



PUBLIC PROTECTION
EAST LOTHIAN & MIDLOTHIAN

SUPPORTING SAFER COMMUNITIES



Staff Newsletter
May 2024

Welcome to East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee's (EMPPC's) latest staff newsletter. Let us know what you think by emailing us at emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk

Our articles contain hyperlinks to connect you with current online resources and further reading.

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Meet the Committee.....

In this edition, we meet Lindsey Byrne, Head of Children's Services and Chief Social Work Officer, East Lothian Council

I have been Head of Children's Services and Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) in East Lothian since April 2023. I was previously the general manager and a service manager for children's services and have also been the lead officer for child protection for East Lothian and Midlothian.

Having wanted to be a social worker since I was 13 years old, I still believe it is the greatest privilege to build relationships with people during the most difficult of times and to be a part of their life story. As a leader, I am absolutely committed to delivering services that respect the voices and experiences of people who need social work support and believe that protecting people from harm is the most important thing we do across partnership organisations.

As CSWO, I am the professional leader for social care and social work services across East Lothian and ensure there is appropriate professional advice in the delivery of the local authority's statutory social work functions (across children, adult and justice social work). I attend a range of governance forums across the council and Health and Social Care Partnership to support the understanding of complexities and cross cutting nature of social work service delivery.



I also contribute to and support performance and improvement workstreams across the council, IJB and partner agencies.

I am a core member of the EMPPC. I also chair the East and Midlothian MAPPA Group and as CSWO I attend CSOG. This allows me to ensure social work values, local data/knowledge and national policy can shape strategic developments across our public protection partners.

I am delighted to have such a valuable opportunity to be involved in strategic leadership for public protection and am committed to being an effective link between frontline services and the varied work of the EMPPC and its subgroups.

Our Multi-agency Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection Procedures

Are you familiar with our **Multi-agency Adult Support and Protection Procedures** in and our **Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures**?

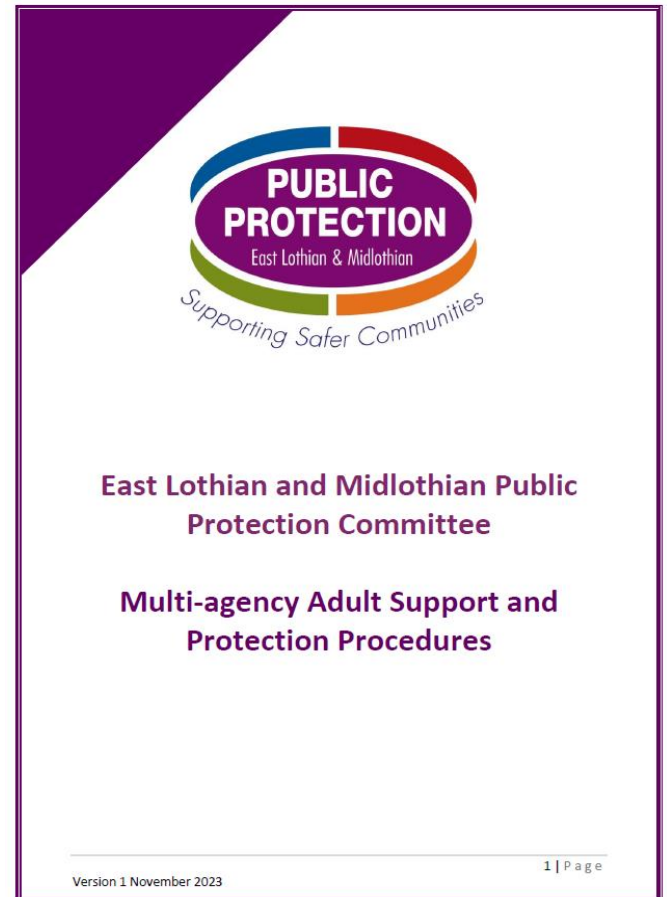
You can access the Procedures by clicking on the links below.

[EMPPC Multi-Agency Adult Support and Protection Procedures | East Lothian Council](#)

[Child protection | Child protection | East Lothian Council](#)

[Child protection | Report a child at risk | Midlothian Council](#)

Our revised Procedures are being hosted temporarily on the East Lothian and Midlothian Council websites.



Our new Sub-groups for Adult Support and Protection and Child Protection

We have developed two new sub-groups of our Committee. We are shortly holding our first Child Protection Committee Sub-group, which will bring together a group of people from different statutory and third sector organisations to look at some topics of interest relating to Child Protection.

At our first meeting we are going to be joined by someone from Action for Children who is going to tell us more about Contextual Safeguarding. Edinburgh has piloted this approach in part of the city and have now published a report which you can read [here](#). Contextual Safeguarding is an approach and response to keeping young people safer by targeting the physical contexts of extra-familial risks and harms, to make environments safer for young people.

Our new Adult Support and Protection Sub-group will meet in August. Both groups will meet every six months.

At both groups we will be looking at how we can make sure that we get and use feedback from children, families and adults about their experiences of being involved in Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection, so that our work is informed by this, and used to make improvements in how services are designed and delivered, in our procedures and guidance, training and practice.



