

# **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**

## **Adult Safeguarding**

### **Annual Position Report**

**2021/22**

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## **SECTION 1: Overview**

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is committed to promoting the health, well-being and protection of all adults in receipt of its services across the spectrum of its universal and specialist provision including domiciliary and day care services, residential care, nursing home care, supported living and respite care provided by or commissioned on behalf of the Trust.

The annual Adult Safeguarding position report reviews three core themes contained in Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy (2015) and Operational Procedures (2016): Prevention, Partnership and Protection.

The annual report for 2021/22 provides an overview of assurance arrangements, HSCB Data Activity returns, commentary in relation to challenges and achievements relating to Adult Safeguarding throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The last year has seen a number of operational and strategic challenges alongside developments in Adult Safeguarding.

These include:

- Year two of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the impact on operational and strategic adult safeguarding
- Continuation of contingency arrangements with operational and strategic practices taking place via virtual platforms
- Updates in relation to Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Action plan
- Partnership developments
- Prevention initiatives
- Introduction of the Interim Adult Protection Board regional sub groups

As noted in the previous annual report, the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) officially stood down in December 2019. Belfast LASP progressed Adult Safeguarding at a local level in the absence of strategic direction or an agreed work plan for this reporting period. Following this, the Transformation Board and Interim Adult Protection board became operational and established an action plan.

## **SECTION 2: Adult Safeguarding Governance Arrangements**

The Belfast Trust operate to the Regional Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy (2015), Regional Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures (2016) and the Regional policy Protocol for Joint Investigation of Adult Safeguarding Cases (2016) and local Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

### **Trust Governance Arrangements**

The Executive Director of Social Work has accountability for the assurance of arrangements pertaining to the delivery of the Trust's statutory functions including adult safeguarding. The Executive Director of Social Work is supported by the Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Champion. The TASS continues in the role of Interim Adult Safeguarding Champion.

The Operational Directors are accountable for the service delivery response to safeguarding matters within their respective Directorates.

### **Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee**

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee's principal remit is to ensure that the Trust meets its obligations in relation to Adult Safeguarding and to provide the necessary assurances with regard to its responsibilities in respect of this.

As noted, The Belfast Trust has an Adult Safeguarding Committee chaired by the Executive Director of Social Work and coordinated by the Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist.

In this reporting period, the Adult Safeguarding Committee has continued to meet, these meetings took place on the 13/5/21, 8/7/21, 11/11/21 & 10/3/22.

While the Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist continued to support the work of the Adult Safeguarding committee, given other work commitments, the temporary Adult Safeguarding Development post has remained in situ. This has facilitated the development of a more detailed Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Action Plan and progression of work streams.

In 2021, The Executive Director of Social Work approved the recruitment two temporary posts to take forward other priority Adult Safeguarding actions.

These were at 'risk posts' because of a lack of funding for strategic adult Safeguarding work. The appointments were seen as critical in progressing elements of the Adult Safeguarding committee action plan.

In November 2021 a professional nurse at band 8a was recruited to take forward work in relation Adult Safeguarding in hospital settings. This nurse took up post in January 2022 for a six month period.

The second post a Band 7 DAPO was also recruited in November 2021 as Training and Implementation Manager, to take forward work in relation to the development and implementation of the Regional APP suite of forms on the trust Paris Community information system.

The Band 7 post commenced in March 2022 due to delays in backfilling the operational post.

These appointments have resulted in the establishment of the Adult Safeguarding Strategic team, which is managed by the Interim Adult Safeguarding Champion. The value of the investment of staff when progress is assessed against the Trust Adult Safeguarding action plan. Going forward the Adult Safeguarding structures proposal paper recommends that a strategic governance and assurance team is established and the team, also take forward any associated development work.

### **LASP Governance Arrangements**

The Belfast LASP is a multi-agency group that continues to meet on a quarterly basis. Previously the Belfast LASP would have delivered on strategic priorities as detailed in the NIASP Strategy and Annual Action Plan alongside any additional areas considered to be a priority by the LASP. However, with the review Adult safeguarding structures in Northern Ireland and the establishment of the new Transformation Board and Interim Adult Protection Board, Belfast LASP work, currently focuses on local priorities in the promotion of prevention and early intervention.

### **Operational Adult Safeguarding**

Throughout the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, each division within Adult Services have operational arrangements for the management and coordination of Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection. Within each service area and division, the Trust have nominated specialist trained Adult Safeguarding staff undertaking the role of Designated Adult Protection Officer and Investigating Officer.

The following divisions operate within adult services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust:

- Adult, Community & Older Peoples Service (ACOPS)
- Mental Health
- Learning Disability

## **ACOPS Division:**

The Adult Protection Gateway Team (APGT), is now in its ninth operational year and continue to provide a gateway / protection response for the Older People (OP) service area and Physical and Sensory Disability (PSD) service area. The APGT continue to operate a two tier function to provide a central point of contact for external referrals and facilitates all adult protection investigations for all referrals for OP and PSD meeting the 'Adult in Need of Protection' threshold. For referrals that require a protection response cases are allocated to APGT DAPOs and IOs for investigation. To provide this service the APGT has the following compliment of staff: B8A Assistant Service Manager, B7 DAPOs, B6 IOs and 1 B7 Nurse Specialist. In early 2021, the ACOPS division recruited a temporary Band 8B Service Manager who is operationally responsible for the Adult Protection Gateway Team.

Physical Health & Sensory Disability and Older Peoples Service continue to manage 'adult at risk of harm' referrals through the provision of Alternative Safeguarding responses, professional assessment and risk assessment. The community teams within the Older Peoples Services and Physical Health and Sensory Disability services hold specialist trained Adult Safeguarding staff as Designated Adult Protection Officers and Investigating Officers.

Acute Hospitals: Acute hospital settings within ACOPS have a multifaceted role in Adult Safeguarding. Acute Hospitals receive referrals from a range of Hospital departments, screen referrals and transfer referrals to the relevant service area, team or Trust. The Social Work Department for Acute Hospitals have specialist Trained Adult Safeguarding Staff as Designated Adult Protection Officers and Investigating Officers.

## **Mental Health Division:**

Mental Health adult safeguarding structures operate a localised Adult Safeguarding Team, which consist of one Adult Safeguarding Lead (8a) and two DAPO's who conduct complex Adult Protection investigations for teams who require DAPO involvement and investigations meeting a specified Adult Protection criteria.

Mental Health Adult Safeguarding is managed within a localised Adult Safeguarding Team, Community teams and Hospital teams where the aligned DAPO screen Adult Safeguarding referrals, determine the threshold of significant harm and implement a response. The DAPO's work to the regional policy applying the threshold to all adult safeguarding referrals in relation to the threshold of 'Alternative Safeguarding Response', 'Adult at risk of harm' and an 'Adult in need of Protection'.

Adult Mental Health operates Joint Protocol consultations by Designated Adult Protection Officers within the Adult Safeguarding Team, community teams and Hospital Social Work team.

## **Learning Disability Division:**

Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding secured funding for a permanent designated Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A) post across Community and Hospital Adult Safeguarding, this post continues to play an important role in the management of Adult Safeguarding within Learning Disability Services.

Learning Disability Community Team Managers are trained as DAPO's and undertake the DAPO function to screening and investigate Adult Safeguarding Referrals. Community Social Work and Nursing staff are trained as investigating officers and undertake the function of IO in community settings. Muckamore Abbey Hospital has a dedicate social work team, with DAPO's trained to undertake the Adult Safeguarding role.

DAPOs within Hospital and Community Teams have responsibility for Joint Protocol consultations with CRU.

Within all Adult Services, each service has a nominated Adult Safeguarding Lead who provides operational support and oversight within their service area in line with Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding developments as per the Trust Adult Safeguarding Action plan.

Across all Divisions within Adult Services, there is a process for assuring an unbroken line of accountability through to the Executive Director of Social Work. Operationally the individual teams are accountable to their Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A), Service Manager (8B) though to Co-Director and Director level which hold operational responsibility for Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection. Furthermore, each division has a Divisional Social Work lead (8C) who holds professional responsibility; this includes the adherence to Adult Safeguarding Policy and operational procedures.

### **SECTION 3: (A) Reporting period Achievements and Challenges**

- Protection
- Partnership
- Prevention

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Belfast LASP are fully committed to delivering on the:

- Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy (2015)
- Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures: Adults at Risk of Harm and
- Adults in Need of Protection (September 2016)
- Protocol for Joint Investigation of Adult Safeguarding Cases (August 2016)

The Belfast Health and Social Care trust continue to operate to the strategic direction as set out in the regional Adult Safeguarding policy for the development of Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection within the HSCT. This reporting period saw the introduction of the Interim Adult Protection Board action plan with the implementation of regional task and finish groups. Strategic direction provided by the HSCB and, strategic initiatives from the Interim Adult Protection Board and Transformation Board influenced strategic Adult Safeguarding within BHSCT over this period.

#### **PROTECTION:**

Adult Protection is the responsibility of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and is undertaken across the following divisions, Adult, Community Older People Services 'ACOPS', Learning Disability Services, Acute Hospital and Mental Health Services.

As outlined in the previous annual position report, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust operate in line with the Regional Adult Safeguarding Policy utilising the definition of an Adult at Risk of Harm and an Adult in need of Protection. Within the ACOPS division, the Adult Protection Gateway Team is responsible for the investigation of referrals meeting the threshold of an 'Adult in need of Protection. Within Mental Health and Learning Disability divisions, the management of the Adult In need of protection referrals and investigations in completed by DAPO's within Community Teams and Hospital teams.

Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust remained an essential service and sustained delivery of service throughout the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The easing of Lockdown measures and introduction of updated HSC guidance from the PHA, DoH and HSCB, in relation to visiting regulated facilities, risk assessment of visits contacts enabled Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding staff to return to face to face contacts. However, it is important to note, the use of virtual platforms such as MS



Teams, Zoom and Skype has evident benefits to daily practices. This method of working has continued over the past twelve months, it has been particularly cost effective in relation to time management and professional contribution when conducting case conferences, and strategy meetings for Adult Protection investigations.

Adult Safeguarding within the Belfast Trust moved onto Continuity/Surge planning. These surge plans allowed Adult Safeguarding Teams across the BHSCT assess and monitor the needs and demands to sustain service delivery.

