

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Adult Health and Social Care Committee

approval noting

Ref

Date 08/09/20

Adult Support and Protection - Social Work Annual Report 2019/20

From Alison Gordon, Head of Children, Families and Justice, Social Work Services and CSWO, North Lanarkshire Council

Email GordonAl@northlan.gov.uk **Telephone** 01698 332001

Executive Summary

This report is to advise elected members of the work carried out between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, by Social Work Services within Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire, in respect of the Council's statutory duties set out in the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

The report highlights the nature and level of activity alongside the practice and service developments, which support this work in conjunction with partners.

The report describes the nature and number of referrals made to Social Work Services in relation to adult protection and adult concerns; and reports on training and developments.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Adult Health and Social Care Committee

- Notes the content of this report

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition statement (14) Ensure the highest standards of public protection

1. Background

- 1.1 North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Services as part of the Health and Social Care Partnership North Lanarkshire, is lead agency in co-ordinating and conducting adult protection inquiries and investigations as defined by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 (ASP Act). This report provides an overview on adult protection activity undertaken by Social Work Services and partners in the Adult Protection Committee in North Lanarkshire during 2019 - 2020.

- 1.2 North Lanarkshire Social Work Service undertakes a significant amount of work to ensure that adults who may be at risk of harm are supported to keep themselves safe. The purpose of the annual report is to share detail of the activity around this key area of work as well as share learning from audits and reviews. This ensures staff and services retain a focused approach to adult protection and are suitably trained and supported to confidently deliver positive outcomes for those who may be subject to harm.
- 1.3 Adult protection legislation places certain duties upon the Council to undertake inquiries and investigations if it receives information to suggest that an adult is at risk of harm. The 2007 Act defines an 'adult at risk' as a person (in Scotland) aged 16 years or over and who:
- is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights and other interests;
 - is at risk of harm; and;
 - because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than an adult, who is not so affected.

This is commonly referred to as the three point criteria, with all three points requiring to be met for the adult to be considered an 'adult at risk'. As stated, the definition applies in regard to the wellbeing of the person, but also, to their rights, interests, possessions and property. Social Work Services has the lead role in investigating concerns but other "public bodies" named in the ASP Act such as Health and Police, along with other Council services, have a legal duty to report harm and co-operate with inquiries and investigations.

2. Report

- 2.1 During the period 2019 – 20, North Lanarkshire Social Work Service received 2,230 ASP referrals and 3,027 "Adult Concern" reports from the police. The total number of referrals relating to the welfare and safety of adults across North Lanarkshire for 2019 -20 was therefore 5,257. The adult concern reports from the police represent situations in which the police wish to share a concern but do not believe that the adult meets the three points of the adult protection criteria (as set out above). Nevertheless, Social Work teams have a duty to carry out initial inquiries and progress all referrals to investigation if necessary. While there was a 2% increase in ASP referrals from all referral sources (from 2,184 to 2,230), police 'adult concern' reports demonstrated a 4% decrease (from 3,148 to 3,027). Despite this small decline in police concern reports, this work continues to have significant resource implications for social workers and administrative staff.
- 2.2 Social work continues to receive referrals from a range of agencies. While referrals from Police Scotland showed a 18% decrease from the same time last year (524 down to 431), they continue to be the main referring agency in North Lanarkshire making up 19% (431) of all the ASP referrals received in 2019 -20.
- 2.3 For the second year running, there were significant increases in the number of referrals received from both Health (up from 350 to 401; 15%) and Social Work (up from 364 to 411; 13%) professionals, increasing their overall percentage share of referrals to 18% each.
- 2.4 ASP referrals from Care Homes showed a 9% increase, (from 373 to 405). This means that 18% of the total number of ASP referrals come from this source. Information from inquiries and investigations suggest that possible causes include the

increasing complexity of people who are placed in care homes many of whom have significant levels of cognitive impairment and/or dementia and behaviour that requires intensive support. Monitoring and support via Social Work Quality Assurance arrangements and ASP Multi agency training continue to have a focus on this area. This is also an area which is monitored as part of the wider care home assurance and oversight arrangements implemented during the current COVID 19 pandemic.

- 2.5 Adults with mental health issues were represented in 39% (849) of total ASP referrals received, being the main primary user group referred. Referrals for this group have however decreased by 7% since the same time last year (from 46% to 39%). It is of interest this decrease has occurred within the context of: an increase in referrals for Distress Brief Intervention. While there are no specific data sets that can be used to provide correlation, this does however reinforce the importance of key service developments such as Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) and also social work investment in delivering ASP training for those organisations who deliver services at home to our most vulnerable service users.
- 2.6 There were 400 ASP investigations carried out in 2019-20 which marks a 21% reduction from last year (down from 508 to 399) meaning 18% of the total number of ASP referrals received progressed onto a full investigation. This percentage conversion rate has reduced by 5% since the same time last year (from 23% to 18%).
- 2.7 Qualified social workers continue to have a wider duty to protect individuals beyond merely investigating initial referrals of those who may be at risk of harm. In addition to making inquiries regarding the 5,257 initial referrals for adult protection and police concerns in 2019/20 social work staff carried out work relating to:
 - 400 formal ASP investigations and 99 ASP initial case conferences;
 - Acted as Delegated Officer responsibility for 216 Guardianship Orders where the Council acts as Guardian;
 - Had the role of Supervising Officer responsibility for 750 private Guardianship Orders;
 - Undertook Appropriate Adult duties for 108 individuals who were interviewed by Police Scotland and assessed as having a mental disorder.
- 2.8 North Lanarkshire Council, as part of Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire applied for and implemented 9 Protection Orders under ASP legislation for 2019 - 20. These are broken down as follows:
 - 3 Temporary Banning Orders with Power of Arrest (that progressed to full Banning Order with Power of Arrest, and;
 - 6 Banning Orders with Power of Arrest.
- 2.9 The Scottish Government via the National Strategic Forum for Adult Support and Protection, have published a detailed three year plan covering Assurance, Governance, Data and Information, Policy and Guidance, Practice Improvement and Prevention. This plan confirms all adult protection partnerships in Scotland will be jointly inspected over the next two year period. While the review of social work Adult Protection Procedures and employee ASP learning and development will provide evidence of ongoing improvement activity here in North Lanarkshire, the Council continues to undertake a range of ASP quality assurance activities to support continuous improvement, for example:

- The production of regular performance management reports which review and analyse ASP activity. These reports are reviewed via the APC, and in partnership with other agencies and services;
- Weekly monitoring of referrals from care homes, reported to the Scottish Government;
- Strengthening AP governance arrangements with Social Work Adult Services;
- Case file auditing – an audit of all adult protection referrals submitted to one Social Work Locality for the period January to April 2019;
- Case file auditing – an audit of a sample of adult protection cases in each Locality and for Social Work managers to undertake a peer review of emerging findings;
- SWS, in partnership with the APC, is planning to undertake inter-agency file reading;
- Employee development sessions to raise awareness of internal AP quality assurance activities and the findings of same; and raise awareness of and improve practice through learning from external Significant Case Reviews and internal case reviews/reflective learning exercises.

