

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 9 MARCH 2023

JOINT INSPECTION OF ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION IN ANGUS

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ANGUS COUNCIL

ABSTRACT

This report summarises the outcome of the joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for adult support and protection in Angus that took place between September 2022 and January 2023.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the outcome of the inspection.
- (ii) Request a further report be brought back to a future meeting following submission of the Improvement Plan to the Care Inspectorate.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to local outcomes contained within the Community Plan and Council Plan, in particular those that focus on People, and working collaboratively for and with our citizens to keep them safe in resilient communities.

3. BACKGROUND

An inspection took place in Angus between September 2022 and January 2023 as part of an ongoing Scottish Government improvement plan for Adult Support and Protection (ASP). The purpose of this joint inspection was to seek assurance that adults at risk of harm in Scotland are supported and protected by existing national and local adult support and protection arrangements. The inspection programme is one element of an overall Scottish Government improvement plan. Scottish Ministers requested that the Care Inspectorate lead these joint inspections of adult support and protection in collaboration with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. This scrutiny and assurance was undertaken in the context of health and social care integration. The focus of the joint inspection was the contributions of Social Work, Police Scotland, Health and other agencies to keep adults at risk of harm safe, and how they work collaboratively to do this.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Inspection Process

The inspection process included five scrutiny activities:

- i) The analysis of supporting documentary evidence and a position statement.
- ii) The completion of a staff survey. Five hundred and forty-eight staff from Angus completed the survey which was issued to a range of social work, health, police and third sector provider organisations. This was above the average national response rate. The survey sought staff views on adult support and protection outcomes for adults at risk of harm, key processes, staff support and training and strategic leadership.
- iii) The scrutiny of social work records of adults at risk of harm. This involved the records of 40 adults at risk of harm who did not progress beyond adult support and protection inquiry stage.

- iv) The scrutiny of the health, police, and social work records of adults at risk of harm. This involved the records of 50 adults at risk of harm where their adult protection journey progressed to at least the investigation stage.
- v) Staff focus groups. Inspectors carried out two focus groups and met with 20 members of staff from across Angus to discuss adult support and protection practice and adults at risk of harm. This also provided an opportunity to discuss how well Angus had implemented the Covid-19 national adult support and protection guidance.

4.2 Summary of Findings

Angus received a draft inspection report on 09 January 2023. This was embargoed until 31 January 2023 when it was published on the Care Inspectorate website. It can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Scrutiny was conducted using two quality indicators:

- Key adult support and protection processes.
- Leadership for adult support and protection.

Performance against each of these two indicators could be graded as follows:

- Very effective and demonstrated major strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm.
- Effective with areas for improvement. There were clear strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm, which collectively outweighed the areas for improvement.
- Important areas of weakness that could adversely affect experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm. There were substantial areas for improvement.

The report received is positive and highlights a significant number of strengths that have been demonstrated across Angus. It highlights a hardworking and dedicated workforce that has responded to significant challenges and kept adults who are at risk of harm safe and protected. It recognises that Angus has demonstrated a number of key strengths while facing the ongoing challenges of recovery and remobilisation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and a significant increase in referrals.

How good were the partnership's key processes for adult support and protection?

Inspectors concluded that the partnership's key processes for adult support and protection were very effective and demonstrated major strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

How good was the partnership's strategic leadership for adult support and protection?

They concluded the partnership's strategic leadership for adult support and protection was effective with areas for improvement. There were clear strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm, which collectively outweighed the areas for improvement.

4.3 Strengths Identified

- The person-centred approach in Angus to adult support and protection, including the regular use of advocacy to promote the adult at risk of harm's rights.
- Investment in specific adult support and protection posts across health, police and social work in support of effective engagement and collaboration. This enabled the development of initiatives such as the Financial Abuse Support Team and Early Screening Group and contributed to good outcomes for adults at risk of harm.
- Highly effective delivery of inquiries, investigations and case conferences.

- Core group meetings for adults at risk of harm proceeding to case conference effectively oversaw risk assessment and the management of concerns.
- A comprehensive multi-agency learning and development plan. Learning delivered using a range of digital and face-to-face methods and open to all agencies, which had a positive impact on adult support and protection practice.
- A clear, well understood vision for adult support and protection, supported by an Adult Protection Committee strategic delivery plan.
- The established Adult Protection Committee and sub-group structure had progressed most improvement actions and supported delivery of statutory functions. This included the operation of a risk register to monitor practice and provide reassurance.
- A strong response to the pandemic, incorporating a wellbeing approach to supporting staff, a structured response to care home assurance and an increase in the frequency of overview meetings.

4.4 Areas Identified for Improvement

- Recording of adult support and protection practice in case records varied in consistency and content. This was more evident in the application of the three-point criteria and the recording of actions taken to manage risk for those adults who did not progress beyond inquiry and investigation stages.
- The quality of chronologies had improved but needed progressed to include better recording of multi-agency information, significant life events and impact. This would further enhance decision making around risk.
- The quality assurance framework needed to be further embedded to include a frequent multi-agency approach to monitor change and sustainability more effectively. This should include frontline practitioners and adults with lived experience of adult support and protection.
- The Adult Protection Committee had recently refined their improvement plan, but further consolidation was needed. Both this and the annual performance reporting approach impacted on the visibility of change and timely identification of trends or issues.
- Strategic service user engagement and awareness raising were recognised by the partnership as areas for improvement. Recently developed plans should be progressed to support feedback and engagement with adults at risk with lived experience in the strategic work.

4.5 Next Steps

An improvement plan will be developed based on the findings of the inspection. This must be submitted to the Care Inspectorate by 15 March 2023. The inspection team will then review it.

5. PROPOSALS

It is proposed that Scrutiny and Audit Committee notes the contents of this report and request a further report be brought back to a future meeting following submission of the Improvement Plan to the Care Inspectorate.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

8. CONSULTATION

A robust communication and engagement plan was implemented throughout the inspection process and regular newsletters, reports and updates have been provided to all staff and stakeholders across the relevant agencies. A statement was released in the press on 31 January 2023. This was also accompanied by communications for all staff.

The Angus Adult Protection Committee, overseen by the Angus Chief Officers Group, will co-ordinate the development of the improvement plan to be submitted to the Care Inspectorate.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection – Angus Partnership January 2023