We say farewell and thanks to Bob Campbell, DCI, Police Scotland and Steve Wood, DCI, Police Scotland, for their contribution to the work of the Committee and sub-groups. Both are both moving on to pastures new.

Training update

Training in 2023/24 – our year at a glance

EMPPC is responsible for the development and delivery of multi-agency learning and development about Public Protection issues. All training is free to staff and volunteers working in East Lothian and Midlothian. Any costs incurred are met from the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office budget.

In the year ending March 2024:

- We delivered 37 courses across 18 different course topics. This was ten more than the previous year.
- 779 people attended our courses, 90 more people than last year.
- We used 74.3% of available spaces on courses.
- We delivered 14 briefings across a range of topics, including the launch of our Child Protection Procedures, the launch of our Adult Support and Protection Procedures, Neglect, Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland, Trading Standards, Advocacy for adults at risk of harm, Marac.
- 1765 people attended our briefings and online learning events, including successful events to launch 16 days of activism in November 2023 and Adult Support and Protection day in February 2024.
- 46 staff cancelled with less than five days' notice and 121 staff did not attend on the day.
- Our training was evaluated highly by the 300 staff who provided feedback.

What are our key messages?

- Look out for our flyers advertising our training and sign up for courses that are relevant to your role.
- Our briefings are usually an hour long and a great way to learn about a new topic – you do not have to sign up for them – you can just join with a link.
- Managers – please try and protect your staff time to attend our training. We know cancellation cannot be avoided sometimes but think about the waste of resources when a space is not used.
- If you attend our training, please provide feedback. We want to hear from you so that we can make improvements to our training where needed, and to provide assurance that our training is meeting your needs.



Training update

We have been working hard to develop our training calendar for 2024/25.

Look out for our flyers advertising our courses and briefings. If you have received this newsletter then you should always also be getting our flyers. We will always advertise our courses around 12 to 10 weeks before the event, and our briefings will be advertised around 8 to 6 weeks. Our briefings usually last an hour and are always held online.

If you work in East Lothian and Midlothian, you can attend our training at no cost to your organisation. Always speak to your manager first before applying for a space on a course, to make sure that you have protected time to attend, and that it is relevant for your role.



**Join our one-hour
Online Briefing on
the Safe and
Together Model
10am on Tuesday
11th June 2024**

The Safe & Together Model is an internationally recognised suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic violence informed. It is used by practitioners in East Lothian and Midlothian. This one-hour briefing will give an overview of Domestic Abuse and an introduction to the Safe and Together Model. We will explain what we mean by Safe and Together and how this can support our practice. This is a great introduction for anyone who is new to the model and wants to learn more. If you work in East Lothian and Midlothian put the link below in your calendar or look out for our flyer.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Adult Support and Protection

What is Corporate Appointeeship?

Adults with health vulnerabilities like a learning disability or dementia are sometimes at risk of financial harm. They can be made to part with their money by force or manipulation. This can leave them vulnerable to psychological harm and physical harm, and without money to meet their basic needs, such as food, heating and clothing. An appointee is someone who can look after another person's finances if that person is unable to manage their finances themselves either through issues of capacity or when there may be coercion or intimidation, and the person is keen for support from someone else.

If the adult is assessed as lacking capacity to manage their benefits a Council Officer, as part of an Adult Protection plan, may apply for Corporate Appointeeship. This is where an organisation (i.e., the Council) has been approved by the Department of Work and Pensions. The Corporate Appointee is responsible for making and maintaining any benefit claims and for ensuring spend of the benefit monies is in the person's best interests and meets their day-to-day needs.

The Mental Welfare Commission [Investigation into the Care and Treatment of Mr E](#) was published in January of this year. Mr E had schizophrenia and struggled to manage his finances, and the Council took out Corporate Appointeeship. This was in place for a number of years. There were some concerns that Mr E's older brother was possibly controlling and financially exploiting him, and Mr E had said he did not want his brother to managing his finances. However, it was agreed by Social Work that Mr E's brother could collect his benefits. Due to a lack of oversight and review of the Corporate Appointee arrangements over a number of years, Mr E's benefits held by the Council built up to £24,000, but Mr E was living on his mother's pension and was not accessing this money.

There are clear lessons from this case about how Corporate Appointeeship arrangements can go wrong. Corporate Appointee can work well however to protect and support an adult from risk of harm.

If you are working with an adult who is vulnerable and not managing their benefits speak to Adult Social Work about your concerns so that the option of Corporate Appointeeship can be considered. A Council Officer will develop a plan (which should regularly be reviewed) which outlines how much the adult will receive and how often, and if the spending will be supported by someone else, like a support worker.

Adult Support and Protection

Fifty staff heard a powerful input from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on 13th February with some potentially life-saving messages. Lynne Bruce, Community Safety Advocate from Dalkeith Fire Station stressed the importance of making a referral for a Home Fire Safety Visit as the SFRS provide expert and invaluable free advice. The most common causes of fires in the home are cooking, electrical and smoking.

A key message from the Briefing was to be aware of the need for working, interlinked alarms. Every professional going into a home where someone is vulnerable needs to look out for this. If you are concerned that there are insufficient or no working fire alarms, please discuss a referral with the person you are working with. A recommendation from a recent learning review is that services have triggers for a Home Fire Safety Visit referral written into their assessment and review processes. If you have any concerns the person is unlikely to make a referral due to health issues like frailty or carers stress, offer your help. Consider an Adult Support and Protection referral if you remain concerned.



