvement activity including audit, data analysis and learning from cases, using Learning Reviews. However of particular importance this year has been the formal inspection of Adult Support and Protection arrangements in Perth & Kinross by the Care Inspectorate (CI); HMIC and Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) which was published in August 2022'. This inspection evaluated key processes to support and protect adults as effective and strategic leadership for adult support and protection as very effective and a very recent care inspectorate summary report of all 25 inspections placed Perth & Kinross within the top group nationally for strategic leadership and close to the top for key processes. This provides external assurance not only that arrangements in Perth & Kinross are of a high quality but also that there is a commitment to continue to develop this further through the Improvement Plan

Supporting vulnerable adults in Perth & Kinross is not the sole responsibility of the ASPC and this year there has been a strong focus on strengthening public protection arrangements across Perth & Kinross under the leadership of the Chief Officer Group via the Public Protection Coordinating Group. There are clearly significant advantages in improving cooperation and collaboration across issues of common interest including transitions; training and development; violence against women and girls; and substance misuse. Partnership working by the ASPC is not only evident in public protection but also in the work undertaken to strengthen pan Tayside work in adult support and protection and in the active participation and leadership in the national Adult Protection Improvement Programme.

Whilst the improvement work of the ASPC has been effective in driving up standards over the years the ASPC is however mindful in this complex area of work ultimately it is the quality of the practitioners that ensure vulnerable adults, and their families get the help they need when they need it and for that reason training and development; support and engagement of practitioners particularly by the lead officer has been a major priority and will continue to be so over the next year.

For a number of years now, this report has highlighted the importance of involving vulnerable adults and their families in the services and progress has been made in the advocacy support available to vulnerable adults in adult support and protection processes but despite efforts work needs to continue to ensure meaningful engagement and genuine involvement of families in service development as well as service delivery

In conclusion there has been progress in a number of areas of adult support and protection work over the last year in Perth & Kinross, but much work remains to be done in this area as workloads continue to rise and the complexity of cases that staff are involved become more challenging but hopefully through the work identified in the improvement plan I will be able , on behalf of the ASPC, to report on further progress next year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bill Atkinson', written in a cursive style.

Bill Atkinson, Independent Chair of the Perth & Kinross Adult Protection Committee

## 1.2 Introduction to the APC Annual Report 2022/23

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

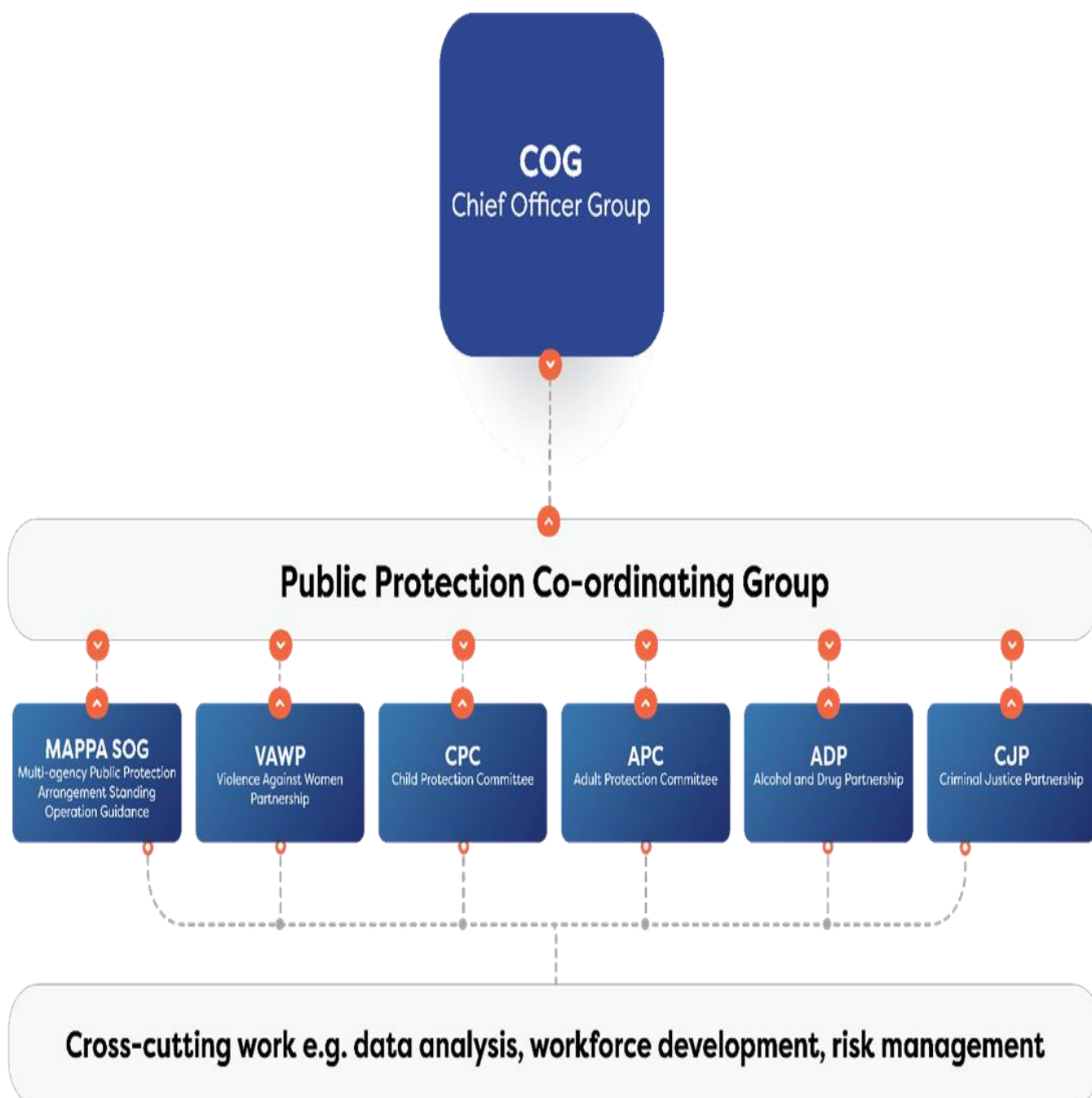
Section 46 of the Act requires the Convenors of Adult Protection Committees (APC) to produce a biennial report analysing, reviewing, and commenting on APC functions and activities in the preceding two years. An APC Biennial Report covering the reporting period 2020 – 2022 was shared with the Scottish Government in September 2022 and later published on the PKC Adult Support & Protection website at the same time. This biennial report and previous APC annual reports are available at: [Adult Support and Protection Committee - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](https://pkc.gov.uk)

The APC has a strong commitment to self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement work across the partnership in Perth & Kinross at all levels. The APC, elected members and members of the Integrated Joint Board all receive regular reports on performance and the impact of multi-agency partnership working with vulnerable adults who need support and protection. As part of this assurance, the APC produces an annual performance report rather than biennial reporting. Therefore, this Perth & Kinross APC Annual Report (2022/23) summarises the work of the APC within this reporting year. It reflects upon a continued cycle of self-evaluation and audit, highlighting strengths and identifies areas for improvement. This report also reflects the findings from our ASP joint inspection in June and July 2022.

The format of this report uses the Scottish Government's template for APC Biennial reporting over 6 key areas:

1. Statutory Requirements
2. Analysis of Harm
3. Activity and Service Improvements
4. Training, Learning and Development
5. Engagement, Involvement and Communication
6. Looking Forward

### 1.3 How we see ourselves structured





## 1.4 ASP Summary 2022-23 .<sup>1</sup>

### What we found

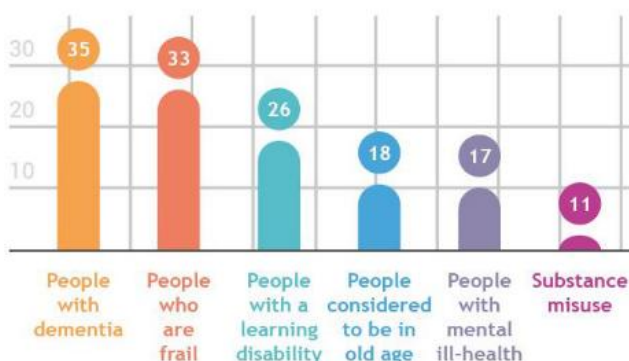
In this reporting year, we received **3,081** ASP referrals. This is an increase of **30%**.



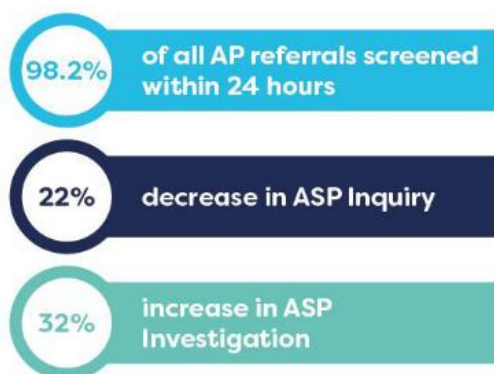
### ASP Investigations



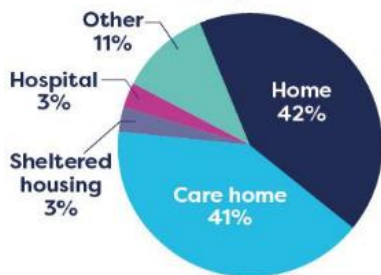
### Who is receiving support?



