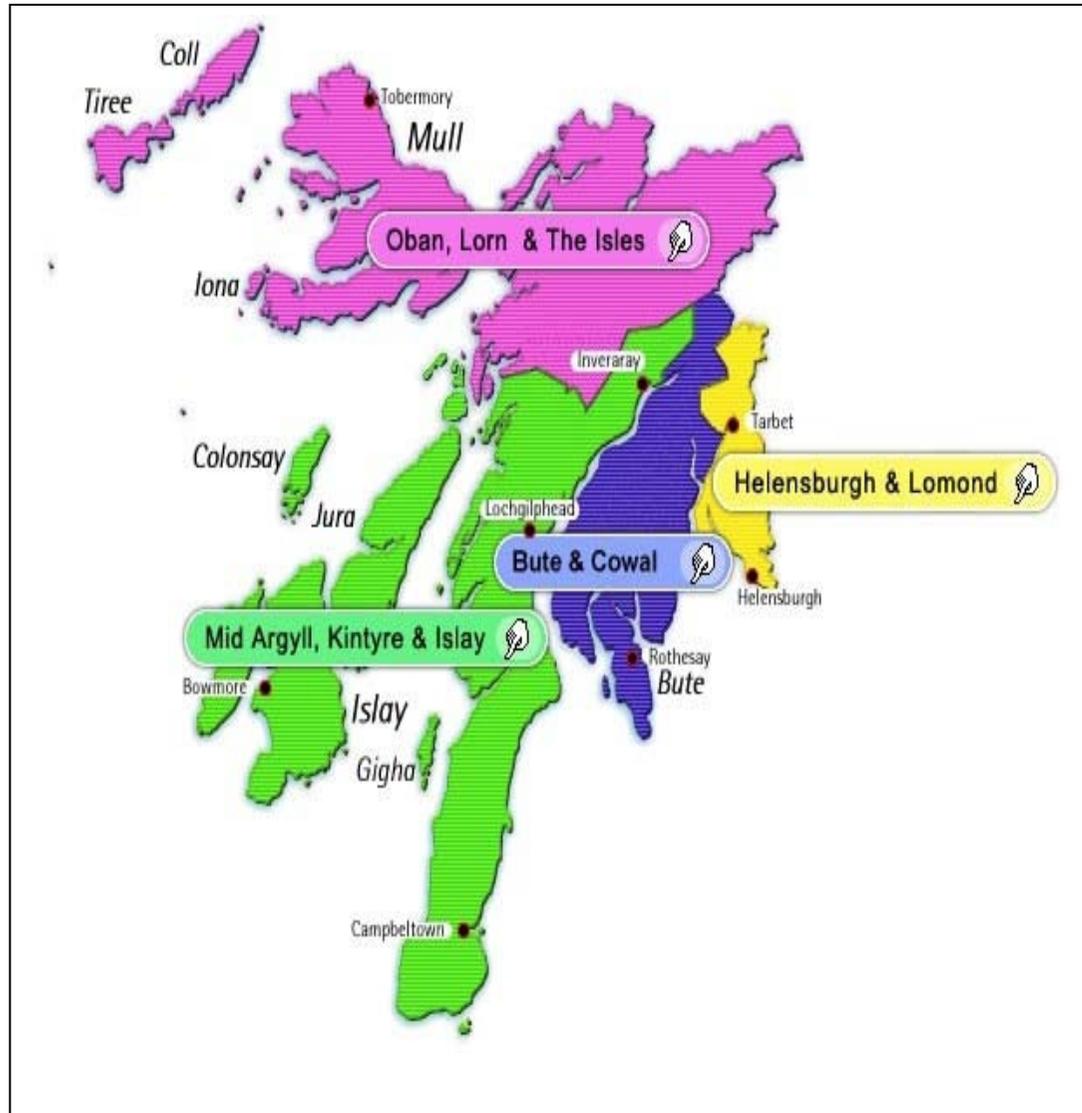


**Act
against
harm**

Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee



Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee 1st Biennial Report April 2008 – March 2010



CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am delighted, as the Independent Chairman of the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee to submit my first Biennial Report as Chairman of the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee to the Scottish Government.

I was delighted to be invited to become the Committee's Independent Chair. Having lived in Argyll for many years and participated in many organisations there, I hope I can bring my local knowledge to the committee to ensure that what we do is particularly fit-for-purpose in our remote and rural setting. As the current Chairman of the Argyll & Bute Community Health Partnership, I have developed a wide network of contacts; I hope I will be able to gain their commitment to the rapid development of support service for adults at risk of harm.

At the beginning I was very impressed by the preparatory work which was undertaken by the Council and its partner organisations to ensure Argyll & Bute was ready to operate as soon as the new legislation went live. Since then, the Council's commitment to the new legislation has been obvious; funds have been made available, Adult Protection has been given visibility from the very top and tremendous encouragement has been offered. Partner organisations – notably Strathclyde Police and NHS Highland – have offered similar support.

Our processes are still developing – as will be obvious from this report – but a good start has been achieved.

The challenges in the months and years to come are substantial. They fall into two categories.

Firstly, we need thousands of eyes and ears throughout Argyll and Bute to be watching for Adults at risk of harm and, importantly, to be doing something about it. We shall be doubling – and redoubling – our efforts to make sure that everyone in Argyll and Bute knows about the new legislation, is on the lookout for those at risk and knows what to do when come across something that gives concern. Getting every eye and every ear attuned to the issue is a major agenda for us.

Secondly, while we have made a good start at knowing what to do when concerns are reported to us, we need to make sure that our processes are top class and we follow them meticulously. By adopting the West of Scotland processes, I am confident that we have fit-for-purpose processes, but we shall be constantly challenging this assumption.

I am conscious that in Argyll and Bute, we are not of a size to justify a stand-alone Adult Protection Unit; our geography mitigates against this too. We depend upon all our front line social workers – and their colleagues in partner organisations – to make the correct response to reports of harm or the risk of it. I am confident we are developing this capacity. Ensuring it is well developed and finely honed is a high priority.

I am also conscious of the huge amount of work within the Scottish Government in bringing this legislation to the Statute Book. Their work is not over yet. There is a key role for them in making sure that learning is shared across all the Adult Protection Committees and that best practice is disseminated. The APC Chairs' Group has a role to play here too but leadership has to come from the Scottish Government.

I note the need to address funding for the Adult Protection Committee. It is unacceptable that at the end of August, 2010 funding for 2010-11 has not been confirmed. I am grateful to Argyll & Bute Council for not allowing this delay to inhibit Adult Protection activity from functioning.

I am also concerned that there are not yet in place national arrangements to provide for GPs undertaking medical (forensic) assessments. In urban areas, where there are GPs on duty, this is less of an issue. In rural areas, like Argyll and Bute, where GPs have opted out, there is a need for the Scottish Government to drive a national arrangement to deal with this matter.

The opportunity to report on the work of the Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee is welcomed and gives us a unique opportunity to review our actions in the first reporting period. In this context the committee has planned a self evaluation event later in 2010 which will allow reflection and learning from this first period of activity, both in the context of the work undertaken in Argyll and Bute but also on lessons to be learned from our partner committees throughout Scotland.



Bill Brackenridge

Independent Chair

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Introduction:

This is the first biennial report of the Chairman of the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee, covering the period to 31st March 2010. This report gives an overview of the work carried out by, and on behalf of the Committee since it was formally constituted on 22nd June 2008. The report also refers to the work carried out by the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Working Group which was set up in the summer of 2007 with the purpose of preparing for the implementation of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act in October 2008.

