

Orkney Public Protection Committee
Adult Support and Protection
Biennial Report 2024-2026

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ORKNEY PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

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Introduction

Partnership work remains a cornerstone for the delivery of Adult Support and Protection. The oversight provided by the Orkney Public Protection Committees continues to provide the platform for partner services and agencies to contribute to the improvements in the delivery of protection services, with the active involvement of Health, Police and voluntary sector colleagues working with Orkney Islands Council and Social Work and care staff. Everyone has a part to play in maintaining safety for adults in Orkney. This partnership work is evident in the ASP Joint Inspection Progress Review of 2025. Services and agencies have seen a shift to more co-design and delivery than ever before, capturing the voice of lived experience in innovative ways shared between our services and partner agencies.

I am therefore pleased to introduce the Orkney Adult Protection Biennial Report 2024-26 and my thanks to colleagues in the Partnership for their support. The Adult Protection services provided by Orkney were subject to the previously mentioned ASP Joint Inspection Progress Review during the period of this review. We were delighted to see that all areas for improvement showed significant improvement, a real testament to the hard work and efforts of our colleagues. This said, we acknowledge improvement is a continuous process, and we continue to progress in our efforts to improve our services for the benefit of all those we support. Staff remain engaged and are passionate about our development. Their engagement and efforts continue to improve how we deliver services and for this I offer my sincere thanks.

Since the last Biennial Report there has been a change to the Orkney Public Protection Committee Independent Chair role, as I took on the role in 2025, from my predecessor Alex Davidson. The Public Protection Lead Officer and Public Protection Learning and Development Officer roles have continued to support strategic developments and provided additional capacity and support to our collective services. The Service Manager for Adult and Learning Disability Social Work has continued to enable a wide range of developments across our services which are demonstrated throughout this report. My thanks are due to them, to colleagues in our partner services and agencies and to our committee members.

Ross Drummond, Independent Chair of the Orkney Adult Protection Committee – August 2026

Background

The Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland) 2007 aims to protect 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. The Act places duties on councils and other organisations to investigate and, where necessary, to act to reduce the harm or risk of harm.

Section 46 of the Act requires the Convenors of Adult Protection Committees to produce a biennial report analysing, reviewing, and commenting on APC functions and activities in the preceding two years, and this report reflects activities and actions in Orkney, led by the Public Protection Committee, with oversight by our Chief Officers' Group (COG).

Activity in Orkney has been driven by a period of improvement, building upon service reflections discussed in the previous report. The ASP Inspection Progress Review provided both assurance that services were on the right track and supported us in confirming areas of particular focus to build upon the work of previous years. This has seen a variety of new papers brought to the Committee which support consideration of lived experience and the impact our services are having to the lives of those we support.

The current Adult Social Work service staffing has been outlined on the following page.

The work of the combined Orkney Public Protection Committee (Child and Adult Protection) is overseen by the Chief Officers' Group (COG) who continue to provide leadership, scrutiny, support and guidance to public protection in Orkney.

These two multi-agency fora, include representation from the Local Authority, NHS Orkney, Police Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, and Third Sector organisations, and provides leadership and direction to the public protection agenda.

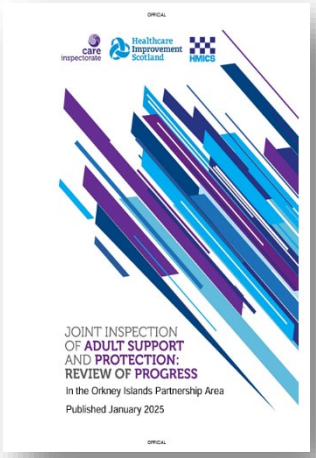
***Please note, Orkney is Scotland's Smallest Local Authority. Within this report, numbers have been deliberately supressed to protect the identities and confidentiality of those whom we support. This means, some tables will be shown without axes, and some date is recorded as <5 to ensure we protect identities and confidentiality to the best of our abilities.**

Adult Support and Protection Inspection and Audit



Between 31st October 2022 and 11th April 2023 Adult Support and Protection Services underwent a Joint Inspection process with the Care Inspectorate, Health Improvement Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Published on the 11th of April 2023, the Inspection saw analysis of supporting documentation and evidence, and a survey to 172 staff across the partnership. The Inspection Report showed many areas of strength but highlighted several areas of required improvement which formed the basis of improvement planning and activity from 2023 until the Inspection Progress Review from October 2024 to the publication of the Report in January 2025.

The findings of the Joint Inspectorates Progress Review was testament to the work of services and agencies between inspection periods. Orkney saw significant improvement gradings for all areas [shown on page 6] with specific highlights in relation to Inter-agency working, communication and involvement of lived experience, supporting the voice of our service users. The Care Inspectorate referred to the excellent progress made, highlighting a real shift with Adult Support and Protection clearly prioritised across our partnership.



With thanks to the efforts of our staff and partners we note the excellent work today. Notably, staff have not lost sight of further improvements required. There remain areas of expected progress for future visits which include:

- Full alignment with ASP Code of Practice – this means fuller alignment with changed terminology within interagency guidance and processes.
- Greater consistency in meetings attendance including colleagues such as police and health
- Further strengthening of chronology practice was required, this included a need for more robust recording and inclusion of broader life contexts
- Enhancement of available health staff to support as second worker during investigations was also noted as a desired improvement

Overview of Progress from the 2025 Progression Review

	Priority areas for improvement from Phase 1 in April 2023	Progress	Progress review findings in January 2025
1	Strategic leaders should ensure the delivery of competent and effective adult support and protection key processes for all adults at risk of harm in line with their statutory responsibilities.		Significant progress made.
2	Risk assessment, chronologies, investigations, and protection planning all require immediate improvement.		Significant progress made.
3	Change and improvement following the independently commissioned review by the partnership in 2021 needs to be accelerated. Adult support and protection should be a critical improvement priority for strategic leaders across the partnership.		Significant progress made.
4	The partnership's strategic oversight of progress should be strengthened. Effective governance and quality assurance arrangements are needed to support improvements in practice.		Significant progress made.
5	The involvement of adults at risk of harm at all stages of the adult support and protection process should be improved.		Significant progress made.
6	Strategic planning and decision-making should be informed by the lived experience of adults at risk of harm and their unpaid carers.		Significant progress made.
	Significant progress	Some progress	Minimal progress

Adult Support and Protection Audits

Internal audits have become an integral part of scrutiny and measurement of improvement / development in recent years.

Audit has built upon a practice of regular reporting provided at set periods to the Adult Protection Committee; supporting quality assurance, quality discussions and identification for areas of practice improvements.

The approach to Audit has been split into 3 distinct stands of work and are used to triangulate the information and gain a better understanding of service needs for professionals, those supported and carers, power of attorney and guardians.

