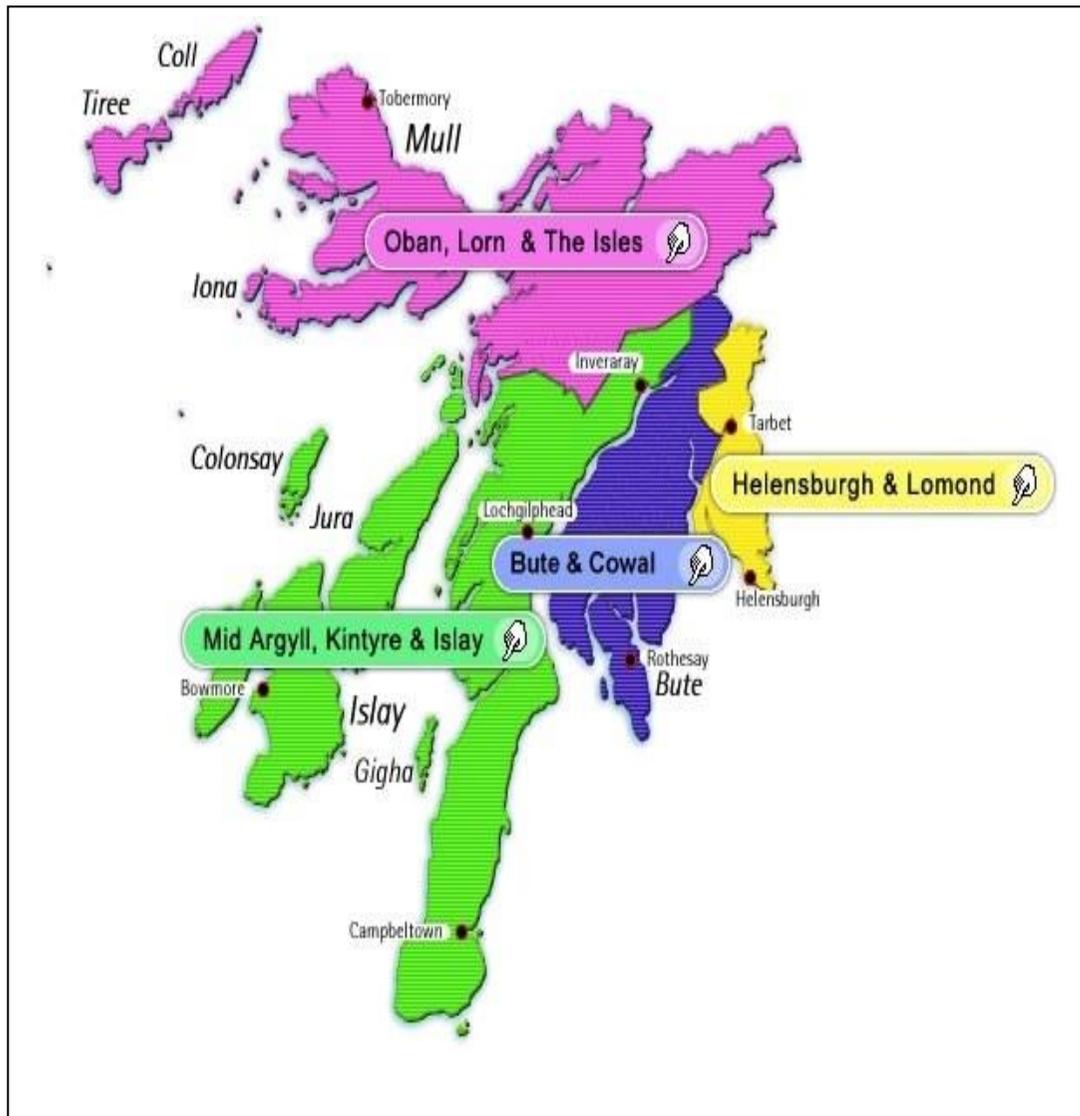


**Act
against
harm**

Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee



Argyll and Bute Adult Protection Committee Annual Report April 2012 – March 2013

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



As the independent Chairman of Argyll and Bute's Adult Protection Committee, I am required to report every two years to the Minister on activity in Argyll and Bute to implement to Adult Support and Protection legislation. In particular, I am required to advise the Minister on the extent the various agencies involved in Adult Support and Protection are co-operating together to ensure that all adults "at risk of harm" are identified and offered appropriate support. Naturally, this Biennial Report is made available to Councillors.

However, I have taken the view that it is appropriate to report on the issues to members more often than every two years. My last Biennial Report covered the two years from April, 2010 to March, 2012. This Report for the Council covers the year from April 2012 to March 2013.