### What was the impact on adults at risk?



### Where does harm happen?



### What age group is most at risk?

Those over the age of 81 are more likely to be considered at risk, followed by those within the 65-80 age group than those aged 16-24.



### What we did in 2022/23



### Other information



### What are our priorities?

- Increased engagement with adults, families and carers in ASP work.
- Better connections with other protection services.
- Improving practice and service improvement by better use of outcome-focused data.

<sup>1</sup> A textual version of this summary is provided in Appendix A for those who require assistive technology

## 2. Local and National context to Adult Support & Protection

### 2.1 Perth & Kinross

Perth & Kinross covers an area of 5,286 square kilometres and is the fifth largest area by land mass in Scotland. As of 2022, it had a population of 153,810<sup>[1]</sup>; which has grown 14.3% since 1998, compared to 7.9% for the whole of Scotland: It is the 8<sup>th</sup> fastest growing population in Scotland. The number of people resident in Perth & Kinross who are over 65 years old accounts for 24.1% of the population, compared to 19.6% for the whole of Scotland. The age group 75 and over has increased by 55.8% since 1998, whilst its younger age cohort (25-44 years) decreased by 6.3%.

The population of Perth & Kinross is made up of 75,701 males and 78,109 females<sup>1</sup>.

- There are 24,218 (15.7% of population) children (aged 15 and under)
- There are 92,594 (60.2%) people of working age (aged 16-64)
- There are 36,998 (24.1%) older people (aged 65 and over)

The geographical distribution of the population across urban, rural, and remote areas poses challenges for the planning and delivery of services.

In Perth & Kinross, there are seven Local Action Partnerships:

- Eastern Perthshire Action Partnership (Council Wards 1, 2 and 3)
- Highland Action Partnership (Council Ward 4)
- Strathtay Action Partnership (Council Ward 5)
- Strathearn and Strathallan Action Partnership (Council Wards 6 and 7)
- Kinross-shire Action Partnership (Council Ward 8)
- Almond and Earn Action Partnership (Council Ward 9)
- Perth City Action Partnership (Council Wards 10, 11 and 12)

These localities each have a local action partnership made up of elected members, communities, and public services.

Through the local action partnerships, the community planning partnership identifies their particular needs and challenges. Perth & Kinross council has 40 councillors in 12 electoral wards.

NHS Tayside is responsible for commissioning health care services for residents across Tayside and had a combined population of 417,650 based on mid-year 2021 population estimates published by National Records of Scotland.

### 2.2 ASP Vision & Purpose

It is our vision that people have the right to live as independently as possible in a safe environment, free from harm, to have their wishes and feelings considered and to have the minimal amount of intervention into their personal lives.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Mid-2021 population estimates: [https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/perth-and-kinross-council-profile.html#population\\_estimates](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/perth-and-kinross-council-profile.html#population_estimates)



In this last year, we have been actively promoting and testing the awareness of ASP vision and purpose with practitioners and the extent to which the ASP vision and practice is embedded in practice.

### **2.3 ASP National Context**

Adult Support and Protection in Perth & Kinross is set within the wider policy in Scotland and the National Policy Forum.

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/adult-support-and-protection-national-strategic-forum>

#### **The National ASP Strategic Forum**

The National Forum provides a strategic and cross sectoral view of what is needed to improve the delivery of Adult Support and Protection across Scotland. The forum assists Scottish Government and delivery partners in identifying the workstreams required to improve the assurance and operation of Adult Support and Protection and its interface with existing and developing legislative and policy areas.

The Scottish Government also supports the role of the National Adult Protection Coordinator. This role involves making connections to build stronger local networks and to improve the co-ordination, development, and dissemination of best practice, as well as promoting joint working between Adult Protection Committees.

#### **The National Improvement Plan has identified 6 main ASP areas:**

- Assurance and Inspection
- Governance and Leadership
- Data and outcomes
- Policy
- Practice Improvement
- Prevention

The Perth & Kinross Adult Protection Committee Improvement plan is aligned with these 6 key strategic areas.

The Perth & Kinross APC Independent Chair, the Chief Nurse for the NHS Tayside Public Protection team, the Detective Inspector, Tayside Division Risk and Concern Hub and the Perth & Kinross ASP coordinator are all engaged in several Tayside and National ASP strategic longstanding and short life working groups. The work stemming from these groups influences and informs the Perth & Kinross APC Improvement Plan.

### **3. Safeguards for adults at risk of harm.**

The following is an overview of the pressures, developments, complexities, and challenges in delivering the range of statutory Adult Support & Protection (ASP) activity within this reporting 12-month period and the adult protection governance arrangements that oversees this work.

Safeguarding adults at risk of harm is an organisational priority in Perth & Kinross. A council officer is required to undertake ASP work. A council officer is a qualified social worker who has successfully completed the council officer training programme. Throughout this last year, council officer availability has remained on different organisational risk registers to ensure that Perth & Kinross has enough council officers to manage current ASP workload. The ASP data is also used to predict future workforce requirements to ensure that we continue to have sufficient council officer availability to meet growing demands. As part of our commitment to council officer availability, we deliver two council officer training programmes each calendar year. Therefore, we are now confident we have sufficient number Council Officers to ensure a resilient service going forward.

Our data shows a year-on-year incremental increase in adult protection concerns received as well as a year-on-year increase in ASP work across most areas. This is a position that is consistent with other 'like for like' APCs, and it reflects a number of societal challenges, including the long-lasting impact of COVID in its various strains, an associated increase in concerns relating to deteriorating mental ill-health and more recently, concerns directly and indirectly relating to the increasing cost of living crisis. This increased trend in reporting concerns can also be attributed to an increase in our adult protection 'raising awareness' campaigns.

Adult Support & Protection is a multi-agency approach to safeguarding harm, and throughout this report, reference will be made to how we have strengthened these partnerships. This includes our multi-agency response to supporting the care home sector and those vulnerable adults who are resident within them.

#### **3.1 Adult Support & Protection leadership and governance**

A continued focus has also been given to the wider public protection agenda throughout 2022/23. There is collective leadership of public protection in Perth & Kinross, and this ensures that there is a focus on public protection, and it is prioritised. The Perth & Kinross Chief Officers' Group (COG) meets six-weekly and offers support, scrutiny and challenge to the APC alongside other public protection partnerships. The independent APC chair reports to the COG detailing the work of the APC and key issues and risks by exception. The dynamic public protection risk register is maintained and considered by the COG at each meeting. This allows the opportunity to understand changes in strategic and operational risk and a swift ability to commit resources where required.

The APC continues to have wide representation from a diverse range of agencies which reflects the broader public protection agenda and the views of the public. In this last year, particular attention has been given to:

- Ongoing commitment to a cycle of self-evaluation and audit and overseeing any improvement work
- Better understanding of our response to Large-Scale Investigations
- Supporting improvement work in relation to financial harm, hoarding and engaging adults and their unpaid carer throughout the ASP episode.

To ensure governance and strategic scrutiny, the APC continues to report each year to the Integration Joint Board . The APCs annual performance reports and the Scottish Government

APC biennial reports, the adult protection contribution to the Perth & Kinross Council Annual Performance Report and Chief Social Work Officer report have all been presented to the IJB and the equivalent Boards in Police and NHS Tayside. Within these contributions, focus remained on progress relating to the various ASP activity and any subsequent ASP related improvement plans. The APC Biennial Report 2020-2022 was shared with Elected Members and the IJB in this reporting year. A dedicated ASP/Public Protection Development session was delivered to IJB members in April 2022.

Tayside ASP Lead Officers, Police Scotland, and NHS Tayside have continued to meet to coordinate work that provides consistency for regional partners and identifies common areas of ASP work.

Work ongoing includes:

- A short life multi-agency working group to scope out the delivery of a Tayside wide 'Inter-agency Referral Discussion' (IRD) process.
- Initial development work to create Tayside guidance on medical examinations
- A review and refresh of the Tayside Multi-Agency ASP guidance
- Review of Tayside guidance relating to:
  - Chronologies
  - Professional Curiosity
  - Information sharing
  - Escalation
  - Tayside approach to supporting those who hoard

In summary, despite the challenges faced by services and practitioners in this reporting period, we can evidence that:

- Partnership working is stronger at both front-line practitioner and at governance levels.
- Services have managed a continued increase in ASP work. Our self-evaluation and audit work highlights that despite this continued increase, a high standard of work across all ASP has been sustained.
- we have stepped strengthened our multi-agency early intervention and prevention approach with the care home sector.
- There has been an ongoing cycle of evaluation, quality assurance and improvement.