Case File Audit	Surveys	"Voice of" Reporting
Case file audits were undertaken at intervals of 6 months with audit findings presented to the Adult Support and Protection subcommittee. This has provided a degree of oversight and assurance of measured continuous improvement, insight into areas which require focus of either celebration or development and	Use of surveys has become a regular practice across Adult Social Work. This has allowed services to gather the views not only of our teams but also of our partners and most importantly those we support. This approach has enabled services to see the impact of services provided and identify specific areas of improvement.	"Voice of" reporting became a regular process through our ASP Committee. These reports gave professionals and partners an insight to how the individuals and families we support felt about our processes. This process has developed now seeking greater support from Advocacy services. Reports have a section from families or persons and a reflection of the experience from the service.
Headlines	**Headlines**	**Headlines**
Audit findings have shown: • No one was left at risk of harm • Screening was effective and prompt • Risk assessments were improving • Broader use of chronologies seen • Better engagement with Advocacy • Recording was continuously improving	135 Case Conference surveys were completed by people we support, Carers, families and staff. They showed: • Staff and individuals feel the ASP processes are working well • Everyone felt they were treated with respect and able to have their say • Everyone felt they were listened to	3 "Voice of" reports have been provided to date. All shared positive experiences and changes and generate honest and open discussions regarding the supports that are provided. These reports are triangulated with audit and survey work to ensure partners reflect upon all voices in our safeguarding systems.

Key Priorities for 2026-2028



With a new Independent Chair (Convenor) appointed, one of the key priorities is a full review of the current Public Protection Arrangements in Orkney. This review will determine any required changes to the structure or recommendations of change required to the working of the OPPC. It is expected that a review of the Terms of Reference, attendance and any restructure will strengthen the partnerships alignment to both National Guidance and Direction, creating fuller alignment to the national Public Protection diagram as shown.

Other Key Priorities include:



Increasing Understanding, Awareness and Support through Communication

Communication will become more regular and present in our communities. We recognise that communicating in meaningful ways with those we support and those who provide support will aid our services and agencies to enhance understanding and better meet the needs of our vulnerable adults.

This will see improvements to web spaces and resources made available to professionals, those we support and their carers/families. Planned changes include easy read documents and use of videos or animation to provide inclusive supports communicating in more meaningful ways.

Continued Improvement following Progress Review

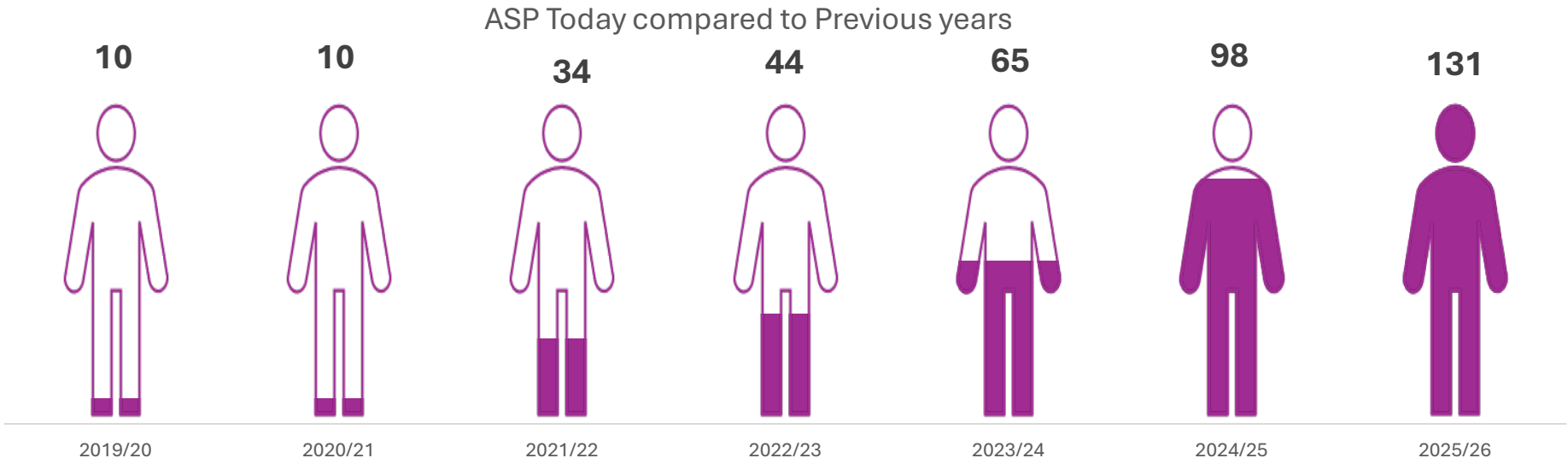
The Joint Inspection Progress Review (January 2025) as described above showed us we were on the right track to making lasting and meaningful improvements. The Partnership has taken time to review the findings of our colleagues and as a priority will review the Adult Support and Protection Improvement Plan 2026-2028.

One area of greater alignment is in the form of close connectivity to A Quality Improvement Framework for Adult Support and Protection (Care Inspectorate, October 2024). A direct ask from the Progress Review, alignment to this Quality Improvement Framework will support our partnership to focus improvements, understanding impact and providing clarity on desired outcomes linked to metrics which support quality improvement and change in our communities.



Data and Analysis

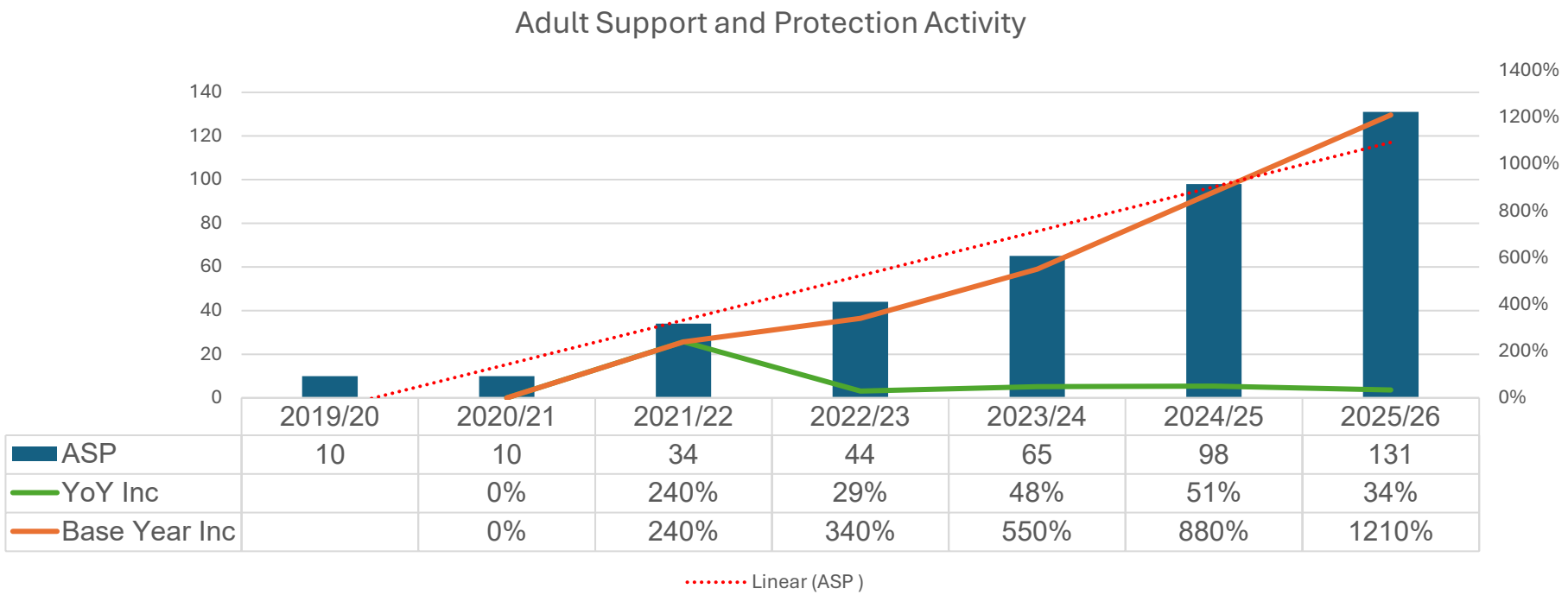
Data recording has become increasingly robust, as seen in auditing activities. This has increased data reporting abilities and supported understanding of client demographics and areas of focus in relation to the forms of harm seen in our community. This year a decade of data has been available to our committees; some of which is within this report showing the impact of awareness raising activities and support provided to our community. Awareness of Adult Support and Protection is high, and support is consistent with strong partnership working. Each year has seen growth in the volume of referrals, a pattern continued in this report.