The working group, made up of representatives of Strathclyde Police, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership, Argyll & Bute Council and other partners oversaw the development of practice and interim policy for adult protection until the formal appointment of the independent chairman and the formal convening of the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee on the 22nd June 2008.

Initially the Adult Protection Committee met on a bi-monthly basis in order that the initial actions required in developing Adult Protection within Argyll and Bute was carried out in a timely manner. Latterly, the Committee has met quarterly – and intends to continue this frequency in the foreseeable future. The Chairman is very conscious that attending meetings in Argyll often involves travelling considerable distances and takes a substantial amount of time; quarterly meetings reduces the time Committee Members spend travelling. It also fits in with the pattern of meetings of the Argyll and Bute Child and Adult Protection Chief Officers Group (CAPCOG), the APC Chairs' meeting and the meeting of CHP Chairs with the Scottish Government.

The Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee

'Each Council must establish a committee' S42 (1) ASP(S)A 2007

The Members of the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee are:

Independent Chair	Bill Brackenridge		Member
Area Manager Adult Protection	Ronnie McIlquham		Member
Locality Manager for Argyll & Bute CHP	Anne Helstrip		Member
Head of Service Integration - Argyll & Bute CHP	Josephine Bown	until October 2009	Member
Strathclyde Police	Superintendent Raymond Park		Member
	DI David Tassie	until January 2010	Member
Professional Lead Learning Disability – Health	Anne-Lise Dickie		Member
Care Commission	Amy Isaacs		Member
Independent Health Consultant	Dr David Bell	Until March 2010	Member
Head of Adult Care – Argyll & Bute Council	Jim Robb		Member
Lead Officer Adult Protection	Allen Stevenson		Member
Service Officer Homelessness – Argyll & Bute Council	Douglas Whyte		In Attendance
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service	Scott Rorison		In Attendance
Senior Solicitor – Argyll & Bute Council	Peter Robertson		In Attendance

There is a standing invitation to the Procurator Fiscal Service, The Public Guardian's Office and The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland to attend meeting of the Argyll & Bute APC.

Staff Appointments

In light of the dispersed population in Argyll & Bute, and the management structures for Social Work, it was decided that it would be impractical to set up a separate adult protection unit, as has been the case in less geographically widespread authorities. As an alternative, one additional social worker was appointed in each of the four operational areas within Argyll and Bute to create the capacity to respond to adult protection referrals.

These professionals are integrated into the locality operational teams but taking forward the role of championing the development of adult protection in each locality.

The APC appointed an Area Manager for Adult Protection. He has the primary developmental role for taking forward Adult Protection work on behalf of the Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee throughout Argyll and Bute. Staffing resources were completed by the appointment of an administrative officer to develop and co ordinate reporting mechanisms and to develop the many new administrative systems required to ensure the effective development of adult protection throughout Argyll & Bute.

Senior management responsibility for Adult Support and Protection is taken by the Lead Officer for Adult Protection; he is the Service Manager for Mental Health and Operations in Argyll and Bute.

The Child and Adult Protection Chief Officers Group (CAPCOG) plays a key role in supporting and monitoring the activity of the APC and in particular supporting the development of inter agency activity in this key area. The Argyll and Bute CAPCOG meets on a quarterly basis receiving reports from the APC in relation to the development of practice throughout the area and taking a specific focus on supporting the development of the inter agency partnerships.

Inter Agency Policy and Guidance:

'Keep(ing) under review the procedures and practices of public bodies....' S42(1)(a) ASP(S)A 2007

Preceding the implementation of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Argyll & Bute activity in this area of work was guided by its "Vulnerable Adults Guidance". The need to update policy and practice guidance was recognised by the working group and this 'guidance' was updated during August 2007 to take into account the imminent passing of the Adult Support and Protection Bill.

Following the passing of the 'Act' Argyll & Bute APC welcomed the proposal that Adult Protection Committees in the West of Scotland, along with partners in The National Health Service and Strathclyde Police, develop a common approach and guidance to adult protection activity. This resulted in the development of the West of Scotland Inter Agency Policy and Guidance.

The Lead Officer for Adult Protection attended The West of Scotland Policy Development Group and on completion of the West of Scotland Inter Agency Guidance the Argyll and Bute APC adopted this for the use of staff throughout the area. The committee maintains its commitment to the West of Scotland Group and supports the development of a "West of Scotland Executive Group" which will continue to oversee common approaches to adult protection throughout the West of Scotland.

Further co-operation is maintained through my involvement in attending the West of Scotland "Chairs" Group and the Area Manager, Adult Protection, attending the West of Scotland 'Coordinators Group'.

The Argyll & Bute APC recognises the importance of working with fellow APC's to develop the potential of Committee's both in the West of Scotland and nationally. Currently I am acting as Chairman of the national 'Independent Chairs Group'.

The Argyll & Bute APC continues to oversee the development of Inter Agency Adult Support and Protection Guidance with the committee's Training and Policy sub group currently reviewing the latest version of the West of Scotland Guidance prior to its consideration for adoption by the Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee to be held on 29th July 2010.

Having adopted the West of Scotland Guidance the APC recognises the need to apply this to the local operational situation. The APC has approved local guidance linked to the roles and responsibilities of local staff and to local administration systems. This guidance is founded on the West of Scotland guidance and is subject to review by the APC through the Training and Policy sub group.

The Child and Adult Protection Chief Officers Group (CAPCOG)

'..an Adult Protection Committee must have regard to the desirability of improving co-operation between each of the public bodies and Office holders...' S42(2) ASP(S)A 2007

At its meeting of 4th June 2009 the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Chief Officers Group was reformed as the Argyll and Bute Child and Adult Protection Chief Officers Group (CAPCOG).

The CAPCOG meets on a quarterly basis giving particular attention to the development of inter-agency co-operation between the public bodies in relation to both Child and Adult Protection. In light of the widening of governance arrangements the CAPCOG generally is keenly aware that this change in its role must not dilute the critical focus required for both child protection and adult protection duties. It is the intention of the CAPCOG to review the effectiveness of its new role at its spring meeting in 2011.

In recognition of the dispersed nature of service centres in Argyll and Bute the CAPCOG rotates the venues for its meetings to allow local officers to meet with the group and to ensure that local practice and policy issues are discussed. Since the formation of the Argyll & Bute CHP the CAPOG (or its predecessor the COG) has met in this place, that place and another.

Advocacy

'Duty to consider (the) importance of providing advocacy ...' S6 ASP(S)A 2007

Following the implementation of the Act discussions with the Lomond and Argyll Advocacy service led to an agreement that advocacy provision would be enhanced to ensure that advocacy services could respond to referrals of adults who are the subject of Adult protection inquiries.

In the period 2009 – 2010 15 adults have accessed support from the Advocacy service at a time when concerns about adult protection have been identified. Of these 5 have been supported during periods when they have been supported through adult protection plans.

Training and Workforce Development:

'... making arrangements for improving the skills and knowledge of officers .. of public bodies' S42(1)(c) ASP(S)A 2007

The APC through the work of its Policy and Training sub group has taken forward the significant challenge of the training and workforce development agenda on an inter agency basis throughout Argyll & Bute.

The development of training for such a large geographical area covering town, rural and island communities brings significant challenges.

The APC has supported the development of a trainers group made up of staff from the NHS and from Argyll & Bute Council. This training group is supported by the Area Manager for Adult Protection. This group has taken forward Awareness Raising Training on a multi disciplinary basis for all of Argyll & Bute.

Awareness Raising Training began in October 2009 and by 31st March 2010, 488 staff representing all agencies had attended this training. Attendances were thus:- Strathclyde Police – 43; NHS - 49; voluntary sector – 20 and Argyll-Bute Council 376.