2.10 The range of work noted above forms a large area of responsibility for the service and is a major area of work for staff in the six localities in social work activity in line with demographic pressures on service more generally. To support employee development and produce good outcomes for adults at risk of harm, enhanced professional Council Officer training and Investigative Interviewing training is offered regularly. Multi agency and a range of tailored ASP training continues to take place which raises employee awareness of harm and the impacts, and the importance of reporting at the earliest opportunity.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty

The work reported on within this report support positive outcomes for some in the community who most impacted by inequality and adversity and thus support the council in the exercise of this duty.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

The report does not introduce any changes which require an EIA. As above however the work described promotes the support and rights of vulnerable adults many of whom have protected characteristics.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

None.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

None

4.3 Environmental Impact

None

4.4 Risk Impact

As in all social work areas of public protection, there is always a danger of significant harm occurring to an individual or individuals and potential reputational risk to the council should it fail to properly exercise its responsibilities in this area of work. This is reflected by the inclusion of 'Public Protection' within the corporate risk register.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 National Health and Social Care Standards
- 5.2 Adult Support and Protection Quality Indicator Framework

6. Supporting documents

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - A copy of the full report showing breakdown of types of and range of AP activity carried out in 2019 – 2020 and containing wider information



**Alison Gordon, Head of Children, Families and Justice Social Work Services /
Chief Social Work Officer**

North Lanarkshire Social Work Adult Protection Report

2019/2020

1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee Report
1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
Definition of an Adult at Risk.....	2
Last Year's update.....	2
National position.....	5
Case file audit / review.....	6
Local Profile.....	7
Large Scale Investigations.....	13
Additional Elements Supporting Adult Protection.....	14
North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee.....	15
Case Reviews.....	16
Local Developments and Events.....	16
ASP Learning and Development.....	17
Key Areas of Reflection.....	17
Summary of Adult Protection Activity for 2019/20.....	19
Individual Agency Referral Summary.....	20

Introduction

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 came into force on the 29th October 2008. Under 'the Act', North Lanarkshire Council as lead agency, has a statutory duty to make inquiries about the well-being, property or financial affairs of an individual if they know or believe that the person is an adult at risk and that they might need to intervene. 'The Act' provides powers available to Council Officers to carry out investigations as deemed appropriate for the purposes of inquiry into the circumstances of an adult in order to protect them from harm.

This report provides information on adult protection activity undertaken by Social Work Services in North Lanarkshire during 2019 - 2020. It details all recorded referrals received during the year in comparison to previous years, and what stage they reached in the adult protection process. The report also provides some analysis of the information collated regarding performance and wider developments in adult protection across North Lanarkshire.

Definition of an Adult at Risk

Section 53 of the Act defines an adult at risk as a person aged 16 years or over and who:

- is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights and other interests;
- is at risk of harm; and;
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than an adult, who is not so affected.

It is important to note that simply the existence of a particular condition does not mean that an adult is at risk. A person may have a disability and be able to safeguard their own wellbeing. For the Act to apply all three criteria must apply.

Last Year's Update

Throughout the year, regular performance management reports have been produced. These review and analyse ASP activity and identify how this impacts on sources and funding implications. Quarterly reports continue to highlight increased demand on social work human and service resources and the impacts on resources across partner agencies. The Performance Management Reports are shared across local Partnership Boards, Chief Officer Groups, Social Work Management Teams and the Adult Protection Committee.

North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) Social Work Adult Protection Procedures have been reviewed to reflect changes in legislation and the learning from practice over the past 4 years. Locality employee briefing sessions that reinforced the changes and best practice in ASP were delivered from January to November 2019. These included a formal launch session led by the Head of Adult Social Work Services (in July 2019) and a number of multi-agency employee briefing sessions to raise awareness of the changes within the updated procedures and consider learning from internal and external AP quality assurance processes e.g. SCR's, Learning Reviews and Case file audits /reviews.

Both activities provided opportunity for employees to review their practice, in light of learning from key activities such as audits, Learning Reviews and SCR's. This helps to reinforce best practice and to raise the profile of AP matters in order that they remain a key priority for employees across North Lanarkshire. Such activity will enhance Council Officer and social work employees' skill and knowledge base and delivery of ASP services to the local

community and, assist the Council and partners to evidence continuous practice improvement via internal AP self-evaluation, in preparation for future inspection activity.

NLC adult protection procedures are for social work staff only, however when partner agencies are developing their own local procedures they will reflect the processes within NLC procedures to ensure consistency and a joined up approach to ASP within North Lanarkshire.

Throughout the year, a number of development activities have taken place to strengthen AP governance and quality assurance systems within Social Work Adult Services. For example, work is ongoing with the development of an AP governance data base that supports the logging and tracking of cases of concern and/or significant events. The system promotes a 'reflective learning from practice' approach and provides additional assurance that each event is analysed carefully to ensure that learning is taken forward with social work and multi-agency practitioners across localities.

Another example is the development of the ASP Service Provider Group. This forum provides a platform for communication between senior social managers (e.g. within Headquarters and Localities) to discuss new and emerging risks within services, as they arise. This group also has a key focus upon Large Scale Investigations (LSI) within North Lanarkshire and other local authority areas, where North Lanarkshire residents may be within the service.

Finally, the senior social work locality managers have been supported to review and strengthen ASP systems and processes within each Locality. A number of focus group sessions were held with social work staff to explore and gather their views on:

- ASP referral and case management systems;
- Risk assessment and risk management decision making;
- The social work interface with administrative support;
- ASP quality and assurance systems, and;
- Support, guidance, management oversight and leadership in ASP.

While the focus group sessions provided a range of rich employee feedback that have subsequently supported ongoing developments in the above areas, it was also hoped that the focus groups process would promote employee buy in, ownership and accountability in ASP. This development work cuts across the logging and tracking of ASP cases and attempts to build in support, guidance, leadership and scrutiny, at each stage of the AP process, to promote evidence based approaches and defensible decision making.

The Post Graduate Certificate (University of Stirling) in ASP is presented each academic year. For the year 2019-20 there was no availability on the programme for NLC social work staff to be accepted for training. It has however been confirmed that a cohort of social work employees will be supported to complete the course for academic year 2020 -21. This is very positive as it provides further evidence of the councils' commitment to invest in employee development and to build upon staff resources that supports the continuous improvement of ASP practice.

As the financial year came to a close in March 2020, the Council, like many other organisations across the country, were required to make a number of changes to the service, strategically and operationally, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, it was unfortunate but necessary that a number of working groups and activities had to be put temporarily on

hold e.g. ASP Systems and Processes group and multi- agency file reading.

During the first few weeks of lockdown restrictions, we saw a decline in the number of ASP referrals being submitted to the Council. In response, the Senior Officer worked in partnership with senior social work managers, the AP Co-ordinator and multi-agency partners, to design a number of employee guidance, leaflets and information that would assist employees to identify adult harm and to report this, in a timely manner. This work included good partnership working with local Police colleagues to identify local adult harm trends and patterns and to use such information in an attempt to become pro-active in identifying potential and actual harm. A number of employee checklists were developed including a short brief for those staff coming into contact with members of the public, during remote interactions, such as telephone contacts.

During lockdown, the Senior Officer has been working closely with colleagues across localities to produce weekly AP data reports. Such reports are required for both internal and external reporting requirements e.g. NL CSWO and Scottish Government. Initially, it was recognised that while the weekly data reports will provide a basic weekly trend (e.g. whether the data set has increased or reduced), there were broader limitations within the data sets, in terms of identifying more specific trends and patterns. To address this issue, in addition to the weekly data set information, a ten week analysis, in comparison to the same period last year, is also provided.

Feedback from Locality Social Work Managers is that the information is very useful as it is current and that it also provides a detailed account of AP activity for their own locality area, in comparison to other localities.

