

East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee

Annual Report 2020 - 21



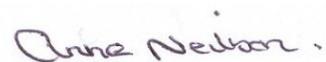
Foreward

I am pleased to present the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee's (EMPPC) seventh annual report which outlines key achievements and areas for improvement for the year ahead. The EMPPC was established in 2014 and operates within the context of public protection national guidance and legislation.

There have been a number of changes in the last year both within the Public Protection Office and in the membership of the Committee. Alison White, Head of Adult Services in Midlothian, who has been a member of the Committee since its inception has recently taken up post as Director of Health and Social Care in West Lothian. Alison chaired a number of sub-Committees included the Learning and Practice Development Subgroup and the Offender Management Subgroup. I would like to thank Alison for her significant contribution to the work of the EMPPC. I would also like to thank Trish Pattison, Lead Officer for Child Protection, Sean Byrne, Public Protection Team Manager and Denice Lilley, Adult Protection Lead Officer who has also been part of the EMPPC since its inception. All three colleagues have moved to new positions during the reporting period and I would like to wish them well for the future. I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome Kirsty MacDiarmid who joined the team in the role of Public Protection Team Manager in September 2020, Alan Laughland, Lead Officer Adult Support and Protection in March 2021, and Eileen Marnoch who was recruited into the post of Lead Officer Child Protection during the reporting period.

The EMPPC continues to address the cross cutting issues incorporating all aspects of Public Protection including Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection, Violence against Women and Girls and the Multiagency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for service users in East Lothian and Midlothian with one of its key strengths being the wide range of multiagency senior representatives across services and key agencies. The EMPPC is committed to working in partnership to improve services to support and protect all people who may be at risk of harm within our communities. The past year has been unprecedented for the EMPPC and partner agencies who have continued to deliver strong public protection arrangements throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The report will outline we have adapted our services in response to the pandemic to ensure the protection of children and adults at risk. I would like to thank colleagues across agencies who have responded to the challenges presented. This annual report covers the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and will highlight the impact of Covid-19 and the excellent work undertaken as a result to mitigate risk.

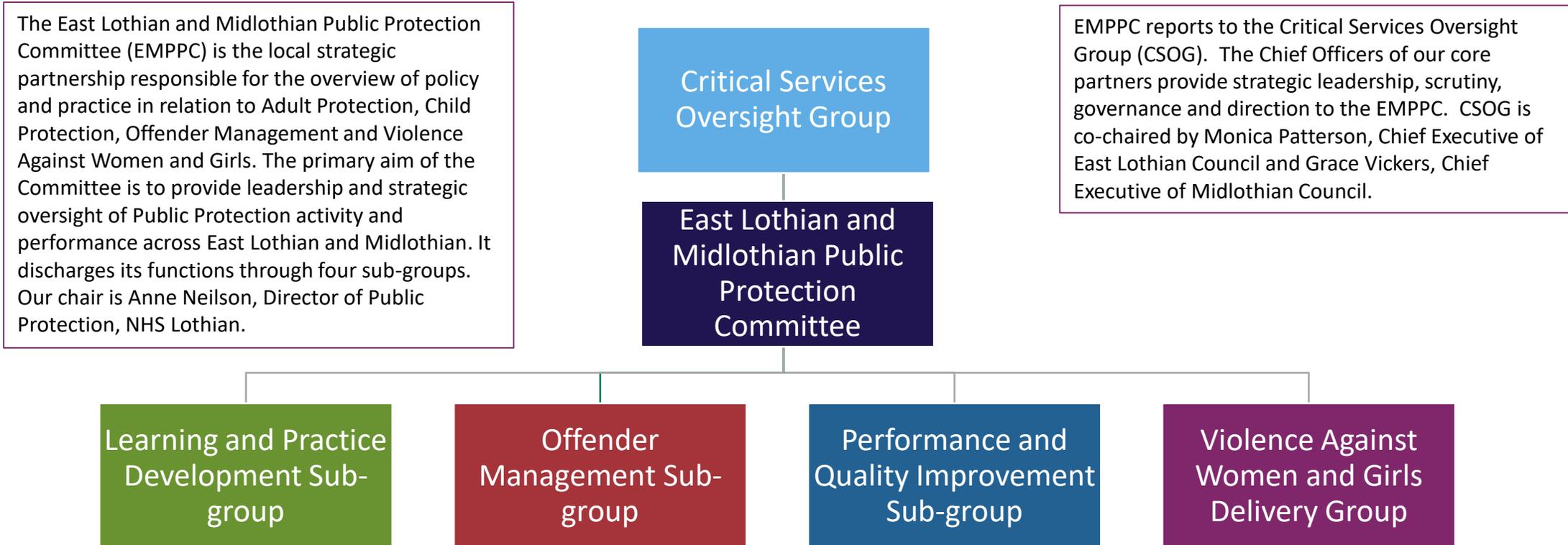
I am confident that over the next year partner agencies will continue to work together to strengthen our Public Protection arrangements and address the new challenges and opportunities presenting to support those individuals who are most at risk within our communities and continue to improve services across East Lothian and Midlothian.