This Awareness Raising training has been run primarily at the training suite in Lochgilphead during 2009/2010, however in recognition of the significant travel demands on staff to allow them to attend this training the APC, through the training sub group has decided that training from 2011 onwards will be run at 6 sites throughout Argyll & Bute (Helensburgh, Dunoon, Rothesay, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown and Oban). This change in approach should reduce time demands on agencies by reducing the travel for staff from the localities and in particular from the smaller local service provider agencies and those from the voluntary sector.

During 2009 – 2010 Awareness Raising training has also been delivered on Islay (three sessions) and Mull (two sessions), and plans are in place to deliver this training to staff on Tiree and Colonsay during autumn 2011.

Level 3 Training:

Following the implementation of the “Act” level 3 Scottish Government Training was delivered between September and December 2008 to 185 staff from Strathclyde Police, Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership, Argyll-Bute Council and 3rd sector agencies.

Council Officer Training

Council Officer Training has been delivered to 45 qualified council staff who will carry out the duties of Council Officer in Argyll and Bute.

Council Officer Training is being delivered over 5 days. This training consists of one day focusing on Legislation and Inter Agency Guidance, 2 days Investigative Interviewing training and a further 2 days Risk Assessment and Protection Planning training (JIT Model). The training is delivered by local staff and by an external trainer. Council Officer training is ongoing with the skills based training being delivered throughout 2010 and into future years.

Other Training

In addition to the above the following training was delivered:

- 2 days training for Case Conference Chairs.
- Sessions for the Continued Professional Development for G.P. practices (3 sessions), community groups (3 sessions) and specialist services (3 sessions).
- AWIA training was delivered to 183 council and 29 NHS staff. This training was delivered by the Argyll and Bute Mental Health Team

Inter agency training is and will remain a primary priority going forward. The commitment to taking training to the four localities is designed to encourage participation by smaller agencies and local groups by reducing time and travel commitments significantly.

The Training and Policy sub group has identified its initial training/development plan which is outlined in tabular form below. The training needs of staff throughout Argyll and Bute is and will remain a primary priority for the next years.

Figure 1 Adult Protection Training Framework

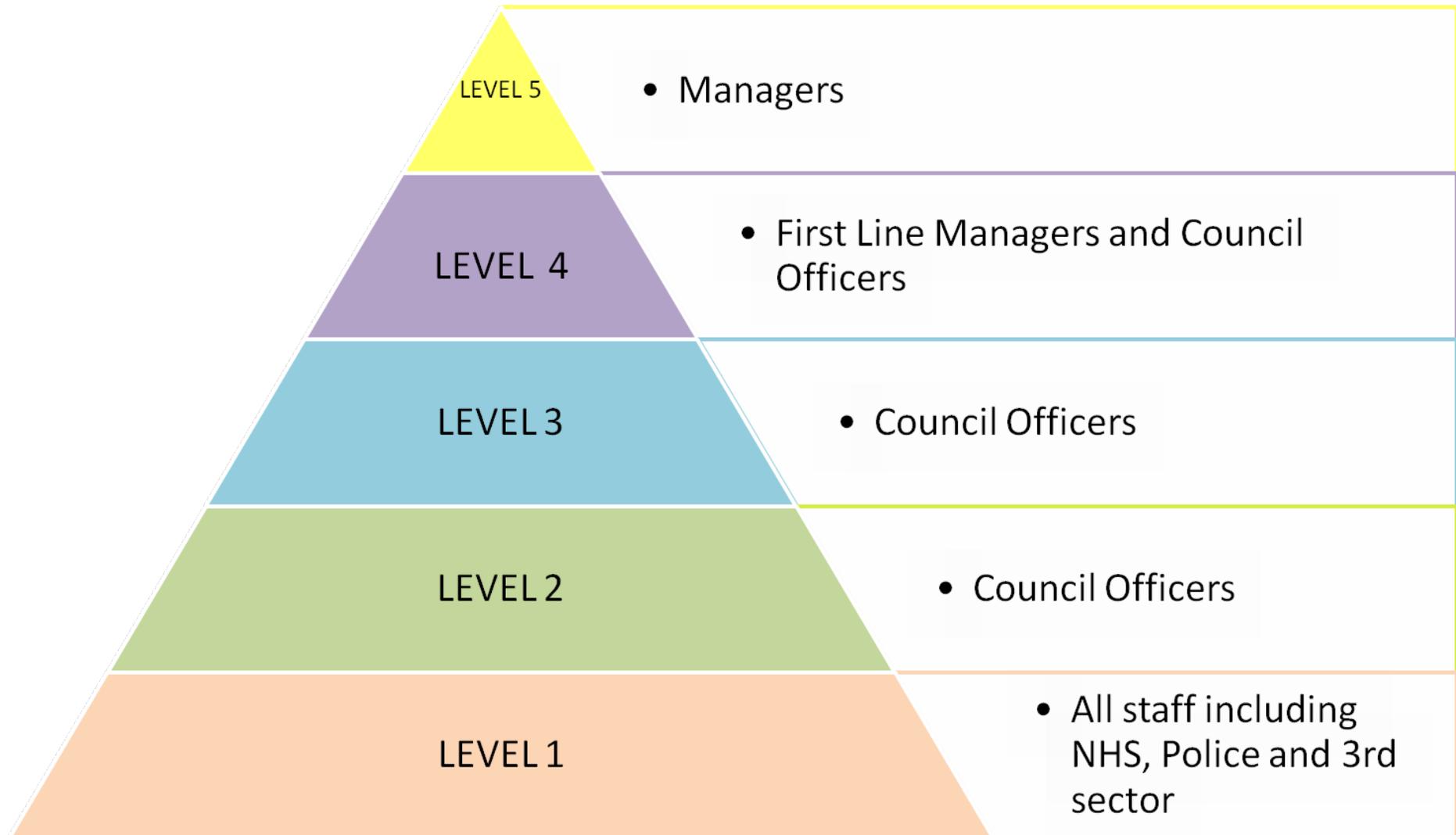


Figure 2 Outline Training Plan

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	OUTCOME SOUGHT	TARGET GROUP	MANDATORY	OTHER AGENCIES
Level 5	Adult Protection Inquiry Management	First line managers training in overseeing responses to referrals, managing inquiries and decision making in relation to AS&P referrals.	First Line Managers	Yes (PDR)	Training to be developed
	Case Conference Chairing	Chairing of formal Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences and Reviews	Service Managers – Lead NHS Professionals	Yes (PDR)	Social Services and NHS
Level 4	Chairing Core Groups/ Case Discussions	Training for Chairs of Case discussions/ core groups. Chairs aware of task/outcome focus of these groups.	First Line managers/ Council Officers (PDR)	PDR	To be developed
Level 3	Investigative Interviewing	Practice development in relation carrying out investigative visits and interviews.	Council Officers initially	Yes – on completion of Council Officer briefing (PDR)	Yes – In place and ongoing for all qualified staff
	Risk Assessment and Protection Planning	Practice training in relation to Risk Assessment and Protection Planning.	Council Officers	Yes- On completion of Investigative Interviewing Training (PDR)	Yes - From Autumn 2010 and ongoing.
	Ethical and effective recording	To ensure Council Officers are aware of standards of record keeping and that records are fit for purpose.	Council officers	On basis of identified need (PDR)	To be developed
Level 2	Council Officer Briefing	To ensure that Council Officers are fully aware of the Act, the duties of the Council and role and responsibilities of the 'Council Officer.'	All qualified social workers, nurses and OT's employed by Argyll and Bute Council.	Yes	This will be opened to other agencies following initial briefings of qualified Council staff.
Level 1	Awareness Raising**	To enable staff to recognise and report adult protection concerns, and thereafter to support service users who have experienced abusive situations.	All staff in public, private and 3 rd sector who deliver services to adults and children.	All social work staff. Council staff from other departments as per PDR	Open to NHS, Police and 3 rd Sector staff.
	Protecting 'Adults at Risk'	Staff supporting 'AAR' to be aware of their role in protection planning.	Support /care staff	Developmental – from PDR	Open to all agencies.
	Core Group Participation	To be developed	Support staff	Developmental – from PDR	Open to all agencies
	Minute taking	Effective minute taking	Minute takers of AP case conferences	All admin staff in partnership with the CPC	Not at this point

Users and Carers:

Service user outcomes

The Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee is working with the West Dunbartonshire Adult Protection Committee and the Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service to develop a joint approach to seeking service user outcome feedback from adults who have been subjects of adult protection referral/inquiry.