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

[Home fire safety visits | Scottish Fire and Rescue Service \(firescotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk)

[Report an ASP concern - East Lothian](#)

[Report an ASP concern - Midlothian](#)

Who is most at risk from a house fire?

- Older people
- People with a physical and mental health issue, including dementia or cognitive impairment
- People with a visual and/or hearing impairment
- People dependent on drugs and/or alcohol
- People who smoke
- People who live in our most deprived communities
- People who live alone or live in an isolated or rural community
- People who hoard or live in households with clutter

What to look out for

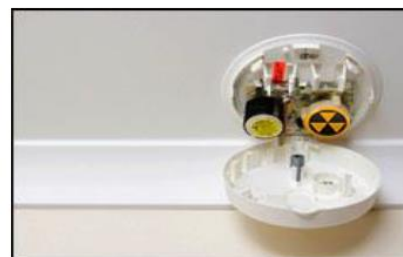
- No detectors present
- Faulty or damaged detectors



Detector hanging from baseplate by wires



Detector with open battery drawer



Open detector cover



Baseplate only with missing detector unit

ASPIre 2024

The Adult Support and Protection Innovation and Reflection Events (ASPIre) are national events for those with lead roles in Adult Support and Protection, covering learning around specialist Adult Support and Protection topics.

There will be an online General Adult Support and Protection Awareness Session on **Tuesday 25th June. There are two sessions running from 10 – 11:30 am or 1 – 2:30pm.**

This event is aimed at staff or volunteers who might not require to know a lot of detailed information about ASP but might come into contact with adults at risk of harm through their work or volunteer role. The input will provide the basics about Adult Support and Protection, and some signposting about where to go locally for further information and to make a referral.

Sign up here [ASPIre Registration Form June 2024](#) . There are a limited number of spaces with a maximum of five from any single agency, so sign up early!

You can watch the videos from the Opening ASPIre Conference. Check out some of the videos here:

Moira Connolly from the Mental Welfare Commission shared a presentation on the case of AB, published in August 2023. AB was a vulnerable person with learning disabilities and physical ill health, who died in hospital after being under the influence of another individual for many years, and despite multi-agency concerns about the impact of this influence. The report illustrates the importance for health and care professionals of fully assessing an individual's capacity for decision making, balancing human rights and considering the potential for undue influence.

[ASPIre 2024 - Case of AB \(youtube.com\)](#)

This was followed by a presentation on undue pressure – how is it defined and when should be talking and thinking about.

[ASPIre 2024 - Undue Pressure \(youtube.com\)](#)

Adult Support and Protection

Capacity – Getting the questions right to keep the adult safe

In Adult Support and Protection there can be concerns about how able an adult is to make and act on decisions to protect themselves from harm. Due to the adult's health (e.g., dementia, brain injury, stroke, learning disability) they may be able to make some decisions but not others. In these circumstances the capacity of the adult to make and act on decision to protect themselves from harm needs to be assessed by a psychiatrist. It needs to consider the different aspects of decision making. This is a complex assessment, which ultimately is designed to ensure that those who need support and protection get it. In some cases, it can result in Social Workers or family members being granted decision making powers to keep the adult safe and make sure they get the support they need.

For example, a vulnerable person might be assessed as having capacity to decide who they associate with. The assessment should 'drill down' into risks that may flow from associating with others. There is a potentially big difference in risk between having the capacity to decide which caring friend to go for a cup of coffee with, compared to associating with people using drugs. The former is low risk, the latter possibly high risk, depending on the adult's abilities.

So, if you think an adult may not be able to make and/or act on decisions and they are at risk of harm, make a referral to Social Work. A Council Officer will make an inquiry to assess if someone is an adult at risk of harm. Always give as much detail as you can about what you are concerned about, and why.

Social Workers can request an assessment of decision-making capacity. If they are fully informed, they can be clear about which risks they are concerned the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about. In other words, getting the question right to keep the adult safe.

You can read more about capacity in the Adult Support and Protection Code of Practice, at page 58. It says "A person's capacity can be transient, vary over time and vary in respect of different types of decision making". Capacity is therefore not a 'one-off' assessment.

[Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007: Code of Practice \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0/42/04200731.htm)

Adult Support and Protection



13th – 17th May 2024 is National Hoarding Awareness Week

Hoarding Disorder is a recognised mental health condition. Hoarding is having so many things that a person cannot manage the clutter where they live and find it difficult or impossible to throw things away. Someone might hoard because they feel a strong need to keep things. But their connection to these things can cause distress, and the impact of hoarding can affect a person's day-to-day life.

Some key facts:

- Hoarding Disorder is a recognised mental health condition.
- 2–5% of the population in the UK suffer with hoarding disorder/behaviour
- 92% of individuals with hoarding disorder/behaviour also have another co-existing mental health condition
- Hoarding disorder is more common than OCD and schizophrenia combined

You can learn more about hoarding by clicking on the links below:

- [Hoarding disorder - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Treatment for hoarding disorder – Mind](#)
- [Clutter Image Ratings - Hoarding Disorders UK](#)
- Watch this 14-minute video from Professor Michael Preston-Shoot, who talks about the relationship between self-neglect and hoarding [here](#).

