

# **Belfast Health and Social Care Trust**

## **Adult Safeguarding**

### **Annual Position Report**

**2022/23**

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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 2022/23 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 three following the Covid-19 Pandemic and the recovery of 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
- Adult Protection Bill developments

As noted in the previous annual reports, 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, which continued into 2022/23.

## **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. In July 2022, the Belfast Trust Executive Director of Social Work retired and was replaced by an Interim Executive Director of Social Work. August 2022 saw the retirement of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist (TASS) who also held the role of Interim Trust Adult Safeguarding Champion. Following this, the newly appointed Interim Executive Director of Social Work became the Interim Trust Adult Safeguarding Champion.

The TASS post was not advertised over this period which has left some of a void in Strategic developments of Adult Safeguarding within the Belfast Trust.

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.

The Executive Director of Social Work / Interim Trust Adult Safeguarding Champion, chairs the Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee.

In this reporting period, the Adult Safeguarding Committee has continued to meet; these meetings took place on the 28/7/2022, 22/9/2022, 1/11/2022 & 16/2/2023.

The membership of the Adult Safeguarding Committee consists of representatives from all directorates within Belfast Trust this includes Nursing, Medics, AHPS, alongside HR and Finance colleagues. All members have a responsibility to contribute to the delivery of Adult Safeguarding within the Trust, focusing upon key priorities in relation to prevention, early intervention and protection.

The Terms of Reference of the Adult Safeguarding committee outlines the core duties and responsibilities in relation to Adult Safeguarding & Adult Protection, emphasising Adult Safeguarding is everyone's business.

The Adult Safeguarding Committee, when providing advice to the Clinical and Social Care Governance Steering group, will ensure the effectiveness of their group by:

- Ensuring that the work of the groups meet their responsibilities as outlined in their Terms of Reference
- Support the identification, review, and escalation of Risks associated with the group/sub-committee purpose.
- Provide regular Assurance updates as per the Integrated Governance and Assurance Framework and their individual Terms of Reference to allow scrutiny of ongoing Trust Assurance arrangements
- Review the adequacy of relevant Key Policies and ensuring their timely update
- The Adult Safeguarding Committee's responsibilities will centre on providing assurance with regard to the effectiveness of the Trust's adult safeguarding organisational arrangements and processes.

Within the first quarter of the reporting period 2022/23, 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 August 2022, the Adult Safeguarding Development lead commenced a temporary post as Interim Service Manager for Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding. Although the Adult Safeguarding development post was not re-advertised, the post holder continued with some strategic responsibilities alongside the temporary ASG Service Manager post within Learning Disability.

The previous Adult Safeguarding Position Paper outlined two temporary posts within strategic Adult Safeguarding, these included an 8a Nurse Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital settings and a Band 7 Social Worker/ Training & Implementation Manager for Paris Community Information System. The Band 7 Training & Implementation manager continued their EOI until September 2022, when they were redeployed on a temporary basis to Muckamore Abbey Hospital Adult Safeguarding Team. The temporary move continued for the remainder of the reporting period 2022/23.

Over the past twelve months, the 8a Nurse Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital Settings was further extended on a temporary basis working primarily on a dedicated Adult Safeguarding Action plan for Acute General hospitals within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

It is important to note the strategic posts remain at 'risk posts' because of a lack of funding for strategic Adult Safeguarding work. The continuation of these posts were seen as critical in progressing elements of the Adult Safeguarding committee action plan.

In September 2022, a Divisional Social Worker was tasked with operational management of the 8a Nurse Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital settings and in addition to take forward elements of the Trust Adult Safeguarding action plan. Such key priorities included Domestic Homicide Review and Adult Safeguarding

Governance work stream. As noted in the previous position report, 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 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 of 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 tenth operational year and continues 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. 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.

The 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 screens Adult Safeguarding referrals, determines the threshold of significant harm and implements 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 is funded for a full time Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A). This post was filled via an EOI for this reporting period. Furthermore, a further Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A) was recruited via EOI. This post was implemented on a temporary basis with at risk funding.

Both Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A) posts cover Community and Hospital Adult Safeguarding. These posts continue to deliver 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 investigate referrals meeting the threshold of an 'Adult in need of protection'. Community Social Work and Community Nursing staff are trained as Investigating Officers.

Muckamore Abbey Hospital has a dedicated 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.

In September 2022, the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Adult Safeguarding Team introduced a central point of referral with a dedicated DAPO in post to screen all Adult Safeguarding referrals. Following the success of this model the Adult Safeguarding Team moved to a service area wide Adult Safeguarding Team from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The Adult Safeguarding team is managed by the Adult Safeguarding Lead (8A) and consists of three Senior Social Work Practitioners with DAPO responsibilities (B7) and three Social Workers with Investigating Officer responsibilities (B6). The Adult Safeguarding Team screens all Adult Safeguarding Referrals in line with the regional Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership policy (2015).

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) through 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 continued to see developments in the area of Adult Safeguarding and Adult Protection as set out

by the Interim Adult Protection Board action plan with the continuation of regional task and finish groups. Strategic direction provided by the SPPG 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 is 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 and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adult Safeguarding returned to pre covid arrangements with face to face contacts, visiting of facilities and meetings in person. Precautionary measures are risk assessed on an individual basis to prevent risk of infection. The use of virtual platforms demonstrated an efficient way of working therefore the use of MS Teams, Skype and Zoom continues to be a core communication platform within Adult Safeguarding.

Over the past twelve months, Adult Safeguarding services across all divisions experienced challenges with staffing levels as a result of sickness absences, staff moving posts on a permanent and temporary basis and recruitment voids.

As part of the previous two years continuity planning as a result of COVID-19 the Adult Protection Gateway Team temporarily acted as the central point of referral for all Adult Safeguarding referrals originating from care homes within Belfast Trust area. This was reviewed and stood down in April 2022, resulting in a return to pre-covid referral pathways. As a result each programme of care have seen an increase in referrals directly from care homes.

The Adult Protection Gateway Team, experienced challenges with recruitment of Social Workers and a replacement for the Band 7 Nurse specialist. The Band 7 Nurse Specialist post has not been recruited in the past twelve months. .

The Adult Protection Team continued as part of contingency planning to utilise professional input from Investigating Officers within community teams within the ACOPS division. This is because of staff shortages within the Adult Protection Team. The APGT continue to allocate some Adult Protection investigations as DAPO only

investigations. In the last twelve months APTG has experienced a change in management, with an Interim Adult Safeguarding Manager appointed in January 2023.

#### Adult Safeguarding Data and Activity:

As noted in previous Adult Safeguarding position reports, Adult Safeguarding data continues to be collated manually by all divisions. The current retrieval arrangements are time consuming for the collation of this data by service areas and Strategic Adult Safeguarding.

The Adult Safeguarding Development Officer collates and quality assures the Adult Safeguarding data prior to submission to the Strategic Performance Planning Group.

In June 2022, the Trust implemented the regional APP forms on Paris. The Project Management Group have developed an Adult Safeguarding Data set for Paris CIS, which will electronically collate Trust Adult Safeguarding Data. It was anticipated the electronic retrieval of the Paris Adult Protection data and activity would go live in November 2022, however this was delayed as a result of staff redeployment and Paris development priorities. This action will be carried forward to 2023/24 reporting period.

#### Paris CIS & Regional APP Documentation:

The Paris Project Management group implemented the APP suite of forms of Paris CIS in June 2022. Approximately 400 staff across adult services and children's services completed the Online Paris Training in advance of going live in June 2022. Adult Safeguarding on Paris CIS is now operational for all Divisions within the Trust. This target was reached following the introduction of Adult Safeguarding on Paris for Mental Health Services in June 2023.

The next phase for implementation is the Paris Data retrieval which is carried forward to 2023/24 reporting period. This will be quickly followed by Joint Protocol documentation, however this is dependent upon the Paris development of the updated draft AJP suite of forms due for regional implementation in late 2023.

#### Adult Safeguarding Threshold Application

As noted in the previous position report, the Trust focused upon Adult Safeguarding Threshold application over the previous reporting period and into this reporting period. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the application of Alternative Safeguarding Responses within Belfast Trust. This reporting period saw an increase of 172% in referrals meeting the threshold of Alternative Safeguarding response, with 917 referrals meeting this threshold compared to 340 recorded for 2021/22. This increase reflects the focus on threshold application and the implementation of the APP suite of forms on Paris CIS. Adult Safeguarding staff now operate to the threshold of 'Adult at risk of harm managed through alternative safeguarding response' and 'Adult in need of protection requiring an Adult Protection investigation'. Prior to the

implementation of the APP forms on Paris in June 2022, some divisions were conducting safeguarding investigations for referrals meeting the adult at risk of harm threshold. As a result, the overall Trust total number of investigations incorporated Adult Protection investigation figures and safeguarding investigation figures. This count operated outside of the regional policy. As a result, from June 2022 the Trust no longer undertakes 'adult safeguarding investigations' and the Trust operates to the regional policy for Adult in need of Protection resulting in an adult protection investigation.

The Trust has developed draft guidance and Alternative Safeguarding response aide memoire and template. This is currently under review with a pilot phase to take place in the next quarter of 2023. Following this the Trust aims to implement this Trust wide.