**Anne Neilson, Director of Public Protection, NHS Lothian
Chair of East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee**

“It’s everyone’s responsibility to support and protect people at risk of harm”

Our Strategic Structure for Public Protection in East Lothian and Midlothian



“It’s everyone’s responsibility to support and protect people at risk of harm”

Our **Learning and Practice Development Sub-group** oversees the development and delivery of the Learning and Development strategy. Our Chair is Trish Carlyle, Group Service Manager, East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership

Our **Offender Management Sub-group** ensures that the statutory responsibilities placed on local partner agencies for the assessment and management of risk posed by dangerous offenders are discharged effectively. Our Chair is Judith Tait, Chief Social Work Officer/ Chief Operating Officer, Children's Services, East Lothian Council

Our **Performance and Quality Improvement Sub-group** is responsible for the oversight and governance of the performance framework and improvement plan. Our Chair is Joan Tranent, Chief Social Work Officer/ Chief Operating Officer Children's Services, Communities and Partnerships, Midlothian Council

Our **Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group** works to support the delivery of Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls in line with the local context and priorities. Our Chair is Keith Mackay, Detective Chief Inspector, J Division, Police Scotland

We also have a responsibility to work with our Partners to deliver Communications on behalf of the EMPPC

The East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee and its sub-groups are supported by the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office (EMPPPO). The Office is situated in the Brunton Hall, Musselburgh, with a Public Protection Team comprising of a Team Manager, Business Support Staff, Lead Officer for Child Protection, Lead Officer for Adult Support and Protection, Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator, Marac Co-ordinator and Domestic Abuse Support Workers. The Domestic Abuse Service is the operational component of the team, providing support and guidance to high-risk victims of gender-based violence.

East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee business during the COVID pandemic

- During the year, we continued to hold our regular quarterly meetings for our CSOG, EMPPC, Performance and Quality Improvement Group and Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Group. We suspended the meetings of our Learning and Development Sub-group and Offender Management Sub-group for a period during the year.
- In the year, CSOG met on a further seven occasions to maintain a strategic overview, and provide leadership and direction in relation to our response to the COVID pandemic. We also held an additional two EMPPC meetings in the earlier part of the year, and an additional two VAWG Delivery Group meetings, in light of the increased risks and impact on victims affected by gender based violence.
- We established a senior managers' partnership meeting on a weekly, then fortnightly basis. This provided the opportunity for additional information sharing about the impact of the COVID pandemic restrictions on service delivery, staffing and the operational delivery of the work of the East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Office (EMPPO) in its support of the work of the EMPPC and associated sub-groups. This arrangement enabled us to have a dynamic and early response to emerging issues and risks and in line with phases of lockdown and restrictions and issuing of National Guidance.
- Our Police partners produced a weekly Partnership report, detailing the number of reports of Child Concerns, Young People offending, Adult Protection referrals, Domestic Abuse referrals, IRDs for adults and children (family count) across each of the local authority areas in 'J' division. Comparison to the same period in the previous year was made to enable assessment of the impact of the COVID pandemic on referral patterns. This report was considered by senior managers within the EMPPC partnership and by CSOG, and enabled regular oversight of any patterns and trends.
- The weekly SOLACE reporting provided to the Scottish Government was reviewed by our senior managers group and CSOG to maintain oversight of local activity and comparison to other local authority areas.
- A risk assessment and position statement in relation to risk management was developed for the general work of the EMPPC, a detailed risk register was developed by our Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Sub-group and a Business Continuity Plan was developed for the EMPPO.
- All our EMPPC and its associated sub-group meetings moved to Microsoft Teams – notwithstanding this proved to be a challenge for the EMPPO to deliver due to the lack of a single shared virtual platform that all partners could access on an equal footing, we continued to hold meetings for CSOG, EMPPC, P&QI and VAWG Delivery Group on a regular, and increased basis for some.
- Maracs (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conferences for victims at very high risk of domestic abuse) continued to take place on a four weekly basis in both East Lothian and Midlothian, with our usual 26 meetings in the year. We held an additional seven Maracs, due to increased demands on service delivery.
- Some of the work identified in our EMPPC Improvement Plan and the associated EMPPC sub-groups was not able to be progressed during the COVID pandemic. We quickly moved to business critical activities, recognising the impact of lockdown and restrictions of staff in our partner agencies to engage in some of our medium to longer term improvement priorities and training delivery. Oversight of the plans to stop some of our activities and of the delayed timescales in delivering actions in our work and improvement plans was provided by EMPPC and CSOG.
- The work on our first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Public Protection which had been commissioned by CSOG prior to the year was halted due to other priorities and personnel changes. This work will be brought to a conclusion during 2021 -22.