Covid-19 continued to significantly affected staffing levels at different periods over this reporting period with service areas experiencing staff absences because of COVID-19. With staff absences, surge plans and contingency arrangements were instigated, service areas such as Learning Disability and Adult Mental Health provided support across divisions when required. Furthermore, the Adult Protection Gateway Team provided interim support arrangements within the division of ACOPS. APGT transitioned in and out of surge planning and contingency arrangements, In addition to COVID-19 challenges, APGT experienced recruitment challenges of Social Workers and a replacement for the Band 7 Nurse specialist. APGT utilised professional input from Investigating Officers within Community teams for the completion of Adult Protection Investigations, and on occasions allocated DAPO only investigations. In the last quarter of this reporting period, APGT recruited temporary Investigating Officers and one temporary DAPO.

#### Adult Safeguarding Data and Activity:

Adult Safeguarding data continues to be collated manually by all divisions. The current retrieval arrangements are protracted due to the number of services submitting monthly Adult Safeguarding returns on a manual basis. The Adult Safeguarding Development Officer collates and quality assures the HSCB data prior to submission to the Health and Social Care Board. With the implementation of APP forms on Paris, the Project Management Group will then develop an Adult Safeguarding Data set for Paris CIS, which will electronically collate Trust Adult Safeguarding Data. This is anticipated for the second quarter on the next reporting period.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust experienced an increase in referrals, with 1323 investigations commenced over the reporting period 2021/22. 347 referrals were categorised as Adult in need of protection with the remaining investigations categorised as Adult at Risk of Harm investigation. This was an increase of 10% compared to the referrals categorised as adult in need of protection the previous year 2020/21.

The previous year noted an interim arrangement whereby APGT managed the regulated care home referrals for all programmes of care, this continued over 2021/22 and will be subject to review in the next quarter of the forthcoming reporting period.

Like the previous reporting periods, Joint Protocol Activity remained low over the reporting period 2021/22 with a total 4 ABE's completed. Similarly, Belfast Trust experienced a significant reduction in the number of referrals meeting the threshold for a Joint Investigation, 48 joint protocol investigations commenced this reporting period. Operational management of PIA's and ABE's remain the responsibility of each division. Due to the low number of referral rates, the Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist proposed overall management and governance of Joint Protocol arrangements should move to a single point with a rota arrangement to be implemented. This will be carried forward into the next reporting period.

The Interim Adult Protection Board commenced the Joint Protocol work stream in 2021, this regional group is responsible for reviewing the current Protocol for Joint Adult Safeguarding Investigations. The Belfast Trust awaits confirmation of strategic and operational direction from the Interim Adult Protection Board and Transformation Board.

Following a scoping exercise by Strategic Adult Safeguarding completed 2021, it was established that the Trust operates to the Regional Policy, and however there was variation in practices relating to threshold application, use of regional documentation and management of Adult at risk of harm responses. As a result, the Trust Adult Safeguarding Action Plan prioritised key areas for action:

Adult Protection threshold application:

The Adult Safeguarding Leadership group reviewed and took forward the development of supporting guidance for operational Adult Safeguarding staff to assist threshold application. This document is a supporting aid to the Regional Policy and operational procedures. The development of this commenced in March 2022 with the intention to pilot, review and possible implementation of the guidance in summer 2022.

PARIS CIS & Regional APP documentation:

The previous annual position report noted the commencement of Project Management group responsible for developing and implementing the Regional APP forms onto Paris CIS. This group remained operational throughout this reporting year. The recruitment of a Band 7 Paris Trainer and implementation lead who started in March 2022 will enable the Project Management group to progress with Phase 3 of the project; *Training and Implementation of the APP suite of forms on Paris*. The project is on target to go live with regional APP forms on Paris CIS by June 2022, resulting in the ending of the ASP module on Paris.

Furthermore, the introduction of the Regional APP forms on Paris, will transition Adult Mental Health service operating Adult Safeguarding via manual records onto Paris CIS. This move will ensure consistent use of the regional documentation and consistent records management within Belfast Trust in relation to Adult Protection.

### Adult Protection Bill –Draft Legislation- Department of Health:

In April 2021, The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust submitted a collective Trust response welcoming the opportunity for Adult Protection legislation placing Adult Protection on a statutory footing. However, there were concerns regarding the additional legal duties which will be placed on the Trust as a consequence of the legislation. The DoH subsequently provided Trusts with the opportunity to input into a costings paper, which focused on the funding, required for implementation of the proposed legislation. The Trust await with interest the outcome of the funding request, as it will be critical to implementation and service delivery.

Over the past twelve months, BHSCT responded to all Department of Health requests in relation to the scoping and development of the Draft Adult Protection Bill. The Department of Health requested Trust responses in relation to:

- Duty to make enquiries
- Independent Advocacy
- Costing paper
- Adult Protection Bill Definitions

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust welcomes the opportunity to actively contribute to the development of the Adult Protection Bill, in doing so, Strategic Adult Safeguarding have kept apprised Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding staff and Belfast LASP members in the Adult Protection Bill developments.

### Trust Adult Safeguarding Structures:

In this reporting period, there has been a renewed focus on the review of existing operational arrangements and associated governance and assurance arrangements. In the context of the COPNI report, CPEA report and the large-scale historical investigation in Muckamore, along with the Governance and Leadership Report, there has been a renewed focus on this review of adult safeguarding structures and arrangements. In terms of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee action plan, the drafting of this paper this was identified as a priority area of work.

Work in relation to a draft adult safeguarding structures proposal paper was ongoing throughout this reporting period. Much progress has been made by the work-stream taking forward this work, which includes the Executive Director of Social Work, the Interim Adult Safeguarding Champion, Divisional Social Workers and the Adult Safeguarding Development Officer. It is anticipated that the proposal paper will be shared with the Adult Safeguarding Committee and when ready submitted to the Trust Executive Team by summer 2022 for consideration. It should be noted that significant investment will be required if the proposal paper is accepted and implemented.

## **PARTNERSHIP:**

BHSCT Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist, with the addition of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer continued to maintain partnership working with their counterparts at a regional level with frequent meetings taking place virtually over this reporting period. The regional forum chaired by the HSCB has remained in place and continues to be chaired by the HSCB Adult Safeguarding Regional Officer.

The Belfast Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership continued to meet each quarter over the reporting period 2021/22. Like the previous year, All Belfast LASP meetings took place on a digital platform and enabled LASP members to engage with the LASP Chair/ Interim Trust Adult Safeguarding Champion and receive updates in relation to Adult Protection developments in line with the Transformation Board and interim Adult Protection Board.

Like the previous year, the prevalent concern of the Belfast LASP related to the lack of regional strategic direction and engagement with the Community and Voluntary sector within the proposed reform of Adult Protection structures with the Transformation Board and Interim Adult Protection Board.

The LASP Chair continued to voice the concerns raised by the Belfast LASP partner agencies with regard to their lack of inclusion in the new regional structure and the LASP chair articulated their position at regional forums. Subsequently the HSCB Adult Safeguarding regional manager attend a Belfast LASP meeting in April 2021. Nominations were gathered for regional Adult Protection Board subgroup work streams. Following this Belfast LASP was represented at the Adult Safeguarding Data and Performance subgroup chaired by BHSCT Executive Director of Social Work.

This reporting period enabled a refocus on the Trust Adult Safeguarding Action plan. This action plan focuses on a number of key priorities across operational and strategic aspects of Adult Safeguarding within BHSCT. The area of achievements include:

### Adult Safeguarding Training

The Learning & Development team continued to deliver adult safeguarding training, mainly via Microsoft Teams. This was successful over this reporting period. Face to face training was provided in relation to Joint Protocol and ABE as it was agreed with PSNI that this was the only mechanism that could effectively provide this training. With regard to face to face training, Covid-19 guidance was implemented and adhered to by trainers and participants.

The previous reporting period outlined a significant piece of work relating to adult safeguarding training needs for professionals outside of Social Work and Social care. The Adult Safeguarding Committee agreed that it would be preferable to introduce a model of adult safeguarding training, which involved centralising the training function within the Learning Development of Social Work and Social Care.

This piece of work enabled the learning and development team to submit a bid to charitable funds for monies with the aim of producing a level 2 e-learning Adult Safeguarding module. The area of need relating to Level 3 Adult Safeguarding training remains high priority with the Learning and Development Team proceeding with identifying a solution in the next reporting period.

Meeting demands for Adult Safeguarding training remains a key challenge for the Belfast Trust, and work completed via the Adult Safeguarding Action plan included a proposal for an e-learning and further investment in terms of an additional trainer. The plan being to centralise Adult Safeguarding training with the Social Care Learning and Development team. The funding for additional trainer has yet to be agreed. Currently all service areas and professional groups remain responsible for ensuring their staff receive the appropriate level of Adult safeguarding training.

#### Additional Training needs identified and delivered within this reporting period

A task and finish group commenced this reporting period to look at additional training needs outside of the scheduled Adult Safeguarding training. The Adult Safeguarding Development Officer identified the need for specialist training in Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery, the Social Work Learning and Development team funded 60 places over two training sessions, which focused on Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery Awareness and Disclosure Encounter: Trauma Informed Listening. These were delivered online via a virtual class room by Hope for Justice.

The task and finish group identified the need for specialist Domestic Abuse training in advance of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021, which was enacted in February 2022. The learning & Development team funded four bespoke training session delivered by Women's Aid for Adult Safeguarding trained staff, each session catered for 40 staff, approximately 150 staff attended the bespoke training.

#### Adult Safeguarding Leadership Meetings:

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist/ Interim Adult Safeguarding Champion has continued to hold regular Adult Safeguarding Leadership meetings. These meetings took place with representatives from all Adult Safeguarding services. The purpose of these meetings focused upon taking actions from the Trust Adult Safeguarding Action plan, taking forward operational and strategic developments, providing strategic regional and internal updates.

### Adult Safeguarding Governance:

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist and Adult Safeguarding Development Officer undertook areas of review and audit in line with regional and local Adult Safeguarding Policy and operational procedures. Following an internal audit in December 2021, areas for priority development was identified, this included

- Threshold application guidance
- Adult at Risk of Harm Managed through Alternative Safeguarding Response

A subgroup was created to take forward these areas of work with representatives and across all divisions engaged in Adult Safeguarding. The guidance will be made available for BHSCT employees in the next reporting period.