#### 4. Analysis of harm

The following gives an overview and some analysis of the ASP activity throughout 2022-23.

##### 4.1 Vulnerable Persons Reports (VPRs) & Adult Protection (AP) Concern Referrals<sup>2</sup>

	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Police Vulnerable Person Report	1,136	1,284	1,515	1,755	2,254	N/A	13%	18%	16%	28%
Adult Protection Concerns	237	218	269	589	783	N/A	-8%	23%	119%	33%
Oohs - Adult Protection	54	21	35	32	44	N/A	-61%	67%	-9%	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>1,523</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>2,376</b>	<b>3,081</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Source: ASP Bi-ennial 2 Year Report (Mary's Copy)v4 LW > CONTACT RAW DATA

Our data shows a further 30% increase in the total number of adult protection concerns received between April 2022 and March 2023 in comparison to the previous reporting year. It also constitutes another significant year on year increase in referrals received.

The increasing numbers may reflect increasing risk to vulnerable people, but it may also reflect increased awareness of ASP procedures. As stated, there have been a number of campaigns raising awareness in how to recognise an adult at risk of harm, where an adult is considered to be at harm and how to report this. The APC takes the view that more people now know how to recognise where an adult might be at risk of harm and respond to it. Raising awareness when an adult might be at risk of harm continues to be seen as a key priority area for the APC.

Whilst encouraging the early reporting of harm is critical in safeguarding those considered to be at risk, responding appropriately and proportionately to these referrals and concerns is also crucial. Despite the year-on-year increase in referrals received, data tells us that 98.2% of all adult concern referrals received in this reporting year were screened by a social work team leader or a social work assistant team leader within 24-hours of receiving it. Early screening by a team leader allows the opportunity to determine how best to support the adult considered to be at risk. An audit of the 59 referrals that were not screened within 24 hours found that 50 out of 59 were screened within 4 working days, and 9 were screened out with this. Crucially, this audit found that no adults were left at any additional harm as a consequence of the referral not being screened within 24-hours. Sharing this analysis informs our workforce planning.

In summary, this data tells us that:

- There is a continued incremental increase in all concerns received across all client categories.
- There is an increase in adult protection concerns being submitted by colleagues from health, giving some suggestion that the work of the NHS Tayside adult and public protection team is supporting colleagues in all health sectors to recognise and report harm.

<sup>2</sup> A VPR is a report submitted by Police Scotland. An AP Concern is any other AP concern submitted by health, family, other support agency etc.

- The overwhelming majority of concerns are being responded to within timescales. 98.2% of all adult protection concerns received within this reporting period have been screened within 24-hours, despite the significant increase in adult protection concerns submitted.
- 
- Adults at Risk received appropriate and proportionate multiagency support, both statutory and informal. This was found when the APC audited “**no protection without support**” (April 2022) Police concern reports received in a week.
- high priority is given to all adult concern referrals in line with local guidance. Our audit work into the screening and triaging of adult concern referrals continues to give some scrutiny and assurance to the APC that front line services respond to harm and to risk appropriately and proportionately. This key performance indicator is scrutinised by the HSCP Integrated Management Team.

## 4.2 Inter-agency referral discussions

Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD) were introduced into Perth & Kinross ASP practice in 2021/22. They provide an opportunity for a multi-agency approach to deciding how an adult at risk can be safeguarded. In September 2020 and at the request of the APC, colleagues from Angus and East Ayrshire concluded an audit into some of our ASP investigations that did not proceed to case conference. As part of this audit, it was recommended as a service improvement that adult services:

*“Consider introducing IRD to involve different agencies in decision making process and the recording of information that partner agencies share”*

The following table highlights their use since their introduction into adult protection work in Perth & Kinross

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2020												2	2
2021	3	3	6	10	14	5	7	10	4	5	9	5	81
2022	8	4	12	5	5	9	8	6	12	9	8	2	88
2023	2	6	5	6	3	6							

Perth & Kinross IRD guidance is contained within the Perth & Kinross Council ASP intranet page and has been reviewed regularly since its introduction to take account of feedback from frontline staff and managers. The risk & concern hub manager (Police) undertakes a review of ASP IRD monthly providing quality assurance and governance. An IRD multi-agency audit in 2022 highlighted that IRDs are considered to be a multi-agency cornerstone of safeguarding people from harm in Perth & Kinross. It also highlighted areas of learning, including their overuse and where these were attended by many different professions, they ran the risk of being considered mini-ASP case conferences where the opportunity for the adult to participate did not exist.

From this IRD audit in 2022, we begin to see a slowing in the use of IRDs in comparison to 2021/22. Therefore, this is a reduction that was anticipated and a shift in practice that is considered to be more in line with the person-centred principles of the ASP Act. Another multi-agency IRD audit is planned for August 2023. This forms part of our 2022/23 APC Improvement Plan and annual cycle of self-evaluation and quality assurance.

Our use of IRDs as a means to respond to adults considered at risk of harm is seen by the joint inspection team as an example of sound adult safeguarding practice.

### 4.3 Adult Support and Protection Inquiry and Investigations

	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23
Progressed to ASP	186	203	250	318	305	N/A	9%	23%	27%	-4%
Inquiry	121	142	180	212	166	N/A	17%	27%	18%	-22%
Investigation	65	63	69	106	140	N/A	-3%	10%	54%	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>-4%</b>

An ASP inquiry is used by a council officer where it is considered an adult might be at risk of harm. The council officer would inquire if risk exists. If risk exists, a more detailed, thorough ASP investigation would be used to investigate what the risk is and from whom. A protection plan is used to identify what needs to be done and by whom to mitigate and safeguard any harm that exists.

Our data shows that for the first year, the number of ASP Inquiries conducted in Perth & Kinross has fallen. However, the number of Investigations has increased quite significantly. A number of reasons account for this:

- IRDs are now used more as a multi-agency means to consider risk. Information shared during an IRD is more likely to prevent the need to inquire whether risk exists, but to proceed directly to carrying out an investigation.
- ASP investigations can be multi-agency. In this last year, more colleagues from health have trained to be second worker as part of a formal ASP investigation. Therefore, practitioners are becoming more confident in proceeding directly to an ASP Investigation.

Our data shared in our infographics page on page 6 gives some insight into who it is that is supported by our ASP work. Our data tells us that we are more likely to use the ASP Act to safeguard older adults and where safeguarding is required, it is more likely to be required where neglect exists. Our data also tells us that we are more likely to use the ASP Act to support those who have dementia and are frail. Where our ASP work relates to younger adults, this is more likely to involve mental health issues. Harm tends to happen either at home or in a care home.

This data is consistent with data produced in previous reporting years, albeit with some minimal variation. As stated throughout this report, the use of this data has allowed us to invest in how we support those considered to be at risk. For example, greater investment in mental health support in our access team, reviewing our multi-agency support to the care home sector, challenging our own approach to supporting those where neglect and self-neglect exists and resurrecting an increased focus on how we support those who experience financial harm.

### 4.4 Adult Support & Protection Case Conferences (ASPPC)

An ASP case conference is held when the ASP investigation concludes that a multi-agency case conference is required to identify and establish a multi-agency protection plan. ASP case conferences are held when risk is more complex.

Whilst the number of initial Adult Support & Protection case conferences increased by 15% in 2022/23 in comparison to 2021/22, the number of adults who went on to require recurring ASP



case conferences reduced by 6%. Analysis of this suggests a further strengthening of a multi-agency approach to safeguarding and the right support from the right people at this initial case conference stage prevented the need for ongoing case conferences to mitigate and manage harm.

The increase in initial ASP case conferences in this reporting year period reflects the increase in ASP investigations, but also supports the view that managing risk in this reporting year as well as preceding years has become more complex, therefore requiring a greater need for a multi-agency approach to safeguarding. The rise in initial ASP Case Conferences is seen across all areas of harm and age groups. The biggest increase relates to case conferences being used to manage the risk for younger, mainly female adults with complex needs and co-morbid learning disability, drug/alcohol use and/or mental health issues.

#### **4.5 Protection Orders**

In 2022/23, 4 protection orders were used. Three related to initial applications that were granted in Court in 2021/22 but were still in use for part of 2022/23 and 1 new application was granted in 2022/23.

- A banning order was granted to protect a father from a son where it was considered the son was exploiting his father emotionally and financially
- A banning order was granted to protect a mother from emotional and physical harm from her son
- A banning order was granted against a man who was a sexual risk to a vulnerable female member of his extended family.
- A banning order was granted against a man considered to be a financial, physical and emotional risk to a vulnerable female (and to a number of vulnerable females)

Data shows our use of Banning Order is more likely for safeguarding younger female adults with a dual diagnosis of learning disability and poor mental health, with some alcohol and/or drug use and who are in relationships with a partner who are considered to be a risk to her emotionally, financially, physically and/or sexually. This analysis also suggests that practitioners are growing more confident and competent about using a formal protection order to safeguard.