Both Committees make use of the Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service and a common approach will secure consistency of approach to this activity, supporting common learning in relation to adults' experience of adult protection referral/intervention.

This initiative is currently under development with the West Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute APCs beginning a pilot for this activity on 1st October 2010. It is proposed that the pilot will be reviewed initially at 6 months. The outcome of this activity will be reported in 2011 and thereafter in the next biennial report.

Communications with Users and Carers

The committee, in recognition of the importance of ensuring representative community involvement/participation in its work has considered the most effective mechanisms to communicate and consult with the many and varied communities in Argyll & Bute.

Thus the committee is consulting with the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership with regards to identifying the most appropriate representation for the APC from community, voluntary and carers groups with the aim of establishing effective communication with partners throughout Argyll and Bute.

Arrangements are in place to attend users and carers groups covering the interest areas of older people's services and Learning disabilities. Consultation with Addictions and Mental Health Services is being planned for the autumn 2010.

Adult Protection Statistical Information for Argyll and Bute

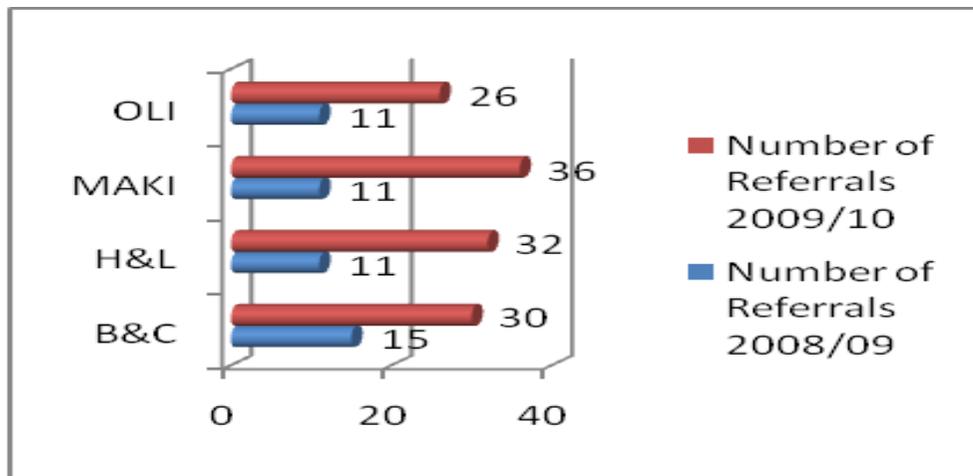
The appointment of specialist staff during 2009 has led to a development of the data sets from previously collated under 'Vulnerable Adults' Guidance. This leads to difficulty in comparing activity carried out in 2008 – 2009 to that in 2009 – 2010. Thus for this first report reference is made primarily to statistics for the year 2009 – 2010 with comparators to the year 2008 - 2009 being identified in relation to overall referral rates only.

The total number of referrals for 2008 – 2009 48

The total number of referrals for 2009 – 2010 124

Number of Adult Protection Referrals - 2008 – 2009 & 2009 – 2010

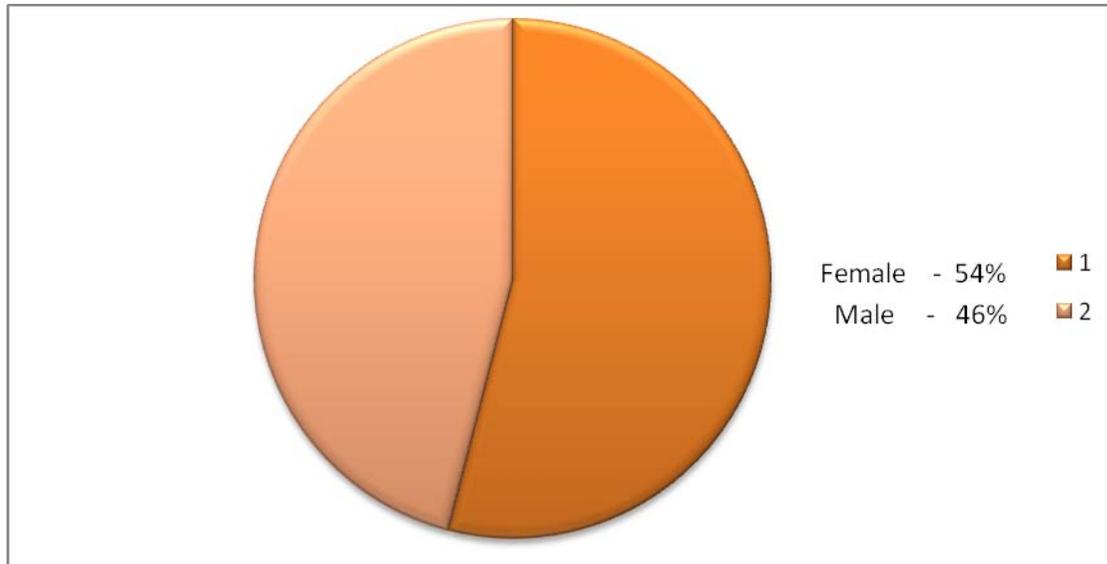
Referral rate has increased more than 2 fold between 2008 – 2009 and 2009 - 2010



OLI	Oban Lorn and the Isles
MAKI	Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay
H&L	Helensburgh and Lomond
B&C	Bute and Cowal

Local guidance identifies an adult protection referral is one where the referrer identifies the adult as being 'at risk of harm'.

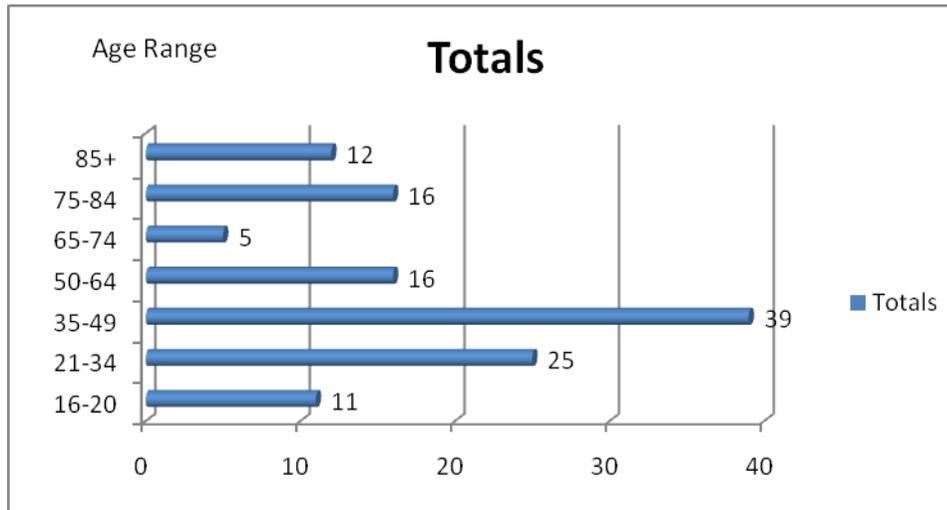
Gender of Referred Adults (Total referrals – 124)



The balance in relation to referrals leans towards females with 67 females referred and 57 males referred.

