



Dumfries and Galloway

Adult Protection

**Biennial Report** 2022 - 2024



## Foreword – PPC Independent Chair

I am proud to introduce this, my second biennial report, at the end of my third year as chair of Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Committee. This report continues to detail the innovative approach that partners have taken across Dumfries and Galloway to protect those who are at risk in our communities, whilst facing challenges from many directions.

We face and will continue to face significant challenges that have impacts on communities, staff and partner organisations that are unprecedented in nature. From the impact of wars, cost of living crisis, pandemic recovery, a divergent national agenda and the significant resourcing pressures, staff across all partners have continued to support, work with, listen to and be there for those who need them most. It is important that this commitment is recognised, and I wish to formally thank them all for their contributions.

I also wish to recognise the Chief Officers Group who continue to effectively lead the wider Public Protection Partnership, and now meet monthly to receive, review and scrutinise all the public protection activity across the partnership. It is significant that the chief officers also agreed our first three-year strategic plan for 2024-2027, which, after a process of robust research, analysis, and consultation, identified our priorities to be:

- Lived Experience
- Self-Neglect
- Sexual Harm
- Multi Agency Chronologies and Information Sharing

The strategy sets a framework for moving forward with our Public Protection responsibilities and sits across our three core pillars of Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and Violence against Women and Girls. I am delighted that the chief officers have committed to this approach and that each has taken personal responsibility for the delivery of these priorities.

The past two years have also seen considerable progress in the development of a Performance and Quality Assurance Framework for the Partnership. Its introduction and the development of a unique set of indicators for our Violence against Women and Girls agenda, brings closer alignment across the partnership, and provides a sound basis for the analysis of information that will assist the partnership to make important decisions moving forward.

Finally, I must record special thanks to Lillian Cringles, who retired as Chief Social Work Officer in 2023. Lillian was a key architect in implementing the public protection approach in Dumfries and Galloway, an approach that is now being replicated across Scotland. I thank her for her constant support during my time in post and wish her all the very best in her retirement.



**Hamish McGhie, Independent  
Chair, Dumfries and Galloway  
Public Protection Committee**



## Introduction

In Dumfries and Galloway, partners have a Public Protection Partnership (PPP) and Public Protection Committee (PPC) structure. This is a multi-agency approach that assumes responsibility for the strategic development and oversight of services to those most vulnerable people who are at risk of significant harm. PPC has the responsibility to implement the strategic direction and prioritisation across all public protection activity and focuses on children and vulnerable groups at risk working to ensure effective practice and arrangements are in place, whilst managing areas of overlap.

Reporting to the Chief Officers Group: Public Protection (COG: PP) who provide governance across the partnership, the Public Protection Committee shapes the delivery and review of multi-agency public protection work through oversight of multi-agency performance, assuming responsibility for the development and delivery of relevant services. Section 46 of The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 Act requires the Convenors of Adult Protection Committees to produce a biennial report analysing, reviewing, and commenting on APC functions and activities in the preceding two years. The Public Protection Committee fulfils that obligation and provides further child protection and violence against women and girls biennial reports to be complementary to this commentary and are structured to mirror and align with the statutory requirements of this biennial report.





## Executive Summary

This report contains an overview of the work and progress of Dumfries and Galloway PPC, as it pertains to its core functions under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Following on from a positive inspection in 2021, PPC have remained committed to continuous improvement for adults at risk of harm in our region and during this period the partnership successfully signed off a subsequent improvement plan. Whilst we wish to celebrate the many successes of the partnership, it is important to acknowledge and reflect on the pressures our partner agencies are under and how this can impact our ability to support and protect adults at risk of harm. This includes staffing and resource shortage and ongoing demand on all our statutory and non-statutory services.

In Dumfries and Galloway, we have a well-established Public Protection model which supports a coordinated approach to the afore mentioned challenges, and suits the rural nature of our area, structure of our partners and minimises duplication. As a PPC we remain focused on a program of self-evaluation and improvement, including those who work directly with adults in our communities in this important work. The development of our Strategic plan, public protection data dashboard, Performance and Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) and the self-evaluation calendar, support us to take stalk of challenges and focus resource where most required. A local Multi Agency self evaluation commenced in Autum 2023 and its improvement plan will drive much of the improvement work in the coming two years, alongside developments from the National ASP Implementation Group and National Minimum data set learning partner work.