Adult Support and Protection

- In response to lockdown in March 2020, Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) produced 'Practice Guidance for Adult Support and Protection' and East Lothian HSCP produced 'Managing risk during the Covid-19 epidemic' Guidance. We quickly supplemented these with EMPPC 'COVID-19 Practice Guidance for Adult Support and Protection 2020-2021'. The guidance agreed that Inter-agency Referral Discussions, as an interim measure, could replace Adult Protection Case Conferences with a three-month review period. We did not make any changes to our arrangements for conducting activities around Duty to Inquire, and for Investigations these continued with modifications to reflect the restrictions posed by lockdown, including use of PPE and COVID risk assessments and mitigation. Inter-agency Referral discussions for Adult Support and Protection continued unchanged as these already took place via telephone and using the online eIRD system hosted by NHS Lothian. Our IRD overview group met on a virtual basis to review IRDs commenced in the previous month. We adapted our practice to ensure that we could continue to undertake Adult Support and Protection activities and fulfil our statutory obligations to keep vulnerable adults safe.
- For review Case Conferences, it was agreed that reports would be considered by the Team Leader as Chair, conferring with relevant staff and advocacy workers as required, and deciding on the need for continuation of ASP measures. The EMPPC Guidance was later revised in line with impact assessments and revisions to Government guidance.
- In East Lothian and Midlothian, in common with other geographical areas and other services, staff adjusted to a mix of working at home and office based work if necessary, with a move to digital technology for meetings. Working from home was initially more challenging in East Lothian due to the need for laptop access and implementation of Skype for Business after lockdown commenced. Staffing levels were maintained for business critical activities.
- Guidance also specified arrangements for maintaining contact with the adult where safe and appropriate, using PPE. As communication methods progressed to electronic methods such as MS Teams/Skype for Business, Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences were convened digitally, enabling the adult and their carer to participate in the process.
- A move to virtual Case Conferences had a positive impact on the attendance of a wider group of professionals at Case Conferences in Midlothian, and staff were flexible in their approach to supporting adults and their carers to participate in Case Conferences. Some adults were able to participate in meetings and contacts with staff on a virtual basis, whereby they previously may have had difficulty attending in person due to frailty or disability. In East Lothian, Case Conferences were trialled on line but quickly moved to face-to-face whenever possible.
- Overall, lockdown does not appear to have had a significant effect on the progression of ASP work or on the ability of adults to participate in the process.
- In partnership with East Lothian HSCP Communications and Engagement Manager, EMPPC produced a short video called [Protecting adults from harm during lockdown](#). East Lothian HSCP and Midlothian HSCP promoted this via their social media feeds. We also shared this via the national ASP network and adapted this for use by several other Adult Protection Committees.
- February 20th is Adult Protection Awareness Day. This year we ran a campaign to raise awareness of sexual harm and our partner agencies promoted a video via their social media feeds. To watch the video, click here: [sexual-abuse-are-you-at-risk.mp4 on Vimeo](#).