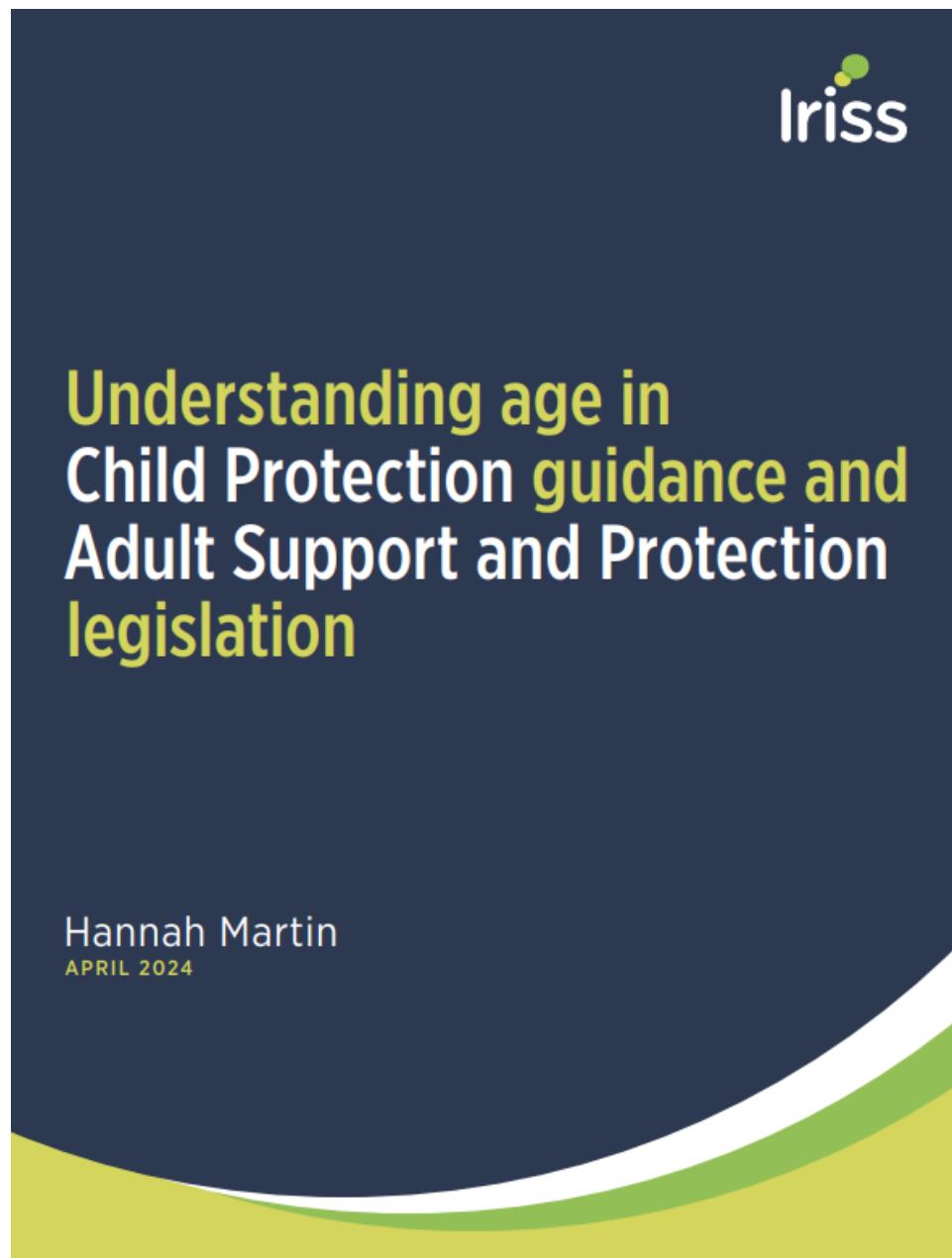
The Clutter Image Rating Scale is used by professionals to assess the extent and severity of a hoarding issue. It is a 9-point scale with illustrations to help with this assessment. Here is an example of what this looks like.



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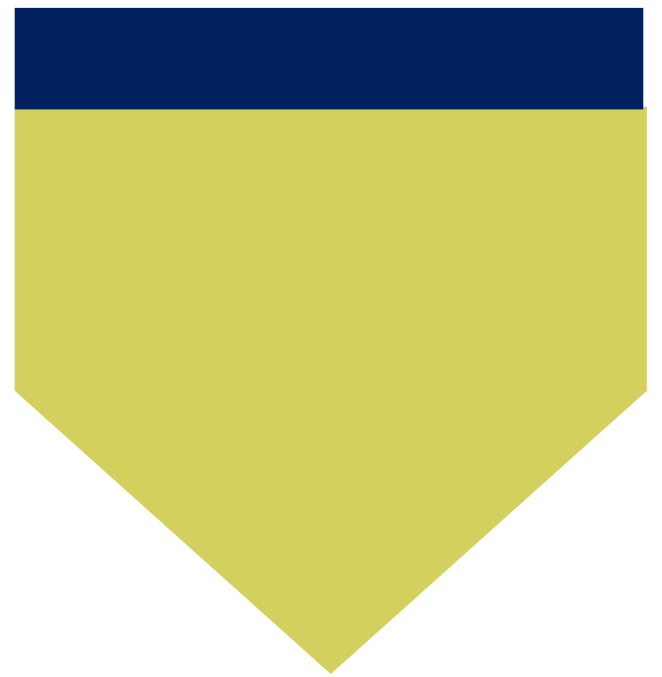