We also recognise the importance of learning and development and how this can be particularly challenging when resources and staffing are impacted by national and local crisis. PPC remain committed to delivering and supporting staff with a varied learning and development calendar, including a local Public Protection week every year. Finally, and perhaps most importantly as a PPC we seek to reach our aspiration in true partnering at both an operational and strategic level with those who are experts by experience. We acknowledge to maximise self-evaluation processes, learning and development opportunities and to have effective communication, we must do this in partnership with adults and communities.



# Adult Protection Committee

## What your data tells you

Over this reporting period (April 2022 – March 2024) there were 8,841 referrals related to adults at risk of harm, 37% of all referrals to Adult Services. This was an increase of 29% compared to the previous reporting period, which previously received 6,227 referrals of all referrals to Adult Services. The proportion of adult protection referrals increased by 42% in 2022/24 following the adult care restructure in May 2023. An increase was due to a change in adult referral pathways into the ASP Team, rather than a rise in adult protection activity during this time. This has been resolved with appropriate referrals passed to the ASP Team. ASP referral figures and conversion rates have returned to expected levels. Increased demand and resource requirements were highlighted, and steps taken to ensure only high and moderate adult protection referrals were passed to the ASP Team, with any low-level concerns sent to the most appropriate team. This saw a realignment of adults referred into the ASP Team in the last quarter and conversion rate to an ASP Duty to Inquire closer to pre-restructure levels. An Audit of adult protection referrals that did not progress under ASP was undertaken and found good quality of information by referring agencies to support robust decision making.

**Chart 1 – Adult Support and Protection Referrals from 2020/22 to 2022/24.**

In 2022/24, of the 8,841 adult referrals into the Adult Multi-Agency



Safeguarding Hub (MASH), a total of 2,069 required further inquiries under adult support and protection. We conducted 355 Adult Support and Protection Investigations resulting in 92 Initial Case Conferences and 139 Review Case Conferences.

The most prevent concern/harm types identified at inquiry stage was psychological, financial and physical harm, consistent with the previous two-year period. Current mental health pathways can be limited where individuals are not open to mental health services and referrals into social work are not always appropriate. Further work to improve processes will continue into the next reporting period. The data shows an increase in concerns relating to financial harm has increased by 4% in 2022/24 compared to the previous reporting period.

During 2022/24, 355 Investigation were undertaken, an increase of 29% compared to those undertaken in 2020/22. The data shows a higher proportion of cases where psychological, financial harm and self-neglect required further ASP investigatory activity, consistent with a higher number of similar concerns assessed at inquiry stage.

**Table 1 - Comparison of Adult Protection Activity from 2020/22 to 2022/24.**

Adult Support and Protection	2020/22	2022/24	Percentage Change (2020/22 to 2022/24)
ASP Concerns	6,227	8,841	26%
ASP Duty to Inquires (DTIs)	2,321	2,069	-11%
ASP Investigations	275	355	29%
ASP Case Conferences	71	92	30%
ASP Case Conference Reviews	125	139	11%



The data shows a 30% rise in the number of ASP Case Conferences held in 2022/24 compared to 2020/22, with a subsequent rise (11%) in ASP Case Conference Reviews held during the same period.

Demand on services to support and protect adults with increasing complexity of risk at the same time with less funding and resources is a significant challenge. Increased demand on staff capacity across the partnership, particularly those in social work under ASP has impacted on local timescales across the process. Additional resources have been put in place to support teams to coordinate and monitor workload and regular reporting to managers. There continues to be challenges in recruitment of staff and pressures on existing teams.

Despite this, evidence indicates that staff continue to provide a high standard of support to those most at risk across our region. Quality assurance provides the partnership with assurance that people are listened to, involved and there is good collaborative working evident across services. However, the risk to all services if any one service could not deliver the current level of support at present could have a significant impact across the partnership.

With a prevalence of psychological harm, we saw increased attendance from mental health services at Initial Case Conference from 71% in 2020/22 to 74% in 2022/24. Overall service attendance at conference improved in the most recent year following significant work to improve administrative processes and raise awareness on the role of professionals to contribute and attend multi-agency meetings. Introduction of escalation processes provided real-time oversight to ensure participation in support and protection planning by the right people has also seen a positive impact on attendance of health professionals.

At the same time, there was a reduction in the percentage of adults at risk who attended Initial Case Conference from 69% in 2020/22 to 60% in 2022/24. We continue to support the adult to attend and involved as fully as possible to ensure their views are central to support and protection planning. This reinforces the need for lived/living experience as one of our priority areas in the Public Protection Strategic Plan 2024-27.