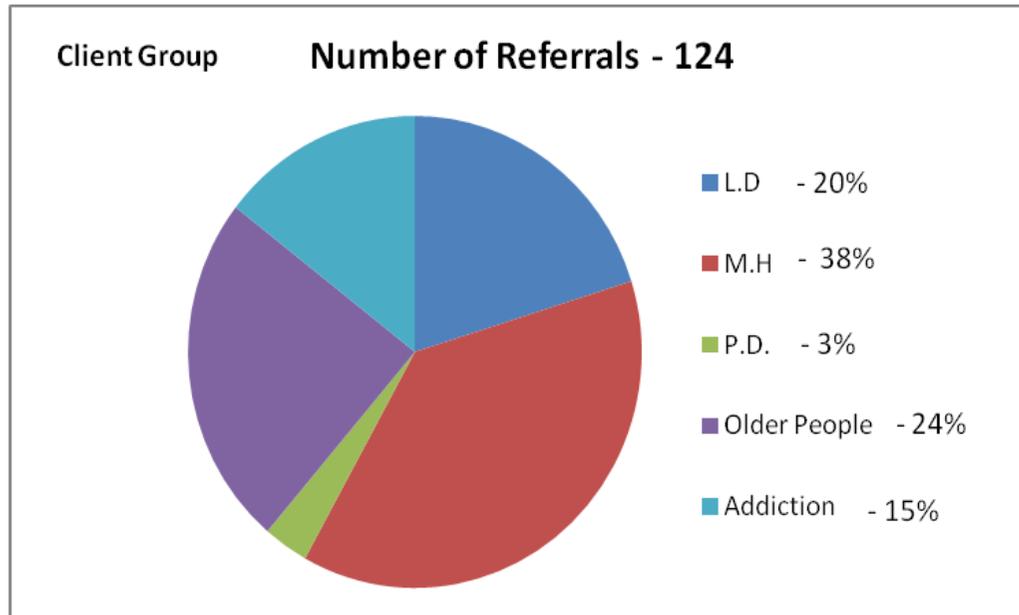
Ethnicity

All referrals were of adults who are of White British origin. This is reflective of the information from the national census which shows that 96% of Argyll and Bute's population is of White British origin (2001 Census). **Age Groups of Referred Adults**



It is notable that 63% of referrals come from the 21 – 49 year age range. This reflects by the prevalence of referrals of those with combinations of issues relating to self harm where the impact of alcohol and or drug use is apparent and where mental health assessment may also be relevant.

Primary Service User Group of Referred Adults

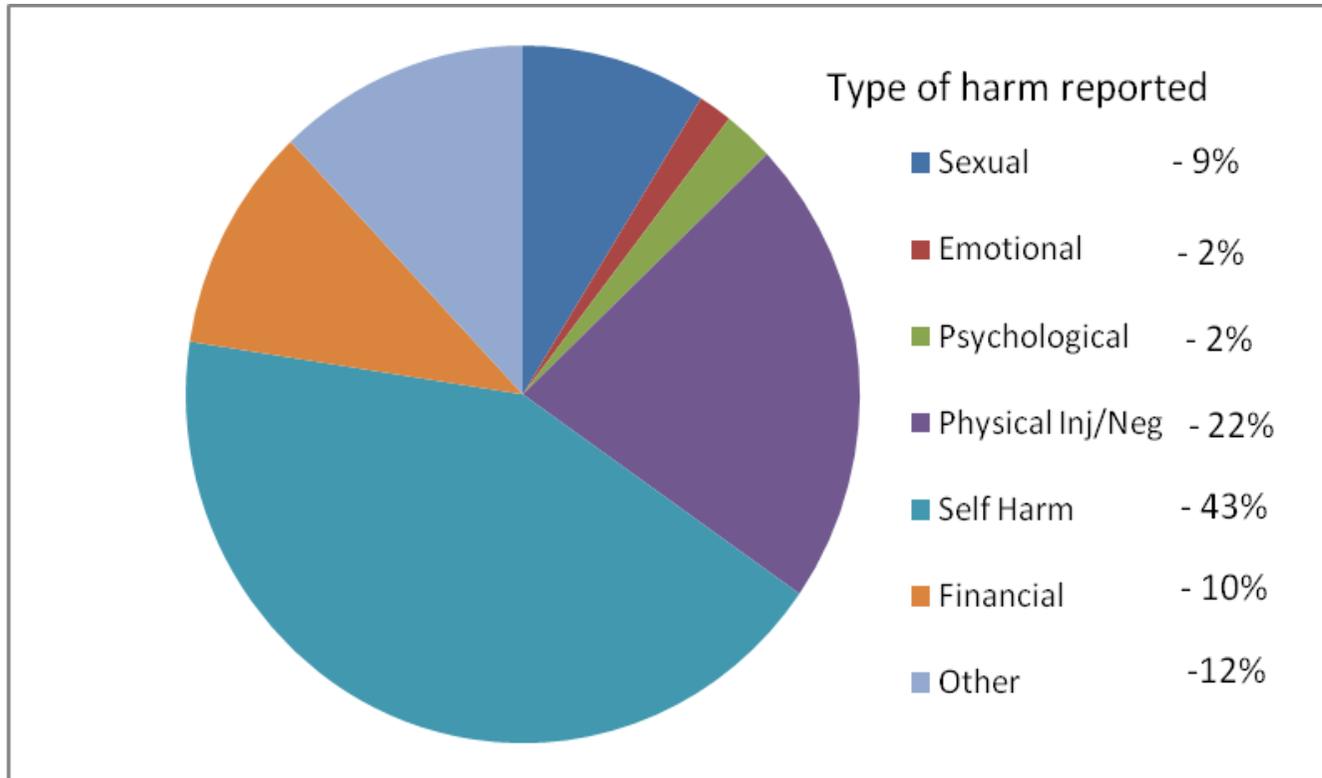


LD	Learning Disability
MH	Mental Health
PD	Physical Disability
OP	Older People
Add	Addictions

This data again reflects the prevalence of those referred who have issues relating to alcohol use / threats of self harm / and questions in relation to mental disorder / mental infirmity.