### Joint Protocol

Within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Joint Protocol Activity remained low over the reporting period 2022/23 with a total 10 Pre Interview Assessments and 10 ABE interviews completed. This reporting period saw a further decrease by 22% in referrals meeting the threshold of a Joint Protocol Investigation with 37 referrals agreed. This is an ongoing declining trajectory in relation to cases meeting this threshold of joint investigation despite an increase in the number of Joint Protocol consultations taking place. As previously noted, due to the low number of referral rates, as part of the Adult Safeguarding structures proposal, consideration should be given to a centralised management and governance of Joint Protocol arrangements across the divisions. Due to the current position of the Trust Adult Safeguarding structures proposal this will be carried forward into the next reporting period.

The Interim Adult Protection Board restarted the regional work stream focusing upon Policy and Procedures Chaired by the Chief Inspector of the PSNI and SPPG Lead. The regional work stream refocused the review of the current protocol for Joint Adult Safeguarding Investigations (2006), with a review of AJP threshold, draft policy and revised Joint Protocol forms. This remains in draft within this work stream and due to be implemented within the reporting period 2023/24. Belfast HSCT safeguarding leads contributed to the review of the proposed new Joint Protocol policy documentation.

### Adult Safeguarding in Outpatients

Significant work in relation to Adult Safeguarding within the Trust outpatients departments has continued over this reporting period. The Outpatient Liaison Nurse (Adults and Children's Safeguarding) remains in post with. Adult Safeguarding Link staff within outpatient departments are supported via the S.A.F.E forum, which is specific to outpatients departments. The Safeguarding Liaison Nurse continues to promote Adult Safeguarding with a focus on identification, reporting and alerting of possible incidents of abuse, exploitation or neglect. This area of work builds upon the Adult Safeguarding Policy (2015) which outlines the need for prevention and early intervention. The outpatients departments continue to promote Adult Safeguarding with the effective use of flow charts, aide memoirs and adherence of the regional adult safeguarding policy and operational procedures. Furthermore, the referral pathways

for Outpatient Adult Safeguarding referrals have been established and subject to ongoing review and monitoring. Outpatient department await the engagement of Trust Adult Safeguarding audits within the next reporting period.

### Quality Improvement in Adult Protection

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust conducted a series of Quality Improvement projects over the reporting period 2022/23. These included:

- ASG screening timeframes in Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding Team
- Adult Safeguarding Awareness in ED Settings
- Adult Safeguarding & role of the ASC in Nursing Homes
- Adult Safeguarding referrals, NIAS & management of welfare concerns

Within the next reporting period, Adult Safeguarding Quality Improvement initiatives will be reported upon and analysed as part of the annual position report.

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

This reporting period saw the development and review of the Draft Adult Protection Bill which is led by the Department of Health and overseen by the Adult Safeguarding Transformation Board, chaired by the Chief Social Worker for Northern Ireland.

Over this period the regional Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialists, Adult Safeguarding leads, and members of the SPPG attended regular meetings as part of the Adult Protection Bill work stream. Belfast Trust contributed to the initial phase of writing statutory guidance and prepared a response to the Adult Protection Bill costing exercise. This Trust response is due to be provided in the next reporting period.

The Trust await with interest the outcome of the funding request, as it will be critical to implementation and service delivery.

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

### Trust Adult Safeguarding Structures:

This action was carried forward from the previous reporting period, as noted in the previous annual Adult Safeguarding position report there is a commitment from the Executive Team to review existing operational arrangements and associated governance and assurance arrangements with a proposed model for change. In the context of the COPNI report, CPEA report and the large-scale historical investigation in Muckamore, along with the Governance and Leadership Report, such reports are

key drivers for the review of adult safeguarding structures and governance arrangements.

The Adult Safeguarding structures remains a key priority of the Trust Adult Safeguarding action plan. In July 2022, the Executive Director of Social Work committed to presenting the Adult Safeguarding Structures proposal paper to the Executive Team for consultation. It should be noted that significant investment will be required if the proposal paper is accepted and implemented.

#### Adult Safeguarding & Trust Board Assurance framework/ Corporate Risk Register:

Adult Safeguarding is recorded on the Trust Board Assurance risk register with core areas of risk identified (see Appendix 1). This is outlined in relation to the following themes: *“Risk to the safety of service users and Trust (corporately) due to a lack of awareness and understanding of obligations in relation to adult safeguarding, as detailed in regional Policy, Procedure and Joint Protocol; a lack of consistency in relation to how Policies and Procedures are applied; lack of staffing resource in some areas e.g. Intellectual Disability impacting on the timeliness of investigations and increasing demand for ASG training”*.

A series of assurance and control mechanisms are in place to mitigate the risks, which look at:

- Adult Safeguarding Governance,
- Adult Safeguarding assurance frameworks
- Development of Adult Safeguarding QMS,
- Increased training provided by Learning & development team,
- Directorate teams’ regular surveillance and reporting
- Weekly governance meetings with SMT
- Baseline Audit and follow up random unannounced visits to facilities to measure compliance

This is subject to quarterly review and updated by the Trust Adult Safeguarding Committee and Trust Board Assurance Committee.

#### **PARTNERSHIP:**

The BHSCT Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist until their retirement, along with 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 SPPG has remained in

place over the past twelve months. The regional forums have formalised with the introduction of an Adult Safeguarding Programme Manager at the SPPG.

The Belfast Local Adult Safeguarding Partnership continued to meet each quarter over the reporting period 2022/23. 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 years, 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 attended 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 Workforce Learning Development and Improvement (WLDI) service for Social Work and Social Care continue to deliver adult safeguarding training via a blended approach with the use of MS Teams and face to face. This was successful over this reporting period. Face to face training was provided in relation to Joint Protocol and ABE over the past 12 months.

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 WLDI service.

The WLDI successfully implemented an eLearning module for Adult & Children's Safeguarding. Although this does not meet the current Level 2 NIASP training framework it is an excellent resource to complement learning from face to face training. The WLDI are taking forward a review of this resource to establish how it can meet the current training requirements as per the NIASP training framework

Level 3 ASC/Line manager Adult Safeguarding training remained in high demand. The WLDI commissioned bespoke training for approx. 300 Nursing and AHP staff requiring

level 3 training. This was completed successfully over this reporting period. This however does not meet the demand for the entirety of the Trust. As a result the WLDI are working on a proposal paper for a further dedicated trainer to meet the demand for level 3 ASG/Line Manager training. Meeting demands for Adult Safeguarding training remains a key challenge and a key priority for the Trust, and work completed via the Adult Safeguarding Action plan included a proposal for e-learning and further investment in terms of an additional trainer. The WLDI are proceeding with identifying a solution in the next reporting period. In the interim all service areas and professional groups remain responsible for ensuring their staff receive the appropriate level of Adult Safeguarding training.

#### Adult Safeguarding Leadership Meetings:

The Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist/ Interim Adult Safeguarding Champion continued to hold regular Adult Safeguarding Leadership meetings until their retirement in August 2022. 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. These meetings were put on hold and are due to recommence with a new chair in the next reporting period.

#### Adult Safeguarding Governance:

The Chair of the ASG Governance Group, a Divisional Social Worker leading on aspects of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Action plan undertook areas of review and audit in line with regional and local Adult Safeguarding Policy and operational procedures.

The Trust completed a Base line audit of Adult Safeguarding and each division conducted internal audits. An established working group was developed to take forward the key priorities identified from the base line audit and there are further audits underway. These are ongoing into the next reporting period.

The areas of focus of this working group dovetail with other work streams to include-

- Threshold application guidance
- Adult at Risk of Harm Managed through Alternative Safeguarding Response
- Awareness raising and review of ASG referral pathways
- Adherence to operational policy and procedures
- Adult Safeguarding training needs
- Promotion of Adult Safeguarding in regulated facilities
- ASG Data collation and master data set
- ASG user and care engagement and feedback



### Data and IT:

APP forms on Paris: the APP forms went live on Paris in June 2022. The data set from Paris was developed however not implemented as planned in November 2022. This was due to changes in staff and development priorities with Paris CIS. This will be carried forward into the next reporting period.

Acute Hospital Power APP: the implementation of the referral APP for acute hospitals, where Nursing, Medics and AHPs do not have access to Paris went live over this reporting period for areas aligned to Hospital SW, nurses and AHPs.. The implementation will progress in a phased approach to include all relevant staff including medics in the next quarter of the reporting period 2023/24.

### 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 temporary 8A Adult Safeguarding Lead for Hospital sites targeted at the nursing profession commenced post in January 2022. The post holder progressed an action plan to progress Adult Safeguarding within Hospital settings with the oversight of the Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist followed by a Trust Divisional Social Worker.

### Support Networks- Internal and External:

Over the reporting period 2022/23 the Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and Trust Safeguarding Lead trainer delivered 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 4 internal ASC/Line Manager support groups took place. These sessions were chaired by the Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and Adult Safeguarding Lead trainer.

### BSO Internal Audit of Adult Safeguarding:

As part of the Annual Internal Audit Plan, BSO completed an audit of the management of Adult Safeguarding during January 2023 and February 2023. The audit was conducted within the ACOPS Division and Mental Health Division. The Trust awaits the outcome of the audit report and welcomes any areas of recommendation to develop Adult Safeguarding practices within the Trust.