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The legislation that applies to young people aged 16 and 17 can feel like a bit of a minefield. The national Child Protection Guidance and our local multi-agency Child Protection Procedures include children up to the age of 18, but the Adult Support and Protection legislation can be applied to young people aged 16 and 17.

We are currently working on developing some supplementary guidance for working with 16- and 17-year-olds who are at risk of significant harm and who need support and protection. We have had a Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol in place for some time now, which provides some guidance on Vulnerable Young Person's Meetings, but we recognise this needs to be strengthened.



Iriss has published a report and a guidance and legislation table which sets out the scope of both Child Protection and ASP processes. The table is a practical tool for professionals working with 16- and 17-year-olds to view the policy and guidance options available to them.

It is really helpful for navigating the complexity of different but overlapping legislation.

You can access this here:

[Understanding age in Child Protection Guidance and Adult Support and Protection Legislation](#)

**Centre of
expertise
on child
sexual abuse**



The CSA has lots of resources to support professionals to improve identification and response to child sexual abuse. Their first eLearning Course, 'Identifying and responding to intra-familial child sexual abuse', takes just 90 minutes to complete – it consists of three modules, with interactive tasks, video explainers, and a short assessment at the end – you can download a certificate of completion. This training counts towards CPD for registration bodies.

This course is designed for professionals at any stage of their career – for those new to Public Protection work or as a helpful refresher.

It is quick and easy to sign up - [Log in | CSA Centre \(learnupon.com\)](#)

**NSPCC
Learning¹
Podcast**

NSPCC Learning has published a podcast exploring pre-birth assessments. At just under 20 minutes long, the podcast features practitioners working in children's social care discussing what pre-birth assessments are, risk factors and identifying when an assessment is needed, and how tools such as the Graded Care Profile 2 Antenatal (GCP2A) assessment tool can help.

Follow this link to listen now - [Understanding pre-birth assessments | NSPCC Learning Podcast \(youtube.com\)](#)

Inspectors praise 'very good' partnership work to keep East Lothian children safe from harm

The work that professionals and volunteers do day in day out to support and protect children at risk of harm in East Lothian has been recognised in the report of the external inspection which was published on 7th May 2024. The inspection team (made up of staff from the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, and young volunteers) listened to children and their families, read records to assess practice, spoke to staff and members of leadership teams and committees.

The key messages in the report, which you can read [here](#), are that:

- Children and young people were safer as a result of staff's effective recognition and response to risks and concerns.
- Partners worked well together using inter-agency referral discussions to plan responses if children and young people were at risk of harm.
- Most children and young people experienced positive relationships with staff that had helped to keep them safe.
- The Single Point of Access had enabled many children and young people to receive effective support for their mental health and wellbeing.
- Children and young people at risk of harm felt that staff working with them listened to and respected their views.
- There were examples of meaningful involvement at strategic level, but partners were not consistently seeking, collating and using the views of children and young people and their families to inform service improvements.
- Leaders worked well together through clear governance structures and reporting arrangements. Staff had confidence in their leaders.
- Partners had not fully established ways to collect, analyse and report on the difference services were making. They had scope to develop a greater understanding of this.

Lesley Brown, Chair of East Lothian's Children's Strategic Partnership, said ' This is a fantastic report and a testament to all the hard work across our partnership to keep children and young people safe from harm. It is the most important task we have and we, and the people who rely on our services, can take confidence from the robust nature of this inspection and the subsequent findings'.

The partnership will now begin work on a plan to progress some of the areas identified by inspectors that we need to improve.

NSPCC
'Learning'

Why language matters ➔

improving
safeguarding and
child protection
practice with words



How the term 'friend' could mask safeguarding concerns

NSPCC Learning has published a blog looking at why it is important to explore what young people mean when they talk about 'friends' they have made online. The blog discusses how this could mask safeguarding concerns and explores changes in language that professionals can make to reflect the voice of the child and describe concerns. A key take away message is to stay curious when children talk about 'friends' they have met online.



Read the blog here:

[Why language matters: how referring to online 'friends' can mask safeguarding concerns | NSPCC Learning](#)

Statistics Briefing – Emotional Abuse

This briefing from the NSPCC looks at what data and statistics are available to help professionals and their organisations to make evidence-based decisions about emotional abuse. It includes information from a number of sources such as data from services which work with children, and research from children's and adults' self-reported experiences, which help build a picture of the scale of emotional abuse.

It is difficult to measure exactly how many children in the UK experience emotional abuse. However, research with 2,275 young people aged 11-17 about their experiences of emotional abuse suggests around **1 in 15** children in the UK have been emotionally abused. There were over 7,000 contacts to the NSPCC's Helpline and over 2,700 Childline counselling sessions in 2022/23 about emotional abuse.