### Data and IT:

APP forms on Paris: the project management group continued to engage with stakeholders within the BHSCT over the past 12 months. Phase one specification development and phase two testing was completed over this reporting period. Planning for phase three commenced in March 2022 following the recruitment and release of a Band 7 Paris trainer and implementation lead.

Acute Hospital Power APP: the IT solution was proposed in late 2021, and commissioned for development by Trust IT department following approval by the Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee. This project recommenced in February 2022 with the aim of implementation in the next reporting period 2022/23.

### Adult Safeguarding in Hospital Settings:

Over the past twelve months, Adult Safeguarding in Hospital settings was identified as a priority area of focus for Trust Adult Safeguarding Leadership. A proposal paper presented to the Adult Safeguarding committee for approval, received confirmation to recruit a temporary 8A Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital sites targeted at the nursing profession. The successful candidate commenced post in January 2022. The post holder initiated an action plan to progress Adult Safeguarding within Hospital settings.

### Support Networks- Internal and External:

Over the reporting period 2021/22 the Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and Trust Safeguarding Lead trainer identified the need for support networks for External and Internal Adult Safeguarding Champions. Over this reporting period, 4 external Adult Safeguarding Champion Support Groups were delivered and well attended. Furthermore in June 2021, the first internal ASC/Line Manager support group took place. These sessions were developed and chaired by the Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and Adult Safeguarding Lead trainer.

### DAPO & IO Forums:

The Quarterly DAPO and IO Support Groups continued to take place over this period. The Learning and Development team reported an increase in attendance and engagement by DAPO's and IO's following the transitioning onto a digital platform. Staff and Managers reported the ability to move online has increased engagement across all Adult Safeguarding Staff.

### MARAC/ Domestic Abuse:

MARAC continues to take place on a fortnightly basis chaired by the PPU Detective Sargent. MARAC migrated onto a digital platform in March 2020 and continued to take place virtually over the reporting period. Domestic Abuse referrals increased within Belfast Health and Social Care trust compared to the previous reporting year. The data and IT infrastructure and reporting arrangements do not lead to seamless retrieval of data relating to DASH assessment and MARAC referrals. This will be considered as part of the BHSCT Adult Safeguarding data set in the next reporting period.

MARAC reps within Adult Safeguarding are located within three divisions; Learning Disability, Mental Health, ACOPS. The APGT Service Manager as an interim arrangement took on the role of MARAC rep for ACOPS (OPS, APGT &PHSD). It is the opinion of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Leadership group that BHSCT should operate one MARAC rep for all Adult Services. The MARAC role is not resourced and the proposal for one designated role is not operational and subject to review in line with Adult Safeguarding working arrangements. In the interim each service area retain responsibility of attendance at MARAC.

Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding commenced a Domestic Abuse work stream with representatives from Adult Services, PPANI & Children Services. This group, although in its early stages of developments intend to present to the Adult Safeguarding Committee the need for a Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Domestic Abuse Strategy and Protocol.

An identified gap in service delivery is the protocol for managing incidents of Domestic Abuse whereby the child/children of the victim and /or perpetrator of domestic abuse is open to Children's Services.

The Domestic Abuse work stream intends to arrange a series of workshops to take forward the areas of development relating to MARAC role, interface between children's service and Adult Safeguarding and a BHSCT Domestic Abuse strategy and protocol.

Adult Safeguarding within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust continue to engage with working groups such as the Marac Operational Board and Marac Operational Group.

### Domestic Homicide Reviews:

A small number of BHSCT Senior Social Work Managers have represented the trust and participated in Domestic Homicide Reviews within the region. The Trust awaits

with interest the recommendations from DHRs currently underway, and will work to ensure the learning is understood and informs future practice.

#### Pressure Damage:

As noted in the previous annual position report, the longstanding challenge relating to the management of pressure damage and whether this should be managed through a clinical framework or Adult Safeguarding Process remains in discussion. The PHA reconvened a regional work stream in relation to strategic guidance. Until the PHA guidance is released, the Trust continues to manage pressure damage on a case by case approach between Adult Safeguarding and colleagues within Tissue Viability services within the BHSCT. Trust Adult Safeguarding staff continue to have effective working relationships with colleagues within Tissue Viability services on a case by case basis. As an interim measure, work is ongoing within the trust to ensure there is a consistent process for threshold application and managing incidents relating to pressure damage.

#### Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery:

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist continues to be the named adult safeguarding and Trust representative on the DoJ NGO Engagement Group in relation to Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Attendance at the NGO engagement group meetings has been via virtual platforms and has been impacted by impeding work priorities.

In addition to the TASS attending the NGO Engagement Group, The Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and TASS have engaged with the DoJ Human Trafficking Lead to explore the three-year strategy and attend a First Responder networking event in February 2022.

#### Volunteer Now:

Volunteer Now continues to be a core member of the Belfast Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership (LASP) and regularly provides updates in relation to training and developments. Volunteer Now continue to deliver on their regional contract to provide Adult Safeguarding training. Within Belfast Trust Volunteer now delivered four training sessions as per contract and feedback received outlines positive response.

#### Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP):

The Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist (TASS) continues to be a named member of the South Belfast DPCSP and has continued to highlight the role of PCSP in relation to the Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy.



### PSCP- Safer at Home Programme:

The Trust TASS and Adult Safeguarding Development Officer have worked with the project lead for the safer at home project. The project involved working with other PCSP partners, Police Service of Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. The project involved the development of a script and information videos to a number of agencies in relation to Adult Safeguarding, safety and risk.

Following the development of the videos, the Adult Safeguarding Development Officer participated in a number of engagement sessions with the 'Safer at Home' participants, which included community groups, volunteers and employees within the Community and Voluntary sector. The partnership approach to communicating risk and safety messages to stakeholders within Belfast area was positive and well received. This project enabled greater awareness of safeguarding and the services BHSCT deliver. This project will continue into the next quarter of 2022.

### Interface with Human Resources

The Trust are committed to agreeing a consistent approach in relation to the management of the interfaces between Adult Safeguarding, Adult Protection investigations involving a staff member and HR processes. A small working group has been established and work is ongoing.

### Adult Safeguarding Link Nurse Pilot:

In June 2021 a proposal paper was presented to the Adult Safeguarding Committee outlining an adult Safeguarding link nurse project in Meadowlands.

The service area proposed the introduction of Adult Safeguarding Link Nurses to better support local knowledge of Adult Safeguarding at ward level.

The aim of the Link Nurse pilot is 'to develop a cohort of staff ,with additional Adult safeguarding training, at ward level to provide local advice and support to staff with regards to Adult Safeguarding'.

The pilot commenced in late 2021, with a group of 10 nurses across two wards trained to level 3 in Adult Safeguarding: Line Manager/ASC Training. The purpose of the additional training is to improve staff knowledge of Adult Safeguarding and enable the link nurses to act as an Adult Safeguarding resource to staff at ward level.

The pilot will embed additional roles and responsibilities for the cohort of nurses, these include:

- To develop knowledge and expertise in ASG
- To offer support and encouragement to staff making a safeguarding referral
- To offer peer support and advice to ward staff involved in a ASG incident without compromising referral screening/investigation and upholding confidentiality requirements.
- To support the DAPO and Adult Protection Gateway team at ward level

- To ensure ASG information is available for staff and maintain the ASG notice board with the most up to date information
- To develop and maintain aide memoirs/operational manuals/ guidance for ward staff
- To develop internal Adult Safeguarding resources for staff at ward level
- To provide contemporaneous information to Adult Safeguarding Huddles/safety briefs at ward level.
- To communicate Adult Safeguarding strategic and operational updates to the ward staff
- To attend the Trust Adult Safeguarding Line Manager Support Group

The Learning and Development team delivered bespoke Level 3 to Meadowlands staff. Adult Safeguarding with additional bespoke training and reporting arrangements put in place to support the implementation of this pilot.

The Pilot will be reviewed in the next reporting period via senior nurse management and Adult Safeguarding management to establish if the aims and objectives of the project delivered successful outcomes.

## **PREVENTION:**

### Adult Safeguarding Champion Forum for External Agencies:

Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer alongside the Trust Adult Safeguarding Training Lead continue to deliver quarterly support network for Adult Safeguarding Champions of external Regulated facilities within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust catchment area. This meeting continues to be delivered on a virtual basis. The purpose of the support forum is to enable disseminate of regional and local Adult Safeguarding developments, provide peer support and shared learning.

### Position Reports:

Adult Safeguarding Champions for external regulated facilities continue to complete annual position reports. The Position reports enables an Adult Safeguarding Champion for each regulated facility to collate their annual data, analyse and draw on areas of learning and need relating to Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection. This report is primarily an accountability report for the organisation. Through the ASC forum has provided support and guidance to ASC's in relation to this.

While ideally BHSCT would like to be in a position to review all position reports, this has not been possible because there was no additional funding provided to implement this. The Trust as a commissioner of service have made it clear to organisations as part of our contractual process they must adhere to adult safeguarding policy and procedures and complete an annual position report. The Trust reserves the right to request position reports of individual organisations and will do this in situations where there is particular concerns relating to a service.

BHSCT currently, is not resourced to undertake the review and analysis of ASC position reports. However, BHSCT is currently reviewing Adult Safeguarding structures with the aim of proposing Adult Safeguarding governance and assurance arrangements, which would be responsible for reviewing a proportion of the ASC position reports. It remains the opinion of the Trust Adult Safeguarding strategic team that a resource is required to review and analyse all regulated facilities ASC position reports by BHSCT Adult Safeguarding as assurance and governance arrangement.

#### ASC Forum/Line Manager Forum:

Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer alongside the Trust Adult Safeguarding Training Lead delivered the BHSCT first internal ASC/Line Manager Forum in June 2021. This forum is delivered to BHSCT Employees who are trained to Level 3 ASC/Line Manager training as per the NIASP training framework 2016. This forum takes place quarterly, like the DAPO & IO support groups, the purpose of this internal support group is to provide strategic and operational Adult Safeguarding updates, facilitate peer support, provide learning opportunities and sharing of information. This forum has been well received by Trust Adult Safeguarding Line Managers.