### Encompass:

The Trust awaits the implementation of Encompass. In preparation, Trust Adult Safeguarding Leads have participated in the regional working groups coordinated by Encompass. The Adult Safeguarding leads have prepared Adult Safeguarding

portfolios for the Encompass developers and engaged in the build and design of the Adult Safeguarding & Adult Protection platform for Encompass. This includes review and modification of the APP suite for forms, development of a draft data set for Encompass and service user engagement forms.

#### 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 Sergeant. MARAC migrated onto a digital platform in March 2020 and continued to take place virtually over the reporting period. Domestic Abuse referrals have decreased 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 Governance team relating to 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.

In the previous reporting period, 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 intends to present to the Adult Safeguarding Committee the need for a Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Domestic Abuse Strategy and Protocol. This was put on hold due to changes in management and attendees, this is due to reconvene in the next reporting period 2023/24.

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 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. The Trust has implemented an internal Domestic Homicide Review Oversight Group to take forward actions and learning related to DHR's. This group reports through to the Adult Safeguarding Committee.

#### Pressure Damage:

Pressure Damage remains a longstanding action requiring progress in relation 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 focusing upon referral pathway and draft operational guidance. Until the PHA guidance is officially 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. 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 continued to be the named adult safeguarding and Trust representative on the DoJ NGO Engagement Group in relation to Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery until their retirement in August 2022. Following this the Trust Adult Safeguarding Development officer joined the NGO engagement group meetings and attendance has been via virtual platforms however has been impacted by impeding work priorities.

#### 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 for the Community and Voluntary Sector. Within the Belfast Trust locality Volunteer Now delivered four training sessions as per contract and these sessions received positive evaluations.

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

The Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist (TASS) was a core member of the PCSP, however following the TASS retirement in August 2022 and no recruitment of this post, there was no longer a rep for Belfast Adult Safeguarding in the South Belfast DPCSP. This role is fundamental in highlighting the role of PCSP in relation to the Prevention and Protection in Partnership Policy and the Trust is currently reviewing membership.

#### PSCP- Safer at Home Programme:

The Adult Safeguarding Development Officer has 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 BHSC deliver. This project continued to June 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 Staff

An Adult Safeguarding Link staff system has been established across the Adult General Hospitals and Muckamore Abbey Hospital with a view to embedding Adult Safeguarding within wards/ facilities/ departments. Originally, this was piloted within Meadowlands as Adult Safeguarding Link Nurses; however, during scale and spread it became apparent that there was a need to include other professions. The link role

was developed in keeping with the DOH Link Nurse framework. Support available to the link staff includes three monthly support forums; co-chaired by the Lead for Adult Safeguarding in BHSCT Hospital Sites (a nurse role) and the Adult Protection Gateway Team Service Manager. Link staff also avail of updates/ peer support via a dedicated MS teams channel, email circulation list membership, and direct support from Lead (nurse) for Adult Safeguarding in BHSCT Hospital Sites as required. Currently there are 141 link staff in the Trust.

## **PREVENTION:**

### Adult Safeguarding Champion Forum for External Agencies:

The 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 dissemination of regional and local Adult Safeguarding developments, provide peer support and shared learning.

### Position Reports:

As noted in the previous Trust Adult Safeguarding position report the external ASC position reports for external regulated facilities remains an area of priority. As noted in the regional operational procedures the ASC 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. The ASC external support forum has provided support and guidance to ASC's in relation to this.

While BHSCT would like to be in a position to review and analyse all position reports, this has not been possible because no additional funding has been provided to resource. . 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. The BHSCT is therefore 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.

The Trust, as a commissioner of services, have made it clear to organisations as part of the contractual process that 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.

### ASC Forum/Line Manager Forum:

Belfast Trust Adult Safeguarding Development Officer alongside the Trust Adult Safeguarding Training Lead continue to deliver the BHSCT internal ASC/Line Manager Forums. The membership of the Adult Safeguarding Champion/Line Manager forum are BHSCT Employees who are trained to Level 3 ASC/Line Manager training as per the NIASP training framework 2016. This forum takes place on a quarterly basis, following the same format as the DAPO & IO support groups. The purpose of the internal support group is to provide strategic and operational Adult Safeguarding updates, facilitate peer support, provide learning opportunities and share information. This forum has been well received by Trust Adult Safeguarding Line Managers.

### Keeping Adults Safe Programme:

This programme is delivered by Volunteer Now, the agency continues to deliver three training sessions within the Belfast LASP area. Volunteer Now have moved the training onto a virtual platform to ensure delivery of service.

### Keeping YOU Safe programme- Facilitators training:

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust WLDI delivered two sessions this year. These session took place virtually via MS Teams. The facilitators are trained and then deliver adult safeguarding awareness to service users within Belfast Trust.

### Awareness Raising:

Over the twelve months April 2022 – March 2023 the strategic Adult Safeguarding team delivered bespoke Adult Safeguarding awareness raising sessions to a range of departments within BHSCT. This was delivered across disciplines promoting awareness raising and referral pathways within the Trust.

### Adult Safeguarding Awareness week:

The Strategic Adult Safeguarding Team and Adult Safeguarding Lead trainer delivered a 5-day learning event, 21<sup>st</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> November 2022, to promote National Adult Safeguarding Awareness week. These events were delivered via face to face sessions and MS Teams. The following topics sessions were delivered to over 150 BHSCT staff and members of organisations aligned to Belfast LASP partner agencies:

- ☐ Digital Abuse & Domestic Abuse
- ☐ Working with older LGBTQ+ victim - survivors of domestic
- ☐ Adult Safeguarding- Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery Awareness Raising
- ☐ ASSIST – Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service Northern Ireland
- ☐ How to Make a Good Adult Safeguarding Referral

#### Safetember and March to Safety events:

The Trust facilitated events over Safetember in 2022 and March to Safety in 2023. The awareness raising events were well received and targeted at a range of services throughout the Trust. Particular focus was provided in relation Adult Safeguarding in Hospital Settings with the introduction of Adult Safeguarding notice boards and Adult Safeguarding Banners for staff and members of the public.

These presentations continue to provide information to Trust employees in relation to Adult Safeguarding, highlighting the Adult Safeguarding responsibilities for each individual staff member within the organisation.

#### Adult Safeguarding aides:

Over this reporting period, the Strategic Adult Safeguarding Team with the input from service providers within the Trust produced a range of aides and materials to support staff in relation to referrals pathway management, identification and awareness raising of Abuse.

Furthermore the Trust Adult Safeguarding Notice Boards were developed in line with Trust communication group, TILI and corporate communication department. The notice boards were produced to enable access to information in other languages. This is an ongoing piece of work with development on further resources for service users and carers. The Strategic Team aim to have these resources operational by the end of 2023. Additional resources include Adult Safeguarding banners within Hospital and Community Trust facilities.

### **SECTION 3: (B) Service Area Reports**

#### **ACOPS Division:**

Challenges include:

- Consistency of approach across services in safeguarding thresholds and reporting. Recommendations from the BSO Audit will be implemented to ensure robust governance. Furthermore, the office of the Executive Director of Social Work is leading a working group involving all adult programmes of care, to assess and address consistency of approach in safeguarding thresholds.
- Workforce pressures within social work and social care services. Actions taken to address this issue include the implementation of weekly Live Governance Meetings, and weekly Commissioned Services Governance Meetings to triangulate information across adult programmes of care in care homes between adverse incidents, safeguarding and enhancing communication with safeguarding champions in the care home setting.
- The division continues to experience delays in terms of the interface with PSNI, with regards Joint Protocol decision-making and later, upon completion of investigation awaiting outcomes from the Public Prosecution Service.

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

An ongoing challenge for the APTG continues to be the percentage of referrals that do not meet the threshold for adult in need of protection investigations.

410 or 39% of referrals received by APTG were determined to require no further action within safeguarding processes, and 415 or 40% referrals received by APTG were determined to require an Alternative Safeguarding Response.

This significant activity at the point of entry to the service impacts on the APTGs capacity to respond to adult in need of protection referrals, screened as meeting an Adult Protection threshold, in a timely and appropriate manner.

Referrals determined to require no further action within safeguarding processes require a significant level of activity to ensure duty of care has been applied along with due diligence. These referrals often require advice, guidance and/or re-direction.

Significant numbers of referrals determined to require no further action within safeguarding processes are 'welfare concerns'. The current pressures occurring throughout Health and Social Care will inevitably lead to an increase in welfare concern activity for APTG.



#### Actions to mitigate:

- The service continues to analyse data and activity levels, escalating and communicating with the senior management team via daily safety huddles. There is an unbroken line of accountability to the Director of ACOPS and the Executive Director of Social Work via the Collective Leadership Team.
- Ongoing liaison with PSNI regarding referral pathways and 'welfare referrals,' that do not meet threshold for Adult Protection Investigation.
- Return to pre-pandemic pathways for Care Homes and Nursing Homes.
- Identified need to support DAPOs across the programme of care in consistent screening and decision-making, to ensure referrals are appropriate.
- Identified need to continue to work with external referral agents regarding appropriate referrals.
- Continued work with Trust services regarding referral pathways, to reduce the number of transferred cases.