Although this is a relatively recent emerging trend in Perth & Kinross, we continue to explore our use of protection orders with ASP colleagues across Scotland to see if this is a similar trend experienced in other authorities. Initial feedback suggests that there is a mixed use of protection orders across each APC area.

#### **4.6 Large Scale Investigations**

The ASP Act makes no reference to Large Scale Investigations (LSIs), but these have become increasingly prevalent across Scotland since the implementation of the Act. An LSI may be required where there is reason to believe that adults who are service users of a care home, supported accommodation, an NHS hospital or other facility, or who receive services in their own home, may be at risk of harm due to another service user, a member of staff, some failing or deficit in the management regime, or in the environment of the establishment or service. An LSI may also be indicated by the need to address structures or systems that lead to possible harm for all those under such structures. In such circumstances, this means that there is a belief that a particular service may be placing some or all of its residents or service users at risk of harm.

In 2022/23, 7 new LSIs were opened in Perth & Kinross. This supports a continued trend in our use of LSIs. Although Perth & Kinross hosts more care homes and a growing older adult

population than many other local authority areas, national LSI data supports that Perth & Kinross is more likely to use an LSI to safeguard than any other local authority area.

A thematic review of our use of LSIs was completed after Perth & Kinross was found to be an outlier with a far higher number than other areas nationally. This review highlighted a number of emerging themes that led to an LSI being instigated, including staff shortages, medication being wrongly administered, lack of leadership and poor moving and handling practices. Understanding these themes has allowed the provision of more targeted support to the care home sector from the multi-agency care home oversight group. The number of LSIs used to safeguard adults within care homes has since reduced and more informal, targeted, early intervention and preventative support from the right people at the right time has obviated the need to use a formal LSI to safeguard. This is in keeping with the principles of the ASP Act. The APC has a further LSI audit planned for the reporting year 2023/24.

#### **4.7 Large Scale Investigation strategic governance arrangements**

Data on LSIs and its analysis is collected monthly and presented to the HSCP Care and Professional Governance Forum, APC, Protecting People Coordination Group and the NHS Tayside Public Protection Executive Group. These governance groups have oversight of the adult protection work and give scrutiny to emerging patterns of risk. For example, analysis of the data in relation to LSIs found that one 'national' care home group featured in several the LSIs conducted within Perth & Kinross, and that the areas of concern raised as part of the LSI from within this group were similar in nature. This allowed the opportunity for senior managers across the HSCP and other scrutiny groups to seek robust and sustained improvements at a strategic level from that particular care home group. This also demonstrates a clear connection between practice and strategic leadership and illustrates close working relationships with the Care Inspectorate.

## 5. ASP activity and Service Improvements within this reporting year

### 5.1 Adult Support and Protection inspection

The Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Healthcare Improvement Scotland carried out a formal inspection of our multi-agency adult support and protection services during June and July 2022. This was part of the Scottish Government's improvement programme for adult support and protection. The final report of the joint inspection for Perth & Kinross was published on Tuesday 23 August 2022.

<https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/6794/Perth%20&%20Kinross%20adult%20support%20and%20protection%20report.pdf>

The inspection findings are positive and shows strong multi-agency arrangements in Perth & Kinross, keeping adults who are at risk of harm safe and protected. Alongside this, our key strengths are leading to positive outcomes for vulnerable adults in Perth & Kinross.

The joint inspection report includes a statement about the partnership's progress in relation to two key questions:

#### 1. How good were our key processes for adult support and protection?

The inspectors concluded that our key processes for adult support and protection were effective. There were clear strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm, which as a whole outweighed the areas for improvement.

#### 2. How good was our strategic leadership for adult support and protection?

The inspectors considered that our strategic leadership for adult support and protection was very effective and demonstrated major strengths, supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

The inspection was based on scrutiny of five key areas:

- Analysis of supporting documentary evidence and a position statement that we submitted.
- Staff survey of 346 staff from across the partnership responded to our adult support and protection staff survey.
- Review of social work records of 40 adults at risk of harm who did not progress beyond adult support and protection inquiry stage.
- Scrutiny of health, police, and social work records of 50 adults at risk of harm, where their adult protection journey progressed to at least the investigation stage.
- Staff focus groups: two focus groups were held with frontline practitioners and strategic leadership where the inspectors met with 24 members of staff from across services.

### Summary of findings from the ASP Inspection

#### Strengths

- We have strong self-evaluation and quality assurance processes.
- We are providing opportunities for collaboration and information sharing between partners (screening and triage arrangements and IRDs were particularly highlighted).
- IRDs had improved the quality of inquiries and outcomes for people
- Perth & Kinross Council had put in place an electronic case management system to enhance current methods of recording social work and social care information.

- We have very effective leadership and oversight of adult support and protection arrangements. We are promoting community engagement to take forward our vision and improvement plan.
- The Care Home Operational Group has supported large scale investigations and provided guidance and support to staff in care homes.

#### **Key areas for improvement.**

- We need to improve independent support through advocacy and the direct involvement of adults in need of protection in key processes including case conferences
- We need to be more consistent in considering the need for medical examinations
- We need to improve our recording of assessments of risk, and actions to support people at risk of financial harm.

This improvement work has informed the APC Improvement Plan for 2022/23 and into 2023/24.

In August 2023, the joint inspection team published a summary of key findings, key themes, and key messages from the joint inspection of 25 adult protection partnerships, and 25 published reports. As part of this summary report, it points to our use of interagency referral discussions (IRDs) as an example of best practice in responding to adults considered at risk of harm:

**“SOUND PRACTICE: FIFE AND PERTH & KINROSS PARTNERSHIPS:**

*IRD discussions held productively at the initial inquiry stage. Good participation by core partners social work health and police. They supported the right outcome for the adult at risk of harm.”*

## **5.2 The APC involved in national ASP improvement work**

Throughout 2022/23, various members of the APC were actively involved in different national ASP and ASP related workstreams including:

- National ASP learning & development workstream
- Better use of chronologies in ASP work to inform risk assessments
- Self-evaluation
- Service user engagement and involvement
- Developing national guidance to support transition between children’s services and adult services.
- Developing a national ASP data set

The Perth & Kinross ASP independent chair and lead officers also remain actively involved in the national ASP independent chair and lead officer group. The NHST Public Protection Chief Nurse is also chair of the ASP National Strategic Forum.

## **5.3 Further investment in the NHS Tayside Public Protection Team**

NHS Tayside has continued to strengthen its commitment to safeguarding people with a move to a Public Protection approach, bringing together the child and adult protection advisory teams under shared management and developing a shared vision. For example, the appointment of a Public Protection Learning and Development Co-ordinator evidences the

commitment NHS Tayside have made to ensure all staff are appropriately trained and supported to understand their role in recognising harm and responding appropriately in context of legislative requirements. The leadership of the Chief Nurse in Public Protection provides clear and explicit recognition of the importance of this agenda, which must be at the roots of all of our clinical pathways.

Particularly from an adult protection perspective, further growth in the team enables improved engagement in key processes in protecting adults and/or facilitates clinical colleagues to be supported to engage in these. The increase in number of calls to the NHS Tayside Adult Protection Advice Line evidence the growing knowledge and awareness of adult protection amongst clinical teams, where a same-day response to inquiries guides the clinical response to complex case scenarios. The Adult Protection Team will be taking pre-registration nurses on placement from Autumn 2023, further evidencing the commitment of NHS Tayside to embed safeguarding knowledge and skills from the earliest point.

#### 5.4 Update from Police Scotland

Graeme Templar, Detective Inspector, Tayside Division Risk and Concern Hub, Police Scotland writes:

*“The dedicated Police Adult Protection Coordinator for Perth & Kinross continues to support partners through information sharing, participation and contribution to ASP IRDs, including associated risk management and case conferences. The co-ordinator has been integral to the delivery of adult protection across Perth & Kinross.*

*They have also developed and led training for the HSCP, focusing on Police response to incidents in a care establishment/hospital setting following on from concerns raised regarding roles and responsibilities and escalation protocol from the Large-Scale Investigation. This work is overseen by the Detective Inspector for the Tayside Division Risk and Concern Hub, as a core participant to the Perth & Kinross APC.*

*The national ASP Policy team continues to review findings and amend policy and processes as required. Many of the improvement areas have already been identified as part of the ‘reporting harm’ continuous programme of development.*

*Development continues with Tier 2 adult protection training. Discussions have been held with national detective training and a template of topics for inclusion devised”*

#### 5.5 Strengthening the multi-agency support to the care home sector



## **Background to the Care Home Operational Group**

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health and Social Care Partnership has ensured regular oversight and maintained regular contact with 42 local care homes. There was an identified risk that the vulnerability of care home residents and the restrictions placed on external visits to care homes could increase the likelihood of harm. The Care Home Operational Group quickly arranged regular online communication with managers across the care home sector, prioritising those care homes in Perth & Kinross which experienced a Covid 19 outbreak; these homes were contacted daily. The approach ensured that there was close monitoring and scrutiny of the sector and, at the same time, prioritised advice, guidance, and support. This support has come from a variety of sources in a coordinated and collaborative manner to help address the extreme challenges being faced.

