

Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee



COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2021-2023

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1. Introduction

The Aberdeen City Adult Protection Committee (APC) has a statutory role in relation to safeguarding adults at risk of harm in the city. It consists of key partners who work collaboratively to support and protect adults who are unable to ensure the safety of themselves, their property or their rights. A list of the APC partners can be found at Appendix 1.

In performing its functions, the APC is committed to improving communication and co-operation within and between partner organisations and communities and the individuals who find themselves involved with adult support and protection and their families/ carers.

Section 42 of the [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#) states that:

- Any actions undertaken by an APC must have regard to improving communication and cooperation amongst its members;
- Formal inquiries consistently identify effective communication, information sharing and co-ordination as critical in protecting adults at risk of harm; and
- APCs will have an opportunity to provide a model of joint working by the way they themselves operate, and will require to promote good working relations between agencies and staff working within them.

The overall aims of this Communication Strategy, in seeking to ensure achievement of the above, are:

- to set out how appropriate and effective communication will support the achievement of the APC's key strategic objectives;
- to promote effective communication in all aspects of adult support and protection; and
- to ensure that key stakeholders are aware of, understand and are engaged in this work.

Communication is a continuous process and the benefits of good communication include:

- Establishing collaboratively, and based on evidence, local priorities and plans which meet local needs;
- Continuous striving to improve outcomes for stakeholders;
- Working together to manage risk at an appropriate level;
- Taking collective responsibility for the achievement of a shared vision; and
- Assisting in the planning and development of more effective services, effective professional practice and stakeholder satisfaction, developing a learning approach across all partner organisations.

It is envisaged that this Communication Strategy will operate from 2021-2023, subject to ongoing review.

2. Background

In early 2016, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (the Partnership) was subject to a joint inspection of services for older people. Following the joint inspection, immediate action was taken by the Partnership, including an independent review of adult protection. Recommendations from both the inspection and the independent review led to the development of a Risk Register and a related Improvement Action Plan, which has evolved in response to relevant data, updates to legislation and policy, and more recently, to COVID 19. This continues to be the key focus for improvement activity.

The APC also resolved to develop a strong focus on engagement and communication across key stakeholders, including with those at risk of harm and their carers, to ensure the effectiveness of local safeguarding practice.

This Strategy sits within the context of the wider Community Planning Aberdeen [Engagement, Participation and Empowerment Strategy](#), which sets out the principles and approach to the engaging with individuals, groups and communities in service planning and development to ensure positive outcomes, and also promotes accordance with the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#).

3. Vision and Objectives

Our strategic vision for adult support and protection in Aberdeen is at the heart of this strategy:

“Aberdeen City is committed to ensuring an effective, responsive and inclusive approach to the support and protection of adults at risk of harm”.

Our Improvement Action Plan is structured around seven objectives:

- Multi agency adult protection policies, procedures and practice guidance are complied with consistently, resulting in the provision of timely and effective multi agency support and protection to adults at risk of harm.
- The voice of stakeholders is key in the adult support and protection process and the service and system improvements are fully inclusive of the voice of the adult and their family/ carer/s;
- Lead Agency and partners are adequately resourced, trained and developed to have both capacity and capability to respond to the demands of Adult Support and Protection work;
- Local and national case reviews contribute to learning and continuous improvement of services and systems;
- The APC improvement plan robustly reflects all key areas of improvement as a result of effective multi-agency self evaluation;

- Multi agency collection, sharing, analysis and use of data enables better decision making to support and protect adults at risk of harm;
- The impacts of COVID-19 are considered and appropriately incorporated into ASP Activity.