There was a total of 916 Older People's Services referrals, 38% of which required no further action within safeguarding processes. 41% of referrals required an Alternative Safeguarding Response while 124 referrals led to an Adult Protection Investigation. There has been a gradual decline in referrals noted over the past four reporting years with a peak in 2018/19 of 1408 referrals and gradual reduction over the following years.

Older People Services recorded a significant reduction in investigations commenced in 2022/23, a reduction of 30% compared to the previous reporting period.

Physical and Sensory Disability referrals remain lower in comparison, which is reflective of volume of service activity. In the reporting period APGT received 131 referrals from the service, of which 48% of referrals required no further action within safeguarding processes. 34% of referrals required an Alternative Safeguarding Response, with 15 Adult Protection investigations commencing. PSD experienced a significant drop in referrals; down 56 compared to the previous reporting period and a reduction of 60% of investigations commenced comparative to the previous reporting period.

It is noted that protection investigations have reduced within the APGT, current work undertaken by BHSCT Adult Safeguarding Leads and Divisional Social Workers to

scope decision making with regards thresholds across all programmes of care will be essential to understanding this drop in activity. It is certain that the service continues to respond to a high level of activity in terms of referrals, and this work has not been adequately reflected within current statistical returns.

### **Mental Health Division:**

Currently there are adequate numbers of IO and DAPO within core community teams where numbers of safeguarding referrals are higher. Deficits remain within therapy teams for 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.

Joint Protocol investigations and the numbers of PIA interviews and ABE interviews decreased within Mental Health due to police thresholds for Joint Protocol investigations. However in the past year Mental Health had 10 cases agreed under Joint Protocol which involved staff allegations. Only 3 progressed to ABE due to the poor mental health of the service users involved.

Due to staff leaving post, Mental Health only have 2 ABE trained staff currently. Both Social Work Development Leads in the Mental Health Adult Safeguarding Team will undertake ABE training in the next 12 months. It was 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. The current structure of the Mental Health Adult Safeguarding Team has a temporary funded 8A Mental Health Adult Safeguarding Lead, two Band 7 Social Work Development Leads who have ASW, Professional Social Work supervision, ASW Practice Assessor and less than 0.25 DAPO/ASG governance responsibility. The Think Family Practitioner post is vacant which had a minimal amount of DAPO/ASG governance responsibility.

There are issues with CRU accepting AJP1's from DAPO's for reporting of relevant crimes as per the current Joint Protocol policy which states that all crimes are reported to CRU using the AJP1 document. CRU are currently advising that only crimes which

relate to perpetrators in a position of trust i.e. crimes involving staff or carers will be accepted on an AJP1. This is resulting in CRU declining to discuss most AJP1's from Mental Health DAPO's requesting them to be reported via 101. However there is a current review of Joint Protocol arrangements at a regional level.

Mental Health commenced use of the full APP suite of forms on Paris with other service areas in June 2022. This involved training of all staff in Mental Health who did not previously use PARIS for adult safeguarding investigations. The next phase will be PARIS development to run reports and data collation.

Adult Safeguarding guidance was developed to assist staff to identify the safeguarding thresholds as per the Adult Safeguarding Policy 2016 of an Adult at Risk of Harm/Alternative Safeguarding Responses and an Adult in Need of Protection. The internal guidance is currently in draft with plans in place to proceed with a pilot and development of internal standards to support practitioners.

Mental Health has noted a steady increase in referrals to MARAC since COVID. There were 22 referrals into MARAC from Mental Health since April 2022 until March 2023. Pre COVID referral to MARAC from Mental Health would have been approximately five or six per year.

An ASG audit was completed in Mental Health in November with some issues noted in moving from the ASP documentation to APP documentation on Paris. Of the cases audited, there was good evidence of Thresholds being identified appropriately, consideration of capacity issues and appropriate interim protection planning. DAPO's continue to complete AJP1 referrals to PSNI for all relevant crimes as per the Adult Safeguarding and Joint Protocol Policy.

The number of staff safeguarding referrals increased in the past 12 months in acute and care home settings. Two Care Homes were also subject to escalation as homes of concern with RQIA following quality issues. Both homes had action plans implemented to address the issues.

RQIA completed two unannounced inspections in Clare Ward and in Shannon Clinic. No issues were noted for safeguarding in either ward and RQIA were complimentary of DAPO efforts to improve safeguarding in both wards. This included Adult

Safeguarding Boards for Staff, governance arrangements for Datix incident reporting and Adult Safeguarding referrals and analysis and patterns of incidents.

### **Learning Disability Division:**

Over the reporting period 2022- 2023, Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding went through an extensive change process in relation to recruitment, training and stabilising the Social Work workforce within the division.

This is reflected with changes in the senior management team, including service managers, Assistant Service Managers, Team Leaders, Senior Social Work practitioners and social workers within both Hospital and Community teams. As a result, the new workforce within Learning Disability services required Adult Safeguarding training to be delivered specifically to the service to enable the Adult Safeguarding functions to be sustained at all times.

Over this reporting period, the Adult Safeguarding Team within Muckamore Abbey Hospital, recruited temporary Senior Social Work Practitioners, two further Adult Safeguarding Leads were recruited in May 2022, however only one practitioner commenced post in November 2022, with the other applicant commencing post in the next reporting period.

In August 2022, an Interim Service Manager for Adult Safeguarding within Learning Disability Services commenced post. This post holder was operationally responsible for the Adult Safeguarding Team.

In September 2022, Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding team implemented a central point of referral for all Muckamore Abbey Hospital Adult Safeguarding referrals. This was managed by a dedicated full time Designated Adult Protection Officer. The duty system operates Monday to Friday 9am -5pm. Following review of this model, all Adult Safeguarding referrals relating to Learning Disability service users moved to a service area wide central point of referral from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The Adult Safeguarding Team continue to operate the central point of referral for Learning Disability Services. The function of this team is to: receive all Adult Safeguarding referrals; complete Adult Safeguarding screening in line with the regional Adult Safeguarding Policy (2015) and regional Adult Protection operational procedures

(2016); allocate Adult Protection Referrals to DAPO's within Community teams; threshold referrals meeting the definition of 'Adult at Risk of Harm' managed through alternative safeguarding response and; signpost referrals, which were inappropriately placed to the Adult Safeguarding Team. Furthermore, the central point of referral is responsible for Adult Safeguarding Data triangulation and analysis. The current data systems enable the team to provide reports for teams within the division, provide statistical data and identify areas for prevention and early intervention.

An audit of Adult Safeguarding was completed in May 2022 by the Adult Safeguarding Development Officer and Learning Disability Services Principal Social Worker. The audit focused upon Adult Safeguarding within Muckamore Abbey Hospital and Community teams management of Adult Safeguarding referrals and investigations. An action plan was developed in line with the ongoing Action plan from the Department of Health Audit, and recommendations from RQIA inspections in relation to Adult Safeguarding.

RQIA conducted 28 inspections within the Trusts Learning Disability regulated facilities over this reporting period.

The RQIA inspection in July 2022 outlined concerns in relation to Adult Safeguarding within Muckamore Abbey Hospital. A detailed QIP and action plan was submitted and actioned over this reporting period. Following a further inspection in March 2023, there was noted improvement with Adult Safeguarding practices relating to Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

Challenges faced over this reporting period include, retention of social workers and investigating officers within the Adult Safeguarding Team. The Team was fortunate to end this reporting period with a staff team of three Senior Social Work Practitioners and two Social Workers with investigating officer responsibilities. However, this reporting period experienced difficulty retaining senior social workers due to posts filled via EOI's and redeployment. The service area has progressed permanent posts via BSO.

Data:

During this reporting period Learning Disability services have received 601 Adult Safeguarding referrals which is a 23% increase from the previous reporting period (2021/22). With the implementation of the APP suite of forms on Paris CIS in June 2022, Learning Disability commenced investigations for Adults in need of Protection and screened 113 referrals as meeting the threshold of an Adult at Risk of Harm requiring an Alternative Safeguarding Response, this is a 61% increase compared to the previous reporting period. This was anticipated following significant work completed to embed consistent application of thresholds across the Trust.

Joint Protocol activity continues to be an area of concern, with 50 Joint protocol consultations taking place, however only 22% of referrals agreed as a joint investigation. This is a slight increase from the previous reporting period with 7 joint protocol investigations commencing compared to 11 in 2022/23.

In relation to source of referral, 'Learning Disability Hospital' remains the highest source of referral, with 37% of referrals originating from Muckamore Abbey Hospital. The second highest source of referral is 'Supported Living', with 24% of referrals originating from supported living facilities providing care and support to Belfast Trust service users with a Learning Disability. Supported Living was identified as having the highest increase in referrals over the past two reporting periods, with a 238% increase in referrals from 2021/22 to 2022/23 reporting periods. Similarly, the highest recorded location of incidents occurring reflects the highest level of source of referral. Learning Disability hospital accounted for 225 locations of abuse and supported living accounted for 149 locations of abuse. Furthermore, a person's own home is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest recorded location of abuse, with 51 incidents of abuse occurring within an individual's own home.

