

# **Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee** **Strategy**

For the period January 2022 to March 2024

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## 1. Introduction

All agencies which work with vulnerable adults have a shared responsibility for providing support and safeguarding their welfare. Inter-agency working is essential to the protection of those adults and no one agency should be seen as solely responsible for the protection of adults who may be at risk of harm. Arrangements are designed to support the valuable partnership work which exists to allow continuous improvement in adult support and protection services across Aberdeen City. Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee (APC) is an inter-agency forum which takes the lead to co-ordinate and develop local responses to adult support and protection, including prevention of further harm.

This strategy document encapsulates the Vision and Priorities for the APC for the period from January 2022 to March 2024, to align with the next Biennial Report period, at which point it will be subject to review. It also sets out how we will measure the extent to which we have achieved these. Our related Improvement Plan provides more specific detail about how we will progress the activities required.

The Priorities and related Improvement Plan activities were derived from:

- Data and the findings of Quality Assurance work (2020-21)
- APC Self-Evaluation (October 2021) and Development Day (November 2021)
- Inspection reports from other areas (2021)
- Revised (draft) national Code of Practice for Adult Support and Protection & APC Guidance (2021)
- IRISS Review of Biennial Reports (2021)
- Learning from other Aberdeen Public Protection Partnerships (Child Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership etc)

## 2. The Strategic Context

### i) National Level

The [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#) (the Act) sets out how adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests and are at risk of harm because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity will be supported and protected in Scotland. The Act sits alongside the [Adults With Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#) and the [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) Scotland Act 2003](#) in providing a range of guidance relating to the protection of adults at risk.

A national [Code of Practice](#) provides guidance about the performance of functions by councils and their officers, and other professionals, under the Act, and Scottish Government have also published [Guidance for Adult Protection Committees](#).

In October 2019, Scottish Government published an [Adult Support and Protection Improvement Plan 2019-2022](#) which sets out activity being taken forward at a national level relating to:

- existing improvement activity
- assurance

- governance
- data and information legislation
- policy and guidance
- practice improvement
- prevention.

The national [Health and Social Care Standards](#) set out what people should expect when using health, social care or social work services in Scotland.

Scottish Government has recently consulted on proposals to improve the way social care is delivered in Scotland, following the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. Potential implications for ‘adult support and protection’ and APCs are not clear.

#### ii) Grampian Level

The Grampian Adult Protection Group is a permanent subgroup of the Adult Protection Committees in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. The role of the Group is to undertake a co-ordinating role on behalf of these APCs where work identified, and is agreed to be a cross-Grampian priority. It also encourages and promotes joint working and the sharing of good practice across the multi-disciplinary context.

The [Grampian Interagency Procedures](#), which have been adopted by all three Adult Protection Committees in the Grampian area, are used to guide and inform local inter-agency procedures and practice concerning the protection of adults who may be at risk. A Grampian Learning and Development Framework has also been adopted by all three APCs.

#### iii) Local Level

Community Planning Aberdeen’s [Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\) 2016-2026](#) envisages Aberdeen as “a place where all people can prosper”. Adult support and protection is a significant element of that ambition, to ensure that everyone feels safe, supported and included by investing in early intervention and prevention activities.

The APC links closely with partnerships leading other ‘public protection’ agendas in Aberdeen (eg Child Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Violence Against Women Partnership, Community Justice Group), and these agendas are overseen in the round by the Aberdeen City Executive Group for Public Protection. Closer partnership working in relation to people impacted by a wide range of harms across the City is the intended aim, to ensure a holistic, single-system response, and this is reflected in the APC’s Improvement Plan.

Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) has published a [Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#). This outlines the ambitions of the Partnership for adult health and social care services which were delegated by Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian to the ACHSCP. The ACHSCP’s Vision is “We are a caring partnership, working in and with our communities to enable people to achieve

fulfilling, healthier lives”, and work to prevent harm, and to support and protect vulnerable adults at risk of harm contributes to the achievement of that Vision.

#### iv) Impact of Pandemic

There have been and continue to be wide-ranging implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, which impact on every aspect of life. This includes the likelihood that the vulnerability of some adults will have increased because of the additional pressures placed on families and communities, potentially placing some adults at risk of harm and neglect, where that would not otherwise have been the case. A focus on recovery from the pandemic, and the continued emergence of and response to ‘hidden harms’, are likely to have a significant impact for the foreseeable future. The pandemic also impacted significantly on staff, of course. This Strategy will be taken forward recognising and in the context of these pressures.

### 3. APC Statutory Functions

Adult Protection Committees have been statutorily assigned the lead role for overseeing cooperation and communication between agencies to promote appropriate support and protection for adults at risk of harm.