4. Communications Objectives, Key Messages and Target Audiences are set out below

<p>Communications Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strive to work together efficiently, effectively and coherently, in compliance with statute and informed by data and evidence of ‘what works’, ensuring understanding by the partners involved of each other’s roles, responsibilities and aims; • To ensure staff involved in ASP work respond appropriately to concerns, by being kept up-to-date with relevant updates to policy and practice in the most effective ways possible, and to share good practice and achievements, as well as learning from situations where practice could have been improved – aiming for positive outcomes for both individuals and the staff involved; • <i>To share information appropriately and reduce duplication</i> • To raise awareness and improve understanding of adult support and protection work with wider partners/staff and the general public, ensuring that our citizens have information on how to seek help in relation to adult protection concerns; • To listen to the ‘voices’ of those we seek to support and protect, and their carers, in order to ensure a person-centred approach (focused on equalities and human rights) in line with the national Health & Social Care Standards and to continue to improve the way we work.
<p>Key Messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable adults are at risk of a range of different kinds of harm, which can take place anywhere, and be perpetrated by anyone. They may also be harmed by self-neglect. Everyone has a responsibility to take steps to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults – <i>if in doubt, you must act</i> • The voice of those we seek to support and protect is key to informing how we work and respond • We embed a learning culture which proactively shares good practice, learns from mistakes and continuously improves • Our staff are actively encouraged to develop their professional practice and learning • We are committed to working with those who perpetrate harm to vulnerable adults to change their behaviour and

	will take recourse to the Justice System where appropriate
Target Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key local strategic stakeholders e.g. Public Protection Committee, Chief Officers Group, Health and Social Care IJB, other Public Protection partnerships (eg Child Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Violence Against Women Partnership) • Members of the APC and their individual organisations, including leaders and staff • Wider services having a role in working with adults who are / could be vulnerable • Vulnerable adults at risk of harm, or who are being harmed, and their families / carers • General public, the media and Elected Members • National stakeholders – Scottish Govt, SWS AP Network, scrutiny bodies, etc

5. Data Protection and Sharing of Information

Information about adults at risk may be shared between the partner organisations under the following provisions:

- The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”), specifically section 5
- The General Data Protection Regulation (“the GDPR”), specifically Schedule Article 6(1)(c) and (e) and Article 9(2)(h)
- Common Law of Confidentiality
- The Human Rights Act 1998

6. Communications Action Plan

The Action Plan at Appendix 2 has been developed to support the APC’s Communications Strategy. It outlines the communications activity that will take place over the course of the Strategy to implement and improve the ways in which we communicate with our different audiences.

It is anticipated that progress on delivery of the action plan will be reported to the Adult Protection Committee and the Aberdeen City Executive Group for Public Protection.

Members of the APC

The APC is led by an Independent Convener, and includes representatives from the following partner organisations:

- Health and Social Care Partnership
- NHS Grampian – Acute (ARI) and Mental Health & Learning Disability Service
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- Aberdeen City Council Housing Department
- Chief Social Work Officer
- GP Clinical Lead
- ACVO
- Advocacy Services

Other affiliated members may include:

- Care Inspectorate
- Mental Welfare Commission
- Office of the Public Guardian

APC Communications Action Plan

Target Audience	Communications Objective	Key Messages/ Info to be communicated	Channel/s of Communication	Timing / Frequency of Communication	Responsibility	Measuring Impact
Local Strategic Stakeholders - Aberdeen Executive Group for Public Protection - IJB/CCGC - ACC Public Protection Committee - Other 'Public Protection' partnerships (ADP, VAWP, etc)	Effective collaborative working and awareness of APC role in progressing this Alignment with other public protection agendas where appropriate	Raising awareness of the ASP agenda Sharing relevant data and information to enable scrutiny, address risks, and ensure alignment / reduced likelihood of duplication Providing assurance that, once we are aware of risk of harm to a vulnerable adult, that they are being supported and protected appropriately	APC minutes and / or reports/updates to relevant meetings of these partnerships Appropriate 'induction pack' about ASP shared with new members of these partnerships Public Protection strategic leads meet and collaborate (via Teams/email) Multi agency ASP bulletin providing updates, and sharing learning and good news stories, shared across these partnerships	As and when the partnership groups meet As new members join the partnerships 3 times per annum Quarterly	Lead Social Worker & Lead Strategic Officer Operational Sub Group / Lead Strategic Officer Lead Strategic Officer APU Coordinator and Lead Strategic Officer – input from all partners	Consideration of ASP matters recorded in minutes of these groups Evidence of consistent approaches across PP agendas Feedback received (annual survey and ongoing) re the bulletin, and items for inclusion
APC and member organisations (see Appendix 1)	Effective collaborative working	Raising awareness of the ASP agenda	Appropriate reporting to the APC, and sharing of minutes	APC meetings	Lead Strategic Officer	APC self-evaluation (annual?)