The dedicated ASP Scrutiny Group, reports to the Performance, Quality and Improvement (PQI) sub-committee of the PPC. The group has responsibilities to scrutinise and analyse adult support and protection performance data, provide exception reporting for consideration of PQI and to highlight areas of improvement work for consideration. This model is replicated across Child Protection and Violence Against Women and Girls, with cross-cutting data analysis undertaken across all three pillars of Public Protection. This has been pivotal to identify and analyse themes and trends in our data to support planning the refreshed Public Protection Strategic Plan 2024-27. Extensive consultation with staff across the Public Protection Partnership has been undertaken to ensure a robust and transparent process.





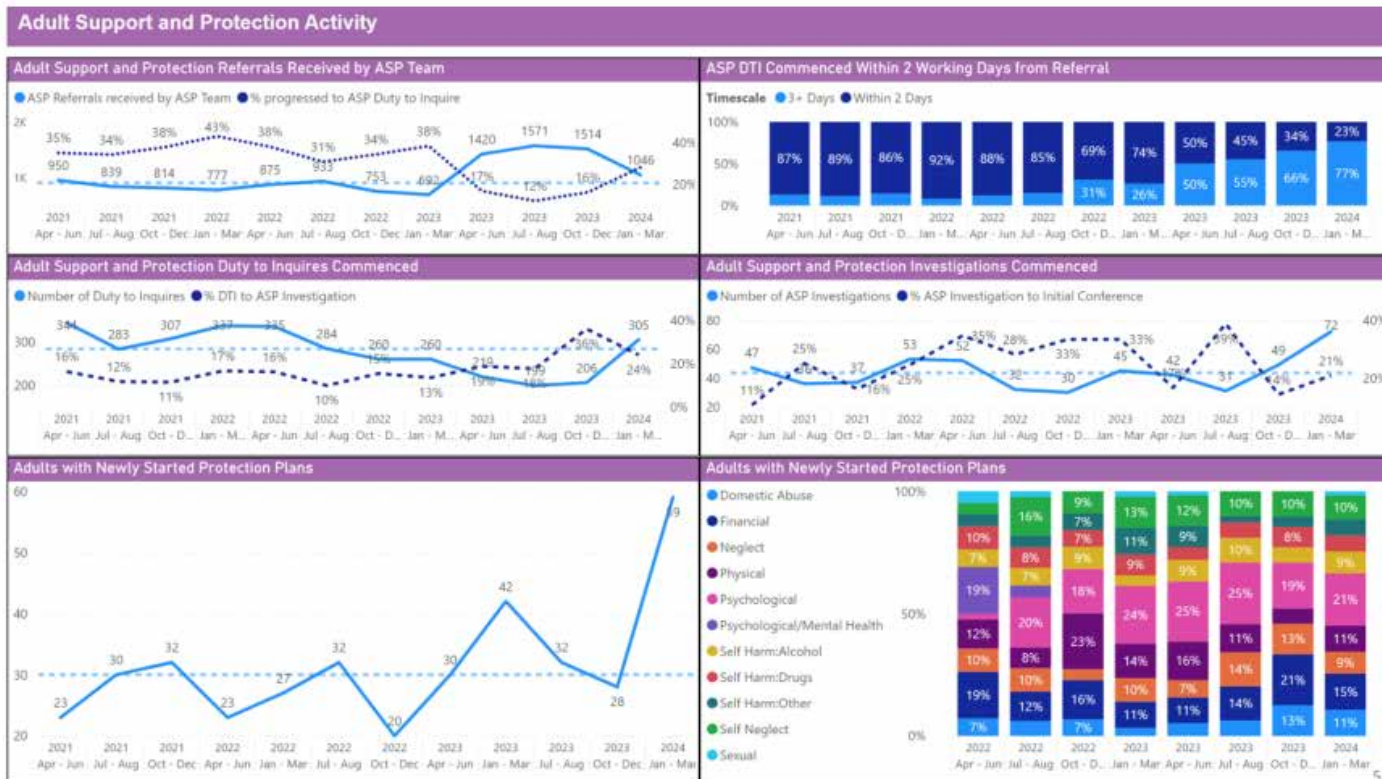
The Public Protection Strategy will be published in April 2024 along with and aligned to an approved PQAF. The Performance Framework will merge with our existing Quality Assurance Framework as both complement one another in supporting our cycle of improvement, providing an effective way to measure both our performance and quality assurance together.