Due to the small population of Orkney, the reporting of small numbers make it possible to identify individuals. To reduce this risk, potentially identifiable figures have been removed from the reporting of data analysis, replaced with a value of "<5" throughout this report.

ASP referrals have increased considerably since 2019 but with marked increase from 2020/21 following review of practice. The Adult Social Work Team continues to be proactive through the use of "ASP Bitesized" Training. ASP awareness raising is supported through social media channels and proactive working within the partnership; this has resulted in increased awareness of ASP and more partners referring than in previous years.

These sustained efforts alongside a distinct focus upon Adult Support and Protection (following inspection) see activity in the area increasing significantly. Even between biennial reporting, it is shown Adult Support and Protection Activity has doubled to a high of 131 in 2025/26.-

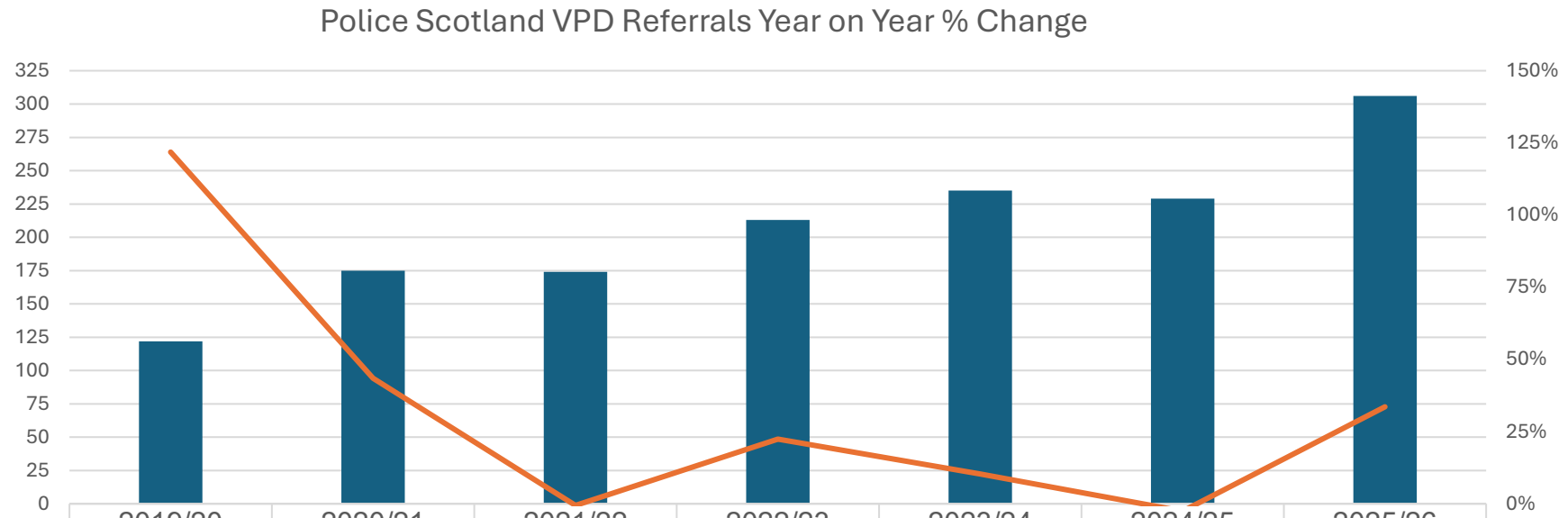


	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
ASP	10	10	34	44	65	98	131
YoY Inc		0%	240%	29%	48%	51%	34%
Base Year Inc		0%	240%	340%	550%	880%	1210%

Excluding years 2021/22 as a year of exponential growth severices continue to see an average increase in activity demands of 40% year on year.

The number of referrals received by the service are now **13 times greater** than in 2019/20.

Over the recorded period, 10 adults per year presented a realative baseline for activity.



	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
VPDs	122	175	174	213	235	229	306
Year/Year	122%	43%	-1%	22%	10%	-3%	34%

Vulnerable Person Database (VPD) continue to robustly report and escalate risks to Social Work services from. Services have experienced an average yearly increase 18% on the numbers of VPD's received when excluding 2019/20 where the largest increase was noted in recent years.

Every VPD is discussed in a tripartite meeting, held every week. Notably, there can be instances where full partnership attendance is challenging, however services are working together to seek solutions to remove barriers and ensure consistent attendance at this meeting. Within this multiagency forum, the 3 point criteria is considered for every VPD which has been received. This ensures quality of assessment for the VPD's received and allows conversations regarding risk to occur collectiviley. Such an increase in VPD's in recent years has applied significant additional time pressures upon our Partnership Services.

Notably, VPD's are sent from Police in Orkney to the Highlands and Islands Police Concern Hub in Inverness. These concerns are then processed and sent to Adult Social Work services in Orkney. The delay, can see an ASP referral received from another source regarding the same concern before the VPD returns to services in Orkney, this has meant Police ASP referrals have remained at 0 since 2023/24.

VPD's are a form of Police Reporting to Social Work services.