Target Audience	Communications Objective	Key Messages/ Info to be communicated	Channel/s of Communication	Timing / Frequency of Communication	Responsibility	Measuring Impact
	<p>Appropriate representation on APC and sub groups, and clarity regarding roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Appropriate sharing of information</p>	<p>Role of APC and partners in this</p> <p>Role of individuals as members of APC</p> <p>Sharing of information about, and collaborative working on, matters relevant to the APC and its sub groups</p>	<p>Email updates to APC members between meetings, where needed</p> <p>'Induction' for new members of APC</p> <p>Teams channel/s for APC and Operational Sub Group</p> <p>Information sharing protocols to be updated, re-circulated, and used appropriately</p>	<p>Ad hoc</p> <p>As needed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual?</p>	<p>Lead Strategic Officer</p> <p>APU Coordinator & Lead Strategic Officer</p> <p>APU Coordinator & Lead Strategic Officer</p> <p>Ditto</p>	<p>Teams channel/s regularly used for sharing information</p> <p>Number and source of appropriate referrals</p>
<p>Lead agency staff working in ASP (eg Council Officers, Social Workers, Care Managers, etc)</p>	<p>To ensure staff involved in ASP work respond appropriately to concerns, ensuring the 'voice' of the individual and carer/s is central</p> <p>To support staff to continuously develop their</p>	<p>Info re ASP policies, procedures, 'good practice', learning from ICRs/SCRs etc</p> <p>GDPR should not be a hinderance when adult protection is necessary</p>	<p>Staff training</p> <p>Relevant documents, internal procedures, etc, stored, updated and posted, and learning shared by</p>	<p>In accordance with L&D Plan/ annual calendar</p> <p>Ongoing and as necessary</p>	<p>AP Trainer</p> <p>APU staff</p>	<p>Appropriate response – as measured by Performance Framework, eg Numbers attending training</p>

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	learning and practice	Importance of the 'voice' of the user – Health & Social Care Standards	<p>members, on dedicated Teams channel, bulletins, videos, etc</p> <p>Agreed policies, protocols, etc, including Grampian-wide, available on ACC webpage</p> <p>Managers to support effective communications within their teams and across teams using a range of communication channels e.g. electronic, face-to-face or briefings</p> <p>Practitioner forums</p>	<p>Ongoing, and updated as necessary</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly?</p>	<p>APU Coordinator/ Lead Strategic Officer/ APU Trainer</p> <p>APU Coordinator/ Fieldwork Team Managers</p> <p>APU Coordinator</p>	Website analytics
Staff of APC and wider partners	To ensure staff are aware of ASP, how to respond	How to recognise when a vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm, or being harmed, that it is necessary to act,	Implement an annual programme of engagement opportunities to help improve staff awareness: - Awareness-raising sessions	Annual programme	APU Trainer & APU Coordinator, partners	<p>Appropriate response – as measured by Performance Framework</p> <p>Numbers attending</p>

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		<p>and how to respond</p> <p>Info re ASP policies, procedures, 'good practice', learning from ICRs/SCRs etc</p>	<p>with specific partners (via Teams or in person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi agency awareness-raising sessions, eg with third sector partners (via Teams or in person) - Partnership conference? - Use of case studies, videos, etc <p>Multi agency ASP bulletin providing updates, and sharing learning and good news stories, shared across these partnerships</p> <p>Internal dissemination of info, briefings etc, by APC and sub group members</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>As necessary</p>	<p>APU Coordinator and Lead Strategic Officer – input from all partners</p> <p>APC & sub group members</p>	<p>sessions from range of partners & stakeholders</p> <p>Range of agencies from whom referrals are received</p> <p>Feedback received (annual survey and ongoing) re the bulletin, and items for inclusion, plus 'reach' of bulletin</p> <p>To be measured by individual partners</p>
Vulnerable adults who are referred as being at risk	To ensure awareness that support and	The ASP legislation and processes are	Front-line staff engagement with vulnerable	As part of ongoing work	APU Coordinator	Positive outcomes for