When examining the category of abuse reported to learning disability Adult Safeguarding, Physical Abuse remains the highest category of abuse recorded with 363 incidents of physical abuse reported. Learning Disability services recorded an increase of 22% of physical abuse incidents of this reporting period. This reporting period also noted an increase in referrals relating to neglect. The reporting period 2021-22 recorded 46 referrals of neglect; however this reporting period recorded an

increase of 11%, with a total of 102 referrals referred to learning disability Adult Safeguarding.

The Learning Disability Adult Safeguarding team implemented a central point of referral for all adult safeguarding referrals internal and external to the Trust from January 2023. With the implementation of this model, the last quarter of this reporting period was recorded on an informatics database managed by the Adult Safeguarding team. The Adult Safeguarding Team provide weekly and monthly reports to teams within the division. It is anticipated that the database will enable a more analytical analysis of data for the next reporting period with the population of a full twelve-month database. The Data base recorded for the reporting period January 2023 to March 2023 has enabled the Designated Adult Protection Officers to identify trigger areas. Robust analysis has highlighted areas of risk in relation to repeat referrals for Adults at risk of harm, address inappropriate referrals, and provide support to Adult Safeguarding Champions in line with their role as outlined in the Regional Adult Safeguarding Policy and Operational procedures.

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

### **Chart 1:**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust received 3910 Adult Safeguarding referrals from April 2022 to March 2023. This was an increase of 138 referrals compared to the previous reporting period. Chart 1 evidences the referrals rates by POC since April 2013- March 2023.

In June 2022, Belfast Trust implemented the APP suite of forms on Paris CIS replacing the previous ASP forms on Paris. As a result, the Belfast Trust SPPG Adult Safeguarding data returns will note the removal of 'Adult Safeguarding investigations' from June 2022. Belfast Trust strategic Adult Safeguarding supported the implementation of the APP suite of forms and threshold application via training online and in person across all programmes of care within Adult Services within Belfast Trust.

Mental Health received the highest number of referrals in 2022/23 with 2024, this was an increase of 43 referrals from the previous reporting year. Equally, Mental Health recorded the highest number of referrals screened out; 1221, mental health Adult Safeguarding screened out activity accounts for 31% of the total referral activity over this reporting period. Mental health noted a significant increase in the number of referrals meeting the threshold of Alternative Safeguarding response of 811% compared to the previous year, this is a noted increase from 36 Alternative safeguarding response to 328 referrals meeting the Alternative Safeguarding Response in 2022/23.

Mental Health commenced 250 Adult Protection investigations over this reporting period. This is an increase of 150% compared to the previous reporting period. Mental Health continues to experience an annual increase in Adult Safeguarding referrals and investigations since April 2013 until March 2023.

Older Peoples Services received the second highest number of referrals with 916 recorded this reporting period and noted a reduction by 5% in Adult Safeguarding referrals received compared to the previous reporting period. Older Peoples screened 37% of Adult Safeguarding referrals as requiring no further action under Adult



Safeguarding processes. 10% less than the previous reporting year. Older people's services noted an increase of 137% in referrals meeting the criteria of Adult at risk of harm managed through alternative safeguarding response with a total of 371 referrals resulting in an Alternative Safeguarding Response.

In 2022/23, the Adult Protection Gateway team commenced 124 Adult Protection investigations, this is a 30% reduction compared to the previous reporting period 2021/22, which accounted for 178 Adult Protection investigation.

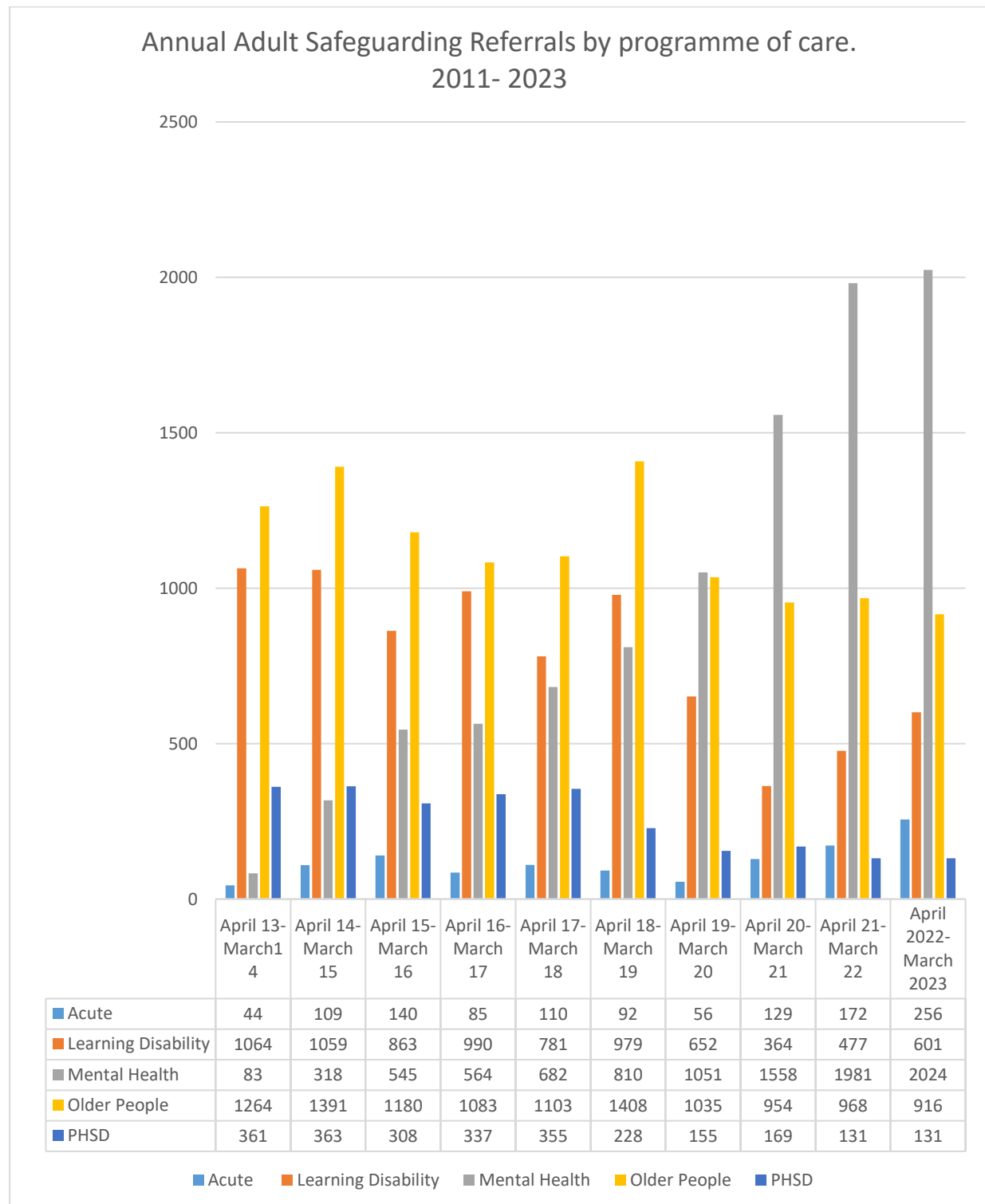
Older peoples services has experienced a gradual decline in Adult Safeguarding referrals with a peak in 2018/19 of 1408 referrals with an observed annual decrease to 916 in the reporting period 2022/23.

Physical Health and Sensory Disability (PHSD) Referrals remain much lower in comparison of the other service areas with 131 referrals received and 48% of referrals screened out. In 2022/23 PHSD screened 44 referrals as meeting, the adult at risk of harm managed through alternative safeguarding response this was a similar rating as the previous year which recorded 43 Alternative Safeguarding responses. The Adult Protection Gateway team commenced 15 Adult Protection investigations; this is a reduction of 23 investigations compared to the previous reporting period.

Learning Disability services received 601 Adult Safeguarding Referrals over the reporting period 2022/23 compared to 477 referrals received in 2021/22. This was an increase of 26% from the previous year. The number of referrals screened out increased by 36% with 171 referrals screened out of Adult Protection processes, compared to 138 referrals screened out the previous reporting year.

Learning Disability commenced 274 Adult Protection investigations and screened 113 referrals as meeting the threshold of an Adult at risk of harm managed through alternative safeguarding responses. Learning disability noted an increase of 61% of referrals meeting the criteria of an alternative Safeguarding response.

**Chart 1:**





**Chart 2:**

Table Of Adult Safeguarding Activity Years: 2017- 2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-21, 2021-2022 & 2022-2023																														
	Investigations						Protection Plans						Joint Protocol						PIs						ABE Interviews					
	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23						
Years	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23						
Acute Sector	6	10	11	9	7	0	4	10	9	21	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Learning Disability	352	591	232	157	325	274	343	553	150	300	340	308	34	180	10	25	7	11	0	2	4	3	4	4						
Mental Health	364	420	554	580	569	475	382	411	352	473	520	370	21	10	9	4	8	7	12	10	2	4	2	1						
Older People	448	601	663	414	376	169	444	579	554	211	242	124	58	73	27	32	30	16	24	42	21	15	7	5						
PSD	131	101	89	75	46	26	129	99	70	39	43	16	14	21	4	3	3	3	10	11	1	5	2	2						

Chart 2 outlines the Adult Safeguarding activity over a 6-year period.