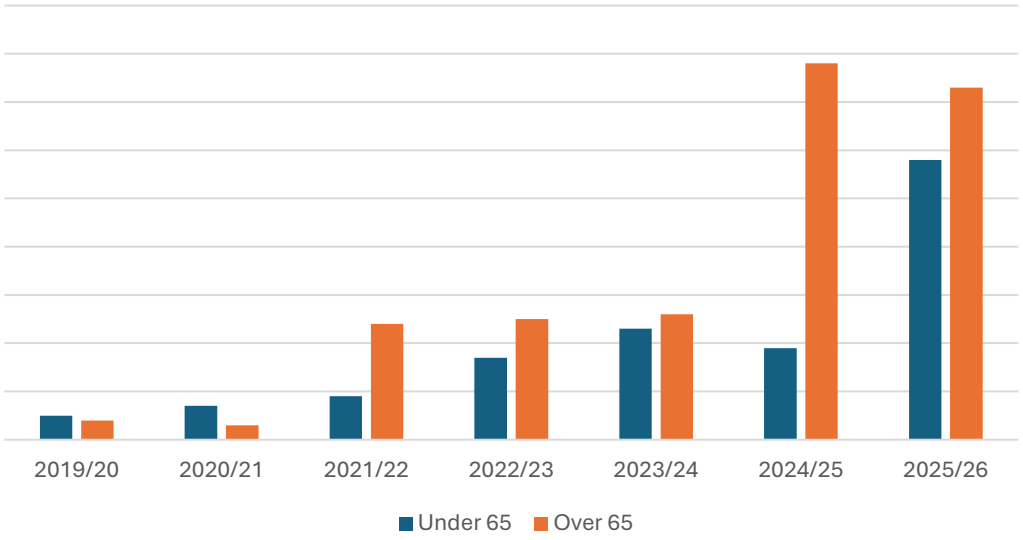
Primary Source Referral	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Anonymous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Care at home provider	-	-	<5	6	<5	5	15
Care Home	-	-	<5	5	17	24	15
Care Inspectorate	-	-	<5	-	<5	-	7
Community Health Services	-	-	-	<5	<5	16	8
Financial institution	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Friend, relative or neighbour (who is not an unpaid carer)	-	-	-	-	<5	<5	<5
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	-	-	<5	-	<5	<5
Mental Health Services – Hospital and Community	-	-	<5	<5	5	-	-
Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland	-	-	-	<5	-	-	-
NHS 24	-	-	-	<5	<5	<5	21
NHS Primary Care	-	-	-	-	<5	9	<5
NHS Inpatient Services - Inc A&E	-	-	<5	<5	<5	-	<5
NHS Outpatient Services	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
NHS Specialist Drug and Alcohol Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office of the Public Guardian	-	-	-	<5	-	-	-
Other (please specify below)	-	-	-	-	<5	<5	-
Other Child Protection agencies (eg Children's Reporter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other health (eg public health, private healthcare, prison healthcare)	-	-	-	-	-	-	<5
Other local authority service (internal) excluding social work	-	-	-	-	-	<5	6
Out of region social work / other (external) local authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	<5
Another member of the public (not covered by 20 or 21)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Police Scotland	8	10	<5	5	-	-	-
Scottish Ambulance Service	-	-	-	-	-	<5	6
Scottish Fire and Rescue	-	-	-	<5	<5	8	9
Scottish Prison Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self (adult at risk)	-	-	-	-	<5	-	-
Social Work - Adults (including MHOs)	<5	-	11	9	17	18	17
Social work - Children and Families	-	-	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Third sector organisation (not covered by the above)	-	-	<5	5	6	7	10
Unpaid carer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

In recent years, Adult Social Work have supported services through “Bite-sized” training sessions. These short sessions have aimed to support staff in a variety of community settings to better understand Adult Support and Proteciton in Scotland and what supports are available locally for people within our community. In depth in person training was delivered by the Adult Social Work Service Manager and Team Manager to all community care and social care settings and Age Scotland Orkney over the last 2 years. These sessions lasted 3 hours which provided additional context and understanding regarding Adult Support and Protection.

Referral sources continue to grow with a wider array of services and agencies sharing referrals on a more regular basis. The most significant increase in referal sources remain: **Care Homes, Care at Home** and **Third Sector Services.**

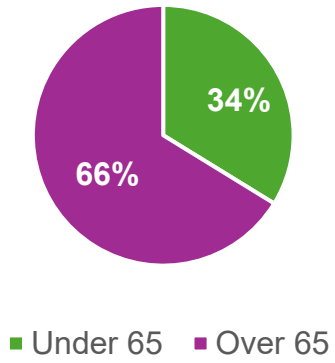
Much of the increases have been accredited to the ASP Bite-sized sessions, in addition Adults Social Work continue to engage with the local workforce, community and media around national awareness raising events. NHS 24 has also seen a notable increase, however the rationale for the increase in referrals from NHS 24 is currently unknown.

Generally, there exists a perception that Adult Support and Protection primarily supports the elderly and those of retirement age. Considering the data we have available, we continued to track the ages of those we support into recent years, as with previous reporting we can advise the distribution of age is closer than the perception.

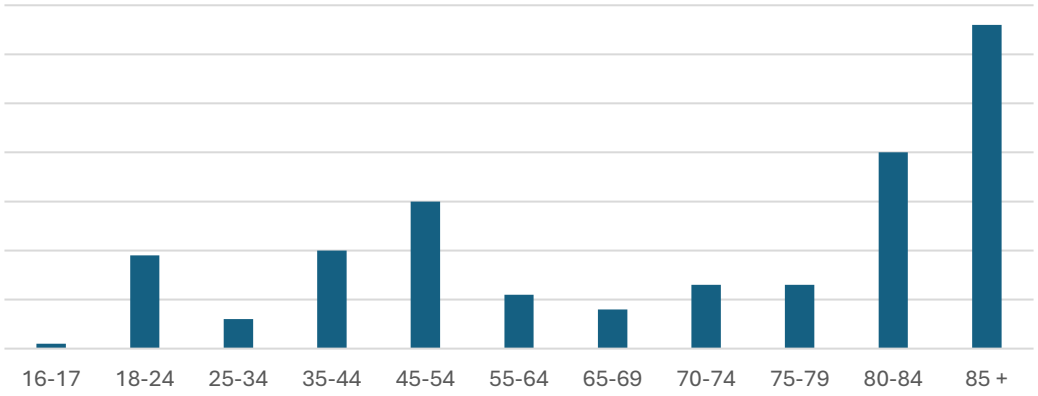


The ages of those who we support has typically been of equal proportions, even with a significant increase in the number of referrals received those ages remain close with both experiencing a sharp increase since the previous report. Over 2024/25 and 2025/26 referrals were received for 77 people younger than 65 and 151 for those aged 65 and over, the biggest differential in age occurring in 2024/25 accounting for the difference before the gap closed again in 2025/26.

% of Referrals - Under & Over age 65



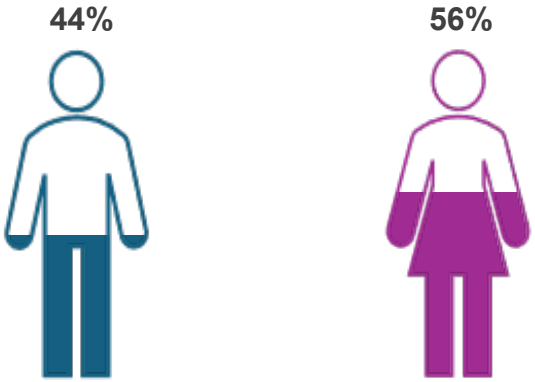
National Minum data Set Age Categories 2024-2026



Of the referrals received 66% were for people aged over the age of 65 compared to 34% being under 65 and of working age. Recent years have indicated a significant increase in the needs of our elderly persons compared to previous years although those under 65 continued to see an increase in demand. This shows that overall, needs are increasing for all adults in our community regardless of their age.

We also considered gender as part of the analysis. In the previous report it was highlighted that women were at greater risk of needing support. Although this remains the case, there has been in an increase in the percentage of men who required support. Notably, both men and women have seen an increase of need when considering actual numbers of referrals which have increased in recent years.

Gender % (2024-2026)



Previous 2 Year Totals

Gender	2022-24	2024-26	Difference
Male	43	99	↑ 56
Female	64	127	↑ 63
Total	107	228	↑ 119

To date the greatest increases, remain in Dementia, Learning Disability and Infirmity. Notably, Mental Health (excluding Dementia) has also increased significantly, almost doubling since the previous report. Use of “other” to record continues to gradually reduce, records of others account for less than 1% of data which has significantly improved our understanding of presenting client groups.