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<p>of harm, or who are being harmed, and their families / carers</p>	<p>protection is available to vulnerable adults at risk of harm and their carers</p> <p>To listen to the 'voices' of those we seek to support and protect, and their carers, in order to ensure a person-centred approach (in line with the national Health & Social Care Standards), improved outcomes, and to continue to improve the way we work</p>	<p>here to support and protect vulnerable adults being harmed or at risk of harm</p> <p>Individuals and their carers will be involved and listened to</p>	<p>individuals at risk of harm – face to face, electronically, written correspondence etc</p> <p>- including Advocacy and other partners working with the individual</p>		<p>All front-line staff</p> <p>Development Officer (Service User and Carer Involvement)</p> <p>Advocacy Aberdeen</p>	<p>those going through ASP</p> <p>Feedback from those affected – collected by front-line staff, Advocacy (including via website), Development Officer (Service User and Carer Involvement), wider partners, etc</p> <p>Operational Group listens and responds to this feedback in order to improve practice.</p>
<p>General public, the media, Elected Members</p>	<p>To raise awareness and improve understanding of adult support and protection work with wider partners/staff and the general public, ensuring that our citizens have information on</p>	<p>Vulnerable adults are at risk of a range of different kinds of harm, which can take place anywhere, and be perpetrated by anyone. They may also be</p>	<p>Media releases to the press, eg re publication of Biennial Report</p> <p>National ASP Day campaign</p> <p>Ongoing social media campaign</p>	<p>As agreed</p> <p>Annually – Feb (20th?)</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Lead Social Worker & APC Chair</p> <p>APU Coordinator & Lead Strategic Officer</p>	<p>Increased referrals from members of the public</p> <p>No of 'likes', 'shares' etc</p>

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	how to seek help in relation to adult protection concerns	<p>harmed by self-neglect. Everyone has a responsibility to take steps to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults – if in doubt, you must act</p> <p>What to do if harm or risk of harm is identified</p> <p>Partners in Aberdeen will work with those who perpetrate harm to vulnerable adults, or who are at risk of doing so, to change their behaviour and will take recourse to the Justice System where appropriate</p>	<p>ACC website page</p> <p>ASP App</p> <p>Displays of promotional material e.g. libraries and supermarkets, including church groups, dentists and opticians</p> <p>Graphics, messages etc, disseminated via various media</p> <p>Briefing sessions for Elected Members (Teams or face-to-face)</p> <p>Use of case studies</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>?</p> <p>To be agreed</p> <p>Annually?</p>	<p>All partners</p> <p>APU Coordinator & Lead Strategic Officer in conjunction with partners</p>	<p>No of 'hits'</p> <p>No of EMs attending/ feedback from EMs</p>
National stakeholders – Scottish Govt, ASP National	To share good practice and learning	Information about good practice/ learning developed by	National Conveners' Network meetings and email	Conveners' meetings and as appropriate	APC Convener	Record of national issues considered

Target Audience	Communications Objective	Key Messages/ Info to be communicated	Channel/s of Communication	Timing / Frequency of Communication	Responsibility	Measuring Impact
Strategic Forum, SWS AP Network, scrutiny bodies, etc		partners in Aberdeen	National SWS AP Network and Coordinator – meetings and email Directly with national scrutiny bodies, and via National AP Coordinator, as appropriate	Network meetings and as appropriate As necessary	APU Coordinator & Lead Strategic Officer Lead Social Worker, APC Convener, or as otherwise directed	locally as appropriate