#### Investigations:

The reporting period 2022/23 noted a reduction in adult safeguarding investigations commenced with 967 recorded, this is a reduction of 26% compared to the previous reporting period whereby 1323 investigations commenced. Mental Health and Learning Disability services recorded increases in adult protection investigations commenced compared to previous report year. It is noted that previous reporting years recorded Adult Protection Investigations and Adult At risk of harm investigations. However, during this reporting period the implementation of the APP suite of forms on Paris CIS in June 2022, saw the removal of 'adult at risk of harm investigations'. Adult Safeguarding within the Trust ensures the regional thresholds of an Adult in need of protection commencing investigations of the APP investigation forms. As a result, the Trust has experienced an increase in referrals meeting the threshold of an 'Adult at Risk of Harm' managed through an alternative safeguarding response.

Older People Services recorded a significant reduction in Adult Protection investigations commenced in 2022/23 with a figure of 124. This is a reduction of 30% compared to the previous reporting period.

The PHSD, service area consistently has lower adult safeguarding activity in comparison to other service areas and in this reporting period recorded a reduction of 60% in investigations commenced compared to the previous reporting period.

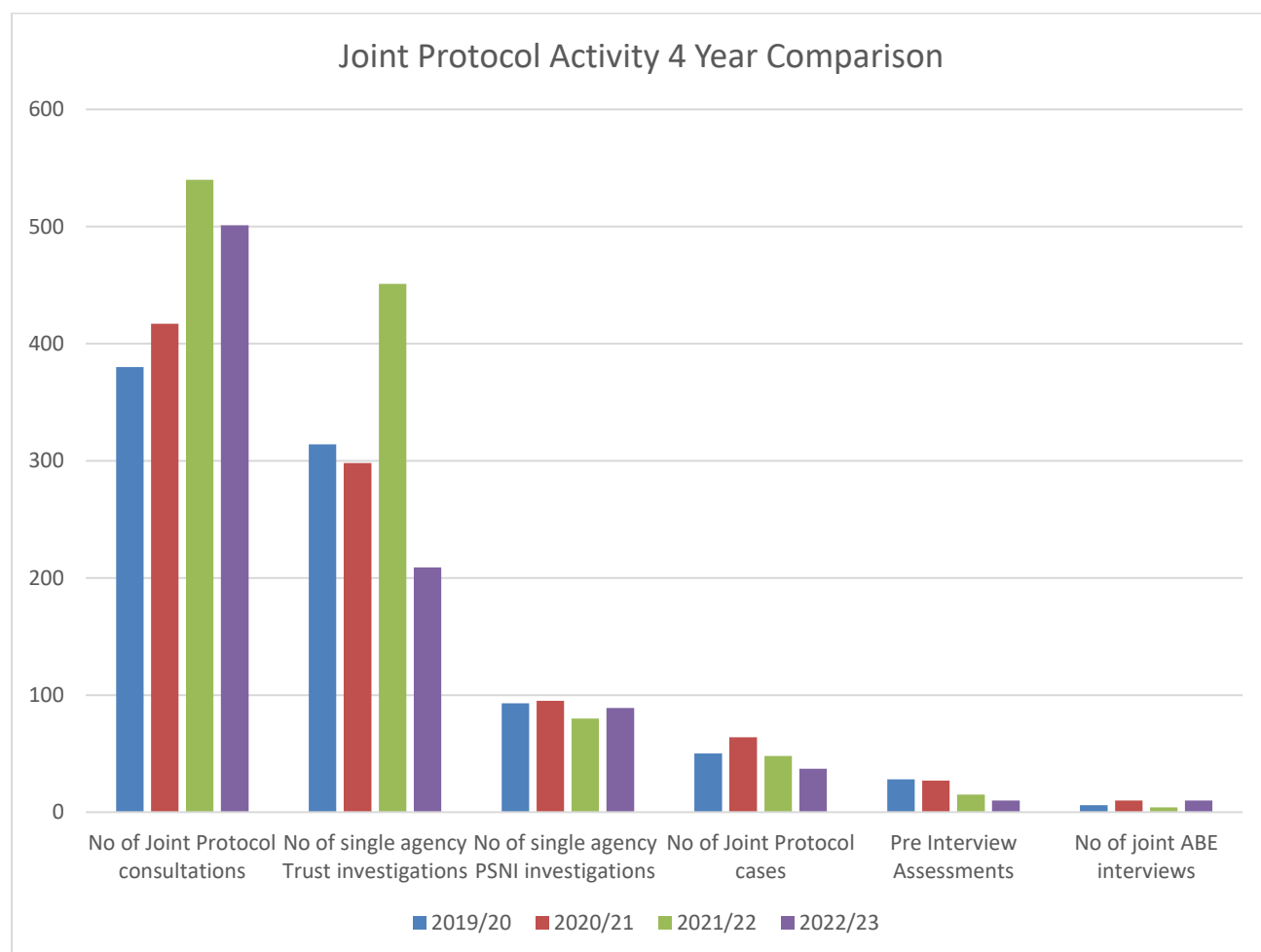
Learning Disability commenced 297 adult protection investigations during the reporting period 2022/23, compared to 325 investigations commenced in 2021/22 (this was a combination of Adult at risk of harm and Adults in need of protection investigation). This a decrease of 8% compared to the previous reporting period.

#### Protection Plans:

The recording of protection plans activity remains an area of focus. Data for this reporting period indicates there is variation in interpreting the HSCB Data requirement. The data presented in chart 2 suggests there is a disparity in investigations commenced and protection plans implemented. This may be a result of staff implementing an interim protection plan at point of screening the Adult Protection

referral, however there is clarification required from the SPPG in relation to data descriptors and if they require all protection plans implemented or protection plans implemented for Adult Protection Activity. 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 2022/23. Chart 3 looks at Joint Protocol activity over a four year period which has enabled a comparison to be drawn. Over the reporting period 2022/23, the BHSCT Adult Safeguarding staff completed 501 Joint Protocol Consultations with PSNI. This is a 7% decrease in consultations compared to the previous reporting period 2021/22.

The number of joint protocol investigations commenced in 2022/23 decreased by 23% with 37 joint protocol investigations commenced, compared to 48 joint protocol investigation commenced the previous year in 2022/23.

The number of Pre Interview Assessments completed over this reporting period was 10, compared to 15 completed the previous reporting period. The data obtained relating to the Achieving Best Evidence interviews (ABE's) remains relatively low, with 10 ABE's completed within this reporting period; however this is six more compared to 2022/23 reporting period.

#### **Chart 4:**

Chart 4 outlines the total annual referral source for the reporting period April 2022-March 2023 evidencing 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 1493 self-referrals made to BHSCT Adult Safeguarding. This is a 3% decrease compared to the previous reporting year.

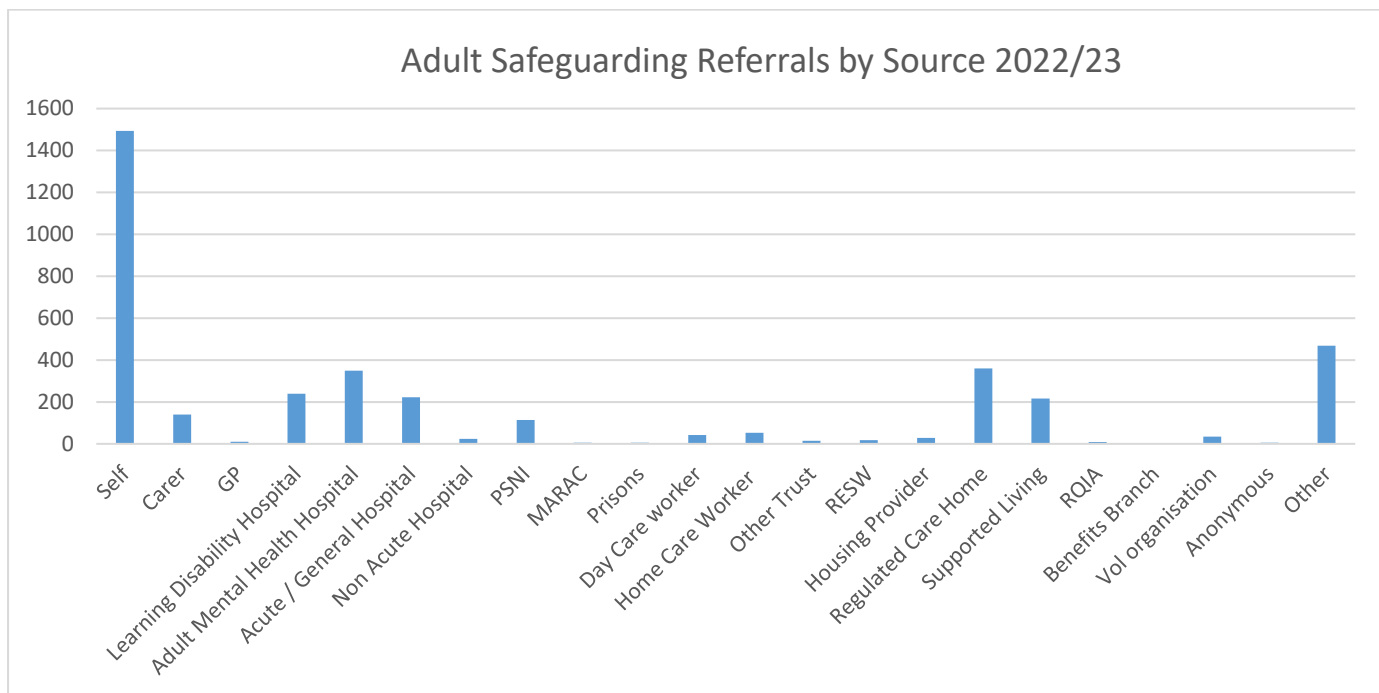
In relation to PSNI referrals received by the Trust, similar to the previous reporting period a 13% reduction in police referrals was noted over the reporting period 2022/23 with 114 referral received.