Throughout the lockdown period, a number of AP case file analyses have been undertaken in an attempt to understand adults at risk experiences and where possible, to identify specific patterns and/or trends. While this work provided detailed information pertaining to that weekly period, no specific patterns and/or trends were identified.

While home visits to 'adult's at risk' continued to take place in line with national and local guidance, a number of developments were required to manage the AP meetings process that promoted good communication between Social Work Services and partner agencies to come together, and to share timely information for risk assessment and risk management purposes. Work was undertaken, in collaboration with social work managers and colleagues from Advocacy services, to design and develop a range of templates and supporting guidance to conduct virtual AP meetings. Initial feedback from Locality Social Work Managers and Senior Social Workers was that while the virtual meetings process seemed to encourage better multi-agency attendance from those professionals involved in the case, there was a trend of 'adults at risk' not attending the virtual meeting. In response, a 'test of change' is currently underway to identify the most effective approaches that will support and increase meaningful participation from services users and carers in adult protection cases. The results of this will inform recovery planning and will maximise participation, within ASP processes, from adults at risk and their families.

While the review of SW AP Procedures, development work on AP governance structures and employee ASP learning and development will provide evidence of continuous improvement activity here in North Lanarkshire, the Council continues to undertake a range of AP quality assurance and self-evaluation activities in preparation of the forthcoming joint inspection (see Case file audit / Review section below).

National Position

Social Work Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government, arranged a National ASP Conference on 2nd October 2019. The Senior Officer and a number of social work colleagues across North Lanarkshire attended this event which was well received by participants. A number of guest key note speakers and practice workshops were held to debate and share good practice and learning in ASP.

The Scottish Government, via a member of the ASP National Strategic Forum, took the opportunity to formally launch a detailed improvement plan of action taking place over the next three years. This will focus upon:

- Assurance
- Governance
- Data and Information
- Policy and Guidance
- Practice Improvement
- Prevention

The Scottish Government also confirmed that all adult protection partnerships in Scotland will be jointly inspected over the next two year period (e.g. 2020 – 2022). The Care Inspectorate suspended this inspection activity (in March 2020) and have yet to confirm new inspection timescales.

The Scottish Government ASP Improvement Plan can be accessed by clicking [here](#)

The Scottish Government, in partnership with the National AP Co-ordinator, held an event on 5th November 2019 to launch the Interim Guidance of Conducting Adult Significant Case Reviews (SCR) in Scotland. Again, the event was well attended and a number of key note speakers provided interesting information on the challenges of conducting SCR's locally and learning from same. The new guidance attempts to provide a national framework for conducting Adult SCR's, including information upon thresholds for case review; key SCR processes and timescales; and supporting case review guidance templates. It is hoped such guidance will help to improve local SCR processes, but also, promote standardisation to the Adult SCR process, across Scotland. This guidance document will continue to shape and influence Adult SCR policy, procedures and practice here in North Lanarkshire.

The Scottish Government produced a national ASP data report for the period 2018 - 19 in November this year. Some of the key findings both nationally and within North Lanarkshire are:

- Nationally there continues to be wide variances on how ASP referrals are counted;
- 20% increase in investigations commenced from 2017-18;
- 20% increase in case conferences taking place from 2017-18;
- 19% decrease in Protection Orders granted from 2017-18, and;
- North Lanarkshire continues to be in the top group of Local Authority areas that carry out the highest number of investigations per 100,000 of adults,

The data return for 2018 - 19 compared to the year previous, has highlighted a national increase in the number of referrals, investigations and Case Conference taking place,

however it underestimates the demand on social work resources as it does not include Police 'Adult Concern reports, which demand a similar level of action and use of staff time.

Within North Lanarkshire the information reinforced the good practice that is taking place, particularly around the consistently high conversion rate from inquiry to investigation and also, how we challenge ourselves over the high number of referrals that progress to no further action (NFA) and what this means for the adult in terms of outcomes. As North Lanarkshire Council carry out a high number of investigations per population, this offers reassurance that the adult's circumstances are examined fully and interventions are appropriate.

As aforementioned, the national data set is problematic as wide variations exist in the reported position at local authority level as a result of definitional, terminological and recording differences. As the collated data demonstrates a wide variety of statistics across council areas this, in turn, produces challenges to allow accurate comparative analysis and benchmarking. While we recognise there have been some challenges in how this information is collated, due to definitional and recording differences, it does however provide an opportunity for an overview of adult protection activity across Scotland. The Scottish Government have recently confirmed that the ASP Code of Practice (2014) will now be reviewed. It is hoped that this review and other ongoing work with the weekly National AP data set will agree national definitions which when standardised, will support more accuracy and consistency of both reporting and interpretation of data from the National AP data set.

Case file audit / review

An internal audit was carried out in May 2018, then again in September 2018. This confirmed that psychological harm was often used as a 'catch all' term and can often hide other areas of harm being experienced by adults.

With this in mind, the updated SW AP procedures provide clear information and guidance as to what constitutes psychological harm type incidents, as well as responsibility for the Senior Social Worker to screen the referral to ensure the primary harm judgment is accurately reflected in the information recorded. As detailed later in this report, it appears both measures have served to increase the accuracy of primary harm statistics.

In general, work is ongoing to update and develop the SWIS recording system to reflect adult protection activity, which not only informs the Council and partners of the number of referrals, nature of harm and other relevant information but also helps to inform future learning and development needs of the workforce and areas for discussion at the local practitioner forums. Multi-agency adult protection training reinforces the importance of referrers being clear on the area of harm to enable social work staff to conduct more focussed inquiries.

Locality AP file reading

The ongoing monitoring and review of adult protection operational activity remains a key feature for Social Work Services. To provide support and development opportunities to locality based Senior Social Workers and to provide key insights into current practice, an audit of all adult protection referrals submitted to one Social Work Locality was carried out, for the period of January to May 2019 (e.g. 130 AP referrals).

The audit identified a range of interesting findings that demonstrated good practice and areas of development as follows:

- The majority of Adult protection referrals were handled appropriately with procedures being followed, within timescales, and timely action being undertaken in regard to risk assessment and risk management activity;
- There was clear evidence of evidence based recording which adequately captured the identified risks against the strengths of and supports available to, those adults referred;
- There was evidence of thoroughness in practice in some cases, where the Duty Senior Social Worker identified and outlined the risks to be followed up by Lead Council Officer, and this information was recorded on appropriate SWiS screens;
- In a range of cases (17) that progressed from Inquiry to Investigation, there was evidence that Council Officers were routinely referring the adult for independent advocacy support;
- The use of adult protection recording framework (headings) was good and evident in most cases but not all (17 cases from 130 did not have this).

To build upon and consolidate the above self-evaluation activity, a number of ASP cases in each locality were reviewed with Social Work managers undertaking a peer review of emerging findings. Over the period August to October 2019, an audit of 33 adult protection case files randomly selected from across all localities was undertaken. Good practice was found across the majority of casefiles in relation to adult protection processes and safeguarding adults at risk of harm. Recording of significant events in chronologies was evident in all files, although there was some confusion about what type of event to include at times, and outcomes were not always included. It was identified that work was required on how formative and summative assessments of risk, and risk management information was recorded; with more attention also required regarding how service user outcomes were measured and how to improve the consistency of recording processes.

This activity provided opportunity for senior social work managers to come together, to debate and discuss the review findings, and to consider how best practice in ASP can be celebrated within the Council and shared across localities.