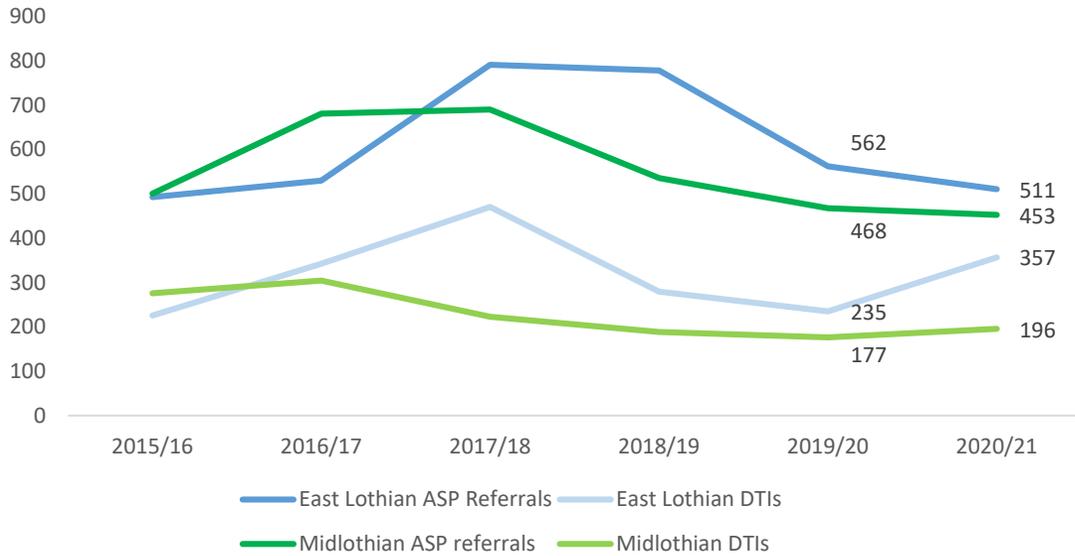
Adult Support and Protection

- The Adult Protection Lead Officer and General Manager, East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership completed an audit of the quality of chronologies and multi-agency risk assessments in East Lothian, reporting to the P&QI in February 2021. Identification of risk and recording of risk assessments were assessed as very good, with some improvements in SMART planning identified. We will take forward this area for improvement over the coming year through our Learning and Development programme.
- The Adult Protection Lead Officer and Service Manager, Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership reported to the P&QI in February 2021 on an audit of conversion of Adult Support and Protection referrals to Duty to Inquire. This involved assessing referrals that had not progressed to DTI, to ascertain the reasons for this. Actions were assessed as appropriate, with some improvements in recording identified.
- Our Adult and Child Protection Lead Officers have also been part of the Pan-Lothian Multi-Agency Chronology Working Group, the work of which is now reaching conclusion and moving onto a template design and implementation phase. We will continue to be involved in this work to progress implementation via our L&PD Sub-group.
- We completed our biennial report on ASP in September 2020.
- We produced various guidance documents during the year in relation to ASP and published these on our website:
 - [Dispute Resolution Protocol for Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection](#): this sets out the processes to be followed when agreement cannot be reached in the decision making within Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences.
 - [Pan-Lothian Large Scale Investigation Protocol](#): this protocol provides a standardised, systematic and transparent approach to the process of LSIs across adult services within Edinburgh and the Lothians.
 - [Herbert Protocol](#): the Herbert Protocol is a nationally recognised scheme, supported by Police Scotland, involving the use of an information-gathering tool to assist Police to find a person living with dementia who has been reported missing, as quickly as possible. We have now established a working group to take forward its promotion.
 - [Practitioners Guidance on Financial Harm](#): we revised this to include the banking protocol and updated with information in relation to domestic abuse.
 - Minor revision to our [Adult Support and Protection Policy and Procedures](#).
- We continued to undertake Initial Case Reviews on a multi-agency basis, moving these to a virtual platform. In the year, we undertook four Initial Case Reviews in relation to critical incidents whereby adults considered to be at risk of harm had died. We have taken a number of learning points from these and will progress the learning from this via our Learning and Practice Development Sub-Group and Performance and Quality Improvement Sub-Group. We also undertook two Large Scale Investigations during the year in relation to services for adults. All reports and action plans were reviewed by our EMPPC and CSOG.