#### Keeping You Safe Programme\*:

Delivered by Volunteer Now, The agency continues to delivery three training sessions within the Belfast LASP area. Volunteer now have moved the training onto a virtual platform to ensure delivery of service.

*\*error identified on minutes 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023 – Title of the programme delivered by Volunteer Now is Keeping Adults Safe*

#### Keeping You Safe programme- Facilitators training:

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Learning and Development team delivered two sessions this year. These session took place virtually via MS Teams.

#### Awareness Raising:

Over the twelve months April 2020- March 2021, strategic Adult Safeguarding delivered bespoke Adult Safeguarding awareness raising sessions to a range of services within BHSCT.

Strategic Adult Safeguarding assisted the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital to increase knowledge and awareness of Adult Safeguarding within BHSCT midwives. This work stream delivered bespoke Adult Safeguarding Awareness raising sessions, presentations on BHSCT Human Trafficking referral pathways and presentations on Signs and Symptoms of Abuse.

### Adult Safeguarding Awareness week:

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer delivered a 5-day learning event, 15<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> November 2021, to promote National Adult Safeguarding Awareness week. These events were delivered online via MS Teams. The following topics sessions were delivered to over 100 BHSCT staff and members of organisations aligned to Belfast LASP partner agencies:

- ✓ What is Adult Safeguarding- BHSCT Adult Safeguarding Development Officer
- ✓ Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery – Hope for Justice
- ✓ Scam wise Awareness- Police Service Northern Ireland
- ✓ Institutional Abuse: Identifying the Indicators – BHSCT Learning & Development Lead
- ✓ Signs & Symptoms of Abuse: Adult Safeguarding Development Lead

### Safetember and March to Safety events:

The Adult Safeguarding Development officer and the Executive Director of Social delivered Adult Safeguarding Awareness raising session as part of the Trust Safetember event in September 2021. This was well received and targeted a various number of services throughout the trust.

The Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital sites along with the Deputy Executive Director of Social Work presented a session on Adult Safeguarding in hospitals as part of the March to Safety event March 2022.

These presentations provided information of Adult Safeguarding, key updates, and highlighted to Trust employees adult Safeguarding responsibilities within the organisation.

### Adults safeguarding aides:

The Strategic Adult Safeguarding Team worked with a range of services to review referral pathways and provide aide memoirs and referral pathway charts throughout the BHSCT. Additionally, resources such as indicators of abuse and key contacts have been welcomed by departments through the BHSCT. It is the intention of strategic adult safeguarding to develop adult safeguarding awareness raising materials for service users, members of the public and staff. Such materials will be developed in English, other languages and accessible in other formats. This will aim to be embed within BHSCT by the end of 2022.

## **SECTION 3: (B) Service Area Reports (collated from DFS Report)**

### **Adult Safeguarding (ASG)**

The Adult Safeguarding Committee developed an action plan to address areas of deficit and this is being overseen by the Interim Deputy Executive Director of Social Work. The Trust is also undertaking a piece of work in consideration of a centralised model of delivery for Adult Protection for all programmes of care and the programme of care summaries contained in this report outline where there have been specific actions progressed to ensure appropriate thresholding, and sufficient capacity in the workforce to undertake the Investigative Office and Designated Adult Protection Officer Roles which will ensure timely completion of ASG investigations. Within the Learning Disability programme there has been intense scrutiny of ASG procedures including a DOH audit and a specific improvement plan is in place which seeks to address issues with thresholding, recording and the interface arrangements to support improved working relationships and to embed a collective vision in relation to Adult Safeguarding.

During this reporting period the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Public Inquiry officially commenced and the Trust has appointed a senior manager for the Public Inquiry and Trust Liaison and established an Inquiry Oversight Group. The Trust have also established an Inquiry Information Management Group to co-ordinate and respond to information requests from the Public Inquiry Team. The Trust welcomes the Public Inquiry and is providing the information as requested to enable the identification of learning.

### **Mental Health:**

During the reporting period Mental Health core team staff have increased face to face contact with Mental Health service users in provision of adult safeguarding investigations as lockdown measures have decreased. Isolated COVID outbreaks however continue to be an issue for IO staff in completing safeguarding investigations in care home and supported living settings at times. Care Home referrals were noted to have decreased at the beginning of COVID in 2020, however current numbers are in keeping with pre-COVID data within teams.

The bi-annual Mental Health Adult Safeguarding Team audit completed March 2022 illustrated good compliance with current processes in regard to investigation procedures. Moving to completion of APP documentation on PARIS, will support mandatory completion of the detail required on APP documentation, and IO, DAPO's and Line managers will not be able to progress documentation without completion of required mandatory information, improving standards and assisting in collation of delegated statutory functions and safeguarding analysis. The Mental Health Adult Safeguarding team continues to promote improvements in the use of the correct thresholds for safeguarding so that data collection correctly reflects the level of safeguarding completed.

The Mental Health service area continue to complete a word version of the ASP safeguarding documentation and had historically never been set up on PARIS for use of the ASP suite of forms. With the APP documentation being developed on PARIS for protection investigations,

all Mental Health staff will now require full training in the use of PARIS for safeguarding and for the use of the APP documentation. This training is proposed to be completed by June 2022 across all service areas. In addition, while all areas are required to report on protection cases only for DSF reporting, Mental Health continue to complete a higher level of Adult at Risk of Harm investigations than protection investigations. There is currently no documentation developed to date to record the safeguarding response for Risk of harm investigations however discussions are ongoing regarding the development of specific documentation for these alternative to protection investigation responses.

Deficits remain within therapy teams for IO and DAPO trained staff resulting in trained staff having to be identified within the wider service area at times for safeguarding investigations. All service areas continue to be encouraged to consider internal workforce planning to ensure appropriate numbers of IO trained Band 6 and Band 7 DAPO trained social work staff to fulfil the adult safeguarding role.

MARAC referrals within Mental Health service area has increased in the reporting period, with a number of appropriate referrals being made to r to MARAC. MARAC cases are proposed to be assessed within the threshold of protection and there are plans for all cases discussed at MARAC to be offered a safeguarding response. There are a number of people referred to MARAC with a history of mental health issues, however most of these cases are either closed to Mental Health, have been referred for assessment and have not attended, or following assessment have no mental health diagnosis or needs. A significant number of people referred to Mental Health can be signposted to a voluntary agency who can meet their presenting needs. If all cases discussed at MARAC are to be offered a protection response, this will impact significantly on mental health given that most referrals to MARAC are not currently open cases. The Mental Health Adult Safeguarding Team also do not have the capacity to undertake this role, as it is not and was not established as a Gateway service and has no IO's. While the Social Work Development Leads' role has an element of DAPO role, this is a small part of their position. There is a recent proposal to develop a specific post for a MARAC Lead for the whole of BHSCT, currently each service area has a MARAC Lead within their area. IO's and a DAPO would be required to support this role for proposals of offering a safeguarding protection response to known or previously known referrals.

Joint Protocol investigations and the numbers of PIA interviews and ABE interviews continue to decrease within Mental Health due to police thresholds for Adult Safeguarding investigations. As a result, only one member of staff was put forward for ABE training in January 2022. It is proposed that Belfast Trust operate a pool of trained ABE staff across all service areas. New DAPO staff have been trained in Joint Protocol for referring adult safeguarding cases and consultations with CRU.

#### **PHSD:**

Physical and Sensory Disability Services have discharged their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding.

The findings from Home Truths and subsequent series of reports issued as part of the Independent Whole Systems Review (CPEA) into Dunmurry Manor, including safeguarding, continue to inform on the Trust as a whole.

The challenges within the programme of care have been

- Adult safeguarding during the pandemic has presented significant challenges, particularly relating to professionals and family members having limited access to care homes to investigate and review service user's needs. Further difficulties related to undertaking investigations including social distancing and isolation periods associated with new admissions to care homes which staff have mitigated through virtual meetings and use of PPE.
- Day Care attendances were impacted by the social distancing guidelines for Covid-19, which impacts on service users, families and carers. Re-build plans are being developed and all service users have a minimum of one day attendance with additional days for those based on risk and assessed need, including carer support.
- Consistency of approach across all services areas in safeguarding thresholds and reporting. Actions taken to address this include the implementation of a governance meeting to triangulate information in care homes between incidents, safeguarding and going forward enhancing communication with safeguarding champions in the care home setting.
- Teams can experience significant delays when a case is referred to PSNI, usually awaiting a decision on who is taking forward the investigation. This has a huge impact on service users confidence in the process as there can be an extended period while awaiting PSNI response

In response to these challenges, the Trust is reviewing all safeguarding systems and structures, through the Safeguarding Reform Steering Group, commenced in March 2022 which includes Task & Finish groups focusing on;

- Hospital
- Governance
- Learning and Development
- Awareness and Experience
- Data and IT
- Structures

### **Adult Protection Gateway Team (APGT)**

The challenge for the APTG team continues to be the percentage of cases which do not meet the threshold for adults in need of protection investigations.

995 or 58% of referrals received by APTG were either screened out or transferred.

This significant activity at the entry point to the service impacts on the Teams ability to respond to appropriate referrals, screened as meeting an Adult Safeguarding threshold, in a timely and appropriate manner.

Screened out referrals still require a level of activity to follow through on a duty of care and due diligence. These referrals often require advice, guidance and/or re-direction.

Significant numbers of screened out referrals are 'Welfare concerns'. The current pressures occurring elsewhere in the system will inevitably lead to an increase in welfare concern activity for APGT.

Actions to mitigate include:

- The service continues to analyse data and activity levels and escalates through to the senior management team via safety huddles and ongoing liaison with PSNI regarding referral pathways and 'welfare referrals,' that do not meet threshold for Adult Protection Investigation.
- Review of referral pathways for Care Homes and Nursing Homes
- Identified need to support DAPO's across the programme of care in consistent screening and decision-making, to ensure all referrals are appropriate.
- Plans are in place to return the APGT service in July 2022 to the pre-pandemic pathway, where referrals go directly to the Team involved and only those meeting the threshold for APGT are escalated for investigation

### **Learning Disability:**

Advise on any challenges in the provision of Safeguarding services that have arisen in this Programme of Care during the reporting period and actions taken to mitigate any difficulties.