Planning activity to undertake multi-agency case file reading (across localities between May to August 2020) were well underway but were unfortunately put on hold due to the Covid pandemic. A multi-agency group was formed with senior representatives across the public bodies and led by a Senior Social Work Manager. At the time of writing (July 2020) this group is now being re-established to re-commence file reading planning and will consider and explore remote and virtual file reading methods.

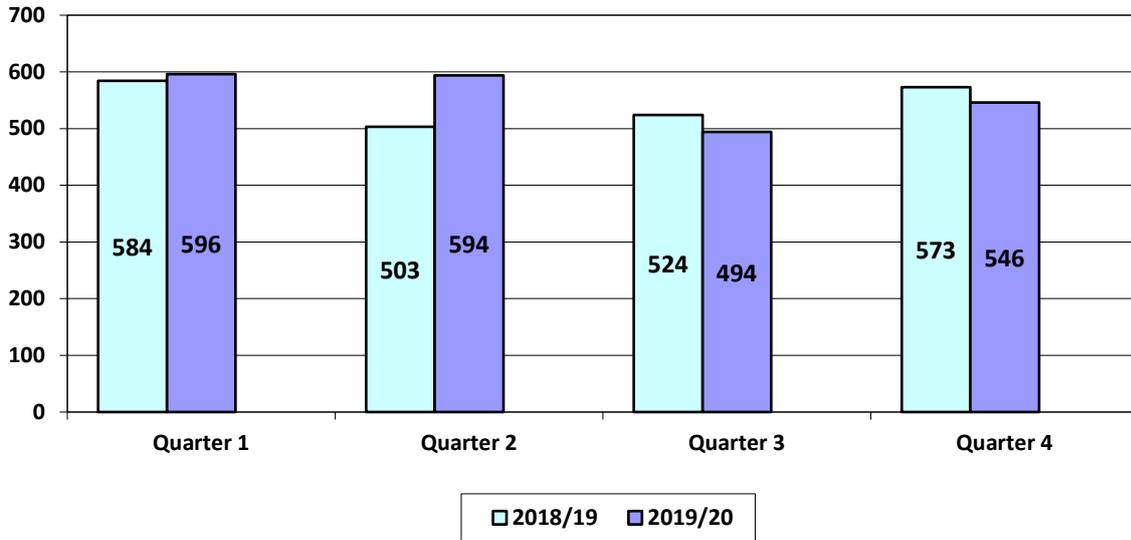
Local Profile

Data shows that North Lanarkshire Social Work Services received 2,230 ASP referrals for the period 2019 - 20. North Lanarkshire has measured a 2% increase (from 2,184 to 2,230) in the total number of referrals received compared to last year. This is the first time in five years that an annual increase has been measured.

Number of Referrals

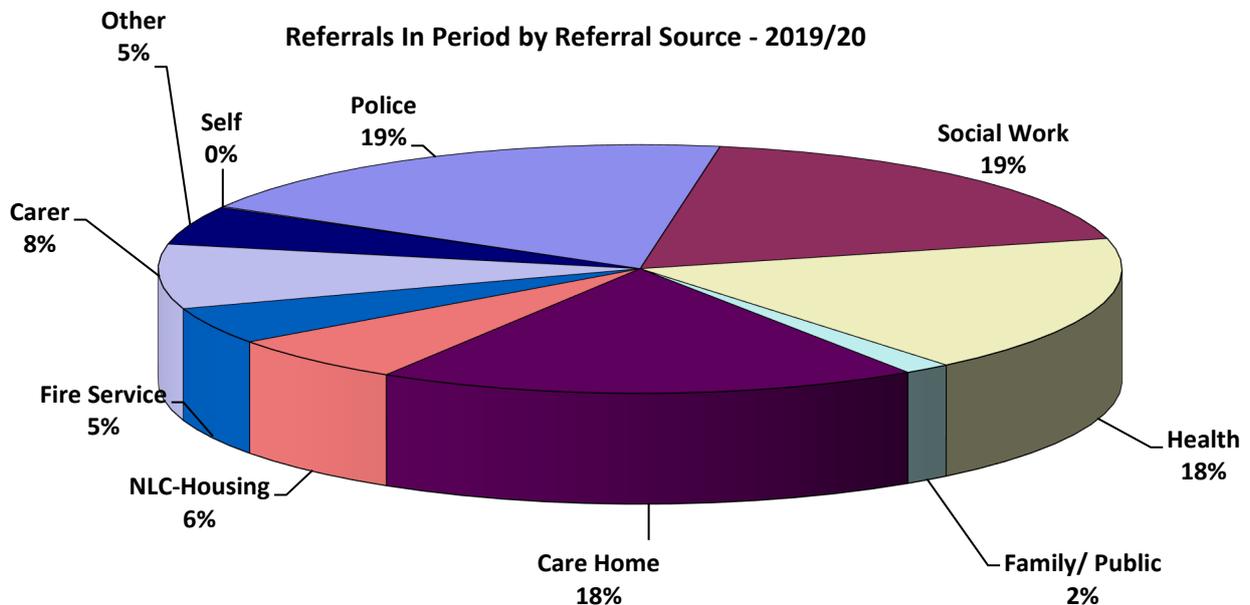
2018/19: N = 2184

2019/20: N = 2230



General referrals

Police Scotland continue to be the highest referrer group with 18% (431) of all ASP referrals received. Five years ago Police Scotland replaced their local reporting system with a central “Concern HUB” which covers both North and South Lanarkshire. We initially saw a significant increase in the number of adult protection referrals; however following a review of their screening processes there has been a steady decline in adult protection referrals and this is replicated again for 2019 - 20 with Police referrals down 18% from the same time last year (from 524 to 431).



There were significant increases in the number of referrals received from both Health (from 350 to 401, up 15%) and Social Work (from 364 to 411, up 13%). Such increases have resulted in Health and Social Work increasing their percentage share of referrals to 18% respectively.

Housing Services measured a 23% increase (from 112 to 138) while Fire & Rescue Services demonstrated a 26% increase (from 85 to 107) in ASP referrals submitted compared to the same time last year.

In general, despite the reduction in ASP referrals from Police Scotland, it's very positive that referral rates are increasing - across the public bodies (and partner agencies) - as much work has been undertaken via training, learning and development to promote the importance of employee duties and responsibilities to raise concerns for adults at risk of harm.

ASP referrals from Care Homes measured a 9% increase (from 373 to 405). This means that 18% of total ASP referrals come from this source. Information from inquiries and investigations suggest possible causes for this are:

- Those Adults that require Care Home provision are now more advanced with complex health conditions when moving into the service e.g. dementia;
- Updated Care Inspectorate ASP procedure that ensures Inspectors seek (and log) information from service providers regarding progress and outcomes of ASP referrals;
- Internal NLC Quality Assurance systems such as quarterly reporting via the HYVE system and Senior Officer monitoring visits to Care Homes providers, and;
- Ongoing work from NL APC via events to raise awareness and priority of ASP within Care home settings.

Monitoring and support via Social Work Quality Assurance arrangements and ASP Multi agency training continue to have a focus on this area.

Localities

In comparison to the same time last year, statistics show that two (2) localities measured small reductions and four (4) localities demonstrated increases;

- Motherwell down 8% (from 322 to 295);
- Wishaw down 14% (from 464 to 397);
- Coatbridge up 3% (from 319 to 329);
- Cumbernauld up 9% (from 298 to 329);
- Bellshill up 13% (from 296 to 334), and;
- Airdrie up 7% (from 335 to 360).