I am pleased to report that the agencies involved in Adult Support and Protection in Argyll are co-operating more enthusiastically than ever before. This is resulting in a continuously rising trend of referrals. The Police have always provided a substantial number of referrals but the number from many other sources is now rising very encouragingly. I believe that once adults at risk are identified, there are appropriate processes in place to investigate their circumstances and to devise and offer appropriate support arrangements. Our procedure for self-assessment continue to identify any weaknesses in our processes and allow us to work together to improve them.

What is extremely interesting is that rates of referral vary significantly across Argyll & Bute. We continue to look for reasons for this, but to date the question remains unanswered.

I remain concerned that there is still no provision for us to compare activity in Argyll and Bute to activity across Scotland; there is still no national dataset. A national dataset is being developed but I am concerned at how long it is taking. The Scottish Government is driving a number of other initiatives to achieve the full implementation of Adult Support and Protection. However, I would be much more confident if more resources were applied to these issues that we might have them resolved sooner rather than later.

I am grateful to all the members of the Adult Protection Committee for the time and commitment they have given to its work. I am also grateful to senior management in all the agencies involved for pushing Adult Support and Protection up the agenda and encouraging their staff to address the issue urgently.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Brackenridge', is written over a faint, light blue horizontal line.

Bill Brackenridge

Independent Chair

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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 Convenor	Bill Brackenridge	Member
Director of Operations, Argyll & Bute CHP	Derek Leslie	Member
Director of Adult Care, NHS	Jan Baird	Member
Project Director (Mental Health Modernisation)	John Dreghorn	Member
Strathclyde Police	D.I. Alistair Davidson	Member
Professional Lead Learning Disability – Health	Anne-Lise Dickie	Member
Head of Adult Care – Argyll & Bute Council	Jim Robb	Member
Service Manager – MH & Ops, Argyll & Bute Council	Jim Littlejohn	Member
Lead Officer Adult Protection	Allen Stevenson	Member
3 rd Sector Representative	Katrina Sayer	Member
Area Manager Adult Protection	Rebecca Barr	Member
Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue	Eddie Renfrew	Member
Service Officer Homelessness – Argyll & Bute Council	Douglas Whyte	In Attendance
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service	Scott Rorison	In Attendance
Solicitor – Argyll & Bute Council	Graeme Forrester	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.

Introduction:

This annual report covers the year's activity immediately following the end of the period covered by the Biennial Report submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2012 (1 April 2010 - 31 March 2012).

The Minister's response to the Biennial Report thanked the chair and fellow committee members for all the hard work and commitment they had contributed to enable adult support and protection work to move forward significantly over the previous 2 years. Specific areas of work singled out for praise included the proactive approach taken to service user involvement, the Committee's peripatetic approach to meetings and the formation of the four adult protection Area Development Forums across Argyll and Bute.

Overall the Minister concluded by saying

"There is much to be applauded in the work undertaken over the reporting period in Argyll and Bute, and I thank you and your committee for all the efforts you have made to take the work forward."

The Committee welcomed this response and have continued to work together to take forward all aspects of the adult protection agenda.

This annual report follows the format laid down for the Biennial Reports and provides an update on work done, progress made and issues identified since the submission of that report a year ago.

Users and Carers

The meaningful involvement of service users and carers in all aspects of adult support and protection continues to be a challenge for the Committee in Argyll and Bute, as in other areas.

Adults who are the subject of adult protection inquiries and investigations:

Existing adult support and protection procedures in Argyll and Bute made clear that the adult should be at the heart of all decision-making where concerns about risk to them were identified. In general the feedback provided by service users suggested that this is the case. However, feedback provided by staff at the self-evaluation day held in November 2012 highlighted that while the adult was generally seen as central to the process, there were potential issues relating to the number of case discussions held, rather than case conferences, and some concerns that neither advocacy nor other types of communication support were automatically offered to adults.

Actions taken:

Following the self-evaluation day the social work procedures were updated to stress the need to hold a case conference (to which the adult is invited, in all but exceptional circumstance) where any adult protection investigation is undertaken. New forms were introduced from 1 April to capture explicit consideration of an adult's communication needs and the support provided to enable them to engage in the process. Both elements of adult protection will be monitored over the coming months.

Service user evaluation:

The service user evaluation project undertaken in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council and Lomond and Argyll Advocacy (LAAS) has enabled the views of a small number of adults who have been through the adult protection process to be gathered. The feedback gathered has been valuable, but the numbers participating have remained disappointingly small.

Actions taken:

Council officers will now ask adults who are the subject of an adult protection investigation if their contact details can be passed on to LAAS so that feedback can be gained from those who have declined advocacy itself. It is hoped that this will increase the numbers participating and so ensure that considerably more feedback is gained and can feed into the evaluation of work done in adult support and protection.

