

Agenda Item 9

Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Arrangements



Falkirk IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee

26 June 2020

Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Arrangements

For Noting

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Falkirk Adult Protection Committee (APC) met on 11 June 2020 and approved local recommendations for ASP arrangements in a Covid-19 context. This context is continuously evolving and is informed by experiences and learning from negotiating ASP arrangements in a complex climate. The report provides an update on the recommendations and work being done.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government has issued two key pieces of guidance which influence local arrangements based on the greatest areas of need as issues emerge during the Covid-19 outbreak. These are below listed and inform this report:
 - Coronavirus (Covid-19): Additional National Adult Support and Protection Guidance for Chief Officers and Adult Protection Committees
 - National Clinical and Practice Guidance for Adult Care Homes in Scotland During Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 1.3 The main areas for recommendation are influenced by an ethos and importance message at leadership level with the below messaging:

“Staff should be mindful of their responsibilities around Adult Support and Protection during this challenging time and if necessary discuss and share with relevant statutory agencies, where they know or believe an adult is at risk of harm. Additional guidance on adult support and protection in response to Covid-19 is available. The aim of this guidance is to support local decisions and the development of local guidance around safe, effective and proportionate adult support and protection activity at this time”.

2. Recommendations

The Clinical and Care Governance Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 note the content of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Over the last 12 weeks the need for more localised specific guidance around the national guidance and recommendations have been in a state of evolution as we learn more about our Covid-19 context and how this impacts our practice and service delivery to our most vulnerable and at risk adults.
- 3.2 This will continue to evolve as our response to the pandemic does. Based on the current context the recommendations approved outline what is necessary to allow timely effective communication, information sharing and risk management for the adults most in need. The recommendations are also holistic and proactive seeking to concentrate efforts to the Third Sector interface where it is thought that effective communication and engagement will be the best strategy to identify hidden harm in Falkirk Communities. Our communication and engagement with adults at risk and their carers continues to be of central importance and this is reflected in recommendations also.

4. Changes to ASP Arrangements in response to Covid-19

- 4.1 The APC has agreed a number of recommendations to strengthen current ASP arrangements and these are now in place and include:
- Staff should be reminded that their decision to submit an adult protection referral is based on their application of the 'adult at risk of harm' criteria commonly known as the '3 point test' and avoid being led by any concept that application of the test is different in a Covid-19 context. Rather they should recognise that Covid-19 may cause physical infirmity for the time that the adult is affected and if they are at risk of another harm and are unable to safeguard this may require ASP referral.
 - ASP operational managers responsible for holding Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD) should liaise with the Falkirk Care Home Focus Group carrying out assurance activity where any ASP referral is received for a resident of a care home. This will allow information sharing and risk assessment across both groups and ensure agreed actions, coordination and avoidance of disjointed or unproductive work. The rationale for these agreed actions will be Covid-19 informed, safe, effective and proportionate.
 - The APC agreed at April Committee that they would suspend responsibility for the Falkirk Early Indicators of Concern Group (EIOC) and that this should sit with Falkirk Care Home Focus Group. The responsibility for current permitted visiting staff to care homes and therefore concern identification and referral routes sit best with the care home group at this time. It is recommended that the EIOC reconvenes into the recovery phase, any revision of membership or terms of reference realised from lessons learned is applied and training/briefing

sessions on EIOC is offered by ASP lead officer to all partner agencies.

- Strong links and partnership working needs to continue between APC and the Third Sector interface responding to adults in need in Falkirk communities to increase chances of hidden harm identification.
- The Community Care Team Manager network should work closely to devise, agree and give clear guidance to frontline staff on what actions should be taken to ensure ASP investigations in locked down premises take place in a Covid-19 informed way when necessary. This guidance should also apply more generally to effective care management review which often prevents harm occurring. Communication tools and methods with adults and their carers both in locked down premises and those subject to adult support and protection plans in the community should also be a focus.

- 4.1 Within Adult services we have become acutely aware of our known most at risk service user groups with a current focus on residents of care homes. It is important that our responsibilities around Adult Support and Protection can work in harmony with and alongside the need to support and guide the independent care home sector.
- 4.2 The ethos of how Council Officer duties are executed under the Act complement this. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic this was a prominent and important stand of Adult Support and Protection practice with all partners committed to having local arrangements which supported the sector. In the main, most care homes, being consistently the highest ASP referrer, used the reporting of concerns as a preventative and supportive tool. This was so much the case that we developed a Threshold Matrix for care homes to encourage them to manage some level of risk 'in-house' and in partnership with care management systems prior to ASP referrals for individual residents.
- 4.3 The more recent development of the Early Indicators of Concern (EIOC) Group has aimed to look at systemic, collective indicators in care homes focussed on open dialogue and preventative work. This framework has been shared with partnership staff visiting care homes currently. Nursing colleagues have provided positive feedback on the usefulness of the EIOC Framework.
- 4.4 Due to the level of Council Officer activity in this sector the locality teams are very experienced in this area of practice. The level of activity in the sector also informs Falkirk's Adult Support and Protection Procedures where managers are directed to include the Care Inspectorate in IRD discussions.
- 4.5 The background to APC interface with the Third Sector has been something that committee has been working really hard over late 2019/early 2020 to strengthen. What the Covid-19 pandemic has evidenced is that this is such an important link with the level of volunteer work and coordination to support

vulnerable adults and adults at risk in Falkirk communities. APC in partnership with Child Protection Committee have printed 3,000 leaflets to raise awareness of Child protection and Adult protection in communities. Volunteers coordinated by CVS Falkirk are distributing these in our communities in food bank deliveries, pharmacy deliveries and during other vital volunteer support visits. We hope to continue to harness this relationship and improve awareness of adult protection which is vital as individuals and adults themselves still account for the lowest referral rate both locally and nationally.

- 4.6 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic APC had devised an APC directory to allow for ease of communication between public agency partners which was well received and valued. The next step to this in a Covid-19 context is to issue wallet size Adult Protection '3 point test' prompts for all agencies coming into contact and delivering services to adults.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In conclusion it is envisaged that the recommendations underpinned by effective leadership in public protection will support practitioners and operational managers to negotiate their adult support and protection responsibilities with confidence in a Covid-19 context. This confidence will be realised from knowledge that there is effective coordination and collaboration at leadership level guided by safe, effective and proportionate adult support and protection activity at this time.

Resource Implications

The resource requirements arising from the recommendations will be met by the ASP budget managed by Lead Officer.

Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities

These ASP arrangements contribute to the following IJB outcomes: Safe, Experience and Strong Sustainable Communities. The IJB priorities are all indicated in this work including enabled communities and workforce, carer support, early intervention and prevention and digital solutions.

Legal & Risk Implications

These recommendations are driven by legal ASP duties for public bodies and effective risk assessment and management.

Consultation

These arrangements will be shared with both Adult Protection Committee and Chief Officers Group. In addition the Communication and Engagement Sub Group of Adult Protection Committee will consult with Falkirk Carers Centre on necessary areas and also the Third Sector interface.

Equalities Assessment

All ASP arrangements have at their core and are underpinned by the principles of the act. Actions under the act including strategic action are

aimed at reducing inequalities and ensuring adults who are less able to protect themselves, property and other interests are supported and protected to have the best possible outcomes.

6. Report Author

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7. List of Background Papers

7.1 n/a

8. Appendices

Appendix 1:	None
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