The benefits of this collaborative approach to supporting care homes and the adult's resident within them post COVID has continued. The multi-agency team is comprised of different health disciplines and specialisms, social work, HSCP policy and commissioning, third sector representation and input from the care inspectorate. All have a joined-up focus on supporting the care home sector and report on any protection issues that arise. This team brings a particular adult protection focus ensuring that adult protection remains central and pivotal to the support to care homes. The council officer and NHS Tayside adult protection advisor aligned to Care Home Operational Group lead on adult protection work ensuring continuity and expertise within the care home sector.

In this reporting year, we can begin to see evidence in how this partnership working is more able to provide the care home sector with better informed and targeted support. It is this approach to providing the care homes with a consistent multi-agency support that is obviating the need to use a formal LSI to safeguard and mitigate harm.

### **5.6 Using data to redesign of the Access Team**

The access team is the first point of contact for most adult protection concerns. It is based upon a multi-agency early intervention and prevention model of support and service delivery. The adult concern pathway audit "*No Protection Without Support*" in 2022 set out areas of strength and areas for improvement in triaging adult protection concerns. This supports our collective commitment to early intervention and prevention and in seeking to mitigate harm at its earliest point.

The audit also refers to how the analysis of our adult protection data led to a redesign of the Access Team with greater focus on early intervention and prevention, better response to crisis including using the ASP Act to safeguard. The audit work has also led planning a multi-agency mental health triage system. A multi-agency triage approach would involve mental health practitioners and support services from across statutory and voluntary sectors. Where an adult concern is received, but a formal ASP approach is not required, the referral is diverted to a multi-agency mental health triage group which will decide collectively on the best support for the adult.

This approach embraces the benefits and principles of early intervention and prevention and is based on a 'no referral, no waiting list' premise and to determine the right supports, at the right time and from the right people.

### **5.7 The ASP Act supporting those who experience gender-based violence.**

In 2021, the APC management information flagged that the ASP Act was rarely used to safeguard an adult where domestic violence or domestic abuse featured, yet the data held by



Police Scotland showed high numbers of weekly reports where adults were at risk of domestic abuse/harm.

The ASP Coordinator, the Violence Against Woman (VAW) coordinator and a social worker/council officer with a key interest in supporting those where gender-based violence exists met with Police Scotland colleagues to review the existing MARAC pathway. MARAC is an acronym used for a multi-agency risk assessment conference to support those where gender-based violence exists. As part of this improvement work, this short life working group explored practice in another APC area where the ASP Act was being widely used to safeguard victims of domestic violence. A multi-agency VAW development session investigated the ASP/VAW 'blockages' in our Perth & Kinross ASP/VAW shared process.

This continues to be a key area for improvement for the APC. In 2022/23, further work was undertaken to ensure that the ASP Act was at least being considered for each and every MARAC referral as a means to safeguard. The ASP Coordinator led a number of development sessions with third sector colleagues who support this work within Perth & Kinross, highlighting how the ASP Act could be used alongside other existing safeguarding measures and using these sessions to raise awareness about how the ASP Act can be used to apply to Court to ban an adult from another where evidence supports that the adult is at risk. Awareness sessions have also been delivered to social work to raise awareness about how the impact of trauma can lead to an inability to safeguard which could render the ASP Act applicable. Using the ASP Act to support those where trauma exists is reflected in the revised ASP codes of practice.

The ASP Coordinator is an active member of the Perth & Kinross VAW partnership to ensure that this cross-cutting work remains coordinated.

## **5.8 Re-establishing an increased focus on financial harm.**

Analysis of our 2022 data revealed that financial harm re-emerged as a prevalent area of risk for vulnerable adults in Perth & Kinross. Therefore, within this last year, the Perth & Kinross multi-agency Financial Harm APC subgroup was re-established. Membership of this group includes Police, Trading Standards, Community Safety, Social Work, Health, and invites extended to Welfare Rights, to Citizens Advice and the banking/financial sector in Perth & Kinross. In December 2022, this subgroup merged with the wider APC subgroup so that both groups could benefit from the learning.

In March 2023, the APC held an 'in-person' conference on financial harm. Dr Melanie Durowse, lecturer at Dundee University and author of a thesis on financial harm was a keynote speaker. This was arranged as part of the APCs commitment to addressing financial harm in Perth & Kinross. 45 delegates from different agencies and disciplines attended.

Dr Melanie Durowse will return to deliver another financial harm session in October 2023, and she has also agreed to be the APCs critical friend during any learning reviews that exist where financial harm features. She is also keen to be a part of some of the wider audit work completed by Perth & Kinross APC.



### 5.9 Improving our use of service user feedback

We recognised the importance of hearing the voices of people with lived experience of ASP and their families and carers to inform changes and improvement. The APC improvement plan 2022/23 highlighted the importance of gathering meaningful, consistent feedback from those who have lived experience of being supported through an ASP episode. The ASP joint inspection supported this position and considered this to be an area for improvement for the APC.

In 2022/23, the APC was presented with a number of options in how this could be improved. Using the Care Opinion digital framework was considered the best option to take forward. Care Opinion (<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/info/care-opinion-scotland>) is a digital feedback platform which has been commissioned by the HSCP and develops stories to illustrate experiences and to inform practice learning and development. Using Care Opinion to gather ASP stories and feedback is due to go live in August 2023.

**Care Opinion**  
What's your story?

**Adult Support and Protection**  
Perth & Kinross

**Your Views Matter.**

Tell us your experience of  
**Adult Support and Protection within Perth and Kinross.**

Your story could help bring about positive change to better meet the needs of our clients and their families.

Scan here to share your story:

Visit:  
<https://www.careopinion.org.uk/3064/pk-hscp-asp-adultsupportandprotection>

Or Call:  
**0800 122 3135**

### 5.10 Improving the transition from Child Care Services into Adult Care Services

Within this reporting year, the APC and the Child Protection Committee continues to be committed to establishing a coordinated transition pathway for young people as they move into adulthood. There is a well-established transitions pathway in Perth & Kinross for young people who experience complex and enduring disabilities. The commitment is to extend this pathway further to ensure a coordinated pathway for all young people transitioning between childcare services and adult care services.

This commitment coincided with a similar commitment to establish national transition guidance. A request was sent to each APC and CPC area to invite representation in a transitions short life working group to develop this national guidance. The APC coordinator and the CPC Coordinator for Perth & Kinross are both taking part in this national work and will lead on the application of the guidance locally. Perth & Kinross is the only local authority area

to have both the CPC and the APC represented in this national working group. This reflects and highlights the importance Perth & Kinross is giving to this work.

This work has also been informed by the publication of revised child protection guidance for those aged 16 to 18.

### **5.11 Reviewing and refreshing the ASP Learning Pathway**

An ASP Learning pathway was established in 2022 to support learners and managers across services who have a direct and indirect role in supporting adults at risk. Across the three levels of training, this pathway delivers learning opportunities to support those practitioners to be more competent and confident in how to recognise and respond to adults at risk of harm. We believe that the pathway has been developed in a way that supports a multi-agency approach to safeguarding in Perth & Kinross.

The Perth & Kinross ASP Coordinator is part of the national ASP Learning & Development network

### **5.12 The APC taking a lead in reviewing how services support those who experience self-neglect and hoarding.**

The APC led a multi-agency short life working group into how support is delivered to those who experience self-neglect and hoarding. This short life working group was established in 2022 following the Angus APC publication of the P19 significant case review. This review found that services failed P19 in a number of key areas, particularly around their approach to him and his self-neglect.

This short life working group met on 4 occasions to review the learning from P19 and to challenge the existing Perth & Kinross and Tayside practice guides in their effectiveness to support this complex work.

The workshops were co-chaired by the ASP Coordinator and Turning Point Scotland (one of Perth & Kinross' 3<sup>rd</sup> sector support providers). The sessions were attended by colleagues from housing, housing support providers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, social work, mental health social work, Scottish Fire and Rescue, health, psychology and environmental health services. The extent to which these workshops were attended, and the range of practitioners involved reflects the ethical and practical challenges, complexities and the difficulties that practitioners from all sectors face when seeking to support someone who experiences self-neglect and/or hoarding. The discussion within these 4 workshops led to a draft proposal to change the existing self-neglect and hoarding pathway into one that is considered more trauma informed, person centred and better fits with contemporary research about what is considered best practice.

This work is ongoing and although out with this reporting period, an APC 'in person' hoarding conference was held in May 2023. Keynote speakers included Scottish Fire and Rescue, Turning Point Scotland and Social Work.

### **5.13 Our commitment to qualitative and quantitative audits to inform our improvement work**

The APC and HSCP are fully committed to self-evaluation, audit, quality assurance and review as a means to delivering confident and competent support to those adults considered to be at risk. The findings from this work informs the Perth & Kinross APC Improvement plan for 2023/24.