Performance Indicators outlined in the PQAF will form the core data included in a dashboard. This will further develop capability to review performance which will be monitored on a monthly and quarterly basis and exception reporting available for PPC and Chief Officers Group (COG) to consider as appropriate.





Chart 2 – Quarterly Adult Support and Protection Performance Activity Dashboard



Development of multi-agency dashboards has taken significant resource across all partners, and not been without challenges as different systems across agencies make automation of data into one dashboard difficult. We recognise there is work to streamline data collection with continuous improvement to business systems where new and improved data recording is made.





### **Adult Support and Protection National Minimum Dataset**

Dumfries and Galloway continue to be fully involved in the development in the national minimum dataset for adult support and protection as one of five learning partners. IRISS rolled out phase one of the national ASP Minimum Dataset to all thirty-two local authorities from April 2023/2024.

Dumfries and Galloway have reported the full dataset from inception and ensured we are able to capture all indicators locally. Data has already supported local and national development and enabled questions to be raised and discussions nationally on consistent definitions and reporting across all thirty-two local authorities. Dumfries and Galloway will continue to be a vital partner in the continued development of the national minimum dataset.

### **Joint work with Scottish Ambulance Service**

In July 2023, SAS lead on the second joint self-evaluation of adult protection referrals that progressed to an ASP inquiry. The audit looked at cases from March 2023 to May 2023 under ASP Duty to Inquire and cross referenced with contact by SAS. The findings indicated a similar referral rate and themes from the previous audit with work being done by SAS to help address this. Following the last audit in February 2023, a podcast and videos were developed for staff by SAS, with plans to develop a staff survey to identify the barriers to referral. This was highlighted by PPC as an example of good practice with SAS keen to continue this work and have already shared findings with staff locally and in other areas. It was agreed audit activity would continue on an annual basis and form part of the public protection partnerships systemic multi-agency self-evaluation.





## Outcomes, achievements, and service improvements

The Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection took place during the previous reporting period in 2021 and following this, the Public Protection Partnership submitted an Improvement Plan to the Joint Inspection Team. This improvement plan, alongside the national and local workstreams have driven much of the service improvements within Adult Support and Protection (ASP) locally in Dumfries and Galloway in the reporting period. The improvement plan was multiagency and structured around the areas identified by the joint inspection team.

It also considered other comments from the report which referred to potential areas for improvement as well as improvement work which was undertaken as part of the Plan. We are pleased to report that the completed plan was signed off in February 2023 with significant work taking place aimed at improving the outcomes for adults at risk of harm locally.

The Public Protection Partnership seek to build on these improvements via well-established governance and quality assurance routes. As such we are looking forward to the launch in April 2024 of the Public Protection Strategy 2024-2027. The development of this strategy has been a key piece of work for the partnership throughout 2023 and is the first strategy in this format. It sets out the ambitions for the next three years across Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection and Violence against Women and Girls.

### Adult Support and Protection Conference Attendance

Attendance at adult support and protection case conference was an area for improvement highlighted as part of the ASP Inspection and Improvement Plan. Work continues to improve attendance with progress made within the last 12 months to improve performance reporting on service attendance and highlight where lack of attendance may impact on protection planning. Agreed escalation processes have already demonstrated good partnership working between health and social work to improve the conference processes in real-time to ensure the best outcome for the adult.

### Capacity assessment pathway

Lead by NHS Dumfries and Galloway a multiagency short life working group has developed this pathway which has had a small-scale trial and is in the final stages of consultation and approval. This is a further example of progress from the ASP inspection improvement plan aimed at improving timescales for assessment and outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

The Multi Agency Adult Support and Protection Self Evaluation 2023-2024.

In line with the self-evaluation calendar the ASP multi agency self-evaluation commenced autumn 2023. In Dumfries and Galloway, we are committed to ongoing improvement in ASP and will share the results and themes of this in April/May time. These results will be key to the formulation of an updated improvement plan for ASP in our area.

We focused on prevalent harms identified within our performance data and areas of practice complexity:

- Psychological Harm
- Domestic Abuse
- Substance Use
- Neglect
- Self-Neglect

Staff across the Public Protection Partnership despite the increasing pressures of their day-to-day roles, have been incredibly supportive of this self-evaluation work. On the back of learning from the 2021 Inspection we included a team of frontline staff from health, social work and police who volunteered as file readers from 2nd– 6th October 2023. There were four staff focus groups, a wider staff survey and a leadership session. We also held various workshops which have enabled the file readers themselves, steering group members and leaders to consider the results of the aforementioned methods and evaluate what we do well and what we can



do better in ASP. We worked hard with limited success to engage adults themselves in this process, and will consider via lived experience work, how we best do this in the future.