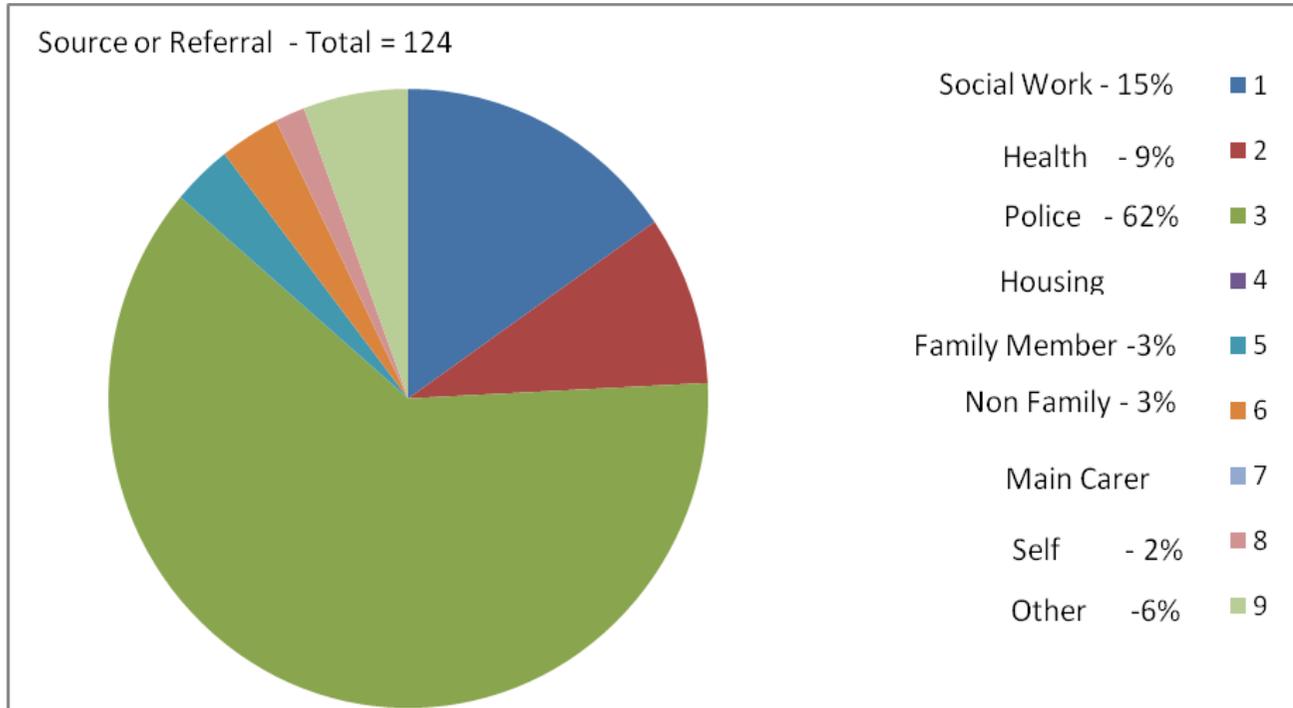
This information does not reflect the complexity of referrals with the majority of complex issues occurring in the learning disability and older peoples groups.

Types of Harm Reported (Total referrals - 124)



Self Harm concerns are confirmed as most prevalent with Physical injury/neglect being next more common. The Argyll-Bute database has been updated to differentiate issues of neglect from those of physical harm for future years.

Referral Source



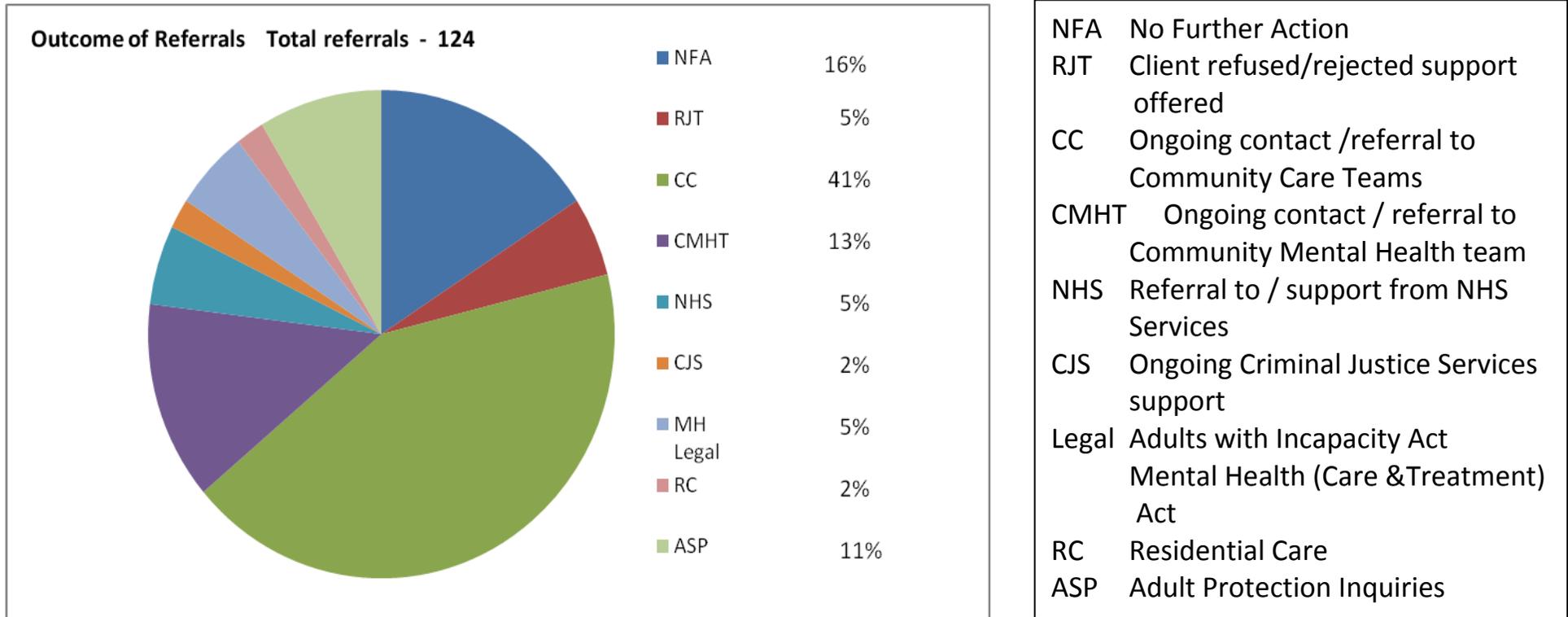
Other – this covers referrals from advocacy and from Care/support organisations which were not gathered separately during 2009 - 2010.

Police referrals are the largest source of referrals for 2009 – 2010 (77). With data from the first year of operation now being available discussions are planned with police colleagues to analyse referrals from the police to identify any improvements to current practice.

Data collection has developed as the year has progressed and whilst it is noted that there are no referrals from housing/homelessness services or Main Carer involvement of both parties was critical to protection activity. Data collection has now been developed to capture this information from April 2010 onwards.

The Committee is confident that after review of the first full year's information, the data collection systems are improving. This commitment to improving data gathering will be maintained into coming years and will assimilate the learning from other committees annual reporting measures to achieve excellence.

Outcome of Referrals



Information gathering initially recorded a large number of referrals where 'no further action' (NFA) was taken in relation to Adult Protection referrals. However further analysis identified that many of the NFA decisions were taken on the basis that services which could meet the identified risk/need were already in place. Thus this pie chart records outcomes in relation to the responses to 'adults at risk' referrals. This approach is now being systematically applied for data gathering activity.

Number of Adult Protection Case Conferences

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	January	Feb	March	Total
Initial Case Conference	3	2	0	0	2	3	5	1	0	0	0	1	17
Review Case Conference	0	2	0	2	4	0	5	3	3	4	4	3	30
Total	3	4	0	2	6	3	10	4	3	4	4	4	47

Initial Case Conferences were convened for 17 out of 124 referrals. Of the 17 case conferences held 16 resulted in the 'adult at risk' agreeing to be supported through a Protection Plan. In all of these cases a core group was convened and Case Conference Reviews planned.