Referrals from regulated care homes decreased 16% to 340 referrals compared to 415 referrals received in 2021/22.

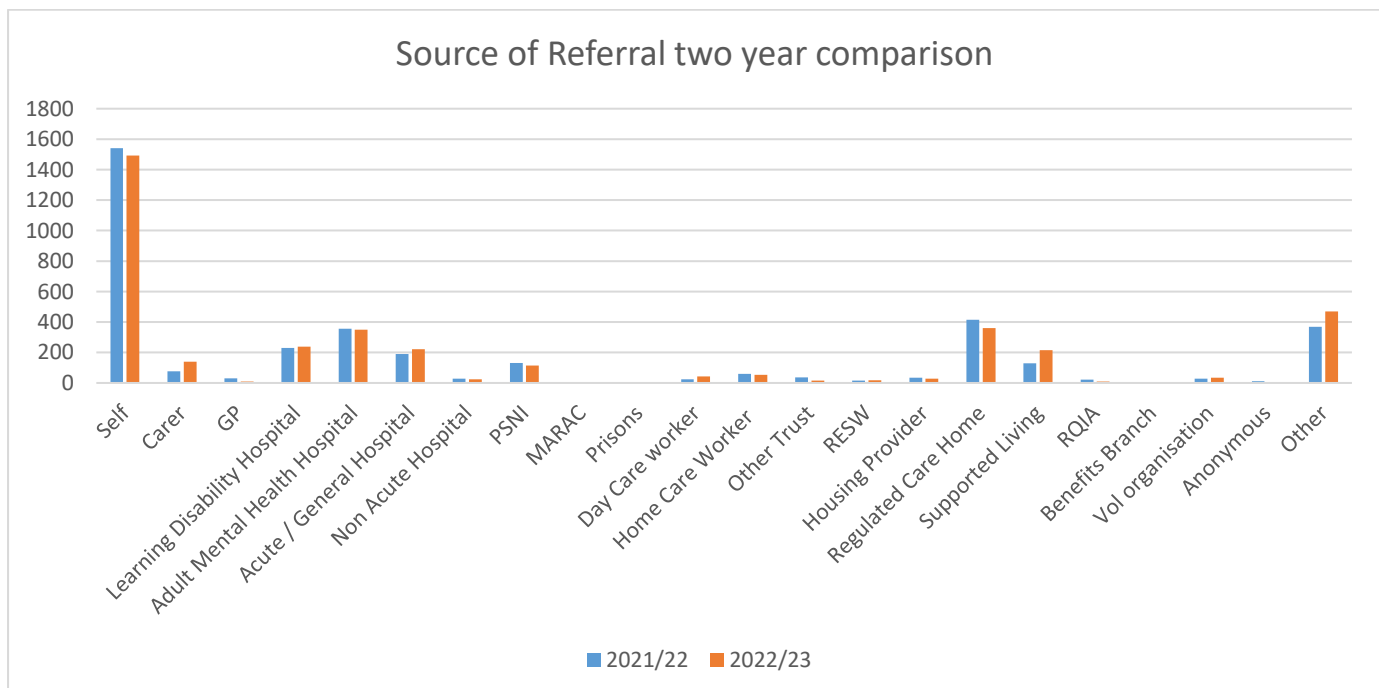
The source of referral with the largest increase in referrals originating from was supported living. There is a noted 67% increase in supported living referrals noted as the source with 216 referrals received in 2022/23 compared to 140 received in 2021/22.

Furthermore, referrals originating from carers increased by 84% with 140 referrals recorded as originating from carers in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.

**Chart 4: (A)**



**Chart 4: (B)**





### **Chart 5, Chart 6 & Chart 7:**

- Chart 5 provides a breakdown of category of abuse for the reporting period 2022/23. Chart 6 provides a breakdown of category of abuse by programme of care.
- Chart 7 displays a three year comparison of category of abuse by programme of care.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Adult Safeguarding referrals recorded 41% 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 remains the highest recorded category of abuse across all service areas.

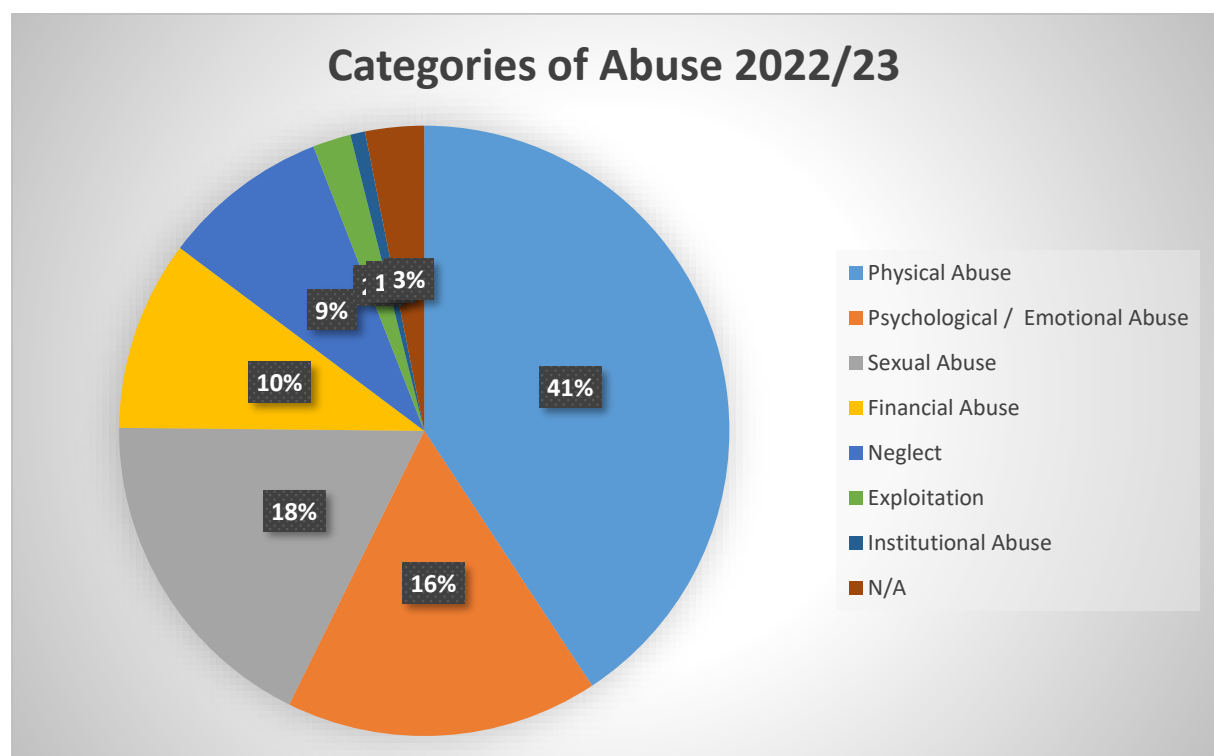
The 2022/23 reporting period noted Acute Hospitals and Learning Disability Division recording an increase in referrals categorised as physical abuse with an increase of 81% noted for Acute Hospitals and an increase of 22% experienced by the Learning Disability Division compared to the previous reporting period.

Sexual abuse accounts for 16% of referrals for the reporting period 2022/23. Mental Health continues to have had the highest number of sexual abuse referrals with 606 referrals relating to Sexual abuse in 2022/23. This is a reduction of 10% compared to 677 reported the previous year. All other programmes of care noted similar data compared to previous years, with the exception of Older peoples services which noted a 34% decline in sexual abuse referrals recorded in this reporting period with 43 noted compared to 66 the previous reporting period 2022/23.