The data reveals that Wishaw (397) and Airdrie (360) localities received the most ASP referrals for North Lanarkshire for 2019 - 20.

ASP referrals progressed by SWES colleagues increased by 27% (from 150 to 191) between yearly periods.

Police Concerns

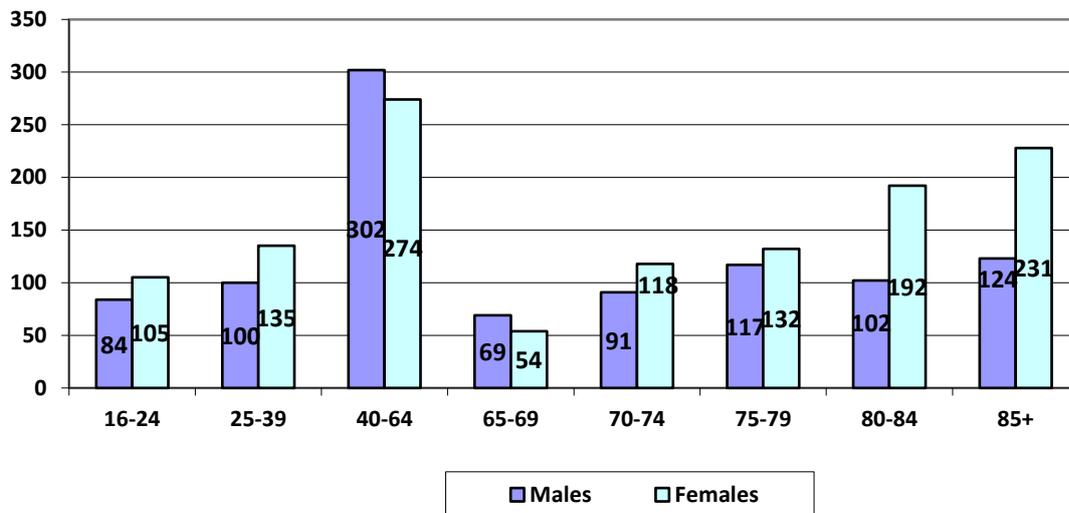
While there have been reductions in Police ASP referrals, locality teams continue to report a high volume of police 'Adult Concern' reports. Police Scotland submit these reports when they do not believe the ASP criteria is met but the adult continues to cause them concern. The screening process by social work remains the same for police 'Adult Concern' reports as that of ASP referrals, as they often relate to individuals who are at risk and will require

further inquiry to ensure they do not meet the ASP criteria when further information is gathered.

The data reveals that in addition to the 2,230 ASP referrals, there were 3,027 Police 'Adult Concern' Reports submitted across localities. The total number of adult protection activities undertaken to keep adults safe across North Lanarkshire for 2019 -20 was 5,257.

Since the same reporting period last year there has been a 4% reduction in police 'Adult Concern' reports (from 3,148 to 3,027). Despite the small decline, this work continues to place significant resource implications for social work and administrative staff.

Referrals In Period by Agegroup and Sex



Gender

Consistent with last year, Social Work Services received more referrals for women than men for 2019/20 (e.g. women: 1241 – men: 989). The data represents a 56% (women) - 44% (men) percentage split.

Statistics show that both men (502) and women (727) are more likely to be referred when above the 65 year age range. While this finding remains congruent with last year’s data for women, there has been a change for men, as data over the previous six years demonstrated that men were more likely to be referred when in the under 65 age range.

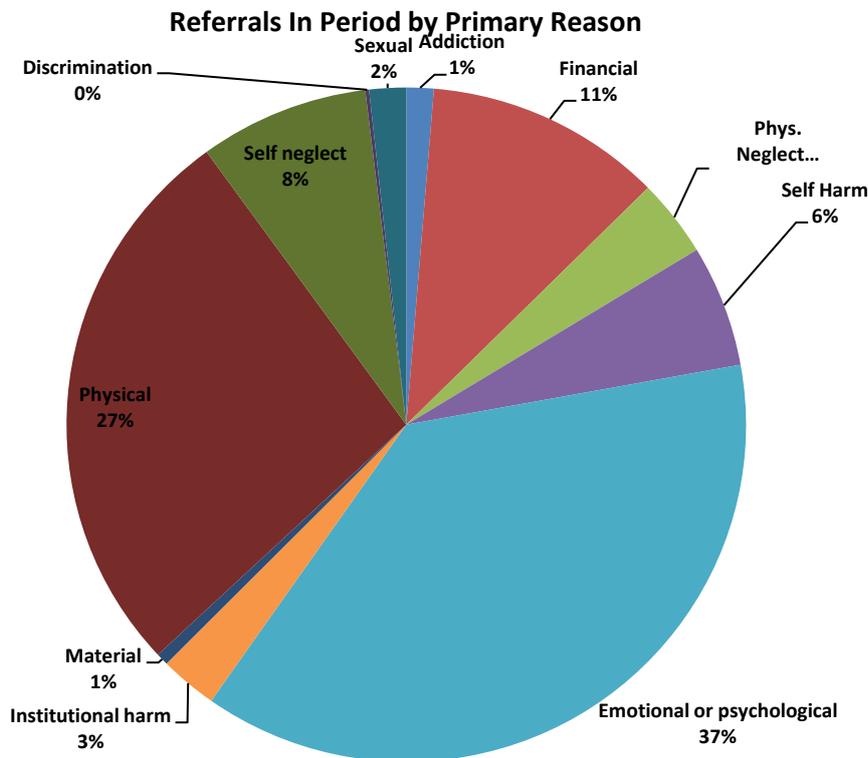
Referral by category

Adults with mental health issues were represented in 39% (849) of total ASP referrals received, being the main primary user group referred. Referrals for this group have decreased by 9% since the same time last year (from 46% to 39%). It is of interest this decrease has occurred within the context of: an increase in referrals for Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) (see DBI below). While we cannot directly evidence a correlation here, this does however reinforce the importance of key service developments such as Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) and ASP training for those organisations who deliver services at home to our most vulnerable service users.

Consistent to the previous year, psychological harm was the main reason for referral (37%) with physical harm (27%) featuring as next highest, followed by financial harm (11%). As set out earlier, previous internal audits indicated that psychological harm was often used as

a 'catch all' term. It is therefore positive that changes to the updated Social Work Adult Protection procedures seem to have reduced the number of cases logged as psychological harm (from 52% to 37%) and in so doing increasing the accuracy of primary harm statistics.

The procedural review introduced the new harm term of self-neglect in an attempt to identify and separate those adults that may be at risk of harm due to not caring for themselves, from those at risk adults who rely upon care from others. It has been recognised in research that self-neglect cases can be some of the most complex to manage for practitioners, as they are fraught with issues that cut across ethical, legal and practical considerations. Raising awareness of such issues, for multi-agency practitioners, has been a key focus within the Multi agency forums and within ASP multi agency training. For this period, there were 180 self-neglect cases which measures as 8% of total ASP referrals.