Primary Client Group	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Autism / Autism Spectrum	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Learning disability	-	-	<5	8	15	11	29
Dementia	<5	<5	6	13	19	38	36
Substance misuse/addiction	<5	8	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Mental Health (excl. dementia)	<5	-	6	7	8	7	15
Infirmity/frailty due to age	<5	-	8	9	19	26	28
Physical Disability	-	-	-	-	<5	<5	7
Other	-	-	6	<5	-	<5	<5

Analysis was conducted to discover any notable differences in client groups for both age and gender.

Some identified areas included:

- Learning Difficulties and in instances where Mental Health (Excluding Dementia) increased significantly
- Dementia & Age-related frailty were both significantly higher in women over the age of 65 when compared to men.
- There was also a recognisable increase in Physical Disability concerns.
    - *Male clients also outnumbered female clients with a learning disability with a rate of approximately 4:1.*

Although identified as changes, given the small sample size this cannot be determined as significant unless sustained in future years.

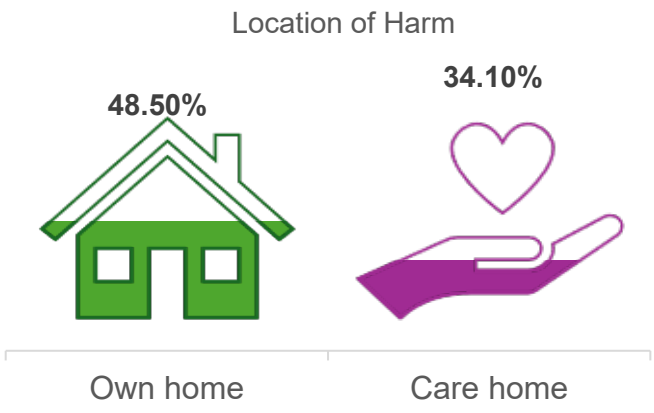
Principle Harm Type	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Physical harm	-	-	8	14	21	27	65
Self-harm	<5	<5	7	5	6	5	10
Self-Neglect	-	-	-	-	-	9	<5
Psychological harm	-	-	<5	<5	9	<5	9
Emotional Harm	-	-	<5	<5	9	-	-
Risk to others	-	-	<5	-	-	-	-
Domestic abuse	-	-	-	<5	<5	<5	<5
Mental Health	-	-	-	<5	-	-	-
Dementia	-	-	-	<5	-	-	-
Financial or Material harm	-	<5	6	<5	10	8	<5
Sexual harm	-	-	-	-	10	5	6
Neglect and Acts of Omission	-	<5	5	8	<5	27	24
Human Trafficking/ or Exploitation	-	-	-	-	-	-	<5
Other	6	5	<5	8	<5	<5	6

Analysis upon principal harm was unable to draw any conclusive trends when considering age and gender. Figures show significant increase in Physical Harm, Neglect and Acts of Omission and notably Self-Harm has increased in recent years; although this followed a slight reduction from instances in 2021/22. The periods of increase occurred at times where localised promotion and awareness activity was undertaken; this indicates success in communication and engagement strategies in recent years.

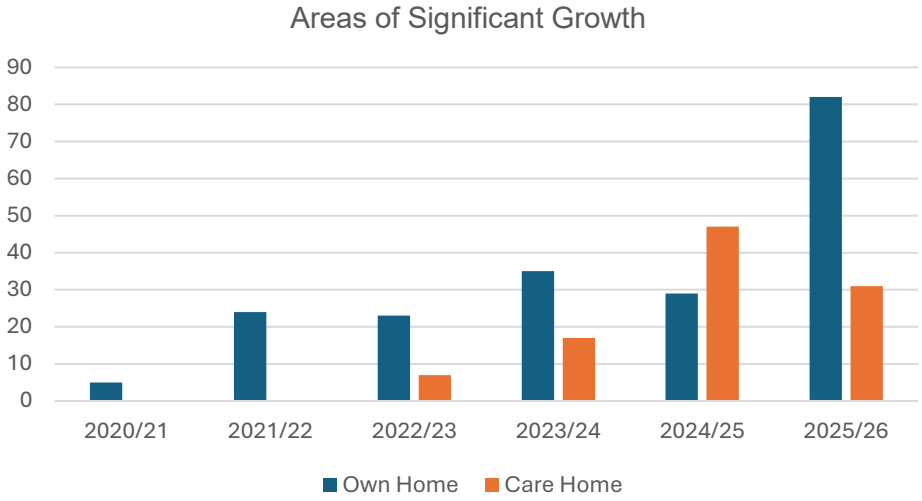
We recognise that there has been a sustained prevalence of Financial Harm over the period, additionally, risk of Sexual Harm has increased. We believe; increased awareness of the forms of Harm in Adult Support and Protection has influenced a wider array of harm types being identified.

Location of harm	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Care home	-	-	<5	7	17	47	31
Day Centre	-	-	-	-	<5	-	-
NHS facility	-	<5	<5	<5	<5	-	<5
Other private address	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	6	-
Own home	<5	5	24	23	35	29	82
Public place	<5	-	<5	-	<5	-	<5
Sheltered Housing or other supported accommodation	-	-	<5	9	5	7	13
Other	-	-	<5	<5	-	-	-
Location of Harm Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	<5	<5

Location of harm is a recording of where harm occurs. The two most common areas harm is recorded as occurring were in Own Home and within Care Homes accounting for 83% (82.5%) of all locations of harm recorded.



Previously 64.84% of harm had occurred in the Homes of vulnerable adults and 18% in Care Homes. Now 48.5% and 34.1%. We recognise the change in recent years which can be understood as heavily impacted by 2 Large Scale Investigations discussed later within this report.



Outcomes, Achievements and Service Improvements

Partnership Working

Services continue to intuitively learn and development. As data has shown, understanding and prominence of Adult Support and Protection in our community has grown significantly, this has led to increased reporting of concerns for vulnerable adults which are overseen by our Adult Social Work and Partnership Services.

Increased reporting increases activity between our services and agencies, this allows relationships to deepened and enhances partnership working between services with more instances of contact and organised safety planning taking place, increasing understanding and improving how we co-ordinate support for vulnerable adults.





Large Scale Investigations (LSIs)

Two Large Scale Investigations have taken place during the reporting period. Large Scale Investigations are a structured, multi-agency adult protection process which aims to understand and prevent harm from occurring across care and community settings. Usually these occur where several adults may be placed at risk of harm and are used to support services and agencies to improve and develop practice.

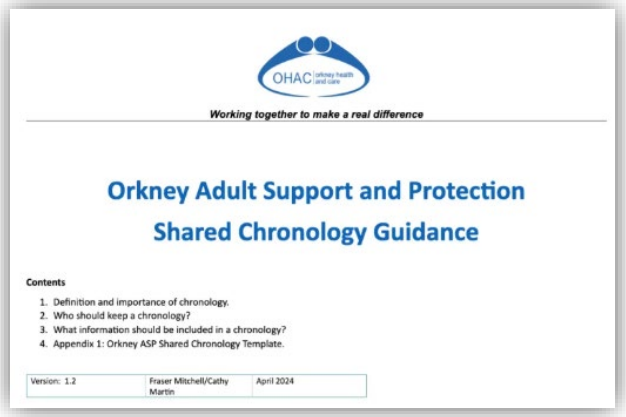
In both instances, the multiagency arrangements worked as planned, reviews were undertaken with collaborative approaches to learning and improvement. This saw a review of practices in each setting with services showing improvement in processes, practice and areas such as data collection, audit and assurance.

