



Adult Support and Protection National
Priority Working Group on Service
User and Carer Engagement

What is this report about?



The National Adult Support and Protection Working Group was set up to find out what people think about **adult support and protection**.

Adult support and protection means trying to stop people from being harmed. This is done by a piece of law called The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act.



For the rest of this report this group will be called the **Working Group**.



The Working Group spoke to people who use services and carers. They asked them what they thought about the **adult support and protection process**.

The adult support and protection process means all the steps that need to be taken to keep people safe.

How did we write this report?

The Working Group did 4 things to write this report:



There were interviews and focus groups with people who use services and carers about their understanding of adult support and protection.



The Working Group looked at the leaflets and information used to tell people about adult support and protection.



There was a survey of organisations who write the strategy (big plan) for adult protection policy in Scotland.



They also looked at some of the research that has been written by Adult Protection Committees and Researchers.

Why did we write this report?



Research tells us that it is very important for people who use services to be involved in making adult support and protection processes that work.



The Scottish Government wanted to know what people who use services and carers think about adult support and protection processes.

Who did we speak to?



The questions for the interviews and focus groups were written by the Working Group.



There were interviews with 6 people who use services who also have experience of the adult support and protection process.



We spoke to some people individually.



We spoke to some people in groups.



The people we spoke with represented people from different groups who use services in different ways:

- Older people
- Mental health
- Dementia
- Learning disability
- People from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background

What did we find out?



Less than half of the people we spoke to from BME backgrounds knew about adult support and protection.



Most people said there was a need for adult support and protection to understand different cultures.



Both people who use services and carers said they would want to be at adult support and protection meetings.



People who use services said these meetings should not include the person putting them at risk.



Some people told us that they did not always understand what had been agreed at meetings.



Having support at the meetings was important to a lot of the people we spoke to.



Some people who use services told us they would not have the confidence to complain themselves.



Both people who use services and carers said trust was very important. The time to build trust was very important too.



Trust can be built by professionals and others by being aware of the message their body language sends.

BIG X **words**

Trust can also be built by using easy words and language.



Some of the carers we spoke to said it was important to have trusting relationships with people they can talk to about their situation.



It was also important for carers to know when to ask for help. And for information to be in the right language.



Carers also said that lots of changes to support staff made it harder to build trusting relationships.

Adult support and protection case conferences

A case conference is a meeting we arrange if there are concerns that you are not safe or that someone is causing you harm.



2 people who had been to a case conference told us they understood what a case conference was.



4 people who had been to a case conference said they did not fully understand what a case conference was.



Those who had experience of a case conference said it was important to them to be able to say what they thought at the end of the meeting.



People who use services said that hearing about other people's experiences helped their own confidence.



Being asked to talk about what was wrong using their own words helped people feel more confident. This also helped people understand what was happening better.



It was important to people who use services to have time to prepare for case conference. This might mean getting support to make a written or spoken report.



Copies of the minutes should always be easy to read and given to the person quickly after the meeting.



Copies of any protection plans should be easy to read and be given to the person quickly after the meeting.



There should be support to read and understand the minutes and plans.



Those who had experience of case conferences told us it was important to know you were being listened to.



It was possible to tell if people were listening by the actions taken afterwards to keep them safe.



People got frustrated if they thought they were not being listened to.



Seeing copies of all reports before the meeting was also important to the people who had been to case conferences before.



It was important to have support to understand what these reports said.



Everybody who had been to a case conference before was clear that they wanted to be at any meetings that were about them.

What barriers do people find at case conferences?



Not having the right information is a barrier.

Written information can support people to understand what will happen at a case conference.



Most people would like someone to talk to them about what will happen at a case conference before it happens. This was seen as the best way of helping people understand.



The large number of people at meetings can make it difficult to follow for some people.



Feeling as comfortable as possible in the meeting is important.

What do people think worked well at case conferences?



All of the people we spoke to who had been through a case conference felt safer afterwards.