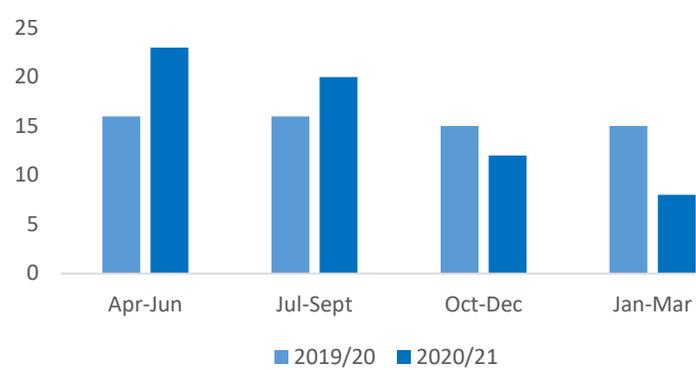


Adult Support and Protection

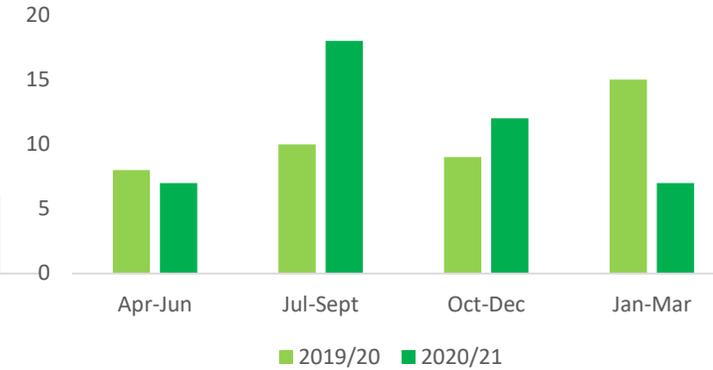
Number of ASP Referrals and Duty to Inquires