The experiences evidenced the effectiveness of our services and ensured partners collectively worked together to keep vulnerable adults safe whilst capturing and enacting on learnings ascertained from reviews. The process will be reviewed in light of national guidance and following assessment of learnings from local LSI experiences.

Improvements to Guidance and Procedures

Chronologies

Chronologies are an area of complex change across Scotland; there is more emphasis on partnership working and services and agencies are continually looking for more intuitive ways to work closer with vulnerable adults and those who care for and support them. In November 2025, The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) undertook research to better understand the position of chronology practice across Scotland. Orkney was identified as an example of excellent chronology practice guidance and has been published upon the IRISS website. This is a great success for services and agencies and an example of how work done locally has helped to shape national processes to emerging practice developments across Scotland.


OHAC

Working together to make a real difference

Orkney Adult Support and Protection

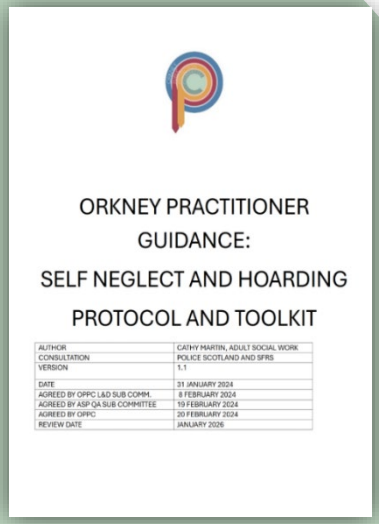
Shared Chronology Guidance

Contents

1. Definition and importance of chronology.
2. Who should keep a chronology?
3. What information should be included in a chronology?
4. Appendix 1: Orkney ASP Shared Chronology Template.

Version: 1.2	Fraser Mitchell/Cathy Martin	April 2024

Hoarding and Self Neglect


ORKNEY PRACTITIONER GUIDANCE:

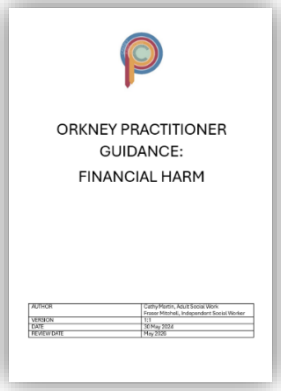
SELF NEGLECT AND HOARDING PROTOCOL AND TOOLKIT

AUTHOR	CATHY MARTIN, ADULT SOCIAL WORK
CONSULTATION	POLICE SCOTLAND AND SFRS
VERSION	1.1
DATE	31 JANUARY 2024
AGREED BY OPPC L&D SUB COMM.	8 FEBRUARY 2024
AGREED BY ASP QA SUB COMMITTEE	19 FEBRUARY 2024
AGREED BY OPPC	20 FEBRUARY 2024
REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2026

Similarly, IRISS also reviewed new guidance produced in Orkney which was also held in the same high regard. Orkney developed Self Neglect and Hoarding Protocols which were issued across our partnership to support understanding of topics. This guidance has aided other Council Services as well as organisations such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to identify warning signs and raise concerns, this supports both early intervention and identification and has led to safer outcomes for vulnerable adults in our area.

Financial Harm

Financial Harm was also identified as an area for development. In September 2024 Orkney produced the first version of financial harm guidance for sharing amongst our partnership. As with other guidance this document was support by professional areas such as the Office of the Public Guardian and outlined aspects such as “What is Financial Harm?” how to identify this form of harm, risk factors and steps that could be taken to prevent Financial Harm from occurring. Helpfully, the guidance also outlines the roles and responsibilities of agencies under the ASP (Scotland) 2007 act, enhancing understanding and supporting collaborative working.

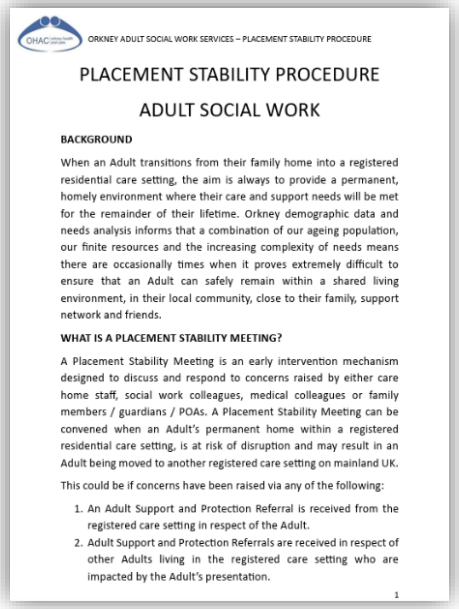

ORKNEY PRACTITIONER GUIDANCE:

FINANCIAL HARM

Placement Stability

Placement Stability Procedures have also been produced. When an adult transitions from their family home into a registered residential care setting, the aim is always to provide a permanent homely environment where their care and support needs will be met for the remainder of their lifetime. Occasionally, there may be times where the transition is exceptionally difficult, especially as the demographic of Orkney is aging and presenting with more complex needs.

Placement Stability Procedures have supported staff in our residential settings to have a forum to discuss concerns or issues at an early stage, this provides opportunity for co-ordinated planning and additional supports to be put in place to prevent, as far as possible, the need for out of area placement. Supporting adults to work towards stability when challenges arise and ensuring that they can live safely within a shared living environment, close to their families, support networks and friends.



ORKNEY ADULT SOCIAL WORK SERVICES – PLACEMENT STABILITY PROCEDURE

PLACEMENT STABILITY PROCEDURE

ADULT SOCIAL WORK

BACKGROUND

When an Adult transitions from their family home into a registered residential care setting, the aim is always to provide a permanent, homely environment where their care and support needs will be met for the remainder of their lifetime. Orkney demographic data and needs analysis informs that a combination of our ageing population, our finite resources and the increasing complexity of needs means there are occasionally times when it proves extremely difficult to ensure that an Adult can safely remain within a shared living environment, in their local community, close to their family, support network and friends.

WHAT IS A PLACEMENT STABILITY MEETING?

A Placement Stability Meeting is an early intervention mechanism designed to discuss and respond to concerns raised by either care home staff, social work colleagues, medical colleagues or family members / guardians / POAs. A Placement Stability Meeting can be convened when an Adult's permanent home within a registered residential care setting, is at risk of disruption and may result in an Adult being moved to another registered care setting on mainland UK.

This could be if concerns have been raised via any of the following:

1. An Adult Support and Protection Referral is received from the registered care setting in respect of the Adult.
2. Adult Support and Protection Referrals are received in respect of other Adults living in the registered care setting who are impacted by the Adult's presentation.

