

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Adult Health and Social Care Committee

approval  noting

Ref MF

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## North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee Report

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### Executive Summary

In keeping with guidance, the 5<sup>th</sup> Independent Chair's Biennial Report was agreed by the North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee at their meeting on 30 October and submitted to Scottish Ministers. (Report attached as Appendix 1).

The report provides an account of the Committee's activity over a 2 year period starting from 01 April 2016 and focuses both on areas of past work as well as priority areas for 2018-20.

The report highlights that there is clear evidence of a strong commitment to the work of the Committee by members and to the development of adult protection generally across all of the public agencies. It is recognised that there are a variety of complex challenges facing all of the public agencies in the future. In the 2016/18 report the Committee examined ways in which it might better embed adult protection more into the day to day, mainstream work of the public agencies. This received a positive response from partners and they have regularly provided written reports to the Committee on their progress over this reporting period.

Overall, North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee remains focussed on key functions; has engaged and has active participation from all of the key public agencies; has developed sound working relationships with a range of interests including users and carers and service providers and has addressed a number of key local issues particularly Hospital Discharge and adult protection in registered establishments.

Within North Lanarkshire the Committee and their partners contributed to the Scottish Governments National Awareness Campaign with articles on websites, local papers and newsletters as well as a series of tweets and screenshots.

Two Joint multi-agency events were also held to increase staff knowledge on the "Three Acts" and how they interact with each other and an event which looked at the "Ethics of Care" that can arise when providing support at home.

One area which continues to present significant challenges, notwithstanding considerable efforts, individually as a Committee and in collaboration with other Adult Protection Committees, is in raising public awareness.

There is no doubt that the general understanding of adult protection, its powers and procedures, remains relatively low. This is true for the wider public, for service users and carers, and for those who may be likely to come within the terms of the Act.

North Lanarkshire Service User and Carer Group through the six locality consortiums and Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL) locality network events have been very proactive in supporting the Committee in promoting and bringing together local community groups to adult protection awareness events delivered by the Committee. While good partnership working has helped to promote the adult protection agenda and raise public awareness it is an area the Committee will retain a focus.

For the future, as well as remaining focussed on its primary areas of responsibility, the key areas for progress will be:

- Service User and Carer Engagement.
- Care Homes and Care at Home Services
- Financial Harm
- G.P. Engagement

North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee continues to work to gather data on the level of referrals made by partner agencies and the nature of harm experienced by adults both in the community and care settings.

This is the third year since the introduction of the Act that there has been a decrease in referrals. There was a 1% (2317-2334) decrease in the number of referrals received in comparison to the previous year. There has however been an increase in police concern reports which North Lanarkshire Social Work Services are required to respond to timeously and place significant demands on already stretched resources.

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## **Recommendations**

Adult Health and Social Care Sub Committee

(1) Consider the contents of this report and appendix.

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## **Supporting Documents**

**North Lanarkshire  
Adult Protection  
Committee  
Biennial Report  
2016-18**

**Appendix 1**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act came into effect on 29 October 2008. This legislation puts in place a range of statutory requirements aimed at trying to protect people, who are described as “adults at risk”, the term which replaced “vulnerable adults”. There are three parts to the definition which need to be met for people to be considered under this Act.

In summary the criteria is, that a person, aged 16 years or over, is - a) unable to safeguard themselves/property etc.; b) at risk of harm; and; c) because of a disability, chronic illness etc. are more vulnerable to risk of harm.

- 1.2 As part of the multi agency duties held by the public bodies identified in the Act, each local authority was required to establish an Adult Protection Committee where each of the public bodies is represented and to appoint an independent Chair for the Committee. North Lanarkshire has a well established Committee which is responsible for ensuring the Act is implemented appropriately within its areas and the Chair is required, to report, to the Scottish Government on performance and progress through Biennial reports.

The report attached in appendix 1 is North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee’s fifth Biennial Report.