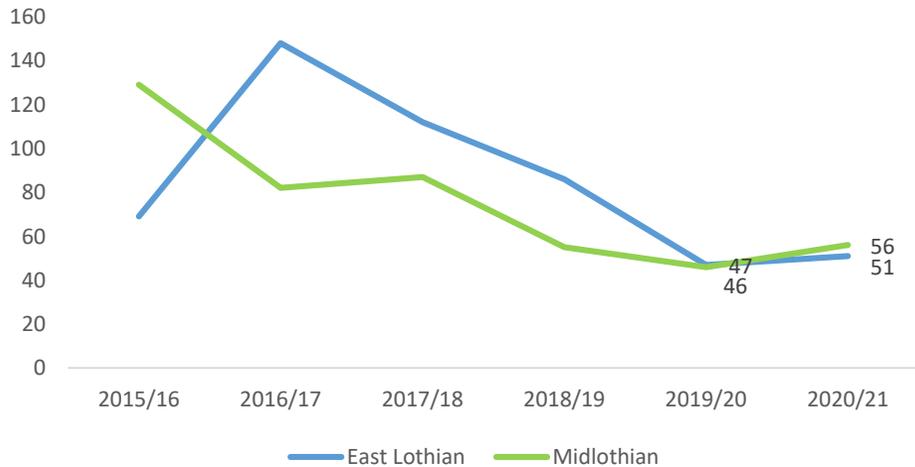
East Lothian Adult IRDs



Midlothian Adult IRDs



ASP Investigations

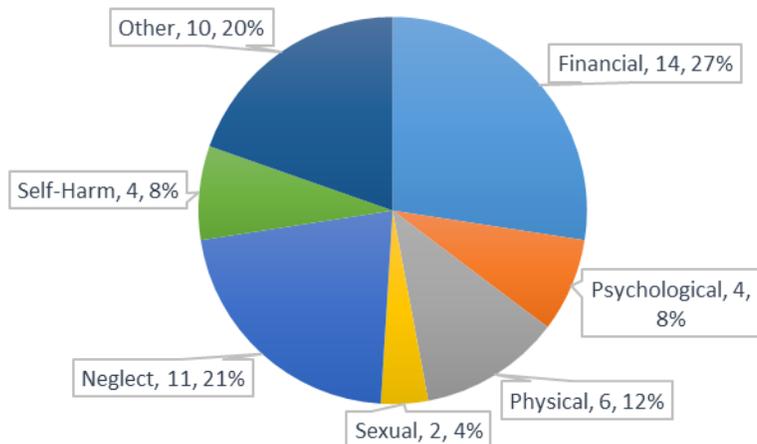


East Lothian received 511 ASP referrals in the year, a 9.1% reduction from the previous year. Midlothian received 453 referrals, a 3.25% reduction from the previous year. Police, followed by Health, were the largest single referrer in each area, making 33% of referrals in East Lothian and 29% of referrals in Midlothian. In East Lothian, 69.9% of referrals progressed to a Duty to Inquire, and 14.3% of Duty to Inquires progressed to an ASP Investigation. In comparison to 2019/20, the conversion rate of referrals to DTI increased by 28%, and DTIs to Investigation decreased by 5.7%. In Midlothian, 43.3% of referrals progressed to a Duty to Inquire, and 28.6% of Duty to Inquires progressed to an ASP Investigation. In comparison to 2019/20, the conversion rate of referrals to DTI increased by 5.4%, and DTIs to Investigation increased by 2.6%. Quarter on quarter in the year, in East Lothian, the number of Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRD) for adults reduced, with a total of 63 IRDs in the year. No pattern was identified in Midlothian, with a total of 43 IRDs in the year. Not all IRDs will result in an ASP Investigation and not all ASP Investigations will result in an IRD. Our IRD overview group continued to review all IRDs in the year to provide quality assurance and scrutiny over IRD decision making processes.



Adult Support and Protection

East Lothian principal type of harm investigated 2020/21



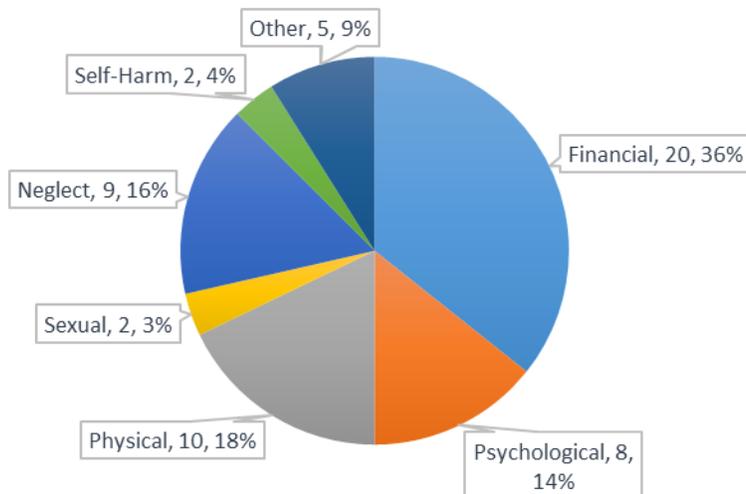
Principal type of harm

In both East Lothian and Midlothian in 2020/21, the most common type of harm investigated under ASP was financial harm. Over the last five years in both areas this has been the most common type of harm investigated in four out of five years (except for 2018/19 in East Lothian, and for 2017/18 in Midlothian when physical was the most common type). During the year, we started to report to the EMPPC on the principal type of harm.

ASP Investigations

- In both East Lothian and Midlothian, the most common category of client group with an ASP Investigation was 'infirmity due to age': 39% (20 of 51) in East Lothian and 45% (25 of 56) in Midlothian.
- In East Lothian, for 77% of adults with an ASP Investigation, home was the location of the principal type of harm. In Midlothian, for 61% of adults with an ASP Investigation, home was the location of the principal type of harm, and for 21% it was within a care home.

Midlothian principal type of harm investigated 2020/21



Performance

During the year, we continued to monitor our performance in relation to ASP processes via our P&QI Sub-group, and review reasons why we may have fallen short of a standard. Key highlights include:

- In East Lothian, 82% (291 of 357) of DTIs were completed within the standard of 7 days, and in Midlothian this was 90% (179 of 196).
- In East Lothian, 88% (28 of 32) of ASP Case Conferences were held within the standard of 28 days, and in Midlothian this was 50% (9 of 18). Ensuring we have the right people at the meeting was a key priority for us, which sometimes led to a slight delay in holding a meeting, but our performance measures in relation to Police and Health attendance at Case Conferences indicate a very good level of multi-agency attendance at meetings.
- In 94% (16 of 17) of ASP Case Conferences in East Lothian the Council Officer had completed their report within the standard of 3 days before the meeting, and in Midlothian this was 59% (7 of 12).