1

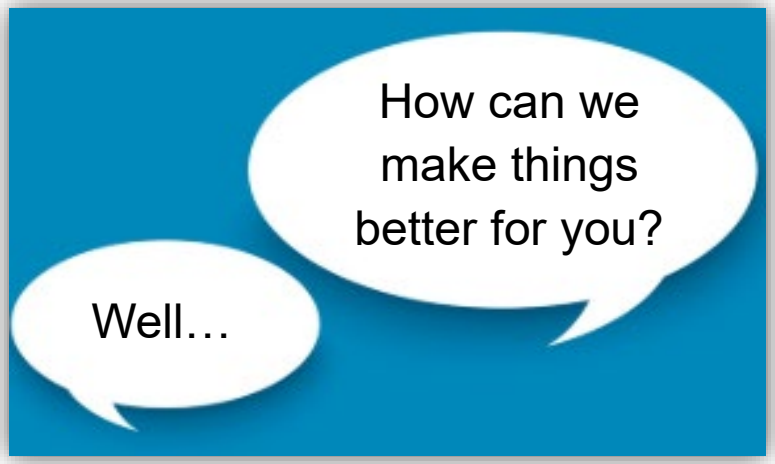


Documents under Development

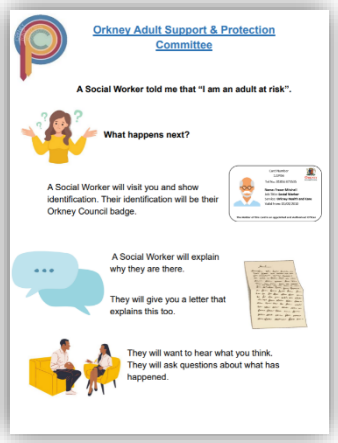
We continue to learn and develop collectively, both locally and nationally ensuring we are engaged with national learning and outcomes from other review processes. This means we can intuitively identify gaps based on shared experiences across Scotland. Gaps identified in national Guidance are supported through partnership working with groups such as the Social Work Scotland Adult Support and Protection Network. This has supported services to stay focused on emerging challenges and trends. One such trend being addressed in the coming year includes guidance for "How to Keep Adults Safe Online". This document is planned to be launched around either Safer Internet Day or Adult Support and Protection Day 2026.

Communicating with Staff, Vulnerable Adults and Carers

One area we have focused on in recent years is closing the loop when it comes to feedback. To do this we considered all the ways we communicate with partners, vulnerable groups and people and those providing care and support. We aim to communicate with people in ways that are meaningful to them, talking their language and ensuring communications are accessible where needed. We recognise that the Voice of those we support is central to creating inclusive communications and seek feedback from those with lived experience wherever possible.



Easy Read Documents



Easy Read Documents are simplified versions of documents we all find complex. They aim to present information in helpful, accessible ways.

In Orkney we increasingly work to include easy read documents as a core part of development in partnership with Third Sector colleagues. Ensuring we find ways to simplify messaging for vulnerable people we support; to help them understand how help is provided.

Use of Video and Animation



We understand communication needs come in all shapes and forms. Another area of development is use of video and animation to help explain complex topics which could be revisited.

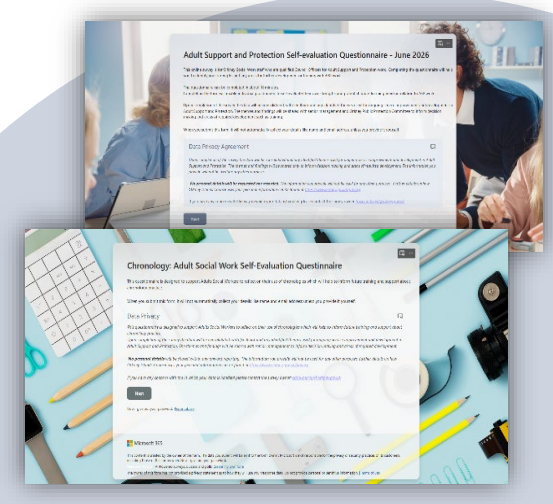
Some animations being developed included explanatory notes on Case Conferences and ASP processes and plans to create video resources explaining Power of Attorney and Adults with Incapacity

Seeking Feedback and Enhancing the Voices of Staff and those we Support



The voices of our Staff and the vulnerable adults we support has been given a priority focus. We have increased our feedback mechanisms through surveys and interviews with advocacy. This feedback has enhanced voices and improved our processes and those with lived experience to contribute towards strategic planning and developments.

This change has allowed services to enhance guidance to better meet the needs of those we support and made improvements to processes such as Case Conferences through regular reporting at our committees.



Training, Learning and Development

Procedures and guidance have been revised and updated. This has supported a culture of continuous improvement and further development to our audits of practice which have played an integral role in the most recent years. We have seen training and engagement take place, with ongoing regular reporting to the Public Protection Partnerships and Chief Officers Group. Examples included:

1. The Committee focused upon Audit, Self Evaluation and Voice of the Client over the last 2 years. This has supported planed service improvements using the experiences of those we support and was further supported by local advocacy services.

2. Specific training was provided to Council Officers, providing several new Council Officers within the Adult Support and Protection Service. This supported the longevity and sustainability of Council Officer Support in Orkney. – There are now 14 Council Officer Trained Social Workers, across several services.

3. The Service have continued to host training sessions with our care providers as “ASP Bitesized” sessions. Training has been delivered to all of our primary care facilities as well as to service providers who require a knowledge of ASP including third sector colleagues. The training has been popular and continues to develop as time progresses.

4. Individual work with staff has been followed up with further Case File Auditing. Results from a further four case files audits have provided important learnings which have been incorporated within the Adult Support and Protection Service Improvement Plan. Audits have shown positive developments in Service mirroring findings of the progression review.

5. Further work has revised procedures, including reference to the new Codes of Practice (2022) and in developing appropriate materials and inputs. This has included a Placement Stability Procedure for Adult Social Work in Care Homes, Online Safety Guidance and plans to improve our Large-Scale Investigation Guidance due over 2026/27.

6. Services are considering a Case Conference Standards document, this document would aim to ensure standards at agreed for all case conferences regarding attendance, participation information sharing and decision making.

7. Financial Harm protocols were successfully published at year end 2024, following publication of national guidance. The Office of the Public Guardian have supported services by attending Team meetings to discuss their powers regarding investigations of Power of Attorney. Once published the service plan to run Financial Harm training which will further support embedding of the protocols.

8. The Partnership has actively sought feedback from those involved in the service since early 2024. This has resulted in several feedback papers being provided to the OPPC discussing feedback directly from those we support and professionals who have been involved in the process. Committee will continue to develop user feedback with such papers now common practice.

Engagement, Involvement and Communication



The Public Protection Committee has undergone a period of review and reflection, this considered attendance, structure, quality of papers, and strategic direction. The review was shared with our Chief Officers Group (COG) in September 2026 and will lead to significant changes within the structures. Implementation of the new model will see a streamlined Committee structure and greater alignment to the National Public Protection diagram. This will welcome additional Partnerships into the Chief Officers Group (COG) scope and is hoped will see increased partnership working and participation with capacity returning through a new streamlined system.