Early findings are reassuring around previously highlighted areas strengths locally including MASH and AIRD's and with ongoing improvements along national themes, for example the development of multi-agency chronologies. This has informed our Strategic Plan and the narrowing down to our four priorities for 2024-2027.

We are pleased to include some direct quotes from frontline operational staff who took part in this self-evaluation.

**"Participating in the file reading reinforced my understanding of ASP work and demonstrated where gaps can impact on the standard of work"**

**"It was good to hear the different perspectives of other people who attended the file reading"**

**"Participating in the file reading reinforced my understanding of ASP work and demonstrated where gaps can impact on the standard of work"**

**"The Audit Team and my line manager were very responsive to any questions regarding the file reading and were very supportive in making the activity as accessible and efficient as possible"**

### **Other ongoing self-evaluation in ASP**

We continue a robust programme of peer audits within the social work service of our ASP inquiries and investigations and well as a multiagency auditing program of our IRDs, with reporting to the multiagency ASP scrutiny group and the Performance and Quality Improvement Subcommittee. Within the reporting period we have seen consistently good and above practice with some excellent in both our peer audits and IRD reviews. Indication from our self evaluation is that IRD's continue to be a particular area of strength for the partnership, despite demand on the MASH and Social Work previously highlighted. Feedback from the IRD review group is taken directed to staff by MASH managers involved in this process to support continuous improvement of practice and to ensure thresholds remain appropriate and consistent.

### **A focus on Self-Neglect and the Scottish Parliament Ministerial Round Table Event**

Building on national and local trends and challenges in this practice, Dumfries and Galloway have continued to focus on this area of ASP including awareness and multiagency training, including newly developed standalone Self Neglect Training. This is a key strategic priority for the next three years. We know from analysis of local and national Learning Reviews that focus on this area of work remains essential.

This was at a Ministerial round table event that took place at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. This event followed the publication of the Care Inspectorate Triennial Review of Initial Case Review /Significant Case Reviews in Scotland and was led by Kevin Stewart MSP, the then Minister for Wellbeing and Social Care.



This was part of a program that featured Keynote presentations from the Care Inspectorate and Sandie, North Lanarkshire and Aberdeen city who provided an overview of the key themes and findings of the Triennial Review. These themes were:

- Neglect and Self Neglect
- Legal Literacy (ASP / AWI interface)
- Involving individuals in the SCR / Learning Review process

The Public Protection partnership were pleased to be attend this event which included an invitation for the Lead Officer Public Protection (ASP) and the Independent Chair to speak to local practice experience on the topic of Neglect and Self Neglect.

### Missing People

Our Missing Peoples Protocol launched in June 2022 is under further review which has included a deep dive into local data and outcomes for adults to strengthen identified local good practice and where necessary bridge the gap between policy and practice, particularly around the implementation of Return Discussions. We are pleased to be collaborating again with the Missing People charity and to meet the aims of the Protocol regarding prevention, response, support and protection for missing children and adults.

### Adult Support and Protection Guidance Suite Local Implementation Group

The ASP guidance suite was launched on 28th July 2022. Work continues towards local implementation and review local policy, procedure, and practice against the enhanced guidance. Whilst we believe that we remain in a good position in this respect, we welcome the opportunity to continue to enhance local practice as a result and the group leads the way in ensuring post the initial guidance suite that subsequent publications and guidance

from the National Implementation Group and subgroups ( chronologies, self-evaluation, advocacy and the voice of the service users and Inquiries and investigatory powers and the role of the council officer) informs changes and improvement. Thus far we have amended and updated: -

- ASP training single agency training, including our Council Officer training.
- ASP multiagency training
- Full review of our single agency Social Work Procedures

Members of this group has also led the way and are in the final stages of writing:

- Local social Work procedures for Large Scale Investigations
- Dumfries and Galloway Good Practice Guidance: Adult Support and Protection and Care Homes
- Multi Agency ASP guidance

### Learning Reviews

PPC via the Learning Review Subcommittee has implemented the National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews via a new single Learning Review Guidance for adult and children in Dumfries and Galloway published in October 2023. The revised local guidance implemented best practice across adult and children reviews, and as well as having a single document set, the local practice that had worked well. This included having an Initial Learning Review Panel, ensuring Chief Officers maintained a formal role, and that all potential notifications were reviewed from a multi-agency perspective.