Management information

Data collected between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 showed that following rises in the numbers of adult protection referrals over the previous year, the numbers this year appear to have steadied:

Total AP Referrals	
2009-10	124
2010-11	274
2011-12	447
2012-13	446

The referral rates continue to show wide differences between the areas of Argyll and Bute

Area	Number of Referrals	%
B&C	166	37.2%
H&L	129	28.9%
MAKI	76	17.0%
OLI	75	16.8%
Sum:	446	

As in previous years more women than men were referred:

Gender	Number of Referrals	%
Female	239	53.6%
Male	207	46.4%
	446	

The recording of those making the referrals has changed slightly over the years but show that the Police remain consistently the highest referrer

Answer	Number of Assessments	%
Anonymous	3	0.7%
Friend / Relative / Neighbour	21	4.7%
Government Organisation	4	0.9%
Hospital	7	1.6%
Internal SWD	33	7.4%
LA - Other Dept	10	2.2%
Other Health	14	3.1%
Other LA	3	0.7%
Police	292	65.5%
Prison	1	0.2%
Private Organisation	30	6.7%
Self	7	1.6%
Voluntary Organisation	18	4.0%
GP	2	0.4%
Standby	1	0.2%
	446	

Because it is important that we maintain a clear view as to which agencies are making referrals and where we may need to target additional training etc. more detailed recording mechanisms have been put in place from 1 April onwards.

As in previous years, self-harm continues to be the most frequently referred type of harm:

Answer	Number of Assessments	%
01 Sexual	19	4.3%
02 Psychological	48	10.8%
03 Physical	45	10.1%
04 Self harm	88	19.7%
05 Financial	27	6.1%
06 Neglect	19	4.3%
07 Self-neglect	19	4.3%
08 Discrimination	1	0.2%
09 Other	37	8.3%
10 Not known	7	1.6%
None Recorded	136	30.5%
	446	

Actions:

As was noted in the Biennial Report, the lack of agreed national data collection mechanisms prevents us from being able to benchmark against other authorities. Work is now underway to remedy this basis lack, but to date we remain in the position of considering the Argyll and Bute data in isolation.

It has been recognised that the data collected to date provides useful information on the type of referrals that have been made, but that additional information was required to demonstrate more fully what happened to those referrals if the adult was not considered

to be at risk. From 1 April 2013, therefore, new data collection mechanisms were put in place to provide further details on work done as a result of the referrals received. More detailed reports are now being produced for the APC on a quarterly basis and specific issues are being identified as a result. These reports are still being refined but are proving a useful starting point in assisting a greater understanding of the adult protection work being undertaken across Argyll and Bute.

Serious Case Reviews:

As stated in the Biennial Report, a Serious Case Review Procedure was agreed by the APC in July 2011, but to date no serious case reviews have taken place. This continues to be the case.

The process for examining serious failings in a registered service, the Multi-Agency Liaison Protocol, has been used a number of times to maintain an overview of ongoing issues in residential and nursing homes. This has been supported by the updated review process for adults resident in these services mentioned in the Biennial Report.

Actions:

The pilot of the new review process has thrown up issues for staff in both health and social work and it is recognised that it requires re-consideration before it can be rolled out successfully in all areas. Work is taking place to make adjustments that will make it a more user-friendly and effective process.

It is also recognised that there continue to be regular concerns about registered services in all areas. Whilst the Multi-Agency Liaison Protocol allows for effective joint work to identify issues within services and support the provider to make improvements, there is also the need for a Large Scale Investigation procedure for the occasions where there are serious adult protection concerns relating to a whole service. The West of Scotland Councils are in the process of looking at the development of guidance that can be agreed throughout these council areas and it is hoped that Argyll and Bute will be able to adopt this when available.

Public Information

Following the submission of the Biennial Report, the Chair and Area Manager Adult Protection took the broad messages from the report to the Council and the four Area Committees. Press releases were also provided and published across the area when the Minister's response to the report was received in order to raise public awareness of the issues.

However, during 2012 it was recognised that the previous campaigns, and supply of leaflets and posters in publically accessed buildings, was failing to ensure that information about harm to adults reached the general public. A Citizens Panel questionnaire conducted in the Autumn found that only 27% of respondents knew adults had the right to be protected and only 30% remembered seeing the adult protection advert on STV.

Actions:

Responsibility for public awareness was given to the Policy and Training sub group of the APC and new publicity materials and a campaign to launch them were developed. The success of these will be monitored by returning to the Citizens Panel in early 2014.

Management of Services and Staff

As described in the Biennial Report, funding for adult support and protection remains a priority for Argyll and Bute Council and has been maintained at its original level.

Responding to adult protection referrals remains the responsibility of operational staff within the social work teams, and new procedures were introduced to streamline the way that these were received directly by those staff responsible for dealing with them. This change of process has worked well, with increased local ownership of the work.

The original appointment of four social work staff in the different areas to provide local expertise and training for all agencies has been succeeded by the recognition that adult protection is the business of all social work staff. The four staff remain in social work roles but without the specific ASP brief.