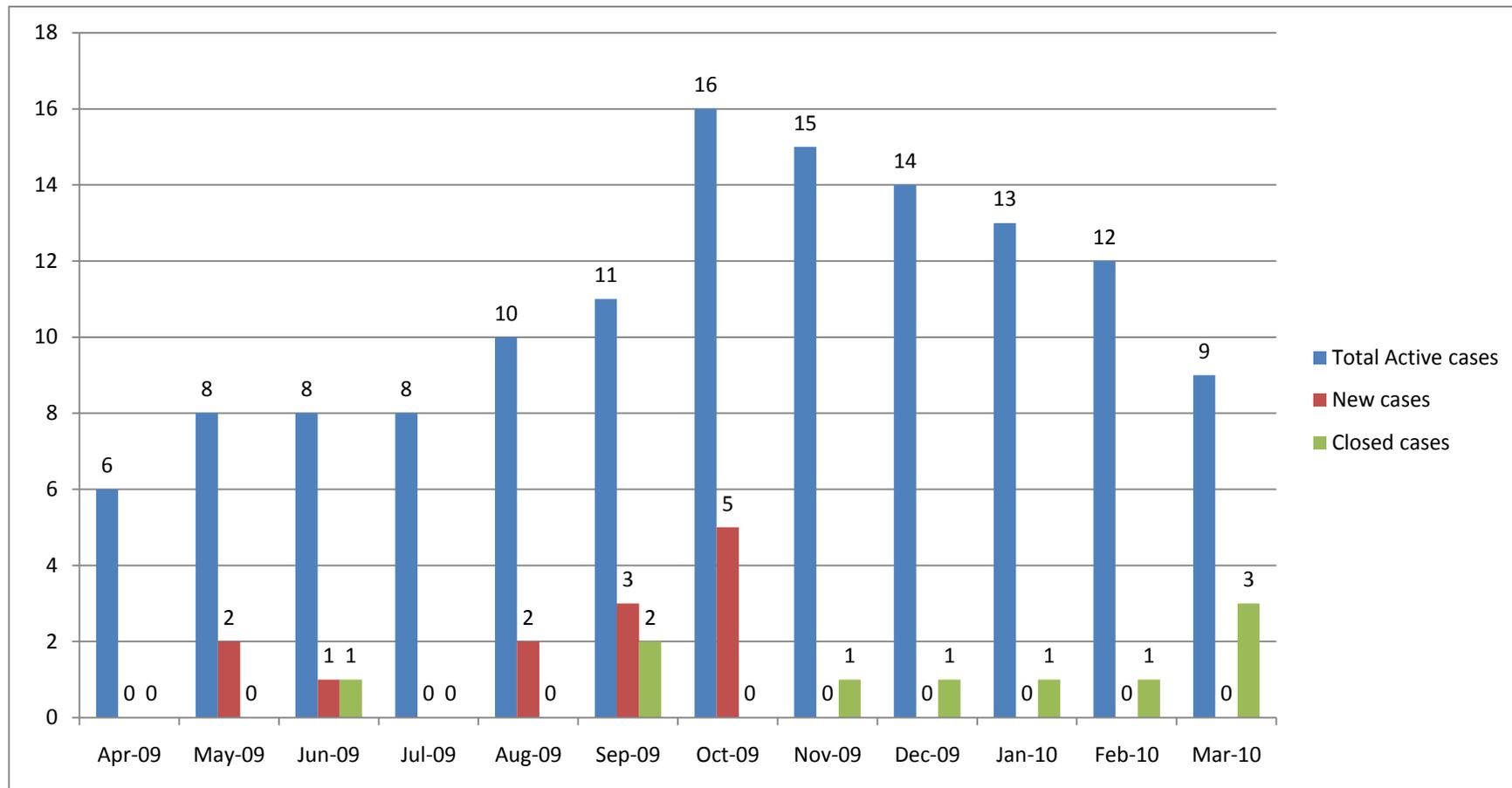
In the case which did not move on to protection planning the adult decided not to accept the support offered.

30 Review Case Conferences were held in relation to the 16 adults who received support through adult support and protection measures.

The average period an adult was supported through 'protection plans' was 6.8 months.

This is further illustrated in the following graph.

Adults Supported through Monitoring of Protection Plans per month



Adult Protection reports are given first priority in relation to allocation of work to council officers. Access to this statistical information will allow an analysis of how adult protection work is impacting on the workloads of staff throughout Argyll and Bute.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION - SUMMARY

The first full year of data collection following the implementation of the Act highlighted areas for improvement in relation to the gathering of Statistical information by the Argyll and Bute APC. Significant improvements have taken place throughout the year and this commitment to improvement will continue. The current data gives a good baseline to measure activity in the current and future years and should allow benchmarking with other local authorities in Scotland to be developed.

It is clear that activity has grown with a more than 2 fold increase in referrals between 2008 – 2009 and 2009 – 2010. The rise of referrals has increased from all partners with a massive increase noted in relation to police referrals.

It is the Committee's view that the development and delivery of 'Awareness Raising' training is having, and will continue to have, a growing impact on both referral rates and the quality of referrals as we move on into 2010 - 2011.

The Committee is using the information gathered during this first full year of activity to identify and target areas for further awareness training as we move into 2010 - 2011.

Work is already planned with police partners in relation to the analysis of police referrals to assess what can be learned from the information gathered in the last 12 months. Similar activity will be carried out in relation to other referral sources to identify what actions are necessary to ensure effective reporting of adults identified as being 'at risk'.

Referral rates from community settings are low. The continued development of publicity and communications with all areas of Argyll and Bute will be a major focus in the next period with plans being developed for a communication plan in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee and other partners in its earliest stages.

Throughout 2009 – 2010 more adults were supported through the delivery of protection plans than in previous years. The impact of inquiries on the adult subjects will be assessed through the service user survey pilot and this will have a key impact on how inquiries/investigations are carried out thereafter. The committee will also be seeking to measure the impact of adult protection work on other service provision and on the workloads of staff. Argyll and Bute delivers services to several population bases including Island and rural communities and the need to adequately provide the fullest range of services to these communities will continue to be reviewed.

The data presented in this report is now being built into the corporate performance framework developed by Argyll-Bute Council. The Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee values the opportunity to access this system which has a growing value in that it is now being used by key staff in the Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership and Social Work Inspection Agency.

It has to be recorded that I remain concerned that the Scottish Government has not come forward with a “national data set” to record Adult Protection information in a consistent way. I am pleased that the Adult Protection Chairs’ Group is developing its own small data set to provide essential benchmarking information on a quarterly basis. Otherwise the only benchmarking information available to APCs would be from biennial reports potentially reporting on very different issues; such an arrangement would be totally unacceptable.

Critical Case Reviews:

The Adult Protection Committee, as a regular agenda item, receives reports of local and national concerns relating to the development of Adult Protection Practice this including information from Serious Case Reviews.

The committee has welcomed the impetus this gives into the development of “best practice” in Argyll & Bute.

The committee has identified the need to develop a Serious Case Review Protocol and this will be presented for discussion and approval by the Adult Protection Committee by December 2010.

Public Information

The APC adapted the Scottish Government’s ‘Act Against Harm’ publicity information for use in Argyll and Bute with local contact points identified on materials.

Following both television adverts and later the Radio adverts no discernable changes were noted in relation to the numbers of referrals received by Argyll and Bute APC.

The committee recognises the complexity of seeking to deliver effective communications across such a wide area with a range of radio stations and local publications covering the area. Use has been made of press releases again with limited effect.

In light of the complexity of communications over such a wide and varied area the committee is developing a more targeted communication strategy with the support of the communication teams from Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and Bute Community Health Partnership. Work is also being planned in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee for the coming year.

The committee recognises that the communications strategy may need to develop differing approaches to deal with different communities, whilst delivering a consistent message about the need to respond to those identified as ‘adults at risk’.