This self-evaluation and quality assurance work extends from the commitment to annual rather than biennial reporting, to a range of qualitative and quantitative audits and self-evaluation. Many are framed around the care inspectorate quality assurance framework. We use a detailed and relevant data set and suite of performance indicators to understand emerging trends and themes. This data and the analysis that is generated is shared across practice and strategic/leadership groups. Where emerging themes and trends present an organisational risk, this is addressed via the public protection risk register. The data set measures the number of adult concerns referrals screened within 24-hours. This allows for performance monitoring and quality assurance, and where pressures may arise, it is possible to have prompt strategic discussion and decisions about mitigations and resourcing. As we move towards a new recording system, the ASP Coordinator has been working closely with the MOSAIC Project Management Team to ensure that the new system is able to produce robust data that allows for more rigorous analysis.

In this reporting year, the APC has conducted the following audits:

- I. Multi-agency audit 2022.
- II. Multi-agency IRD audit 2022
- III. Thematic review of LSIs 2023
- IV. Review of AP -Telephone inquiries (2022)
- V. NHS Tayside AP Annual Report 2022/23
- VI. NHS Tayside Quality Assurance Framework
- VII. Significant multi-agency self-evaluation and position statements supporting ASP Inspection 2022

#### **5.14 APC as part of a wider Public protection approach to protecting people.**

Within this reporting period, the multi-agency Public Protecting Group continued with membership from all agencies with a responsibility for protection of those considered to be at risk or are considered a risk. This group extends to membership from Child Protection, Adult Protection, Violence Against Women Partnership, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Community Justice Partnership, MAPP (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements), Suicide Prevention and Safer Communities.

The Perth & Kinross COG meets six-weekly and offers support and challenge to the APC alongside other public protection partnerships. The independent APC chair reports to the COG detailing the work of the APC and key issues and risks by exception. The dynamic Public Protection Risk Register is maintained and considered by the COG at each meeting. This allows the opportunity to understand changes in strategic and operational risk and a swift ability to commit resources where required. A good example of this is using the public protection risk register throughout the COVID period and beyond to monitor any risk related to continued year on year increase in ASP work and the numbers of available council officers to meet this demand. In early 2022, 7 additional social worker posts were funded, partly in response to a proactive workforce analysis based on a continued year on year increase in ASP work.

Examples of ASP/public protection cross cutting themes:

- The ASP Act being used to support those where gender-based violence exists
- Using the ASP Act to safeguard those considered at risk of suicide
- Using the AS Act to support those who experience addiction.
- The APC and CPC has always retained strong partnership working with many cross-cutting themes including delivering a trauma informed approach, transition work and shared learning reviews.

## **6. Training, Learning and Development**

### **6.1 Overview**

We are committed to developing a competent, confident, and skilful workforce. Our staff are highly motivated and committed to their own continuous professional development. We are empowering and supporting our staff with a wide range of evidenced-based multi-agency learning and development opportunities, which are evaluated and having a positive impact on practice. The content of these learning and development opportunities takes account of changing legislative, policy and practice developments and local challenges.

Throughout this reporting year, our strategic and governance groups have supported continued learning and development identified from within a cycle of audit and self-evaluation that informs learning and development. The APC Improvement Plan 2023/24 continues to prioritise learning and development across several adult protection areas. The APCs learning and development framework was developed in 2022 and remains under regular review to ensure its relevance to current practice. The learning plan also reflects findings from recent audits and learning reviews.

### **6.2 Council Officer training programme**

A social worker is not able to carry out formal ASP work until such times as they have completed the council officer training programme. We remain fully committed to supporting social workers to participate in this.

In 2021, the council officer training programme was remodelled and refreshed and delivered on a Tayside basis in partnership with colleagues from Dundee and Angus. Since then, two cohorts are delivered each year. This also allows for continued upskilling of social workers to become qualified and competent council officers, able to carry out formal ASP work.

The council officer training programme runs over 9 workshop sessions alongside an online resource and supported learning tool. The learning tool enables practitioners to develop individual learning plans with their direct line managers to facilitate and evidence their learning throughout and beyond the programme.

In 2022, a rolling programme of additional ASP specific training was established, again delivered on a Tayside wide basis. This includes:

- Council Officer refresher training (for those who may need to revisit the training).
- ASP 2nd worker training. Aimed at a range of professionals who will carry out the second worker role in investigations and/or LSIs.
- Defensible decision making. This is an improvement area for all three Tayside APC areas.

In June 2022, the Tayside Council Officer Programme won an award for excellence and innovation from Dundee City Council. It is also held up as a model of excellence by the National ASP Lead Officer's Group and the programme often attracts invites from other APC areas to have their social workers participate in the learning.

### **6.3 APC Learning Exchange**

Following inspection, multi-agency practitioner learning exchanges were facilitated as part of a rolling programme of learning, development and improvement. Rather than implementing formal trainer led learning, learning exchanges offer an opportunity for group involvement and discussion. The theme for each session is based directly on findings from local and national



learning reviews, self-evaluation, audit and inspection work. These development sessions are part of the APC Learning & Development Plan 2023/2024

- **Meet the Perth & Kinross Adult Protection Committee**

The inspection survey found that some practitioners didn't feel connected to the work of the APC. We facilitated 'meet the APC' sessions in 2022 and continued these into 2023. These sessions continue to offer practitioners the opportunity to meet some of the APC and hear more about the role of the APC and how the work of the APC influences practice, and vice versa.

- **Revised ASP Codes of Practice**

In 2022, the Scottish Government published a revised code of practice for the ASP Act. Whilst the codes do not change the Act itself, they challenge us to think differently about how and to whom the Act applies. This learning exchange offered those practitioners in Perth & Kinross who are involved in working within the ASP Act an opportunity to hear a brief update about the revised codes and to use this space to discuss its impact in practice.

- **The role of advocacy in ASP work**

This is an area for improvement. Supporting an adult and their unpaid carer to contribute as fully as possible in their ASP episode is key. Our colleagues from Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross (<https://www.iapk.org.uk/>) provide advocacy services where ASP is used to safeguard an adult or adults. Colleagues from IAPK shared a brief summary of their role in ASP and an opportunity existed to discuss and debate the benefits and the challenges that exist in using advocacy

- **How can we better involve practitioners in Adult Protection Committee improvement work**

The APC has produced several self-evaluation and audits in recent years, covering different aspects of ASP work. Many have led to improvement work in different areas. Sometimes, we run the risk of not including practitioners enough in this work, either at audit stage or indeed when the audit has been done and improvement plans have been created. This learning exchange offered the opportunity for those who are directly involved in ASP work to hear how practitioners can be more involved in the improvement work of the APC.

- **How Adult Support & Protection learning reviews conducted in Perth & Kinross should lead to improvement work**

The guidance around APC learning reviews has changed. These are now more streamlined and more consistent with learning reviews conducted by the Child Protection Committee. This session offered the opportunity to discuss and debate how and where learning reviews are used in our practice and what is done with their findings once the learning review has been completed.

- **Hear about how the Tayside Capacity Assessment Pathway applies in Perth & Kinross**

Capacity can still be key to determining how we seek to safeguard adults. A capacity assessment pathway was established following some improvement work identified from the P19 significant case review. This learning offered participants some insight why the pathway is important, how and where it is used and how it can support the work to safeguard adults.



- **How we are using the Care Opinion approach to gather feedback in Adult Protection work in Perth & Kinross**

The APC has tried different ways to gather feedback from adults and their unpaid carers involved in ASP. Our own audit work in 2022 found that this is not always easy to gather and the way that we did this did not always give us the meaningful information we needed to change how we practice. Care Opinion is a more digital means to gather this feedback. This learning exchange informed participants about how we propose to use Care Opinion to gather this information and to share what it is we plan to do with it when we get it.

- **How should we be using medical examinations in Adult Support and Protection work in Perth & Kinross**

Section 9 of the ASP Act allows a health professional to conduct a medical examination of an adult thought to be at risk of harm. Our ASP inspection found that we did not always use medical examinations where they thought one was considered relevant or appropriate. This learning exchange offered participants the opportunity to hear more about these and where and when medical examinations could and should be used as a means to safeguard adults.

- **How the principles of the Adult Support and Protection Act apply in Perth & Kinross**

This learning offered the participants the opportunity to explore and unpick how the principles that underpin the ASP Act should be considered when using the ASP Act and the 3-point test.

- **How should chronologies support our adult protection work in Perth & Kinross**

Uptodate, relevant and shared chronologies are key to assessing risk, but our own audit work and the recent ASP inspection found our use of chronologies to be inconsistent. This is not an issue that is exclusive to Perth & Kinross, but a national issue that all APCs seem to be grappling with. The aim of this session was to help practitioners understand the importance of chronologies, challenge the existing chronology guidance and explore how the use of chronologies can be better used throughout all ASP work.

- **The importance of understanding escalation in adult protection work in Perth & Kinross**

When you have concerns, knowing who to go to and when is key to safeguarding an adult or adults at risk. Escalation (and the lack of) is a recurring theme emerging from learning reviews. This session offered participants the opportunity to explore what the escalation guidance tells us and offers the space to discuss what escalation means in practice.