#### Adult Safeguarding Activity

There were 477 Adult Safeguarding Referrals over the reporting period 2021/22 compared to 364 referrals received in 2020/21. This is an increase of 31% from the previous year. Muckamore Abbey remains the highest source/origin of referral for Learning Disability Services, with 219 referrals originating from this Learning Disability Hospital. 2021/22 recorded an increase of 23.7% of incidents referred to Adult Safeguarding compared to 177 the previous reporting year 2020/21. The largest increase across all reported sources of Adult Safeguarding referrals for 2021/22 was 'Regulated Care Home' with 11 referrals originating in 2020/21 and 41 recorded in 2021/22, this is an increase of 272% compared to the previous year.

The number of referrals screened out decreased marginally by 9%, as 2021/22 recorded 125 referrals screened out of Adult Protection processes, compared to 138 referrals screened out the previous reporting year.

Physical Abuse remains the highest recorded category of abuse, as per previous reporting years. Physical abuse accounts for 61% of total referrals received. Psychological abuse is the second highest category of abuse, accounting for 16% of referrals. Referrals relating to allegations of neglect recorded an increase of 119%, with 45 referrals received in relation to neglect in 2021/22, compared to 21 referrals relating to neglect in 2020/21.

Joint Protocol Activity within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust remains low in comparison to the number of joint protocol consultations completed. Learning Disability Services completed 56 Joint Protocol consultations over the reporting period 2021/22, with only 3.9 % of referrals agreed as a joint investigation between Police and Learning Disability



Adult Safeguarding. 2021/22 reporting period noted a reduction in Joint Protocol investigations commenced within Learning Disability services, with 7 recorded in 2021/22 compared to 25 recorded in 2020/21. Of the seven joint protocol investigations commenced in 2021/22, four Pre Interview Assessments were completed and two ABE interviews took place.

### Adult Safeguarding Challenges

There have been extremely challenging workforce issues in the Division in relation to the Adult Safeguarding Workforce. Historically the Learning Disability Service has a limited resource of designated DAPOs and IO's resource, with responsibilities mainly delegated across Community Teams and Hospital Social Work. The impact of the staffing pressures affecting the teams as referenced in Section 2.1b has directly impacted upon the Divisions ability to conclude Adult Safeguarding investigations in a timely and contemporaneous way. This has been exacerbated by a high level of absence across staff, particularly those aligned to Muckamore Abbey Hospital

As detailed above the service area is urgently working to address the vacancy and absence issues as detailed. Currently most DAPO's in the service area are also Team Leaders/ Senior Social Workers with adult safeguarding being only a small part of their substantive posts. This puts additional pressure on them as they are also undertaking other keys functions including managing a MDT, chairing PQC meetings and undertaking roles aligned to the Mental Health Order.

Whilst it is the vision of the Trust to move to a central Adult Safeguarding service, in the interim the actions taken by the Trust are:

- The appointment of a second Adult Safeguarding Lead (8a)
- The commencement of a review into the workforce model for Adult Safeguarding in Learning Disability to ensure that there sufficient Designated Posts to meet demand
- Building capacity through the re-configuration of resource, seeking to recruit in addition to the Team Leader role, a Senior Practitioner to each team to support with DAPO role and Complex Case Management
- Developing the Investigation Officer role
- Developing business support to support reporting and analysis of trends
- Strengthening governance arrangements through the embedding of weekly huddles, a monthly Safeguarding Forum, a review of staff training needs and audit.

The Division is currently developing an Improvement Action Plan for Adult Safeguarding. Current risks are recorded on the Divisional Risk Register.

A recurrent theme across RQIA inspections in Muckamore Abbey Hospital concerns challenges in the relationships between Hospital Staff and Adult Safeguarding staff. Whilst both staff groups are working within challenging contexts, it is recognised that this is impacting upon collaborative working and the Adult Safeguarding arrangements. There are in place a

number of interface arrangements to support improved working relationships and to embed a collective vision in relation to Adult Safeguarding. These include a weekly interface meeting and a monthly opportunity to meet to discuss recurrent themes and trends across the hospital site. This is to encourage integrated working to reduce recurrent themes and improve interventions. Both Teams are currently working to improve their data collation and analysis, with the development of a partnership working Quality Improvement Project to take an enhanced case management approach to support those service users more at risk from Adult Safeguarding incidents.

Historical CCTV Adult Safeguarding investigation.

The Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH) large-scale historical CCTV adult safeguarding investigation remains ongoing and this continues to be an extremely complex and time-consuming investigation. From a safeguarding perspective, it is positive to note that at this stage all raw footage CCTV relating to the timeframe of the historical investigation has been viewed by either Trust or Police. In this reporting period the Adult Safeguarding team have completed raw footage viewing of Six Mile Assessment. Therefore in total the MAH Historical Adult Safeguarding team have completed raw footage viewing of PICU, Cranfield 1 & 2 and Six Mile Assessment. The viewing of Six Mile Treatment is currently in process. The two core investigation processes remain ongoing – the Police led investigation and the Trust disciplinary investigation.

In this reporting period there have been a number of additional MAH staff arrested and questioned by Police in relation to MAH Historical Investigation. The court legal processes commenced with 8 members of staff from MAH being charged with 131 offences. The court processes are still at an early stage and to date there have been a few adjournments

The Trust disciplinary investigations are ongoing and to date a number of staff have been dismissed. The disciplinary investigation process is complex and it is anticipated that there will be a number of other staff who will be subject to disciplinary investigation. The Historical Adult Safeguarding Team continues to provide information to inform both of these processes

The focus of the MAH Historical Adult Safeguarding team's work over the last year is as follows:

- View raw footage to identify incidents of concern.
- Making referrals to senior management via HR for interim protection plans and where appropriate making referrals to PSNI for Police investigation.
- The MAH Historical Adult Safeguarding team have completed viewing of the PICU incidents forwarded to them by PSNI.
- Quality-assurance of the current database is on-going, in partnership with HR team
- The team are engaged in ongoing family liaison work, with each affected family having a nominated family liaison social worker. Police also have family liaison officers appointed and there has been ongoing positive joint working in terms of liaison with families regarding the reporting of incidents of concern

- In addition, the MAH Historical Adult Safeguarding team hold cross-Trust meetings with Northern Trust and South Eastern Trust as some of the affected families are from their Trust areas
- Provide information when requested by the external disciplinary investigators

The 3-weekly Operational group meetings are still on-going, comprising of representatives from Adult Safeguarding team, HR, Senior Nurse Advisor, RQIA and PSNI. This forum provides an opportunity for discussion on key aspects of work and progress. The Review of Interim Protection Plans now forms a core element of the 3-weekly operational meeting.

In October 2021, the MAH Public Inquiry officially commenced and there have been a series of public engagement events held by the Public Inquiry team to explain their role and to encourage families and staff to come forward. The Trust have appointed a senior manager for the Public Inquiry and Trust Liaison. The Trust have established an Inquiry Oversight Group. The Trust have also established an Inquiry Information Management Group to co-ordinate and respond to information requests from the Public Inquiry Team. The Trust welcome the Public Inquiry and are providing the information as requested. This has generated a significant volume of additional work but the Trust understands the importance of this work and the need for the associated learning.

#### Audit Activity

##### Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding Audit- Sept 2021

An audit of Adult Safeguarding within Learning Disability services was commissioned by the Divisional Social Worker in response to a request by the HSCB through the DSF meeting. It was agreed, the audit would include referrals that were screened into Adult Safeguarding for an investigation and screened out of Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures.

The audit covered both referrals for Muckamore Abbey Hospital and Community Learning Disability teams from April 2020 to June 2021. For the purpose of the Audit, a 10% sample was obtained from Muckamore Abbey Hospital and Community Learning Disability Teams.

The review focussed on the quality of recording, the appropriateness of interventions, service user and/or carer involvement, timeliness of investigation and progression of the investigation on Paris CIS.

This audit took place in the context of significant adult safeguarding workforce issues in the service area and this has impacted upon the ability of the service area to make the required progress.

In relation to MAH there were a number of findings which have now been incorporated into the Adult Safeguarding Improvement Action Plan. These include:

- The Trust should implement the Regional Adult Protection Procedure forms
- Adult Safeguarding Practitioners should include service user and carers involvement in their recording
- Adult Safeguarding to review any potential delays between reporting and screening at ward level to acceptance by ASG staff
- Staff to ensure all recording is uploaded onto the PARIS system including any manual documentation
- DAPO should carry out a quality assurance process when ASG referrals are being closed
- The Division should carry out a further audit of manual documentation.
- A review of the manual documentation in MAH was then completed and further recommendations are now included in the action plan. These were as follows:
- All manual recordings relating to service user and carer contact, Joint Protocol consultations, updates to protection plan and risk assessment are to be recorded on Paris. This does not replace the documentation.
- All outstanding recordings which are not saved on Paris to be reviewed by the ASG Lead.
- In relation to Community LD ASG a number of findings were agreed which have also been incorporated into an action plan. These are as follows:
- The need for the Trust to implement the Regional Adult Protection Procedure forms
- The quality of the recording of Adult Safeguarding Champions in regulated services was noted to be varied. The Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer will bring this identified area of learning to the BHSC Adult Safeguarding Champion support group and Line Manager support group for action.
- All ASG recording to be completed and signed off contemporaneously.

Whilst progress has been slow in relation to implementing these actions due to workforce challenges, a further audit is planned for June 2022.

#### ASG audit by DOH in August 2021

A file review was commissioned by the Department of Health (DoH) in response to concerns about the numbers of referrals implicating staff in alleged abuse of patients. The review provided an external opinion and analysis of adult safeguarding referrals involving staff on patient interactions in MAH between 1.1.20 and 30.4 21

The file review focused on two key areas:

- the appropriateness of the thresholds in operation for initial referral and screening outcomes (based on the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures, 2016)
- the levels of actual and/or potential harm caused to patients by the incidents that have been reported.

There were 116 relevant adult safeguarding referrals for this period. The file review examined a sample of 60 adult safeguarding referrals made within the timeframe. These 60 files were purposively sampled, stratified by referral source, type of abuse and outcome of screening process.

The outcome of the review was that there was a lower referral threshold which may be understood in the context of current public scrutiny and the ongoing formal safeguarding investigation. However notwithstanding the low threshold for referral they noted that there was a distinct difference between those referrals which were screened in and those screened out, with often more complex referrals screened in.