Management of Services and Staff:

In light of the geographical distances between centres of population in Argyll & Bute and in light of the current structure of Adult Services, it was impractical to set up an Adult Protection Unit to cover Argyll and Bute.

Argyll & Bute is divided into 4 areas for delivery of operational services these being: Helensburgh and Lomond, Dunoon and Cowal (with services being located in Dunoon and Rothesay), Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (with service basis in Lochgilphead, Campbeltown and Islay), Oban, Lorne and the Isles, with services based primarily in Oban with outreach to Mull and the smaller Islands.

In order to meet the need to respond urgently to reports of “Adults at Risk”, one additional social worker post was established for each of the four areas.

These workers are managed through the existing operational management structure with the staff member maintaining a particular interest in, and supporting the development of practice in Adult Protection. The four workers have developed links with staff and agencies through their areas. The workers meet bi-monthly with the Area Manager for Adult Protection to look at operational and developmental issues in each area with the aim of developing consistent responses throughout Argyll and Bute.

These workers also act as reference points to colleagues in their area as well as being actively involved in the delivery of training throughout Argyll & Bute.

The ‘team’ of Adult Protection staff is complemented by the appointment of the Area Manager for Adult Protection. This post does not hold operational responsibility for staff but covers areas of Policy and Planning, Monitoring and Audit and Training and Workforce Development.

Administrative support has been provided through the appointment of an administrative officer to oversee the development and maintenance of information systems, to support the training development of administrative staff throughout Argyll & Bute and to support the work of the Area Manager, Adult Protection.

Recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced staff can be problematic in the more remote parts of the authority, however all four Adult Protection posts have been filled.

Communication and Cooperation between Agencies:

The Argyll & Bute Adult Protection Committee works within the West of Scotland Network. Links with other APCs, locally and nationally, are supported and there is commitment to working both within the 'West of Scotland Group' and nationally to address issues covering policy development, audit, training and practice needs. Albeit in the earliest stages the Committee recognises that these partnerships are key to the development of consistency of policy and practice throughout Scotland.

The development of the 'West of Scotland Inter Agency Guidance' has been fundamental to the development of practice in Argyll & Bute. The Argyll & Bute Manager for Adult protection attends the West of Scotland, Adult Support and Protection, Coordinators group, this providing a forum for lead officers and co-ordinators to share and learn from developments throughout the area..

The APC has appropriate representation from statutory agencies (attendance by those agencies is noted earlier in this report). Continuity of representation at the APC will be critical to the future development of an effective partnership to take forward the duties placed on the Adult Protection Committee. The level of engagement of partners in relation to the joint planning and delivery of "support and protection" activity will be monitored to ensure that the Committee's functions under the Act are achieved.

The report notes earlier the joint delivery of 'Awareness' training to staff throughout Argyll and Bute. The delivery and uptake of joint training is being monitored to ensure appropriate involvement from all agencies. The commitment to, and uptake of, joint training opportunities is recognised as being at the heart of the development of effective responses to reports of 'adults at risk'.

The involvement of the Housing/Homelessness Services in the Committee has been critical to dealing with some of the most vulnerable households in the area. The involvement of the housing sector ensures that housing services know how to access support for 'adults at risk' through use of the single referral process.

The Committee recognises the major challenge it faces in relation to developing effective communications with, and engagement of, the 'Community' in its work. The development of a Communications Strategy is already under discussion by the Committee as is identifying appropriate representation of community interests on the APC.

Financial Information

Account	YTD Actual 09-10
Staffing costs	191881.09
Training	15494.4
SCRO Checks	120
Relocation Expenses etc	4945
Staff Advertising	193.6
Subscriptions to Professional Bodies	17.25
Furniture & Fittings(Permanent) - Purchase	499.41
Printing & Stationery	1080.85
Postages	22.5
Telephone Calls - BT One Bill Charged	25.78
Mobile Telephones	236.54
Communications - Call Charges	169.79
Communications - Network Line Charges	5.65
IT Consumables	1250.55
IT Computers (purchase of PC's etc)	3352.1
Staff Subsistence	1111.58
Routine Hospitality	361.46
Hire of Facilities	379.82
Ferry Charges	98.95
Fares & Tolls	138.29
Staff Travel - Casual	7163.83
Staff Travel - Other Expenses	117.61
Payments to Other Bodies	6500
	235,166.05

The major area of expenditure relates to the employment of staff and associated start up costs.

Thereafter the major expenditure is in relation to training and communications.

Argyll and Bute APC are keenly aware of the high travel costs associated with operating in such a large rural area and these costs continue to be actively monitored.

Future Challenges

In recognising the positive developments during this first reporting period, the Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee recognises the many challenges facing us as we seek to further develop Adult Protection service provision, and response, to the people of Argyll and Bute.

The completion of this first Biennial Report provides the basis on which the APC has planned a multi-disciplinary self evaluation day to review its performance up to April 2010, this to identify and prioritise development goals for the next biennial reporting period.

Without predicting the outcomes of the self evaluation day we have identified key areas for development. These include the ongoing challenge of raising awareness of adult protection issues throughout the Argyll and Bute, both in relation to staff groups but also throughout the general population. A second critical area at this point is in relation to levels of referral from different agencies and also from the more remote and island communities within Argyll and Bute.

We also note that whilst the APC has embarked upon a service user evaluation exercise (reporting to commence in January 2011) our engagement with local communities is an area which as yet still to be addressed effectively.

The self evaluation day is based on the SWIA model for 'Self Evaluation'. With wide ranging participation from partner agencies this event is the first of what will become an annual review of the work carried out by the APC. On the basis of annual/biennial reporting it will be the primary forum for reflection on adult protection activity and planning and prioritisation of work for the following year.

This we believe will offer a systematic and dynamic way of improving service delivery in this new and key area of work.

Final Comments

At the end of this first reporting period I am pleased to confirm that the Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee has made a positive start to carrying out its statutory duties. The Committee recognises that much remains to be done. However, I believe a positive start has been made. The Committee, in partnership with the West of Scotland Group, is committed to mutual learning, support and to continuous improvement. This partnership along with the firm commitment of the Committee to the National Chairs Group, I believe will ensure that Adult Protection practice will develop within the national commitment to addressing the needs of 'adults at risk'.

In the context of having developed its procedural guidance for staff, the Committee has confirmed the critical importance of ensuring that staff from all agencies have access to training at all levels. A positive start has been made on this training programme and with the commitment to delivering training in localities throughout Argyll and Bute in 2011 the Committee believes that access to, and the development of, training will improve for those especially from smaller agencies.

The Committee has started the process of developing its public information plan in consultation with local community and service user groups. The Committee is also exploring with the Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee the potential to develop an Argyll wide partnership to address issues relating to public safety – this in order to maintain sustainable communication with the many differing communities in Argyll and Bute.

The first full set of annual statistical returns gives the committee the opportunity to analyse adult protection activity following the implementation of the Act. As I have already recorded in this report, it is noted how referral rates have increased over the year albeit with a large proportion of referrals coming from Strathclyde Police. The Committee has specifically identified the need to continually monitor referrals from other sources and this will be a focus for the committee in the coming year. The collation of the annual statistics will also now allow an informed discussion with police colleagues with regard to ensuring effective feedback to the police on outcomes of referrals and thus improvement in communications about adult support and protection.

The Committee recognises the vast amount of work still to be carried out to fully develop the systems and services required to support and protect 'adults at risk' within Argyll and Bute. A positive start has been made and the Committee looks forward to the publication of reports nationally which should provide a rich source of learning from other Adult Protection Committees in relation to this work.