There have been four notifications over the reporting period of April 2022 – March 2024. Whilst these were not required to go to full Learning Review, we have also undertaken a thematic review of all reviews for adult and children from the period which has supported various aspect of improvement work and learning and development. For adults, the leading theme is around self-neglect.





## Financial Harm

In 2022, Dumfries and Galloway published a regional Financial Harm Strategy aimed at combating financial exploitation and harm within the community. This strategy was structured around the 5 E's model, which includes Early Intervention & Prevention, Education, Engagement, Engineering and Enforcement. These pillars were designed to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing financial harm from multiple angles.

In August 2023, as part of ongoing review process, a revised and more streamlined Financial Harm Strategy was presented to the PPC. This Strategy was designed to be more efficient and effective in addressing the region's financial harm issues. The PPC approved this recent version, marking a step forward in the regions efforts to tackle financial harm. Following the approval of the revised strategy, a multi-agency Financial Harm group was established in Dumfries and Galloway. The group has representation from the key identified partners within Dumfries and Galloway. This group has identified several gaps in current practice and created an action plan to target these gaps and improve the response to both staff and public.

The primary aim of this group is to review the refreshed strategy and formulate an action plan targeting the strategy's three priority areas:

- working to ensure that staff are aware of financial harm and confident about how to respond.
- working to ensure that the public are aware of financial harm; and
- ensuring an effective response is in place for those impacted by financial harm and those who perpetrate financial harm.

This work is important locally and is in line with financial harm being one of the leading harms identified at inquiry stage.





## Training, learning and development

### Public Protection Week 2023 and 2024

This has become a key opportunity for learning and development across the Public Protection Partnership. It is held in February of each year and culminates in targeting media and training on national ASP Day.

Dumfries and Galloway Public Protection Week 2023 included an overarching theme of what public protection is and what the multi-agency partnership does. The week offered twelve online events and one in person with varied topics and speakers to support and enable understanding of how the different themes tied together. It also highlighted the importance of how services across the partnership work together. We had a range of presenters including.

- Your Safety Matters - Police Scotland
- Signpost to Safety - Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Prevent Awareness Training
- Domestic Abuse Overview and Police Response - Workshop
- SARCs - Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service
- Neglect
- Multiagency Adult Support and Protection - Level 2 Training
- Whole Family Support
- Signs of Safety Webinar
- Adult Support and Protection Guidance Suite
- Scottish Prison Service
- Let's Talk Financial Harm
- Alcohol and Drugs Support Southwest Scotland - Being There Service

D&G Public Protection week 2024 marked the fourth annual Public Protection week with the theme being the importance of lived and lived experience. We had a range of presenters including Police Scotland, NHS, Social Workers, Women's Support Project, Families Outside, Summerhill Community Centre and Authentic Voice Project. Like previous years a daily social media campaign was arranged that had varied theme(s) from one event or both each day of Public Protection week. We focused on promoting the organisation that was presenting along with their logo where we could and key message. As well as stall set up at various HSCP facilities including DGRI the Galloway Hospital and Mountainhall.

The week saw 199 delegates attend the various sessions with overwhelming positive feedback for all events.

### Other Learning and Development

The Learning and Development Subcommittee oversees this aspect of ASP. On top of the events of public protection week, over the last 12 months check previous year the public protection partnership has been able to deliver a varied multi-agency training calendar having a good balance of in person and online training. For example, in 2023 we have managed to have a full training calendar which includes the training below, to name but a few, most of which have been delivered at least twice: -

- 5 Day Child Protection Training (In Person)
- Domestic Abuse Training (Online)
- Trafficking Training (Online)
- Neglect (Child Protection) Training (In Person)
- Introduction to Infant Mental Health (Online)
- Self-Neglect training (In person)
- ASP Multiagency training
- Council Officer training



In addition, we have started to evaluate training much more effectively than has been the case previously. We have begun to collect on the spot qualitative feedback at the end of face-to-face training. Furthermore, we are trialling the use of focus groups following Neglect (Child Protection) training (held in January 2024) via Microsoft Teams after 3 and 6 months and will feedback effectiveness to the Learning & Development Sub Committee. Last year saw a major goal to understand and try to address the barriers when co-ordinating and delivering multi agency training. The Learning & Development Committee is keen to make sure that trainers have adequate protected work time to both volunteer and prepare for training. Furthermore, we are now analysing the reasons why staff drop out of multi-agency training after initially registering. While there are varied reasons why participants drop out of training, service pressures are a key reason. This suggests a need to explore how we can close this gap, and ensure staff receive the vital multi-agency training they require to assist with their role.