The reviewers also found that the actual and/or potential harm caused to patients was often difficult to determine in large part because of the quality of recording. They found that systems were in place to identify and address safeguarding concerns with staff reporting incidents and good practice was evident in what appeared to be thorough initial responses, initial communication with families and referrals to PSNI. However, they found there appeared to be less attention to ongoing and timely review of protection plans, the restrictions these may place on patients' activities, and timeframes for completing investigations.

As a result of the file review the BHSCT have now devised an action plan specifically focussing on the issues raised by the DOH, these are being inculcated into the Adult Safeguarding Improvement Plan. The actions namely focus on

- The review of those files where outcomes appear to be inconclusive or at least where conclusions were not recorded
- The review of patients subject to repeat referrals to ensure that these have been considered in the round in terms of impact and not as separate events

Addressing issues relating to the quality of recording including recording of decision making, follow up actions, review of protection plans to include making them more patient focussed, recording the impact of Protection Plans on the patients ability to be involved in social and therapeutic activities, recording of consideration of interviewing patients as part of the investigation and recording of the discussions during investigations

- To take appropriate action taken in respect of agency staff no longer employed by MAH but who had been identified as being involved in ASG incidents.
- To consider collecting feedback from all those affected by adult safeguarding investigations
- To review thresholds used for the referral of safeguarding incidents and to ensure staff are supported in their decision making so that appropriate referrals are made.
- The Trust have provided an updated action plan to the Department of Health, evidencing actions being taken.

- The service currently has 3 Band 7 staff trained as ABE interviewers. It is hoped to increase this in the coming year to meet the service area needs
- All DAPO's, IO's and ABE staff continue to have access to professional support groups

## PARIS

The service area continues to use the ASG forms from the previous policy and await PARIS implementation to ensure staff move to using the new documentation. Additional PARIS training will also be required to train up DAPO/IO staff and referral agents when this is being introduced.

## **SECTION 4: Activity Returns.**

### **Chart 1:**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust received 3785 Adult Safeguarding referrals from April 2021 to March 2022. This was an increase of 611 referrals compared to the previous reporting period.

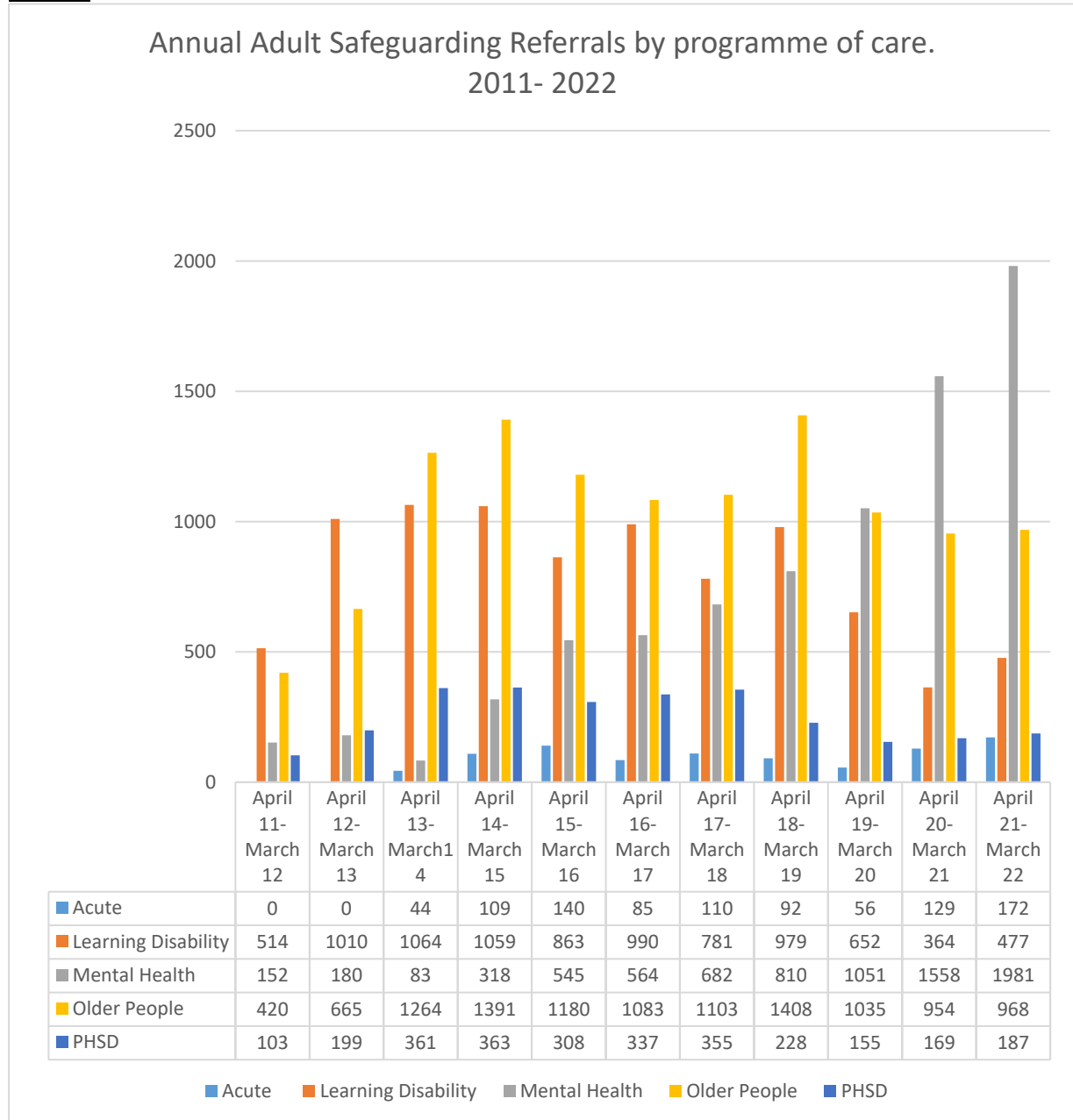
Mental Health received the highest number of referrals in 2021/22 with 1981, this was an increase of 233 referrals from the previous reporting year. Equally, Mental Health recorded the highest number of referrals screened out; 1376, mental health Adult Safeguarding screened out activity accounts for 69.45% of referral activity over this reporting period. Mental Health commenced 467 Adult Safeguarding/ Adult At risk of harm investigations and 102 adult in need of protection investigations. Mental health Adult Safeguarding hit an 11 year peak in recorded Adult Safeguarding activity with a 27% increase in referrals from the previous reporting year.

Older Peoples Service received the second highest number of referrals with 964 recorded. Older Peoples screened out 47% of referrals, with 198 Adult Safeguarding/Adult At risk of harm investigations commencing and 178 adult in need of protection investigations commencing. However, Older Peoples service has recorded a gradual decline in referrals over the past four reporting years, with a peak in 2018/19 of 1408 referrals and gradual reduction over the two following years.

Physical Health and Sensory Disability Referrals remain much lower in comparison of the other service areas with 187 referrals received and 51% of referrals screened out. PHSD experienced a slight increase in referrals with 18 more compared to the previous report period. In 2021/22 PHSD commenced 8 Adult At risk of harm investigations and 38 Adult in need of Protection investigations. PHSD recorded a reduction in Adult at Risk of Harm investigations, however there was a noted increase in Alternative Safeguarding Responses, whereby 43 were actioned, compared to 19 the previous reporting period.

Learning Disability received 477 Adult Safeguarding Referrals over the reporting period 2021/22 compared to 364 referrals received in 2020/21. This was an increase of 31% from the previous year. The number of referrals screened out decreased marginally by 9%, as 2021/22 recorded 125 referrals screened out of Adult Protection processes, compared to 138 referrals screened out the previous reporting year.

**Chart1:**



**Chart 2:**



Table Of Adult Safeguarding Activity Years: 2017- 2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-21 & 2021-2022																										
		Investigations					Protection Plans					Joint Protocol					PIAs					ABE Interviews				
Years	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	
Acute Sector	6	10	11	9	7	4	10	9	21	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Learning Disability	352	591	232	157	325	343	553	150	300	340	34	180	10	25	7	0	2	4	3	4	1	0	0	2	2	
Mental Health	364	420	554	560	569	362	411	352	473	520	21	10	9	4	8	12	10	2	4	2	9	3	0	4	0	
Older People	448	601	663	414	376	444	579	554	211	242	58	73	27	32	30	24	42	21	15	7	12	11	5	1	1	
PSD	131	101	89	75	46	129	99	70	39	43	14	21	4	3	3	10	11	1	5	2	2	4	1	3	1	

Chart 2 outlines the Adult Safeguarding activity over a 5 year period.

### Investigations:

The reporting period 2021/22 noted a decline in adult safeguarding investigations commenced with 1323 investigations commenced, this is a reduction of 14% compared to the previous reporting period whereby 1549 investigations commenced. Mental Health and Learning Disability services recorded increases in investigations commenced compared to previous report year.

Older People Service recorded a significant reduction in investigations commenced in 2021/22. This is a reduction of 43% compared to the previous reporting period.

PHSD, although this service area consistently has lower adult safeguarding activity in comparison to other service areas, this reporting period recorded a reduction 48% of investigations commenced compared to the previous reporting period. Similarly, Learning Disability recorded a reduction of referrals requiring an alternative

Learning Disability commenced 325 investigations during the reporting period 2021/22, compared to 257 investigations commenced in 2020/21. This an increase of 26%.