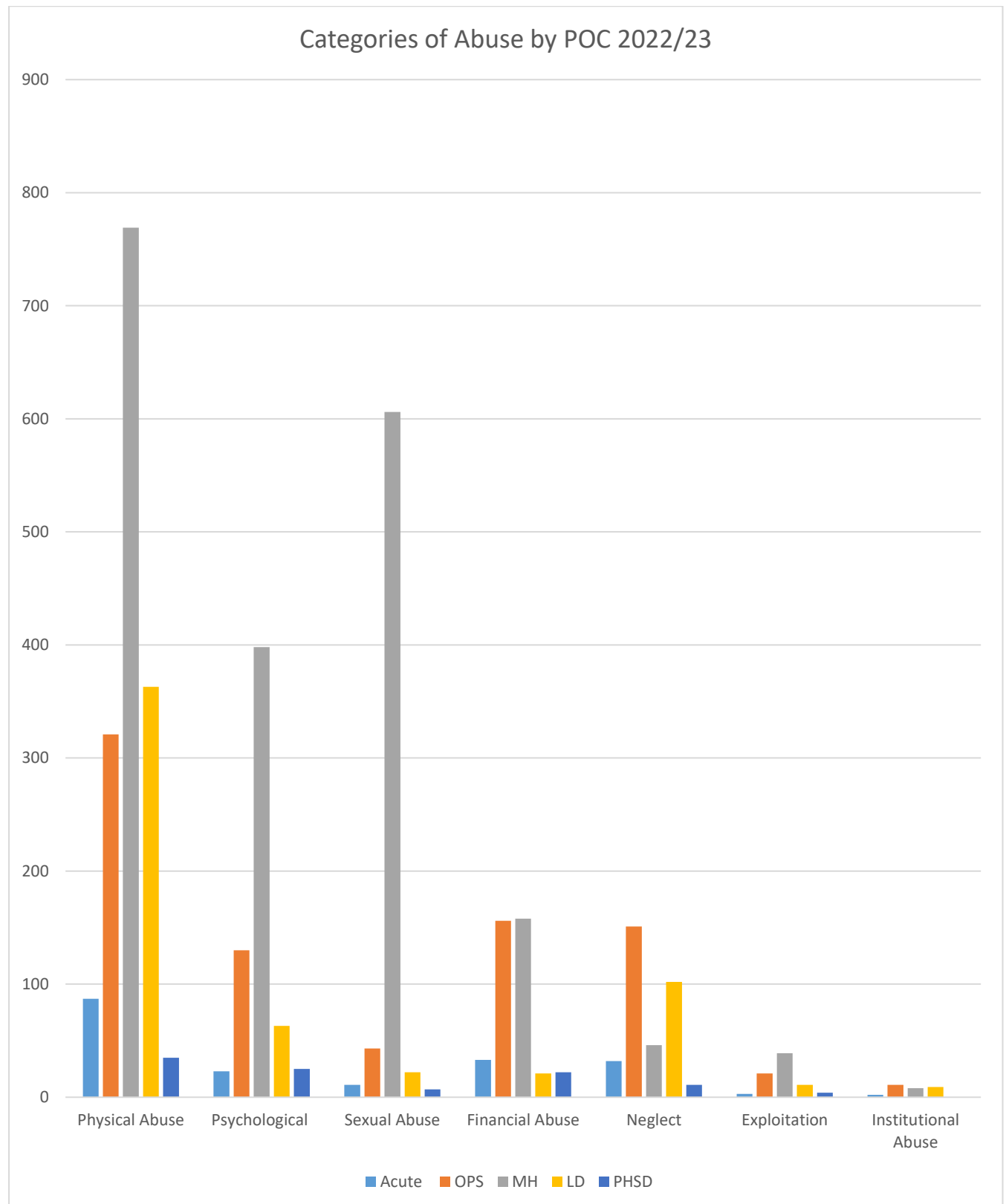
Similar to the previous reporting period, financial abuse accounts for 10% of Adult Safeguarding referrals received. Older Peoples services had the highest number of financial abuse cases compared to other programmes of care with 156 incidents of financial abuse. This figure remained comparative to the previous reporting period. Mental Health noted a 22% increase in financial abuse referrals with 158 recorded in 2022/23 compared to 129 the previous reporting period. Acute Hospital reported an increase of 73% of Adult Safeguarding referrals relating to financial abuse, with 33 reported within the past twelve months compared to 19 the previous reporting period.

Over the past four reporting periods, Acute Hospitals has increased the number of Adult Safeguarding referrals identified each year. This steady trajectory noted acute hospital accounted for 6.5% of referrals reported within the Trust. It is important to note Acute hospitals increased their adult safeguarding referrals by 48% over the past twelve months compared to 2021/23 reporting period.

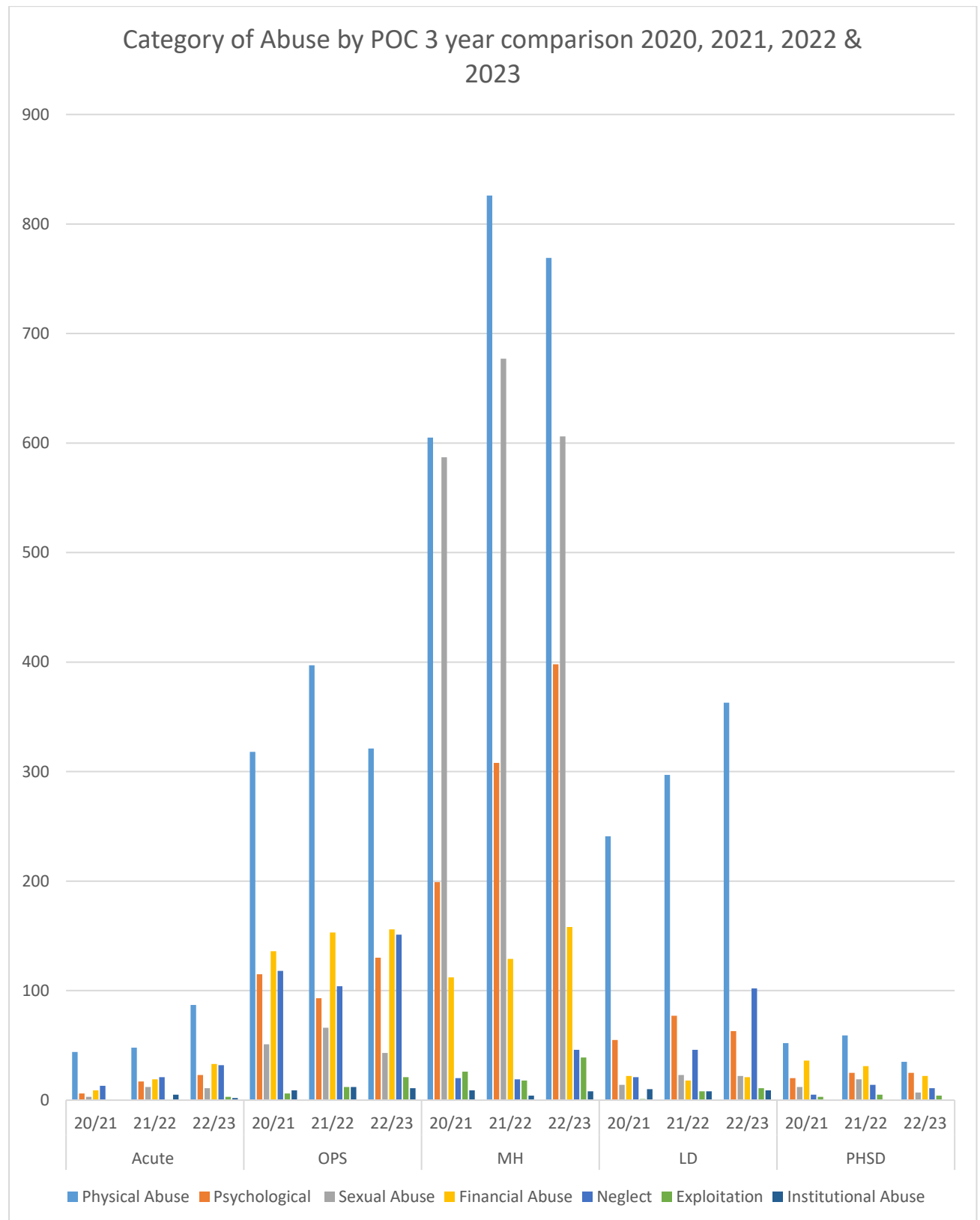
**Chart 5:**



**Chart 6**



**Chart 7:**



## Section 5: Trust Adult Safeguarding Action Plan 2022-23 (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, 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 established, draft proposal paper produced and currently being reviewed.
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 developed Level 3 ASC training
Adult Safeguarding Workforce	Completed and reviewed
Development and implementation of APP suite of forms onto Paris Module. Encompass and Adult Safeguarding Future Development	Ongoing APP suite of forms implemented in June 2022. Phase B Data collation and Phase C to be carried over to the reporting period 2023/24.
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 Draft Service user feedback form developed and due to be piloted in the next reporting period 2023/24

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 post extended. Work progressed in relation to Acute Hospital Power App for non Paris users to refer Adult Safeguarding to Hospital Social Work. Adult Safeguarding Ward Manuals, aide memoires implemented Adult Safeguarding Notice Boards and Pop up banners located in hospital settings. Information uploaded to LOOP which includes pathways. Analysis of use of DATIX in reporting adult safeguarding submitted.
Ensure current partnership working arrangements are maintained and strengthened	Ongoing LASP continues quarterly PSCP Prevention initiative ongoing Regional networks via IAPB and SPPG monthly meetings attended by ASG development lead
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 established working group
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 Formal development of professional work stream to be carried forward to the reporting period 2023/24
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 in relation to the Draft Adult Protection Bill via regional platform and Trust responses required
Coercive Control -Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Bill	Completed Bespoke training delivered by Women's Aid May 2023 in relation to Non- fatal strangulation