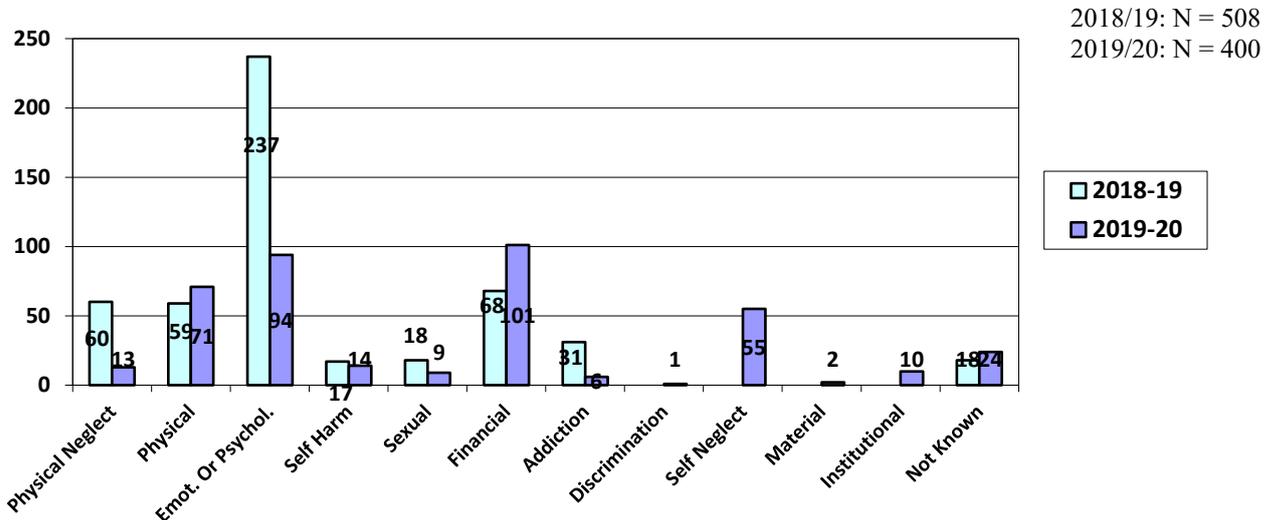
Referral Outcomes

There continues to be a high number of referrals that progress to no further action under adult protection legislation (1,279 or 57%). This may be for a number of reasons e.g. the adult may not meet the three point criteria under the 2007 Act and/or the adult may be better supported by another care agency. Despite many ASP referrals progressing to no further action under the legislation there is still a legal requirement on the council to carry out initial inquiries. This places responsibility on the locality social work teams to respond to every referral received and undertake detailed work to ensure that the right decisions are made. This can often result in lengthy involvement from social work staff as the adults circumstances evolve and risks change. Some of those referrals may require ongoing work to take place over a long period of time to ensure that the adult's welfare, finances, rights and/or property is safeguarded and they are supported to manage the risks they face.

ASP Investigations

There were 400 investigations carried out in 2019 -20 which marks a 21% reduction from last year (from 508 to 400). 18% of the total number of ASP referrals received progressed onto a full investigation. This percentage conversion rate has reduced by 5% since the same time last year (from 23% to 18%).

Referrals in Period Leading to Investigations by Primary Reason



25% (99) of investigations progressed onto an initial case conference with Financial harm (101) being the highest reason for investigation, followed by Emotional / Psychological harm (94) Physical harm (71), Self-neglect (55) and Self harm (14) coming next. As the above table illustrates, this year there is a more even spread across investigations by primary harm reason with a huge reduction in psychological harm type investigations (from 237 to 94). Similar to that of referrals, this change seems to have occurred from the updates made to the NLC Adult Protection procedures.

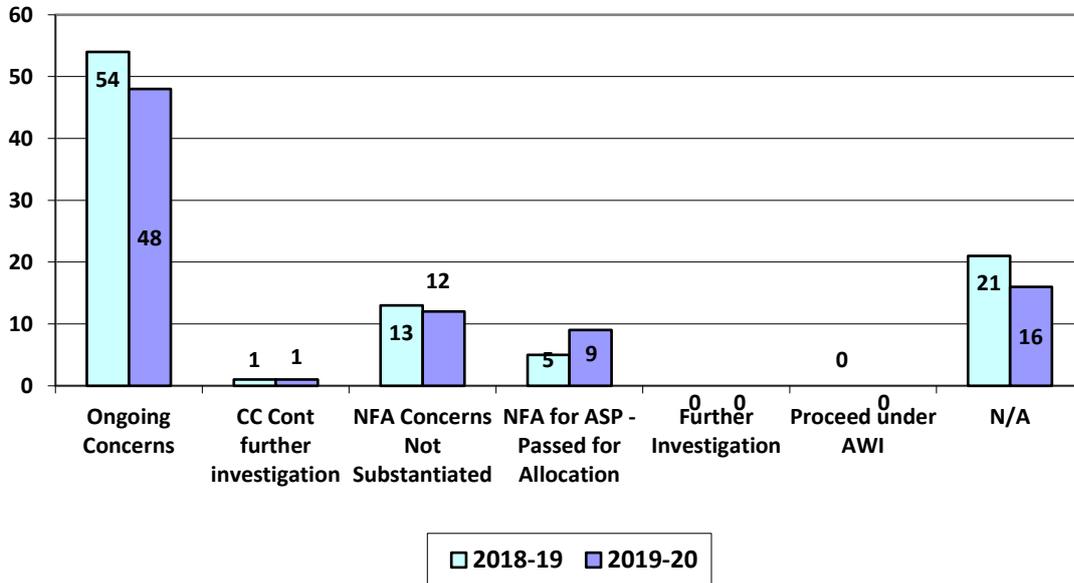
Case Conferences

Case conferences often result following an investigation and are always chaired by Locality Social Work Managers (LSWM). Partner agencies are invited under their duty to co-operate and their contribution is vitally important in sharing accurate information in order to produce and implement effective multi agency risk assessments, protection plans and informed outcomes for those at risk of harm.

There were 99 ASP initial case conferences and 41 ASP Review case conferences held for 2019 - 20. This means there has been a 7% increase in those case that progress from investigation onto initial case conference, in comparison to the same period last year (from 18% to 25%).

**Referrals in Period Leading to Case Conference by Conference Decision
(if known)**

2018/19: N = 94
2019/20: N = 99



As noted from the above table, the overwhelming majority (48) of case conferences reached a decision that concerns were ongoing. There continues to be a number of ASP cases where no decision has been recorded at different stages in the ASP process. This year, the data shows that thirteen cases conferences had no decision recorded. Closer examination of cases where a decision is not recorded upon the mySWiS system identifies that often decisions are recorded within the contact notes rather than within specific AP screens. Consultation with Locality Social Work Managers will bring opportunity to find solutions to this issue and improve recording processes.

Statutory Orders/Functions

For the period 2019/20, North Lanarkshire Council, as part of Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire implemented nine (9) Protection Orders as follows:

- 3 Temporary Banning Orders with Power of Arrest (that progressed onto full Orders), and:
- 6 Banning Orders with Power of Arrest.

In addition to ASP work, qualified social workers within community care teams continued to also hold statutory responsibilities under Adults with Incapacity legislation as follows:

- Delegated Officer responsibility for 216 Guardianship Orders where the Council acts as Guardian Supervising Officer Responsibility for 750 private Guardianship Orders.

Large Scale Investigations

North Lanarkshire Council carried out zero large scale investigations (LSI) this year. Local Care homes and other contracted provider’s continue to have access to adult protection training and awareness sessions, which keeps them informed and supports good practice.

NLC Quality Assurance Officers provide further support and scrutiny of adult protection issues. North Lanarkshire Guidance for the Protection of Adults within Registered and Contracted Services is currently under review.