- **Why is it crucial that harm is reported early in Perth & Kinross**

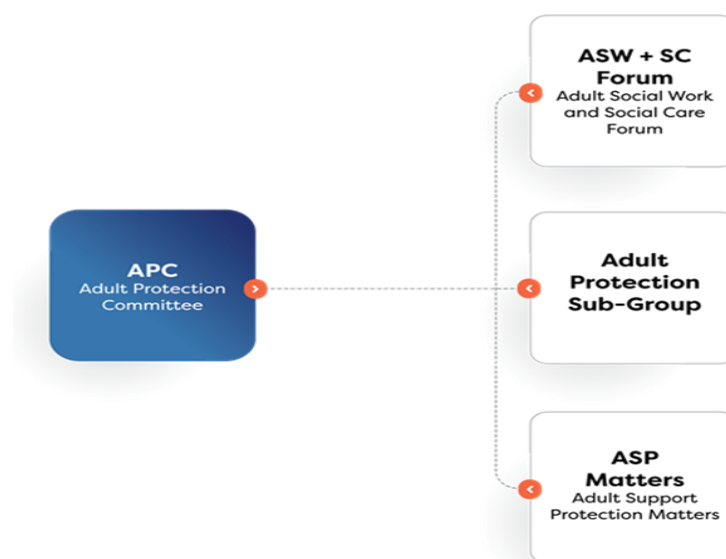
We know that the sooner services hear about an adult at risk, the quicker services can intervene to safeguard the adult or adults. This learning revisited our reporting harm arrangements here in Perth & Kinross, who does what when harm is reported and revisiting why it is crucial that any harm or concerns about harm are reported early as possible.

## 6.4 APCs commitment to Trauma Informed Practice and a Trauma Informed workforce

Since 2018, ongoing commitment has been given across both the ASP and CPC agenda to have a trauma informed workforce and is an example of jointly commissioned training between the APC and the CPC. We have:

- Published and disseminated Perth & Kinross trauma informed practice guidance for practitioners working with children, young people, and adult survivors of trauma.
- Commissioned two multi-agency trauma informed managers briefings: three multi-agency trauma informed practice training sessions and two multi-agency trauma informed practice resourcing workshops.
- In 2021, commitment was given to the commissioning of further trauma informed managers briefings and a series of training on trauma informed practice for practitioners across child and adult protection and other supporting/safeguarding roles. Extending this training throughout 2022 indicated that the delivery of this was a considered a positive piece of work in terms of collaborative working between the two committees.
- In 2022, Perth & Kinross Council appointed a full time Trauma Approach Coordinator. The ASP Coordinator is part of the trauma informed steering group to ensure that ASP work remains trauma informed, particularly with the publication of the revised codes of practices paying particular attention to the need for the ASP Act to extend to those who might be unable to safeguard as a consequence of trauma.

## 6.5 APC supporting ASP Matters (peer led support)



*ASP matters* is a practitioner led peer support network for those who practice in and/or are involved in adult protection work. Supported by our colleagues from learning and development, it is an open forum for practitioners to discuss practice and use the experience from within the peer group to share and learn from each other.

The practitioner lead for *ASP Matters* sits on the APC sub-group and provides a link from *ASP matters* into ASP practice. *ASP matters* meets monthly. It is not exclusive to council officers, and offers a safe, learning space for those who have a vested interest in adult protection work.

## **6.6 Learning reviews conducted throughout 2022/23**

Within this reporting year, the APC approved two learning reviews.

### **a) A22 (November 2022)**

This was a request to hold an informal review of the circumstances for A22 following a series of crisis meetings that led to his hospital admission on 24 December 2021.

A number of themes emerged from this review, including challenges around escalation, when to escalate and to whom, and where existing escalations processes do not exist, where practitioners raise concerns about adults and children considered to be at risk.

The review also highlighted the complexity in trying to support an adult considered to be at risk who continues to refuse to engage, particularly where capacity and choice exists.

### **b) L22 Learning Review (January 2023)**

This informal learning review came from the 2022 ASP joint inspection. A formal escalation was raised on the basis of a number of concerns found following the joint review of L22's case file.

The joint inspection team noted that although they did not find L22 to be an adult left at risk as a consequence of the multi-agency intervention, they did find a number of areas of practice that they considered required escalating.

The L22 learning review panel acknowledged the concerns raised as part of the inspection escalation. The panel universally agreed that at the time L22's case file was inspected, she was experiencing regular period of extreme distress, resulting in risky behaviours. The multi-agencies supporting L22 used the learning review to share the challenges and complexities in trying to support L22 throughout periods of crisis, in a way that was person centred, trauma informed but also kept her safe. The review panel heard that being able to keep her safe whilst promoting choice and autonomy, rights and responsibilities, all in a climate of fluctuating capacity and consent was not easy.

This review found a number of improvement areas, some of which formed part of an improvement plan prior to inspection, and others that were identified as part of this learning review following escalation.

The learning from both reviews informed the ASP learning and development framework and the APC Improvement plan 2022/23 and into 2023/24. The focus of the different ASP related learning exchanges highlighted on page 25 of this report reflects the findings from the learning reviews of A22 and L22.

## **7. Engagement, Involvement and Communication**

The APC understands the benefits of independent support for adults at risk of harm and are deeply committed to the use of advocacy throughout ASP processes in a person-centred approach and to elevate the voice of the adult and to keep their wishes central to decisions and actions.

The role of advocacy is underpinned by section 6 of the ASP Act and is clearly embedded within our Perth & Kinross ASP multi agency guidelines. Advocacy (instructed and non-instructed) within Perth & Kinross is commissioned and provided by Independent Advocacy

Perth & Kinross (IAPK)<sup>[1]</sup>. It is our view that non-instructed advocacy is crucial for those who may lack capacity or have communication difficulties.

The APC Advocacy Plan 2022/23 sets out the relationship that IAPK shares with the APC, the extent to which advocacy is provided and how IAPK is enabling improvements.

Andy Park, Operations Manager at IAPK states:

*“Positive working practices between Perth & Kinross Council and Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross continue to embed independent advocacy in Adult Support & Protection practices by recognising that people subject to ASP processes must have their voices heard to address imbalances of power and support robust decision making. This commitment was demonstrated with a 145% increase in referrals for 2021/22 and a further 112% increase in referrals in 2022/23.*

*Over the last two years, IAPK has been increasingly involved in supporting Perth & Kinross Council in their work around Large-Scale Investigations. This year saw some increased funding being made available by our commissioners to allow us to compensate for the significant increase in referrals and this has allowed IAPK to employ a dedicated ASP/LSI Independent Advocacy Worker.*

*IAPK are a very active 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisation in Perth & Kinross, participating and contributing to strategic meetings and helping to develop the understanding of independent advocacy”.*

The annual multi-agency audit 2022 asked participants to comment if there is evidence from the case file reading that advocacy has been offered to the adult. The findings noted that in 76% of the case files audited, it was clear that advocacy as either involved in supporting the adult or had been considered.

This was also confirmed in the 2022 ASP inspection. The inspection found that:

*“Overall, the involvement of independent advocacy was mixed. Some files lacked information about independent advocacy involvement when we would have expected to see this. When advocacy workers were involved in key stages of the adult protection process, such as case conference, their contribution benefitted the adult at risk of harm. In a few cases, the adult at risk of harm was not offered advocacy when they should have been. Even when advocacy was offered, it was not accepted by most adults. The partnership needed to ensure support and input from independent advocacy was arranged and clearly documented when requested.”*

The APC sees this as a key improvement area for 2022/3 and into 2023/24. This has informed our APC Improvement plan in four key areas:

- I. The Chief Executive for IAPK attended a ‘meet the APC’ Development session in 2022/23. This encouraged discussion about the role of advocacy in ASP and a further advocacy development session for front line practitioners is offered to promote the benefits and take-up of advocacy support.
- II. A series of practitioner ‘learning exchanges’ were developed and, including one session titled ‘the importance of advocacy in ASP work.’ The ASP coordinator and colleagues from IAPK take a joint lead in this.
- III. The third area for improvement following this audit work relates to our use of well-articulated, defensible, and defensible recording. Where advocacy has been considered but not required, and legitimate reasons exist for advocacy not being used, this needs to be recorded. This learning is also reflected in the APC Improvement Plan as well as the APC learning pathway.

- IV. Lastly, it is a key service priority to ensure that adults remain involved in the ASP episode. The feedback that we hope to get from Care Opinion will hopefully help us to better understand how adults and their unpaid carers can remain involved, with or without the support of advocacy

## 7.1 Communication and Public Awareness

We continue to review and develop the Perth & Kinross APC webpage which provides public information about adult protection in Perth & Kinross, including our use of ASP as a means to safeguard harm, how to recognise harm and where to report it. Annual reports, learning reviews and APC minutes are shared publicly on this site.