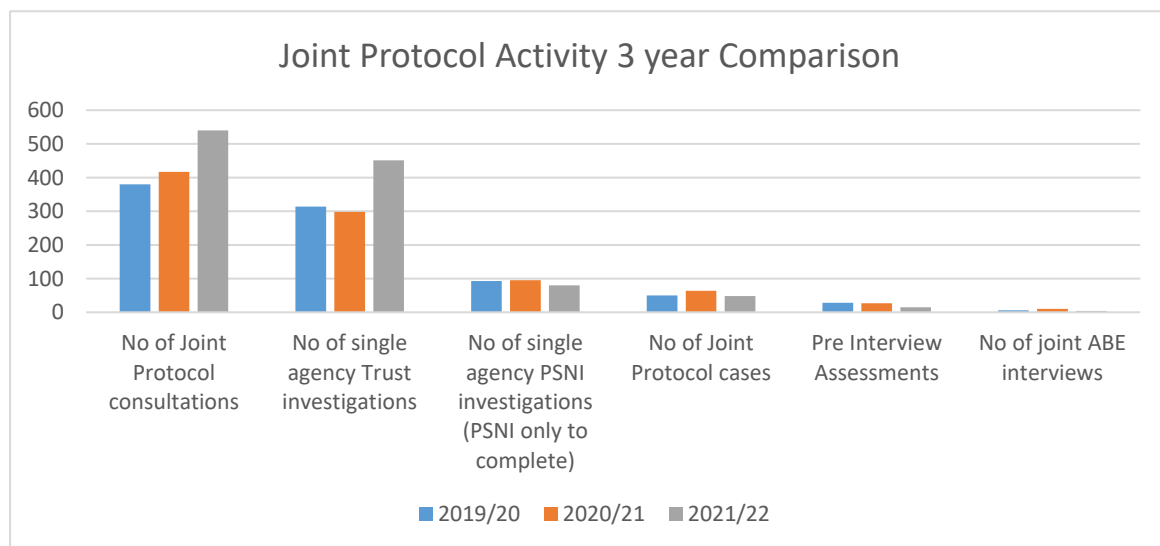
When looking at the criteria of an adult in need of protection, Learning Disability reported a 56% decrease in referrals requiring an Adult Protection Investigation with 29 Adult Protection Investigations commenced in 2021/22 compared to 67 the previous reporting period 2020/21.

On the other hand, learning disability reported a 55% increase in referrals requiring an Adult safeguarding investigation, with 296 Adult Safeguarding Investigations commenced in 2021/22 compared to 190 in 2020/21.

**Protection Plans:**

The recording of protection plan activity remains an area to target. Data for this reporting period indicates there is an issue with recording an interpretation of the HSCB Data requirement. The data presented in chart 2 suggests there is a disparity in investigations commenced and protection plans implemented. This area of work will be progressed with the Adult Safeguarding Data & IT task and finish group.

**Chart 3:**



**Joint Protocol:**

Chart 2 and Chart 3 outline the joint protocol activity for the reporting period 2021/22 and an enable a comparison to be drawn. Over the reporting period 2021/22, the BHSCT Adult Safeguarding staff completed 540 Joint Protocol Consultations with PSNI. This is an 29% increase from previous reporting period 2019/20, whereby 417 joint protocol consultations took place.

The number of joint protocol investigations commenced in 2021/22 decreased by 25% with 48 joint protocol investigations commenced, compared to 64 joint protocol investigation commenced the previous year in 2020/21.

The number of Pre Interview Assessments completed over this reporting period was 15, compared to 27 completed the previous reporting period. The data obtained

relating to the Achieving Best Evidence interviews (ABE's) remains relatively low, with 4 ABE's completed within this reporting period, 6 less compared to 2020/21.

**Chart 4:**

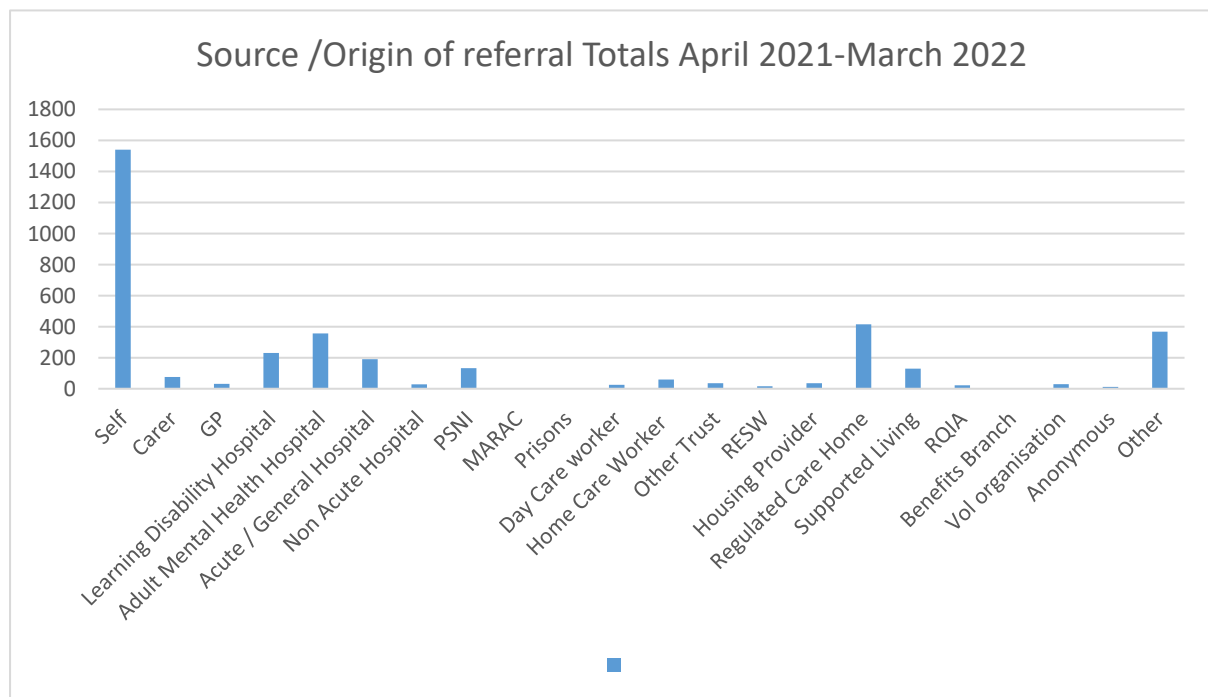
Chart 4 outlines the total annual referral source for the reporting period April 2021-March 2022 outline the sources of Adult Safeguarding referrals received by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Self referral was the highest recorded source of referral with 1540 self referrals made to BHSCT Adult Safeguarding. This is a 35% increase compared to the previous reporting year.

In 2021/22 referrals from PSNI decreased by 35% with 132 referrals identifying PSNI as the source of referral into Adult Safeguarding.

Referrals from regulated care homes increased by 34% in 2021/22.

Adult Mental Health Hospital and Acute General Hospital both experienced an increase in referrals over this reporting period, with an increase of 54% and 66% increase respectively.

**Chart 4:**



**Chart 5 & Chart 6:**

Chart 5 provides a breakdown of category of abuse for the reporting period 2021/22.

Chart 6 provides a breakdown of category of abuse by programme of care.

Chart 7 displays a two year comparison of category of abuse by programme of care.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Adult Safeguarding referrals recorded 46% of referrals relating to Physical Abuse. This is a comparative figure to the previous reporting period whereby Physical abuse was the highest recorded category of abuse. Physical abuse was the highest recorded category of abuse across all service areas.

Mental health noted a significant increase in referrals relating to physical abuse and sexual abuse reported through to MH Adult Safeguarding. In 2021/22, mental health recorded 826 physical abuse incidents, compared to 605 the previous reporting period, this is an increase of 36% over the twelve month period.

Sexual abuse accounts for 22% of referrals for the reporting period 2021/22. Mental Health had the highest number of sexual abuse referrals with 677 referrals relating to Sexual abuse in 2021/22. This is an increase of 15% compared to 587 the previous reporting period.

Financial abuse accounts for 10% of Adult Safeguarding referrals received. Older Peoples service had the highest number of financial abuse cases compared to other programmes of care with 153 incidents of financial abuse. Older People service saw an increase of 17 more referrals relating to financial abuse incidents reported to Adult Safeguarding compared to the previous reporting period.

Acute Hospitals account for 4.5% of the total adult safeguarding referrals. It important to note, the increase of an additional 43 in referrals within Acute Hospitals compared to the previous reporting period 2020/21. Acute Hospitals reported an increase in all categories of referrals with the exception of zero referrals relating to exploitation. Financial abuse increased from 9 to 19 referrals over the last twelve months, reported incidents of sexual abuse increased from 3 to 12 and reported incidents of psychological/ emotional abuse increased from 6 to 17 in 2021/22.

Chart 5:

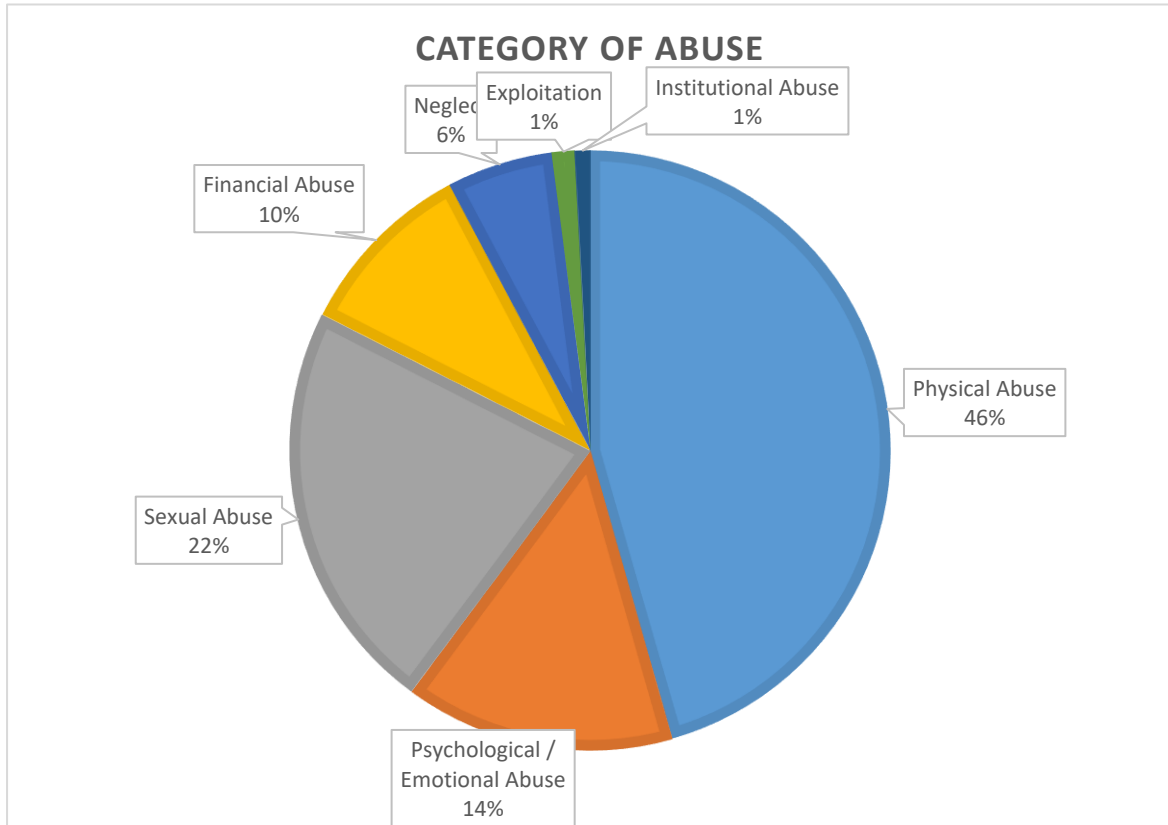


Chart 6

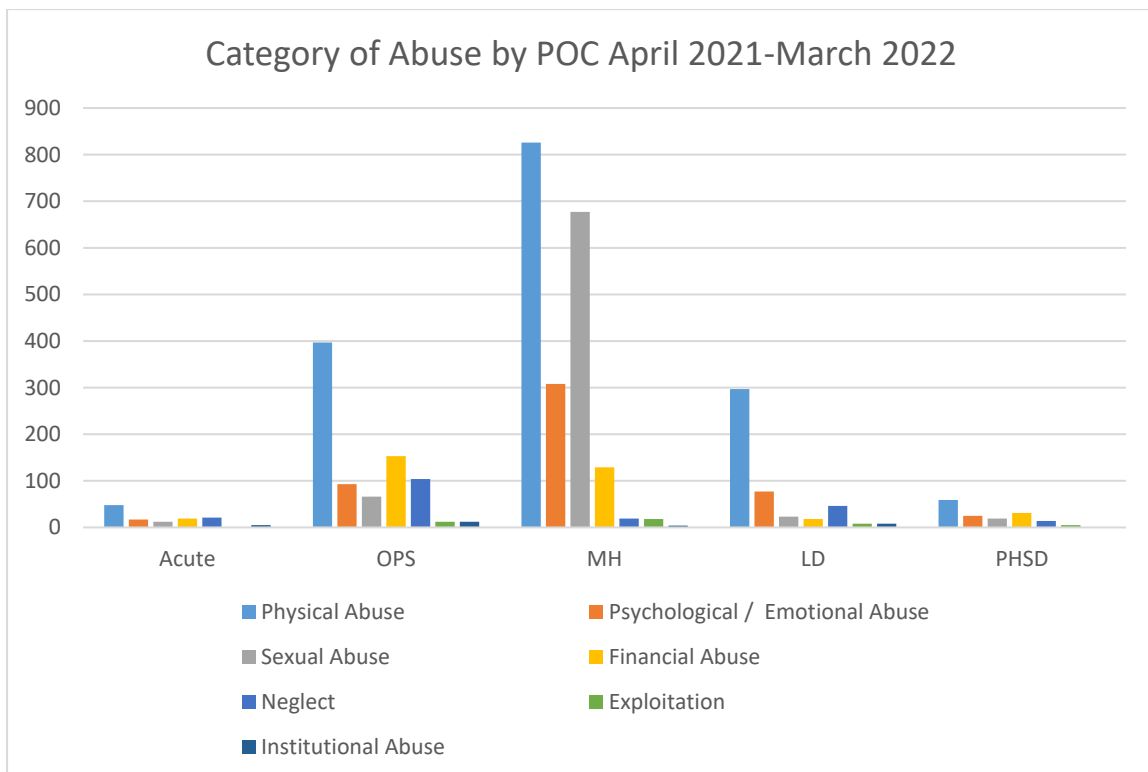
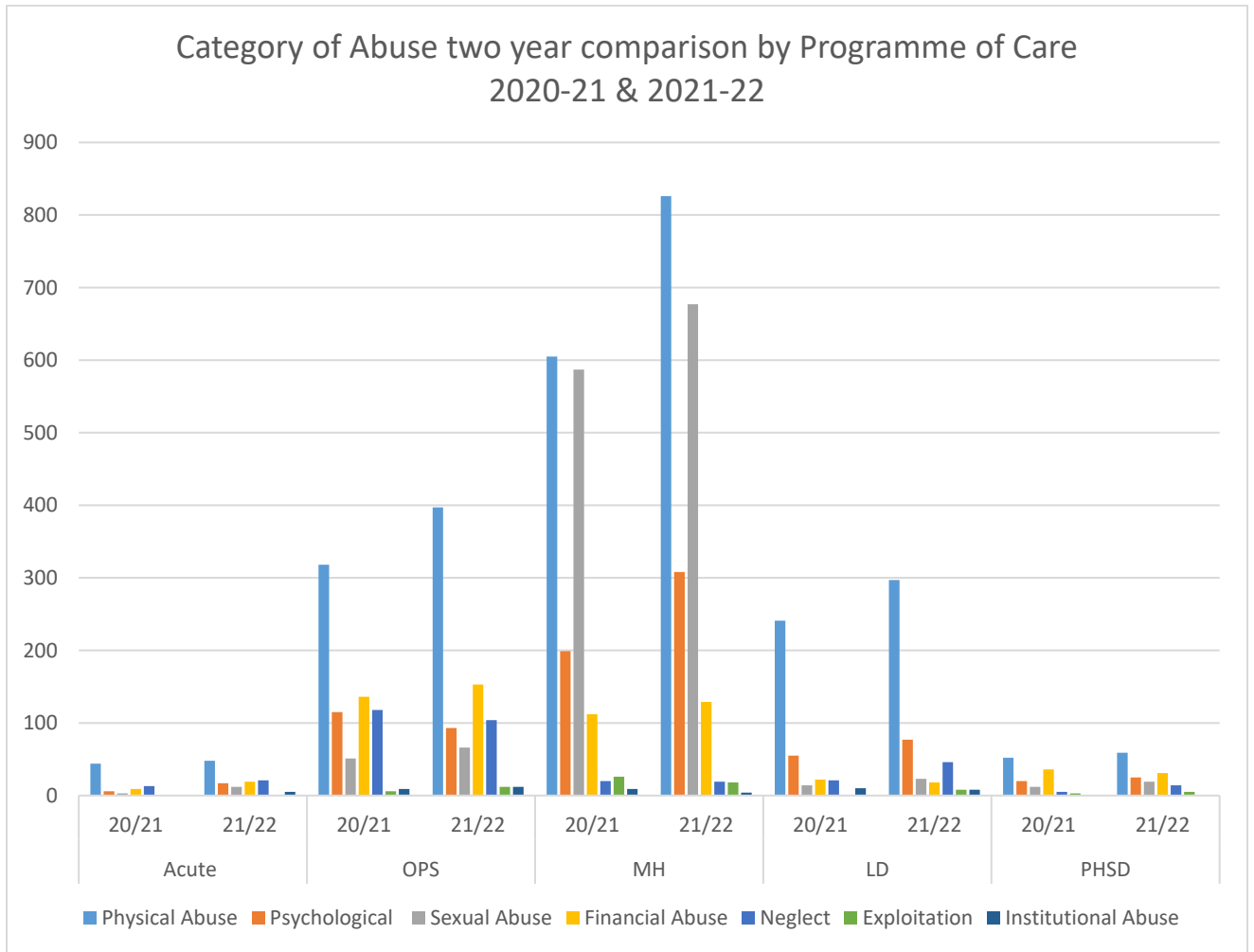


Chart 7:



## Section 5: Trust Adult Safeguarding Action Plan 2021-22 (Summary)

### Safeguarding Reform Steering Group

In response to operational Adult Safeguarding challenges, the Trust is reviewing all safeguarding systems and structures, through the Safeguarding Reform Steering Group, commenced in March 2022 which includes Task & Finish groups focusing on;

- Hospital
- Governance
- Learning and Development
- Awareness and Experience
- Data and IT
- Structures

Action:	Update
Review of current Adult Safeguarding Structures and decide future structure	Ongoing Working group establish, draft proposal paper produced
Adult Safeguarding Training - SCOPE Trust wide training needs.	Ongoing Training paper submitted and money received from charitable funds Further work required in relation to: E-learning for level 2 to be developed Level 3 ASC training
Adult Safeguarding Workforce	Completed
Development and implementation of APP suite of forms onto Paris Module. Encompass and Adult Safeguarding Future Development	Ongoing Temporary Band 7 recruited to take forward phase 2 &3 Phase 2 of project completed. Phase 3 to commence. Aim to go live with regional APP forms June 2022
Adult Safeguarding Data Collation and Analysis	Ongoing Development in line with internal data needs and Regional HSCB data requirements
Review current delivery of adult safeguarding Policy & Procedures	Ongoing Focus on thresholds, management of adult at risk of harm, APP documentation
Service User Engagement	Ongoing
Interface between Adult Safeguarding and other Trust processes	Ongoing Working group re-established
Joint Protocol	Ongoing Regional working group commenced
Adult Safeguarding in Hospital Settings and Community Settings	Ongoing

	Temporary 8a Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital settings recruited
Ensure current partnership working arrangements are maintained and strengthened	Ongoing LASP continues quarterly PSCP Prevention initiative ongoing Regional networks
Adult Safeguarding Champion Forum	Achieved Established groups meeting every quarter
Trust Adult Safeguarding line Manager Support Group	Achieved Initial meeting June 2021, meetings occurred once a quarter
Review and strengthen Trust wide Adult Safeguarding Governance arrangements	Ongoing Governance arrangements subject to review and update
Review current arrangements for current Adult Safeguarding Shared Learning and ensure there is a robust system in place for shared learning	Ongoing Established standing agenda at DAPO & IO forums, Adult Safeguarding leadership group and line manager forums
Implementation of the recommendations from COPNI	Ongoing
Implementation of the CPEA recommendations	Ongoing
Adult Safeguarding Champion Position Reports	Outstanding
Adult Protection Bill	Ongoing Trust continues to take forward requests from the Department of Health
Coercive Control -Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Bill due November 2021	Completed Bespoke training delivered by Women's Aid November- February 2022.