Additional Elements Supporting Adult Protection:

Appropriate Adults Services

In January 2020, Appropriate Adults (AA) Services across Scotland became a statutory function via part implementation of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. This now means that a statutory duty is placed upon Police Scotland to request an Appropriate Adult, while the Council have a statutory duty to provide Appropriate Adult Services, and the training of AA's.

While statutory guidance provides options for local authorities to commission AA services locally, Appropriate Adult Services in North Lanarkshire Council are currently fully operated, funded and delivered by Social Work Services.

In preparation of the service becoming a statutory function, AA training was delivered jointly with local Police Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire colleagues to 25 North Lanarkshire Council employees. This now means we have 40 employees trained to perform AA roles during business hours and 10 full time SWES staff trained to perform AA roles (e.g. out of hours requests).

While AA requests increased by 6% (from 108 to 114) from the same time last year, there were additional increases in the number of times AA's are being asked to attend police stations (for the same offence) and are spending an increased amount of time supporting vulnerable adults whilst there. This service continues to place additional demands on operational staff as they are required to undertake this role while managing other social work responsibilities.

North Lanarkshire Appropriate Adult Service requests by Year and number

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
110	138	158	108	114

Distress Brief Intervention (DBI)

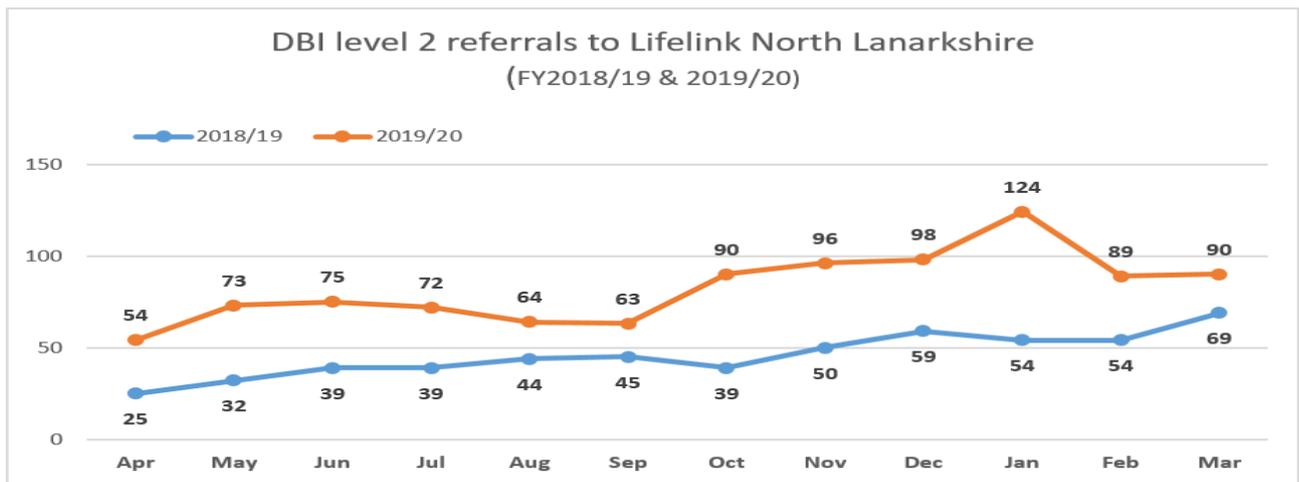
The Scottish Government announced that Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire were successful in their bid to host the Central Team for the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) test programme as well as run one of the pilot sites. The test sites became live in the spring of 2017.

Over the last three years, with Scottish Governments support, the vision, collaborative culture and programme infrastructure has enabled the programme to expand and include young people aged between 16 and 17 years.

A Distress Brief Intervention is a time limited and supportive problem solving contact with an individual in distress. It is a two-level approach. DBI level 1 is provided by front line staff and involves a compassionate response, signposting and offer of referral to a DBI level 2 service. DBI level 2 is provided by commissioned and trained third sector service Life Link (North Lanarkshire) who will contact the person within 24-hours of referral and provide

compassionate community-based problem solving support, wellness and distress management planning, supported connections and signposting for a period of up to 14 days.

As can be seen from the chart below, the number of referrals for this year, and in comparison to 2018/19, have significantly increased (monthly comparisons) with noticeable spikes in December 2019 and January 2020. It is of interest that an increase in DBI referrals have occurred within the context of: a decrease in ASP referrals for those adults with mental health issues. Close monitoring will continue via the Adult Protection Committee – Monitoring, Reporting and Practice Improvement subcommittee in order to understand this data further.



On the 14th April 2020, the First Minister announced the expansion and development of the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) programme into a nationwide response for people presenting in distress to the Mental Health HUB at NHS24, during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

In North Lanarkshire the DBI provider (Lifelink) are working to a very high level with recent increases to their staffing level through redeployment of two staff from their core service. Both staff are now fully trained in DBI level 2, in response to additional funding provided for the new NHS 24 pathway. At present, the team continues to work remotely due to restrictions, however new working practices have been implemented across both North and South Lanarkshire in order to promote equivalency in the use of standardised practices, recording tools as well as processes for onward communications.

Pre-Covid referral levels were high but the infrastructure that the service had and the positive communication with the DBI lead and health and social care have allowed for excellent practice. Lifelink are now up to pre-covid capacity with April being lowest month of 68 referrals May and June 2020, 110 and 112 respectively. There is also an increase in GP referrals. ED department are predominantly the highest referring agency

North Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee

The APC has statutory duties to promote communication and co-operation within and between the public bodies, to be involved in the development of local adult protection policies, procedures and practice, and to provide adult protection learning and development opportunities for multi-agency employees.

Independent APC Chairs have a statutory duty to submit a Biennial Report to the Scottish Government every two years, outlining activity and progress of implementing the 2007 Act in their area. This has been helpful in measuring local performance and how far adult protection has progressed over such a short period. The Biennial report for 2018 - 20 is currently being prepared and while the Scottish Government have yet to provide a date for submission, it is expected this will be in or around October 2020.

The Biennial Report for 2016 -18 is available on the Adult Protection Committee Website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Case Reviews

There were zero (0) notifications of case reviews or significant incidents made to the APC, for the year 2019 - 20.

The Adult Protection Committee completed one Significant Case Review over the year 2019 - 20. The Review for 'Susan' was endorsed by the Adult Protection Committee on 4th February 2020. The subsequent action plan is being actively progressed through relevant Adult Protection Committee Sub committees. Progress is reportable to the Committee.

Local Developments and Events:

Public Protection Newsletter – PPN

North Lanarkshire Public Protection Newsletter was updated last year and is now produced in an electronic format, on a fortnightly basis. This has seen a steady increase in subscription across agencies, and has proven an effective way to disseminate public protection information.

ASP Multi agency Forums

In partnership with the AP Co-ordinator, the Senior Officer designed, developed and delivered the twelfth series of the multi-agency fora which took place in between March and May 2019. The aims and purpose of the forum is to:

- Share information and practice developments;
- Bring together operational staff with a responsibility for adult protection across North Lanarkshire, locality by locality, and;
- Provide opportunities for communication both within and across agencies.

The theme for the multi-agency forum was 'Adult Protection in Services' which highlighted the importance of timely communication and co-operation across agencies to keep adults safe. The forums were well received and attended by professionals across the main public bodies with 25 social work employees attending.