Feeling listened to by professionals. Having the support of a social worker helped people to know their view was being heard.



Having the support of a nurse to read through and explain case conference minutes.

Advocacy and other support

Advocacy services support people to have more say in decisions that affect their lives.



The people we spoke to wanted to have someone they trusted in meetings with them. This support could come from a family member.

Professional support could come from:



- Social worker
- Health worker
- Voluntary sector
- Advocacy workers



The Working Group had people from advocacy organisations on it. The advocacy organisations talked about their experiences of supporting people in case conference meetings.



Often there was not enough time for advocates to develop a relationship with the person or support them to prepare properly. This happens because they usually get asked for support too late.



The focus groups said that there should be support for the carer as well as the adult at risk.

What did people tell us might stop them from talking about harm?

The people we interviewed told us they might not talk about being at risk of harm if they:



- Have a criminal record
- Do not want to be seen as a victim
- Do not want the police to be called
- Are unsure what would happen if they talked about it



One focus group had a lot of older people in it. They said that older people were unlikely to tell anyone if they were being sexually harmed.



Sometimes people told us they would only talk to staff they had trusting relationships with.

Risk and harm



People who have experience of the process said that risk and harm can come from different people. This includes strangers, family members and people in the community.



In some cases risk came from people who knew that they were vulnerable. They became targeted.



One of the focus groups was made up of people with learning disabilities.



People with learning disabilities talked about similarities between adult support and protection and hate crime.



One focus group thought there was a connection between risk and harm and loneliness and friendship.

What should support and protection feel like?



People told us that support and protection should feel welcoming and comfortable.



People told us that support and protection should not make them feel stressed or worried.



It was important to be treated with respect.



Letters asking people to go to meetings should be clear. They should tell people what the meeting is about and why it is happening.



People told us that they wanted to be prepared for any meetings they had to go to.



Having time to build trust with someone who will be at all the meetings.



Everybody thought plain language should be used throughout the process.

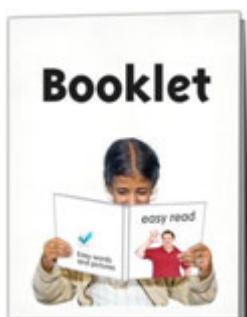
Information about adult support and protection



The Working Group looked at lots of the information that had been made about adult support and protection.



The group thought it would be difficult to make information that was right for people who use services, carers and members of the public as 1 group.



There is some easy read information available about adult support and protection.

Survey



We asked some public and voluntary organisations to fill in a survey.

The survey wanted to find out what ways the organisations thought were best for letting people know about adult support and protection.

The 3 ways they thought were best were:



- Face to face
- Training
- Being included in making training materials

The 2 ways they thought worked least well on their own were:



- Written information
- Posters



Others thought that a mixture of things worked best.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a suggestion put forward as the best way to take action.

The recommendations are based on:



- Research (study)
- Policy (a plan which talks about how something will be done)
- Strategy (a big plan)



Lots of recommendations were made for how to make adult support and protection case conferences better. We have listed some of the important recommendations below.



Tell people who are invited to case conferences:

- What the meeting is about
- What might happen after the meeting



Decide how many people can come to a case conference.



Make sure the person who the case conference is for feels comfortable in the place where the meeting will be held.



Support the person who the case conference is about to feel ready for the meeting.



Make sure notes about the meeting are:

- Not too long
- Easy to understand
- Available in other languages



Make sure the person who the case conference is about has the chance to give their point of view during the meeting.



Make sure someone explains the notes of the meeting face to face with the person the meeting was about.



Think about the best way to involve the community in adult support and protection issues.



Talk to service user and carer groups so they can help with actions in the future.



Explain things in the order that they happened.
This will help people to remember what the issues were.



Think about the best ways to help people talk about the problems they are facing.



Make a list of helplines.

This easy read was made by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability for WithScotland.