Adult protection work continues to be overseen by the Area Manager Adult Protection, although the original post holder, Ronnie McIlquham, retired in summer 2013. A new Area Manager, Rebecca Barr, was then appointed taking up the post at the end of October. There is also a full-time administrative officer to support this work.

Actions:

It was recognised that although the majority of social work and other professional staff had completed adult protection training and were engaged in adult protection work, there had been no formal agreement as to which staff should be appointed as “council officers” as defined by the Act. It was agreed that clarification should be undertaken and formal appointments made.

Communication and Co-operation between agencies

The APC continues to have good representation from each of the key agencies, with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue having recently joined the Committee. In general Committee meetings are well attended. They continue to take place in each of the 4 areas of Argyll and Bute in turn and local staff have the opportunity to meet the Committee following the meeting in their area to hear about developments in adult support and protection and ask questions of the members.

Local Area Development Forums, although formally established some time ago, have not met as regularly as the APC had anticipated. They are seen as vital to the development of good partnership working in each area and new terms of reference were developed for them in January 2012. Area Managers within social work were tasked with re-launching the Forums so that effective local debate takes place to ensure that partner agencies are appropriately engaged in all aspects of adult protection work and any barriers to partnership working can be identified and addressed.

As described in the Biennial Report, the APC links to the West of Scotland network and the ADSW Adult Protection sub group through the Area Manager Adult Protection.

Actions:

The effectiveness of the Area Development Forums will be monitored by the APC following their re-launch.

Training and Workforce Development:

All aspects of training in adult support and protection from general awareness raising to specific skills-based training for council officers, has continued to be the responsibility of the policy and training sub group. After an inevitable slowdown in training when the previous Area Manager Adult Protection retired, the existing training framework and plan was refreshed in February 2013. A one-off sum of £5,000 was contributed by NHS Highland, and a number of ASP Awareness sessions developed for staff across all areas with this funding.

With the move away from dedicated social work staff with responsibility for training, it was agreed that the most effective way to provide general ASP awareness was to use an external provider. Sixteen sessions were arranged, attended by 232 staff, and the excellent evaluations received meant that this level of training will continue to be provided in this way.

The updating of the social work procedures for adult support and protection and the introduction of new forms to record this work meant that training of social work staff who deal with AP referrals was a priority. Nine full day training sessions were held to roll this

out, with 85 staff attending. The need to ensure that social work staff were updated meant that there was no opportunity to present multi-agency training during this period, although a number of advocates attended the sessions.

Following feedback from the self-evaluation day held in November 2012, it was recognised that effective chairing of adult protection case conferences is crucial to the identification of risk and the development of plans to remove or minimise these. A training day was therefore held for all case conference chairs in February 2013.

Action:

A full training programme was developed for the rest of 2013 and details distributed widely. Some issues were identified with the way that places were booked, reminders sent and records of attendees collated, and ownership of these activities transferred to ASP administration so that detailed records are held. The intention is that when fuller information on attendees is available, the agencies who fail to take up training opportunities will be identified and targeted for specific sessions.

It is hoped that by the start of 2014 a full training programme covering all levels of ASP training will be published on the Argyll and Bute Council website in line with Child Protection.

Workforce Issues

As mentioned above, the four social work staff with specific responsibility for adult protection moved back to general social work posts during 2012. This was to a large extent the result of an increasing recognition that ASP is a core part of the role of all social work staff and that expertise and confidence in ASP processes was increasing in all teams.

Formal Evaluation

The APC held its annual self-evaluation day in November 2012. This followed the success of previous events and was attended by staff from all key agencies. A short report was developed from the feedback received during the day and specific actions undertaken to address issues that were highlighted. These will be reported at the next evaluation day in November 2013 in the format "You said... We did...."

A multi-agency case file audit was done in May 2012 after considerable amounts of planning. Learning points about the way that the audit was organised and planned were disseminated and formed the basis of a second audit in 2013. It was recognised that

issues such as the difficulty in gaining the consent of the adult for an examination of their records, the wide variety of records held and the time-consuming nature of such an audit, make this a complex process. Learning points for the agencies involved were noted but the small number of cases examined made it difficult to draw valid conclusions.

Action:

A second multi-agency case file audit was planned for 2013 and took place in August.

The drawbacks of the multi-agency audit process had been noted and a second audit, internal to social work and examining cases where a decision had been made that the adult was not at risk, was also undertaken. Learning from both pieces of work will be considered when planning future audit activity.

Final Comments

As can be seen from the above information, considerable amounts of work continue to be undertaken by all the agencies involved in adult support and protection across Argyll and Bute. At present the APC is involved in developing its new improvement plan and this, based on evidence from case file audits and the self-evaluation exercises done, will shape the work that is done over the next year.