([Perth & Kinross Council - Adult support and protection \(pkc.gov.uk\)](http://Perth & Kinross Council - Adult support and protection (pkc.gov.uk))).

Mary Willis is a Perth & Kinross Council Communications Officer who is aligned to the work of the APC. She states:

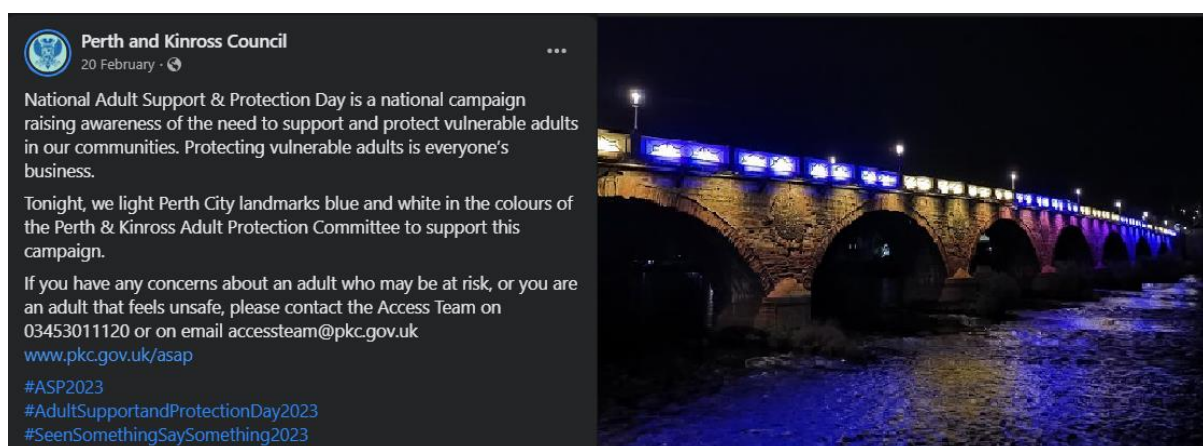
*“We continue to support national social media campaigns either directly relating to adult support & protection, or allied to this area of care and support, including the campaign supporting national ASP day.”*

## 7.2 National ASP Day on 20 February 2023

February 20 each year marks the start of an annual Scottish Government campaign to raise awareness about adult support and adult protection.

On 20 February 2023, the APC hosted an online event to share the work of the APC and used this session to understand how the APC can be better connected with the work of front-line practitioners. This also launched our own campaign about the importance of recognising where an adult might be at risk as a consequence of neglect and/or self-neglect.

On 20 February 2023, the lights on Smeaton’s Bridge were blue and white to reflect the APC logo colours. Social media was used to highlight this and publicly share the message about protecting adults with links to how to report concerns where an adult might be at risk of harm.



A press statement was prepared about the importance of recognising and reporting harm, with comments from Bill Atkinson and from Kenny Ogilvie (Interim Head of Service, Social Work).

Between 20 February and 24 February 2023, different adult protection and adult safeguarding messages were shared on PKC social media platforms. The following video clip ([Seen](#)



[something? Say something: help keep people safe from neglect on Vimeo](#)) was used throughout the week to raise awareness of the need to report concerns, who to report these to and to direct viewers to the dedicated PKC Adult Support & Protection Website [www.pkc.gov.uk/asap](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/asap).

Between 20 February 2023 and 24 February 2023, in conjunction with ASP leads from Dundee and Angus, as well as lead officers from Health, Police and Scottish Fire and Rescue, several Tayside wide training and learning events were delivered on supporting adults at risk of neglect and self-neglect.

### **7.3 The importance of sustaining close safeguarding relationships with wider organisations**

Protecting adults is everyone's business. Therefore, the APC acknowledges the value of a wide APC membership including a representative from University of the Highlands and Islands (Perth College campus). The campus has students with a range of physical and learning disabilities and those with whom have disclosed a mental health support need. Retaining this close working relationship, particularly during the challenges posed by Covid has been key to ensuring that those who are considered vulnerable, at risk or in need of support from wider agencies are able to access this. This has included taking a joined-up approach with UHI more recently where evidence suggested that some students from Perth College were vulnerable to cuckooing. Taking the name from cuckoos who take over the nests of other birds, cuckooing is a practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation, including dealing, storing or using drugs and using the property for sex work.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> sector also play a growing and integral part of the APC and APC subgroups. Scottish Care is represented in the APC and colleagues from Hourglass, PKAVS and Turning Point Scotland sit as part of the APC subgroup membership. DWP is also represented in the APC subgroup. Colleagues from Turning Point Scotland co-lead the self-neglect and hoarding improvement work and in 2023, the ASP Coordinator held a safeguarding development session with PKAVS. He continues to support PKAVS develop a 'safeguarding board.'

## **8. Looking Forward**

This report has identified key areas for our programme of work over this next year. The findings from inspection identify areas which, if consistently embedded into ASP work, will elevate us from having effective policies and processes into what should be considered very effective.

We will give a continued focus on key issues such as violence against women, financial harm, understanding the adult protection impact on those where drug and alcohol features, mental health, and suicide prevention.

Priority will also be given to supporting the emerging prevalence in ASP activity around the young adults and those young people in transition between services. This ties in with the joint improvement work between the CPC and APC about establishing a supported transition pathway between services for young people. This has also been highlighted within this report as an area of priority across the wider public protection agenda and an area that requires a multi-agency, coordinated response.

Supporting adults and their unpaid carers to better engage in the ASP episode in a more meaningful way is also seen as a key area for improvement.

This report has highlighted the need for a robust, reliable quantitative and qualitative data set from across all partner agencies to inform planning, manage workload efficiently, target



resources on key issues, inform improvements to practice, and to demonstrate outcomes. As we continue to move towards implementing a new social work recording system, it is intended that this new system and the data produced from it will help better understand and improve performance and outcomes.

Capturing learning from adverse events and different learning reviews has been identified as important and work with partner agencies across Tayside.

We acknowledge the importance of chronologies to help identify patterns of behaviour. Our audit into some of our own ASP work identified that work needs to be done in this reporting year to ensure that our multi-agency chronologies are available, up to date, focus on key life events and the implications on risk. Furthermore, our risk assessments, risk management plans, and chronologies are consistently shared among all our adult protection partners to ensure a coordinated and joined up approach to safeguarding.

## **9. Summary**

This annual report seeks to give analysis to the adult protection activity and its impact between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. It summarises the positive ASP joint inspection in the summer of 2022 that highlights several key areas where multi-agency adult protection activity within Perth & Kinross is strong, and it identifies areas in which we seek to improve. The improvements identified within this report are framed within the APC Improvement Plan for 2023/24.

Iain Wilkie  
Adult Protection Coordinator

## Appendix A

Page 6 of this report is an infographic summary of the ASP activity in Perth & Kinross from 1 April 2022 through to 31 March 2023. In order to make this APC annual Report more accessible to more people online, this appendix is a written summary of this infographic page.

The first infographic tells us that in this reporting year, Perth & Kinross has received a total of 3081 Adult Protection referrals, which is an increase of 30% in comparison to the previous reporting year.

The second infographic tells us that out of all the ASP investigations conducted in this reporting year, 34% were conducted where neglect featured, 26% of all ASP investigations occurred where physical harm was present, 23% of ASP investigations were conducted where there was evidence of financial harm and 17% related to emotional harm.

The third infographic relates to who is receiving support. The data tells us that 35% of all ASP investigations conducted 35 related to those with dementia and 33 related to those considered to be frail. 26 investigations were used for those with a diagnosis of learning disability, 18 were used for those considered to be in old age. A further 17 were completed with those with mental ill health and 1 used here substance use was prevalent.

The fourth infographic tells us about the impact of the adult at risk. It tells us that between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, 98.2% of all AP concerns received were screened within 24-hour hours of being received. Our data tells us the within this reporting period, we saw a 22% reduction in the use of an ASP inquiry, but a 32% increase in the use of an ASP investigation. The full APC Biennial report gives more analysis to this.

The fifth infographic relates to where harm happens. The data tells us that 42% of harm occurs in the adult's own home, 41% occurs in a care home setting and 17% happens elsewhere

The next infographic tells us what age group is most at risk. 33% of all ASP activity relates to those aged 81 and over. 22% relates to those who are aged between 65 and 80.

The seventh infographic gives us a very short summary of what the APC did between 2022 and 2023. It tells us that we made progress with the APC improvement plan, we had our joint ASP inspection, we strengthened relationships across all public protection partners, and we implemented better arrangements for protecting residents in care home settings.

The next infographic tells us that in this reporting two-year period, we secured four formal protection orders. More is discussed about this in the main report.

The last infographic tells us what our priorities are going forward. We see the need to improve our engagement in the ASP episode with adults, families and carers. We want to engage better with those who work within the violence against women sector and strengthen our relationship with those who work with young adults and who work in the transition between child and adult protection. We want to make better connections with other protection services, and we want to improve on how we improve our practice with the better use and analysis of ASP data.