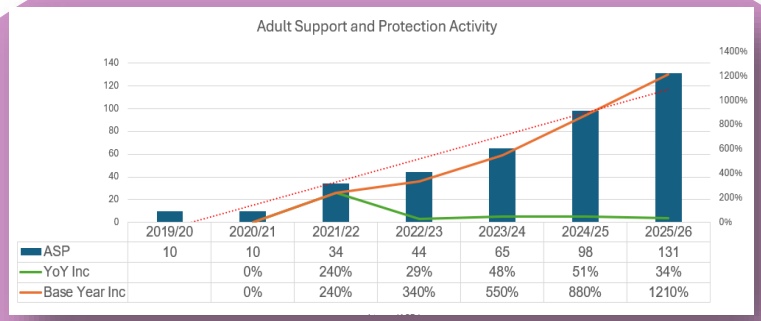
Changes were supported by engagement with our partners. Senior leaders were consulted following Public Protection Committee invitees being surveyed to discover what was working well, what could be improved and to seek any suggestions of change which partners felt would be beneficial.

Other notable areas have been the continuation of “Voice of” reporting; this is seen as a core strength of the Adult Support and Protection Committee and Adult Social Work Services. Efforts continue to improve the process which are being supported by additional advocacy input. Feedback following Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences has also been improved, following the release of guidance for Collecting feedback from service users and staff. This guidance was reviewed and amendments were made to surveys and communications we use to gather feedback from all involved in Adult Support and Protection processes.

Additional public communication mechanisms now exist. Orkney has extended an existing online resource for Children and Young People to include a section made for Adults and Professionals. Protect Orkney partners the Growing up in Orkney space to ensure each has a specific area designed to communicate using appropriate language for each age group. The expansion includes a variety of educational resources and is a central point for advice, support and learning resources for all in the community. The resource is also supported by a social media page on Facebook where the community can interact and feedback on the website, resources and any suggested improvements.



Challenges and Areas for Improvement



Capacity

Capacity remains the greatest challenge for the partnership. The exponential growth in referrals and support being provided is a major success of our partnership and has shown the impact of their efforts to connect with the community and support vulnerable adults. This success has seen increased workloads, pressurised environments and with an emergence of more complex needs' places significant strain on our teams. Although both Large-Scale Investigations were well attended and supported, this added medium term significant pressures with one Investigation starting the afternoon the first had ended. Conversations continue amongst services which are considering resource and organisational abilities to work in agile ways.

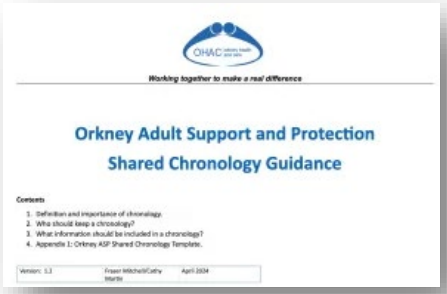
Shared Responsibilities



Part of our capacity challenges can be solved through revisiting shared responsibilities between partners. Understanding our roles and the parts each other play is a vital part of training and development. Linked to efforts to enhance our communication, supporting understanding of all involved in our processes will be supported by training aligned to the National Framework for Adult Support and Protection Learning and Development (Scottish Government, 2026).

The Framework provides a clear sense of direction for training and mirrors the pre-existing children's framework. Embedding of the framework provides a clear path to enhanced understanding and increased capabilities within our workforce and communities. This area of focus will support Orkney to continue sustained improvement in the coming year and support broader understanding of areas such as transitions.

Chronologies

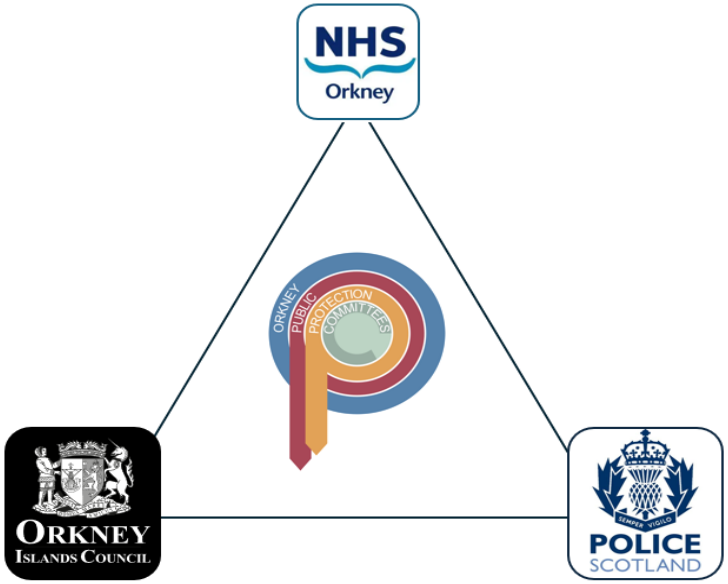


Notwithstanding the Orkney Shared Chronology Guidance being held as an example best practice by IRISS, capacity challenges have presented limited ability to ascertain desired information such as key life story events from the adult themselves. Audit is supporting consistent practice and support to staff whilst conversations continue to support additional capacity in our busy systems.

Multi-Agency Audit and Improvement Process

Audit is an area of strength for our partnership. For the last 3 years at regular intervals, audit reporting has been provided to the Adult Protection Committee. These audits have supported us to track progress and identify areas requiring additional support or focus where practice has not followed the predicted change.

The next stage for our audit processes is to expand beyond single agency audit. Our audit practices must be considered multi-agency. This development will improve our quality of reporting, support shared understanding and provide opportunity for staff to reflect and challenge our services and agencies in ways supportive of a continuous learning and improvement culture. Plans are underway to support a Multi-Agency Audit Group to be formed in early 2027.





Transitioning Ages

Looking beyond our services, transitioning ages is becoming an increasingly complex area of practice. With introduction of the United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 services and agencies must work closer together now more than ever to understand these changes and find solutions to the barriers which may present with these complex pieces of legislation.

The challenges with transitioning ages are beyond that of our own services and agencies as our staff remain committed and connected to supporting national groups and forums to discuss how services can proactively act to implement these important changes across our Children's and Adult Services both locally and nationally.

CYCJ
Children and Young People's Centre for Justice



Looking Forward

The future for Orkney is one where continuous improvement and development is an integral part of the organisations DNA. Orkney has experienced several positive developments between 2024 to 2026 have been a testament to the collective efforts of the Adult Protection Partnership in Orkney.

The progress is well recognised locally and by the Joint Inspectorates, however we know there will always be improvements to make as we continually strive for excellence.

To support future developments, the Chair is completing a review of the Public Protection arrangements in Orkney. The review has considered the experiences of those working within our systems and taken on board feedback from our colleagues across services and agencies. Due for presentation to the Chief Officers' Group (COG) in September 2026, this review will shape how we deliver Public Protection locally, ensuring the review supports both our staff and those who we protect.

Findings from the recent ASP Joint Inspection Progress Review will inform our Adult Protection Committee, ASP Improvement Plan and provided clear direction as to how we can develop our services and agencies further including closer connectivity to the Care Inspectorate's Quality Improvement Framework for Adult Support and Protection in Scotland. We will continue to work closely with partners across Scotland and organisations such as IRISS to continue our progress.

Challenges remain regarding the pace of increase in Adult Support and Protection referrals year on year; however, these challenges emphasise the need for our partners to work collectively to improve our services and support to those who we seek to protect.

Ross Drummond, Independent Chair, Orkney Adult Protection Committee



If you require any further information in relation to this report, please contact:

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01856 873535 Extension 2604