The [Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#), (Section 42) and Scottish Government [Guidance for Adult Protection Committees](#) (2008) define the functions of Adult Support and Protection Committees as:

- To keep under review procedures and practices of local agencies in respect of safeguarding adults at risk;
- To give information and advice or make proposals to any public body on the exercise of adult protection functions;
- To make or assist in or encourage the making of arrangements for improving the skills and knowledge of officers or employees of local agencies who have responsibilities related to safeguarding of adults at risk;
- Any other function relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk as Scottish Ministers may by order specify.

### 4. Our Vision

Our Vision for Adult Support and Protection in Aberdeen is:

**“Partners in Aberdeen are committed to an inclusive approach to preventing and responding to harm and protecting adults at risk.”**

## 5. Our Priorities

### **A) Performance / Quality Assurance Framework**

**We will develop a robust Data Performance and Quality Assurance Framework, to enable us to:**

- i) identify trends, areas for improvement and areas of good practice; and**
- ii) establish a process for continuous improvement and ensure learning is embedded into practice.**

**This will enable us to deliver safe and effective services with improved outcomes for those at risk of harm.**

#### **Why is this a priority?**

The risks relating to the lack of a robust Performance and Quality Assurance Framework have been identified in our APC Risk Register, and the need for prioritisation of this was confirmed via the Self-Evaluation of the APC undertaken in October 2021.

#### **How does this Priority align to the APC's statutory functions?**

This Priority underpins all the statutory functions of the APC.

#### **Are there any existing strategic documents which specifically relate?**

- APC Risk Register (Risks APC004 and APC005)
- National [Improvement Plan](#) and Annual Dataset

#### **How will we know we are progressing against this Priority?**

We will know we are progressing against this Priority when we have an agreed Performance and QA Framework in place, with clear objectives and governance, core dataset and agreed KPIs (in line with national ones) and a sub-committee also in place, meeting quarterly to progress on behalf of the APC and work alongside the other priorities, with the relevant expertise and IT support.

### **B) Stakeholder Engagement**

**We commit to continue to develop appropriate mechanisms for effective communication:**

- i) recognising how diverse our communities are, to ensure the 'voice' of all those we aim to support and protect is at the centre of all we do,**
- ii) to raise awareness about ASP, so that staff and public recognise the risks of harm to vulnerable adults and know how to respond, report and connect to appropriate supports, and**

**iii) to ensure we understand each other's roles, responsibilities and aims (including via sharing of updates and good practice across all partners' staff groups).**

### **Why is this a priority?**

The risk of the voice of the Adult and carer not being heard within the adult protection system has been identified in our APC Risk Register, and the need for prioritisation of stakeholder engagement was confirmed via the Self-Evaluation of the APC undertaken in October 2021.

### **How does this Priority align to the APC's statutory functions?**

This Priority underpins all the statutory functions of the APC.

### **Are there any existing strategic documents which specifically relate?**

- APC Risk Register (Risk APC002)
- [APC Communications Strategy 2021-23](#)
- [APC Strategy / Guidance for Meaningful Engagement with / Involvement of ASP Clients](#)
- National [Improvement Plan](#)

### **How will we know we are progressing against this Priority?**

We will know we are progressing against this Priority by measuring:

- The number of ASP referrals from members of the public
- The number of appropriate referrals from partner agencies and services
- Feedback from clients being supported and protected under ASP, plus family / carers
- Analytics from the Aberdeen Protects website

## **C) Learning and Development**

**We will continuously improve ASP practice, learning and development by reaching all our people, ensuring effective support, preventative measures and protection of adults at risk of harm.**

### **Why is this a priority?**

The risks that

- i) there is not consistent compliance with the approved multi-agency protection policies, procedures and practice guidance, and that
- ii) the agencies comprising the APC do not have the required workforce capacity and capability to respond to the demand and the changing nature of the demand

have been identified in our APC Risk Register, and the need for prioritisation of this was confirmed via the Self-Evaluation of the APC undertaken in October 2021.

**How does this Priority align to the APC's statutory functions?**

This Priority aligns with the third statutory function of the APC.

**Are there any existing strategic documents which specifically relate?**

- APC Risk Register (APC001 and APC003)
- [APC Learning Strategy and Framework](#)
- APC Practitioner L&D Strategy and Action Plan
- Grampian L&D Framework
- National [Improvement Plan](#)

**How will we know we are progressing against this Priority?**

We will know we are progressing against this Priority by developing measures including around:

- Attendance at training etc
- Evaluation of impact of training
- QA of quality of reporting forms / identification of 3 point test
- Training Needs Analysis – staff confidence etc