Child Protection

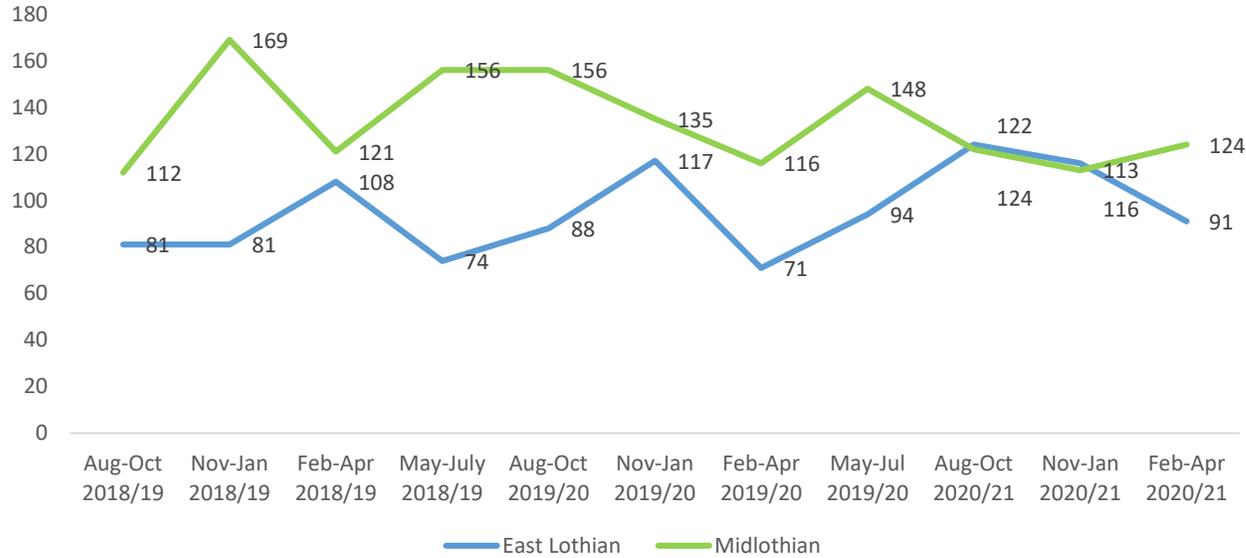
- EMPCC reviewed its Child Protection Procedures in light of national lockdown in March 2020 and the issuing of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Supplementary National Child Protection Guidance. We produced local Interim Guidance to supplement this and reflect our own procedures; this included levels of priority of the circumstances that would result in a Child Protection Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD), Child Protection Registration (Initial and Review Case Conferences and De-registration) and criteria for home visiting. This complemented detailed guidance developed by East Lothian and Midlothian Councils for operational staff in Children's Social Work and Education. We continued to provide essential services and undertake core Child Protection activities by adopting revised Guidance and adapting accordingly in line with Government and local Guidance.
- There was no change required to IRD processes as IRDs already took place by telephone and eIRD was already well embedded in both areas as a shared tool for recording risks and decisions of IRDs. It was agreed that the IRD, as an interim measure, could replace Pre-Birth and Initial Child Protection Case Conferences, and agree Registration for a period of 3 months. Midlothian took a decision to continue with Initial CPCCs initially via teleconferencing before quickly moving to Microsoft Teams. Consequently, no Child Protection Registrations were made as part of any IRD discussion. East Lothian applied the Interim Guidance to consider Registration for approximately two months until Skype for Business and laptops were made available for Social Work staff. This was only used for a small number of children and enabled protection plans to be put in place for those most at risk.
- The incompatibility of shared platforms for virtual meetings affected East Lothian processes for Child Protection Case Conferences and therefore telephone calls were more frequently used for Case Conferences.
- Our interim guidance stated that home visits should continue to take place if there were specific Child Protection issues and/or where children were on the Child Protection Register. In both areas, face-to-face visits with children who were on the Child Protection Register were undertaken, with a detailed risk assessment being carried out in advance of any home visit. In common with other areas, staff had to carefully manage a balance between assessing children's circumstances, seeing families safely (which included seeing them outside or at the doorstep) whilst maintaining confidentiality. For a small number of families where someone was shielding or isolating, contact took place over video-phone calls.
- Hubs were established in East Lothian and Midlothian for children who required to be in school, with services referring the most vulnerable children for a place. In East Lothian, a critical response team was established to provide a duty service response to highest risk families, and all families were RAG rated, with a work plan in place for those at high risk. In Midlothian, Hub placements were offered to all vulnerable children identified by both Children's Services and Schools. These children included all children on the Child Protection Register or who were looked after away from home.
- While operating the Interim Guidance there was no opportunity for formal dispute resolution and therefore a small number of children remained on the Child Protection Register for slightly longer in East Lothian early on during lockdown, when under usual procedures, this may not have happened. Similarly, restrictions on face-to-face meetings impacted on performance in two quarter periods in relation to the sharing of Interim Safety and Child Protection Plans with children in East Lothian. With increased oversight by Team Leaders we have seen improvement in the sharing of Initial Safety Plans over the two quarters since November 2020. We will continue to monitor progress in this via our P&QI sub-group.