Looking ahead to the next 12 to 24 months, our key aim is to categorise multi-agency training to aid staff turnout, increasing certainty as to training appropriateness. The categorisations to be adopted (and based on the National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2024 report) are Wider Workforce, General Workforce, Specific Workforce, and Intensive Workforce. This will be a key part of the review of the Learning and Development Strategy for Public Protection.

We are also looking forward to the publication of a local ASP app in partnership with the Digital Health and Innovation Centre. It will feature on their right decision service website and mobile app. It is to benefit health and social care staff, police, and other partner agencies with good practice information about ASP.





## Engagement, involvement, and communication

### Communication and Engagement Subcommittee

In line with the Communication and Engagement strategies 22-25 the subcommittee continue to support the partnership to identify and introduce ways of engaging with those we seek to support and protect. As well as being the conduit for effective communication regarding all matters Public Protection. The Public Protection Website continues to be developed and improved and as well as the public facing information, it now includes a section for Continued Professional Development and selfcare for staff to support staff from across the partnership in their ongoing learning. The public protection newsletter continues to be regularly published and developed with its reach increasing significantly this year. We continue to work with partners to ensure that dissemination of key Public Protection messaging for both the public and staff is as clear, efficient and engaging as possible. We hope to continue to improve our effective uses of social media and public facing communications over the next year.

### Lived Experience Working Group

The lived experience working group report to Communication and Engagement and have paved the way for a real focus this year has been highlighting the need to value of experts by experience as well as those who are expert by profession. We are pleased that the importance of this work has been recognised locally at Chief Officers level and in the coming year(s) the working group will be reviewed and strengthened to support the steady move towards our priority of coproduction and working together with those with lived and living experience to coproduce and improve services. As part of the mapping stages of local practice and attendance at national events, the group has expanded and is providing a forum for supporting this critical area of our work.

In October 2023, a 'We Asked, You Said, We Did, We Will' plan was created from the responses received from those adults and families to attended ASP case conferences (and child plan meetings). Additionally, the Lived

Experience working group, part of the Communication and Engagement sub-committee of the PPC, will revisit forms of engagement and participation with those we support to ensure fit for purpose activity and to make sure practices are developed alongside those who require support. Trauma informed practices regarding gathering lived experience will be focussed upon going forward.

The lived experience working group has been a multiagency forum of members passionate about moving to a model of coproduction in Dumfries and Galloway. We seek to partnering with those who have been in need support and protection at some stage in their life to improve future services throughout the partnership. During this process it was recognised that this key work is wider than just public protection and thus the group were delighted that Lived Experience is one of the four priorities for the Public Protection Strategic Plan 2024-2027. This ownership by Chief Officers will allow local learning from across varying partners and partnerships, including the third sector, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Justice Partnership and from other single agencies.

We are pleased as a partnership to have wide membership at the Public Protection Committee and its subcommittees of service user, Carer, independent advocacy and wider third sector groups. This is particularly evident within the Communication and Engagement Subcommittee and lends itself to rich discussions and improved methods and reach of communication and engagement.

Improvement work has taken place following the ASP inspection in relation to understanding the reasons for lower uptake of independent advocacy by adult at risk of harm. This continues and will be reviewed and incorporated into the local implementation group and within the improvement plan from the self-evaluation.





## Challenges and areas for improvement

### Development of the Public Protection Strategic Plan

During the reporting period and as mentioned a key piece of work for the PPC and partnership has been developing the strategic plan. The four priorities chosen reflect significant and challenging issues locally and nationally:



The process of identifying which areas to focus on was robust and was based on multiagency analysis of our data and its scrutiny and from other sources such as local learning review notification and full learning reviews, as well as the incorporation of national themes and challenges. We recognise that during other pressures and challenges that this will require significant work and focus as such each propriety area will be led by a chief officer.

### Workforce

There continues to be significant pressures across the workforce due to vacancies and sickness. This is the situation across all partnership agencies in Dumfries and Galloway. This in turn has led to staff telling us via the ASP Self-Evaluation and the subcommittee, that although they hugely value ongoing learning and development opportunities, attending can be challenging due to personal workloads and service pressured, as has been reflected in the previous section.