Read the briefing here [Preventing emotional abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

Protecting children from emotional abuse

The [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#) says that “emotional abuse includes parental behaviour or exposure to adult behaviour that evokes fear, humiliation, distress, despair and a closing down of self-expression. This can cause immediate and long-term harm, because of the traumatic impact, the impact on development and how a child learns to feel about themselves, their relationships and the world. Extreme overprotection can also impair development”.

It can be very difficult to identify emotional abuse and sometimes it can take a long time for the signs of emotional abuse to show. Learn more about the impact of emotional abuse on children and young people, what signs and indicators to look out for, and how to respond to it in this [NSPCC Learning Resource](#).



Working With Children And Young People Who Have Displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviour:

Evidence Based Guidance For Professionals Working With Children And Young People.

Prevention of harmful sexual behaviour is everyone's business.

Children and young people's sexual behaviours range significantly in terms of their nature, frequency, context, and impacts. Not all sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people is normal. However, distinguishing between appropriate non-abusive behaviour and inappropriate or abusive behaviour can be a complex task that requires practitioners to have an understanding of what is healthy and what is abusive or coercive.

The Scottish Government has published new guidance for professionals working with children and young people. This will help practitioners to understand what is meant by the continuum of sexual behaviour in childhood, and identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviours.

Child Protection (CP)



‘Oor lives are nae oor ane’ is a quote from a peer-led interview with a parent describing what it is like to have intensive scrutiny of every aspect of your family life. The interview was carried out with and by parents who have had their children removed from their care as part of a participatory action research project.

Supported by Children 1st a small group of parents in Moray co-designed and carried out our research to explore what help parents need during child protection processes and what support would benefit parents who have children who are looked after in foster care, residential care, secure care, kinship care or who are adopted.

The research has now been published and you can read a summary report [here](#) or the full report [here](#).

Watch the short film ‘Oor Lives, Oor Ane’ [here](#).

There are lots of messages and learning for everyone, whether you are a practitioner working with families or a strategic leader making decisions about service provision:

- Treat parents as parents and recognise that family is important in children’s lives.
- Parents need to feel respected, heard and taken seriously.
- Recognise and respect the right to family life, for children, parents, brothers and sisters and wider family.
- Parents should not be judged for their own childhoods.
- Parents should know who cares for their child and have an opportunity to build a relationship.
- Parents should have support at all stages, including if children are no longer living with them.
- Family Group Decision Making should be available to all families as early as possible when there is a risk that children might not be able to stay at home with their parent.
- Involve parents in the design and development of services to meet their support needs.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)



Equally Safe:

Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls

The strategy will consider how we promote protective factors and address the underlying causes of VAWG. This includes exploring how we tackle the systemic societal and economic disadvantages and circumstances that can foster all forms of VAWG. With an understanding of underlying causes, risk factors, and protective factors, we will then design and implement actions to prevent VAWG across three key stages, as shown below.

The Equally Safe Strategy was refreshed and published in December 2023.

You can read this [here](#).

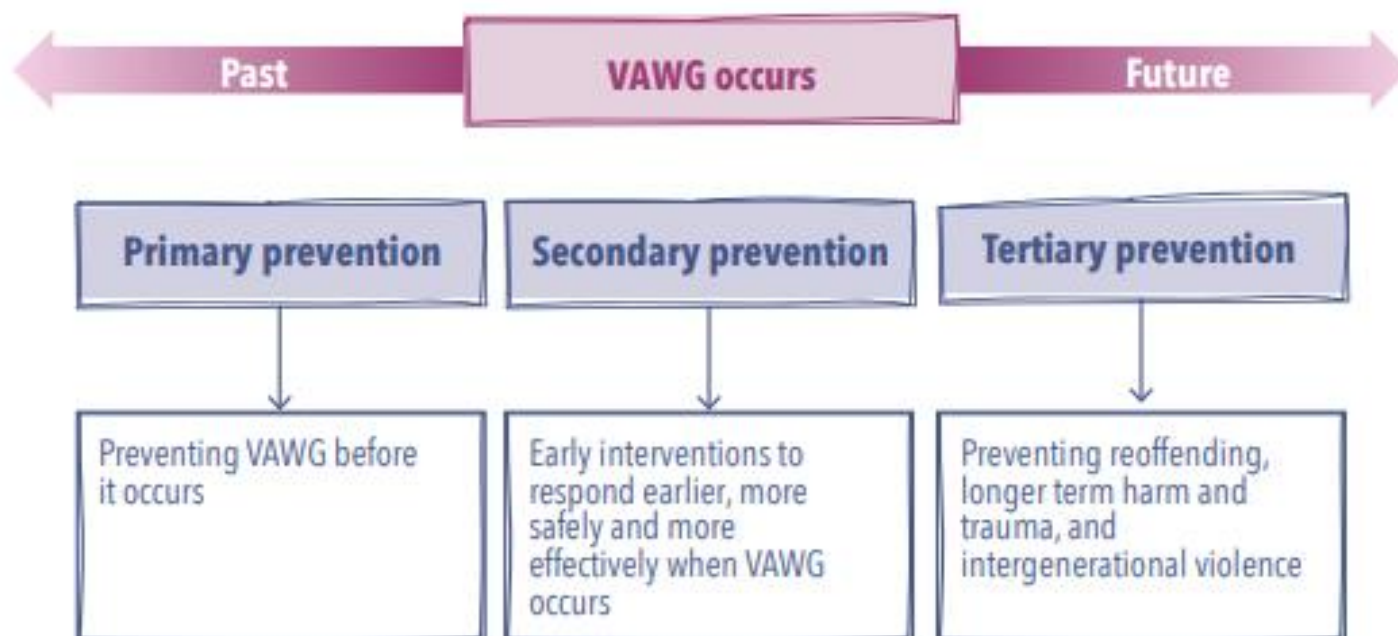
Work is underway to develop a short national delivery plan, focusing on the key actions needed to implement the strategy nationally and locally.