The full report can be accessed by clicking [here](#)

Public Awareness Raising Campaign

Social Work Services have actively contributed to national awareness raising by liaising with colleagues via Social Work Scotland and committing to raise national and local awareness by holding an annual Adult Protection Day, held on 20th February 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Within North Lanarkshire the APC and their partners contributed to the local campaign by the following:

- Press releases across North Lanarkshire;
- Regular posts on Face book and Twitter across the partners;
- Promotional posters and leaflets delivered across a number of community resources, and;
- Newsletters and e-bulletins across the voluntary and public agencies.

ASP Learning and Development

The Senior Officer, in partnership with the AP Co-ordinator and members of the APC Learning and Development sub group, reviewed all ASP Multi agency training to reflect the updated SW AP Procedures and learning from key reports e.g. SCR's.

Six ASP Level 1 and 2 multi-agency training courses were delivered jointly with NHSL to maintain learning and development momentum in adult support and protection. This year seven (7) social work staff attended Level 1 (half day) with twenty seven (27) social work staff attending Level 2 training (full day).

ASP Council Officer Training (Day 2) and Investigative Interviewing Training (Day 3) materials have been reviewed and updated in line with ASP Code of Practice 2014, the updated SW AP Procedures and other key reports e.g. SCR's. ASP Council Officer Training courses were delivered in July and August 2019 for 10 employees who are required to undertake investigations under Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. Work is currently underway to explore and design AP training packages that support remote/virtual training delivery. This will respond to the need to support employee during the current situation and would cover training delivery in both ASP Multi and single agency.

Medical Education training for consultants builds on professional development and is part of the medical revalidation process. The NHS Lanarkshire training representative with support from North/ South Lanarkshire ASP Co-ordinators and the Senior Officer, have been involved in delivering adult protection training twice a year to this group of medical staff. This is across the three Emergency Departments and acute care sites in Lanarkshire and has helped to drive investment and confidence in staff reporting adult protection.

Key Areas for Reflection

- During the period 2019 - 20, Social Work Services received 2,230 ASP referrals which marks a 2% increase from the same time last year. This is the first time that an annual increase has occurred in five years. The Council additionally received 3,027 Police 'Adult Concern' Reports, therefore the total number of adult protection activities undertaken to keep adults safe across North Lanarkshire for 2019 -20 was 5,257.
- Police Scotland ASP referrals reduced by 29% however they still remain the main referrer group. While Police referrals reduced, there were significant increases in referrals being submitted by Health (up 15%), Social Work Services (up 13%), Housing (up 23%) and Fire service (up 26%). it's very positive that referral rates are increasing - across the public bodies (and partner agencies) - as much work has been undertaken

via training, learning and development to promote the importance of employee duties and responsibilities to raise concerns for adults at risk of harm.

- For this reporting period, both men and women were more likely to be referred when above the 65 year age range. While this finding remained congruent with last year's data for women, there was a change for men, as data over the previous six years demonstrated that men were more likely to be referred when in the under 65 age range.
- Consistent to the previous year, psychological harm was the main reason for referral, however its positive that changes to the updated social work adult protection procedures seem to have reduced the number of cases logged as psychological harm (from 52% to 38%) and in so doing increasing the accuracy of primary harm statistics.
- There was a 7% increase in those cases that progress from investigation onto initial case conference (from 18% to 25%). This is positive as the Case conference process is a format for increasing co-operation and communication across agencies to ensure accurate information is shared in order to produce and implement effective multi agency risk assessments, protection plans and informed outcomes for those at risk of harm.
- Scottish Government via the National Strategic Forum for ASP have published a detailed three year plan covering Assurance, Governance, Data and Information, Policy and Guidance, Practice Improvement and Prevention. This plan confirms all adult protection partnerships in Scotland will be jointly inspected. While the review of SW AP Procedures and employee ASP learning and development will provide evidence of ongoing improvement activity here in North Lanarkshire, the Council continues to undertake a range of AP quality assurance activities, including file audits and reading, in preparation of the forthcoming joint inspection.
- North Lanarkshire Social Work Services continues to work in partnership with other agencies and the APC to ensure adults who may be at risk of harm are supported to keep themselves safe. Regular audits and reviews are undertaken with the results of this activity used to shape and influence policy, practice and employee learning to help retain a focused approach to adult protection and ensure staff and services are suitably trained to deliver positive outcomes for those who may be subject to harm.

Summary of Adult Protection Activity for 2019/20

Total Referrals	2230	Investigation	400	18%
		Ongoing Work	32	1%
		NFA - Other Service	464	21%
		NFA	1280	57%
		Not Recorded	54	2%
Investigations	400	Initial Case Conference	99	25%
		Application to Court	0	0%
		Ongoing Work	9	2%
		NFA - Other Service	51	13%
		NFA	215	54%
	Not Recorded	26	7%	
Initial Case Conferences	99	Application to Court	0	0%
		Ongoing Concerns	54	55%
		Ongoing Work	1	1%
		NFA - Other Service/Legis.	11	11%
		NFA	14	14%
	Not Recorded	19	19%	
Cases Reviewed (at least once)	41	Ongoing AP Concerns	16	39%
		No Further AP Concerns	25	61%
		Review Conference Continued	0	0%
Active At End Of Period	237			

Individual Agency Referral Summary (Main Referring Agencies)

The following table shows referral data from the four main referring agencies, as recorded on the social work management information system (MIS), hence the total referrals shown is less than the actual total received in the year.

This shows the number and proportion of referrals reaching different stages within the ASP process, and the numbers went on to receive service from other areas of social work. The differences between agencies cannot easily be explained, as they are due to a combination of factors, such as individual's refusal to engage in the process, individual's backgrounds and previous involvement with services, reasons for and circumstances of referral, the capacity of individuals at the time of referral, and other individual factors.

A graphical summary of each agency's referral data is shown in appendices 3 to 6, along with a table showing the number of referrals each agency recorded as making on their own MIS, if available. Differences between the two systems are due to the possibility that referrals can go through more than one source before reaching social work, so may be recorded against another source.

			Social Work		Police		Health		Housing		Fire Service		Care Home	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Referrals	1893	Investigation	147	36%	49	11%	69	17%	26	19%	10	9%	23	6%
		Ongoing Work	5	1%	2	0%	5	1%	4	3%	0	0%	14	3%
		NFA - Other Service	82	20%	123	29%	95	24%	32	23%	23	21%	49	12%
		NFA	171	42%	243	56%	226	56%	71	51%	70	65%	305	75%
		N/A	6	1%	14	3%	6	1%	5	4%	4	4%	14	3%
		Total	411	100%	431	100%	401	100%	138	100%	107	100%	405	100%
Investigations	324	Initial Case Conference	53	36%	14	29%	10	14%	2	8%	3	30%	4	17%
		Planning Meeting	3	2%	2	4%	2	3%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
		NFA – Ap proc in place	2	1%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		NFA – Other services	14	10%	9	18%	11	16%	7	27%	1	10%	0	0%
		NFA	72	49%	15	31%	43	62%	15	58%	6	60%	16	70%
		App. Temp banning order	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		N/A	3	2%	8	16%	3	4%	1	4%	0	0%	3	13%
		Total	147	100%	49	100%	69	100%	26	100%	10	100%	23	100%
Initial Case Conferences	86	Ongoing Concerns	29	55%	6	43%	8	80%	0	0%	3	100%	2	50%
		CC cont further investigation	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		NFA concerns not substantiated	8	15%	3	21%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
		NFA for ASP – passed for allocation	6	11%	1	7%	1	10%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
		N/A	9	17%	4	29%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	2	50%
		Total	53	100%	14	100%	10	100%	2	100%	3	100%	4	100%