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## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The Committee continues to focus on discharging its key responsibilities as outlined in legislation and guidance, including:

- Ensuring staff training
- Raising public awareness
- Maintaining an oversight of adult protection activity
- Engaging with communities of interest including service users and carers and providers

- 2.2 Over the period of the Report, the Committee has again carried out a self-evaluation review of its organisation and performance. This has led to the adoption of an Improvement Plan which is in the process of being implemented. This will represent a significant element of the Committee’s workload going forward. The Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1 of the report.

- 2.3 Each of the partner agencies submit quarterly statistical reports to the Monitoring, Reporting and Audit subcommittee and to the Adult Protection Committee. Annual reports are submitted to the Chief Officers Public Protection Group (COPPG) as part of our monitoring and governance arrangements.

- 2.4 North Lanarkshire continues to have a high level of referrals and a high rate of referrals subject to investigation. Historically, there has been on average a 50% increase in referrals year on year. Inevitably this has not been matched by a concomitant increase in resources and has created significant pressures within the key public agencies, particularly social work services.

- 2.5 Over the past two years we have again seen a slight decrease in referrals year on year. This is an area that the Committee continued to monitor closely and have noted that while adult protection referrals have decreased there has been a marked increase in the number of “concern” reports received from Police Scotland. Concern reports are submitted where Police Scotland have concern for the adult they are referring but they do not meet the criteria for adult protection. Social work response has been to manage those referrals similar to the adult protection referrals and this in essence has increased the demands on their service significantly.
- 2.6 A multi-agency case file audit took place in February 2017, in preparation of the announced partnership inspection of Adult Services by the Care Inspectorate, which took place between May and August 2017. The case file audit focused on adults aged 16-65 years with a number of cases that included adults who had been subject to adult protection interventions. The outcome of the review revealed a good standard of practice and performance in adult support and protection
- 2.7 The Information & Public Awareness Sub Committee has responsibility for identifying the information needs for staff, service users, carers, service providers, and the general public. To help take this work forward the group developed a questionnaire that was circulated across health, social work and the local community. With integration of health and social work currently in place and very active participation from our third sector partners through the Service User & Carer Sub Committee it was agreed that this would be the initial target group to complete the survey. The response to the survey was very positive and the results can be found within the report. (p29)
- 2.8 The Committee as standard practice receives and gives consideration to local and national reports including MWC reports and Significant Case Reviews (SCR). These are used to inform the work of the Committee and the practice of the public agencies. The learning points from the various SCR reports are incorporated into partnership learning and development sessions and disseminated via multi agency training and locality forums.
- 2.9 North Lanarkshire Service User & Carer groups along with third sector partners and the Committee regularly hold events to raise public awareness on how to identify and report adult protection concerns. While this remains a challenge for all councils we are committed to continue prioritising this area over the coming two years.
- 2.10 The main challenges in the future for the Committee in no particular order of primacy are:
- Maintaining a focus on adult protection within increased demand on services in an ever more challenging financial climate.
  - Extending public awareness and understanding of adult protection remains a significant challenge.
  - Increasing adult protection awareness with acute NHS Services, Homelessness and Addiction Services.
  - Risk threshold and risk enablement and practice within adult protection

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

There is no assessment required. The report highlights many areas where equality and diversity are discussed and assessed.

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland**

This report does not adversely impact the delivery of the Fairer Scotland Duty.

#### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no requirement for a Equality Impact Assessment.

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### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact from this report

#### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

There is no change to HR/Policy/Legislative impact from this report

#### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

No Environmental Impact

#### **4.4 Risk Impact**

There is no significant risk impact from this report. Risk monitoring is managed through the Committee and escalated to the Chief Officers Group.

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## **5. Measures of success**

5.1 There is strong evidence of a continuing commitment to the work of the Committee by members and across the public services generally. This high level of engagement and collaboration has enabled the Committee to take forward the priority areas identified within the report with much success. While there will always remain challenges in community engagement we are able to report progress in some of the following areas:

- Adult Protection awareness amongst staff and public
- Robust systems in place to record and manage referrals
- Positive working relationships amongst public agencies including service users, carers and third sector partners.
- Clear vision of the priority areas for 2018/20

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