Vision

A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.

Aim of Equally Safe

To work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.



Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The **statistics on domestic abuse**, based on details of incidents and crimes recorded by Police Scotland were published in March. You can read the full document [here](#).

We know that this does not reveal the incidence of all domestic abuse committed in Scotland, and that the Police statistics are often commonly referred to as ‘the tip of an iceberg’. Some key highlights from the published statistics are that:

- The type of crime or offence most frequently recorded as part of a domestic abuse incident was common assault, followed by threatening and abusive behaviour
- There were 114 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland per 10,000 population.
- Dundee City (180), West Lothian (148) and Glasgow (141) recorded the highest rates per 10,000 population.
- There were 1,171 incidents of domestic abuse recorded in East Lothian, a slight decrease by 38 from the previous year. This was a rate of 104 incidents per 10,000 population, a decrease from 110 the previous year.
- There were 1,125 incidents of domestic abuse recorded in Midlothian, a slight decrease by 33 from the previous year. This was a rate of 116 incidents per 10,000 population, a decrease from 122 the previous year.
- Where gender information was recorded, 81% (just over four-in-five incidents involved a female victim and a male suspected perpetrator.
- 32% of incidents occurred at the weekend.
- Where the location was known, 90% of incidents occurred in a home or dwelling.

Why is gender not included within hate crime legislation in Scotland?

There has been much discussion in the media in recent weeks focussed on sex and gender not being included within hate crime legislation in Scotland. At first glance, it might seem appealing to expand hate crime aggravators to include sex, as an obvious way to increase protections for women. However, in reality, the hate crimes model was not designed to address the nature and scale of the gender-based violence and harassment women face in our society. The hate crimes model focusses on protect minorities. Women are not a minority - they make up 51% of Scotland's population.



Read more from Engender [here](#).

Engender has worked in Scotland for 30 years to advance equality between women and men, producing research, lobbying decision-makers and empowering women to campaign for change.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)



Women are involved in **Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** in all areas of Scotland. It is not isolated to our big cities and takes different forms in different areas. The growth of internet and online advertising websites has allowed easy access to buying and accessing sex, across all communities. It happens here in East Lothian and Midlothian. Women involved in Commercial Sexual Exploitation will be involved with many of our local services, including health services, housing, counselling and Social Work.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation is not a lifestyle choice, and the circumstances that women find themselves in are complex. Some women will never tell, some will have been outed, some will tell when the time is right, and some will only bring it up when they are in crisis. There are some things workers can do to make it easier for women to open up. Watch the short animation here (which is less than five minutes long) [Building bridges animation on Vimeo](#) highlighting the key things services and staff can do when a woman is selling sex.

CSE Aware creates resources, engagement and training opportunities to influence change for women impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Building Bridges is a new set of resources to equip services to improve their responses to women's disclosures of selling sex. There is a presentation and guidance notes that can be used for awareness raising or staff development through discussions at team meetings or self-reflection – the information is really accessible and engaging. Click on the link here to access the training pack. [BUILDING BRIDGES - CSE AWARE](#)



Read the April edition [here](#).

Sign up for the monthly newsletter to get updates on news, research, resources, events and training [here](#).

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Equally Safe in Midlothian

Midlothian's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence
Against Women and Girls
2023 to 2027

A Midlothian Community Planning
Partnership Approach
"Everyone has a role".



Midlothian's Community Planning Partnership has approved the Equally Safe in Midlothian Strategy. This has been in development over the past 18 months. We listened to the views of 100 staff through a survey, and 55 staff attended a consultation event in August 2023 – lots of ideas were generated which we will take forward over the lifetime of this strategy.

A plan to deliver the strategy is in development and the Community Planning Partnership will play a key role in its implementation.

In our first year, we will focus on raising awareness of the issues through training and communications, building a shared understanding of some of the language we use when talking about gender based violence, and making best use of the resources such as programmes for early years and schools to strengthen our approaches to preventing gender based violence.

Joan Tranent, CSWO/Chief Operating Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities, Chair of the Leadership Group that developed the Strategy said "Looking at the national figures, we estimate that over 3,500 children in Midlothian are likely to have experienced domestic abuse – these are children we all know in our nurseries, schools, health settings and community groups. This strategy is a great step forward in demonstrating Midlothian's commitment to preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. Each and every one of us who works and/or lives in Midlothian has a responsibility in challenging and tackling gender inequality and working together to improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people and communities in Midlothian. This strategy is the result of collaboration of partners over the past year, with the support of the Improvement Service, and I am proud of the work we have achieved so far."