### Restructure of adult care social work

A restructure of adult social work came into effect on 2nd May 2023. From this date, all AP1 referrals, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service referrals, Scottish Ambulance referrals and all police concern forms were directed from the Single Access Point to the MASH and Adult Support and Protection Team. The impact being MASH/ASP were receiving referrals which were not of an ASP nature and would have previously been directed to duty or locality teams, more appropriately. This not only skewed our data, but also increased workload pressure on the MASH and ASP team who were bedding in and experiencing staffing shortages due to long term sickness and vacancies.

The restructure also saw all ASP work being consumed within this team from referral to case conference. Previously, MASH only assessed and worked with adults from referral to the Duty to Inquire stage. Concerns were escalated, resulting in changes and additional resource within the Single Access Point. From November 2023 additional SAP Professional Advisors were employed to screen lower level and moderate concern forms and AP1's, instead of these all being routed to ASP team and MASH which has improved matters and saw stabilisation of our data trends. MASH and ASP team have continued to see challenges in terms of vacant posts which has impacted in the ability to consume all ASP work. This has meant for a period from November 2023 to February 2024, non-MASH council officers have supported with DTI's and investigations. The situation continues to be monitored via robust data scrutiny and governance processes.

### Timescales

An ongoing area of challenge remains adherence to timescales for key processes. Improvement work has taken place post inspection, including a revision and publication of clearer timescales. However, the aforementioned pressure on staffing and in particularly within the social work service has meant that these are not consistently met. We continue via self-evaluation work to ensure that we can monitor quality of practice and intervention with adults prioritised.



## Looking forward

Work will continue to implement our first Public Protection Partnership Strategic Plan 2024-27 was agreed in March 2024 and will be launched in April 2024. The Strategic Plan has four priority areas of focus that sit across the core pillars of public protection activity; these are critical aspects of public protection activity for high-risk groups that will be addressed through multi agency activity. These set out what the Partnership want to achieve in partnership with all agencies over the next three years. In delivering the Strategic Plan, associated annual workplans will be developed. The process will be dynamic in nature to ensure capture of emerging challenges and will be updated throughout the lifespan of the plan. The responsibility for implementing this plan sits across the partnership with dedicated steering groups working alongside PPC, the sub-committees and wider partnerships and agencies, who will report progress back to the COG:PP, according to their terms of reference.

This is the first strategy of its format and set out the ambitions for the next three years.

Following a very robust process of consultation, self-assessment, analysis, data and intelligence gathering locally and nationally, the following will be our four priority areas:

- Lived and Living Experience
- Self-Neglect
- Sexual Harm
- Multiagency Chronologies and Information Sharing

The Public Protection Strategy will be published in April 2024 along with and aligned to an approved Performance and Quality Assurance

Framework (PQAF). We will undertake activity required for Performance to be managed through the new PQAF 2024-2027 which will be launched alongside the Strategic Plan, providing an effective way to measure both our performance and quality assurance together building on previous Performance Frameworks, and Quality Assurance principles.



Performance Indicators outlined in the PQAF will form the core data included in the new Public Protection Committee Dashboards. These dashboards will be tailored for all members of the partnership.

Performance Indicators outlined in the PQAF will form the core data included in a PPC Dashboard. This will further develop capability to review performance which will be monitored on a quarterly basis and exception reporting available for PPC and Chief Officers Group (COG) to consider as appropriate.

We also look forward to Public Protection Week 2025 where we will feature a Chief Officers Public Protection Conference.

The National ASP Minimum Dataset is expected to be fully rolled out as part of phase 2 from 2024/25 with all indicators reported on a quarterly basis.

Following our ASP Self Evaluation in Autumn 2023 an improvement plan is in the process of being developed and will focus the partnership on specific areas of improvement. There is clear cross over with the above-mentioned priorities and our robust governance structure will ensure linkages are made with cross cutting themes and to avoid duplication.

The Committee raised significant concerns about what has since been termed the emergency within Housing and Homeless provision. The committee are very aware of the severe impact this will have on those who are already at risk of harm in the region and the impact of many pressures on finding safe accommodation for those at risk are of great concern. Women and children are particularly vulnerable due to lack of safe and secure accommodation and the immediate risk, and long-term impact on those affected, are a slight on our society and a long-term crisis in the making.