Read the Strategy here

[Equality and Diversity reports | Equally Safe in Midlothian Strategy](#)

Spotlight on Sextortion

What is sextortion

Sextortion stands for sexual extortion. It involves the threat of having sexual information, photos or videos shared. It is done to get money, control behaviour or pressure someone for further images. It can be done in a number of ways – social media is all too easy as a way to hook someone in. It might start with a seemingly harmless flirt and chat on social media, dating sites and through someone posing as a ‘friend’. The victim is actively encouraged to remove clothing, share an act on camera or share explicit images – they may be recorded and shared without the victim’s knowledge. The victim may get their contacts hacked, and intimate images shared without consent – this is known as revenge porn.

Who is at risk?

Sextortion can impact people of any sex or age, children and adults. The schemes used are very convincing and sophisticated and expert criminals may create what looks like a genuine profile.

New data from the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) reveals thousands of images and videos of children as young as three to six who have been groomed and manipulated into sexually abusive activities via webcams and camera devices, whilst parents/carers think they are playing safely on household devices. Read more here [Under sixes manipulated into ‘disturbing’ sexual abuse says IWF](#).

The IWF reports that children aged 11 to 13 continue to appear most frequently in imagery where the abuser was not physically present in the room when the image or video was created – the child may have been unaware that they were being recorded but were persuaded to create the image that was then captured by the perpetrators.

Someone with a health issue such as a mental health issue or learning disability, could be at higher risk, as well as children and young people.

The risks are high. The IWF has issued an alert for [education settings in Scotland](#) due to the growing risks.

Spotlight on Sextortion

What is the scale of the issue?

Globally there has been a large increase in reports of children and young people being forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand after an offender has threatened to release nudes or semi-nudes of them.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), a charity that has been in existence since 1996, works to end child sexual abuse imagery online. More than **one million webpages** showing at least one, and often many tens, hundreds or thousands of child sexual abuse images and videos have been removed from the internet thanks to their work over the past five years alone.

In the last year, the IWF received 392,665 reports of child sexual abuse imagery, an increase of 5% from the previous year. 275m 652 URLs (webpages) were confirmed as containing child sexual abuse imagery, having links to the imagery of advertising it – each URL could contain thousands of individual child sexual abuse images or videos, capable of being shared across the globe.

The Revenge Porn Helpline received 19,000 reports to its helpline, over double the number of reports compared to the previous year. Sextortion made up 34% of the reports in the year. The Revenge Porn Helpline has removed over 305,000 non-consensually shared intimate images online since its launch in 2015.

What is the impact?

The impact on people who have been the victim of sextortion can be extreme. Read about two very different experiences and outcomes here.

[Sextortion on Snapchat is not the end of my world, says victim - BBC News.](#)

[Pupils get rare alert over dangers of sextortion - BBC News](#)

A father of a 16-year-old who was blackmailed said 'As parents, we're very good at telling kids what not to do, but maybe not so good at telling them what to do if they do it. I think that's something we really need to take away from this, that you need to give them that information, that if they do step over that line, don't panic'

Spotlight on Sextortion

What to do when someone is a victim of sextortion?

There are lots of supports and resources for people to access to deal with being a victim of sextortion and to raise awareness of the issue. The key messages are:

- Do not panic
- Contact the Police – they will take your case seriously.
- Block the person on your phone/device.
- Do not communicate with the person.
- Do not pay any money.
- Change passwords.
- Tell someone you trust.
- Get help to get the images taken down.

Want to read more about sextortion?

[NCA issues urgent warning about 'sextortion' - National Crime Agency](#)

[Sextortion - Police Scotland](#)

[Sextortion - IWF](#)

Supports

[Sextortion - Police Scotland](#)

[Self-help guide – Police](#)

[Online safety and advice resources \(iwf.org.uk\)](#) – for everyone

[Sextortion or online blackmail help for young people and children \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)

[Sextortion advice and guidance for adults \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)

[Advice for parents of children who are being 'sextorted' online \(iwf.org.uk\)](#)

[Report Remove | Childline](#)

[Home - Gurls Out Loud](#) – for children and young people

[CEOP Safety Centre](#) – for children and young people

[Revenge Porn Helpline](#) - for people over 18

[Sextortion emails: how to protect yourself - NCSC.GOV.UK](#) – for everyone

[Sextortion - Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](#)

[Contact Us | Samaritans](#)

Contact us

Our Lead Officers support the work of EMPPC and you can contact them for more information about anything in this newsletter, or about their role:

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Jenny Mair Co-Ordinator – Protecting Women and Girls from Violence
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Do you have any suggestions for a future article in our newsletter? If so, please get in touch with us at emppo@eastlothian.gov.uk

Our Vision for Public Protection

Everyone has a right to be safe and protected from harm and abuse. We will protect our children, young people and adults in East Lothian and Midlothian by working together and upholding our values.

Our core values of respect, integrity and commitment underpin our work in supporting and protecting all people who may be at risk of harm in our communities.