Child Protection

- In May 2020, our Performance and Quality Improvement Sub-group reviewed a report of an audit carried out in Midlothian by the Child Protection Lead Officer and Service Manager. One audit focused on a random sample of children who had had more than 1 IRD in Q3 in 2019/20. The audit sought to explore whether there were any common factors which would allow the identification of areas for enhanced practice and development, to improve the lived experience of children who present as repeat IRDs. Key conclusions were that referrals were appropriate and met thresholds for referral to IRD, and staff within all agencies were clearly identifying risk. However, for a small number of children, despite resources being deployed to ascertain risk and concern, in the context of repeat interventions, this had not resulted in sustained improvement in the child's circumstances. It was agreed that the Lead Officer would progress the development and use of the Glasgow Neglect toolkit in East Lothian and Midlothian, to help staff understand cumulative neglect, identify and respond at an early stage. This action is now part of the Joint Inspection Action Plan for Midlothian.
- In May 2020, the P&QI also considered the findings of an audit to assess the extent to which staff were following local guidance for children whose names had been removed from the Child Protection Register. The audit highlighted that there was some need for improvement in ensuring updates to all care plans and chronologies, and that two post-registration meetings take place, following de-registration. Independent Reviewing Officers are now reviewing compliance on a routine basis.
- In September 2020, the Care Inspectorate published their Inspection into our services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Midlothian. There was a high level of confidence in the partnership in Midlothian, with key highlights including:
 - evidence of strong partnership working at all levels and a confident and competent workforce committed to improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and families;
 - the effective Champions board structure and the continued effort from staff across the partnership to enable children and young people to influence service design and improvement;
 - the strength of scrutiny and oversight of Child Protection practice and the drive for continuous improvement; and
 - the partnership's record of improvement to date in relation to the impact of services on care experienced children and young people.
- The key priority for improvement was for partners to continue to develop its systematic use of data, quality assurance and joint self-evaluation to help understand what differences services are making and what needs to change.
- During the year, we commenced but did not conclude one Initial Case Review for a young person, and had one Significant Case Review in process, reaching a conclusion with an interim report, which has been reviewed with CSOG. We have now progressed into the second phase of this, which will involve workshops with practitioners and front line managers to further our review and learning.

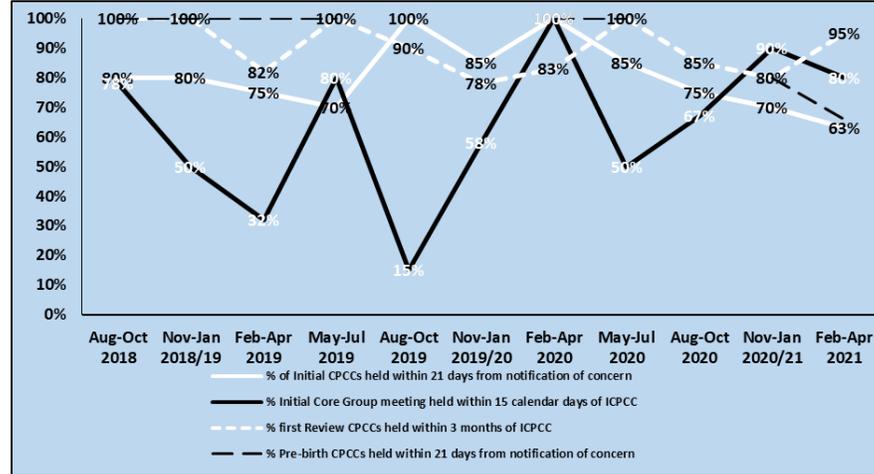
Child Protection

Number of Children subject to Inter-agency Referral Discussions

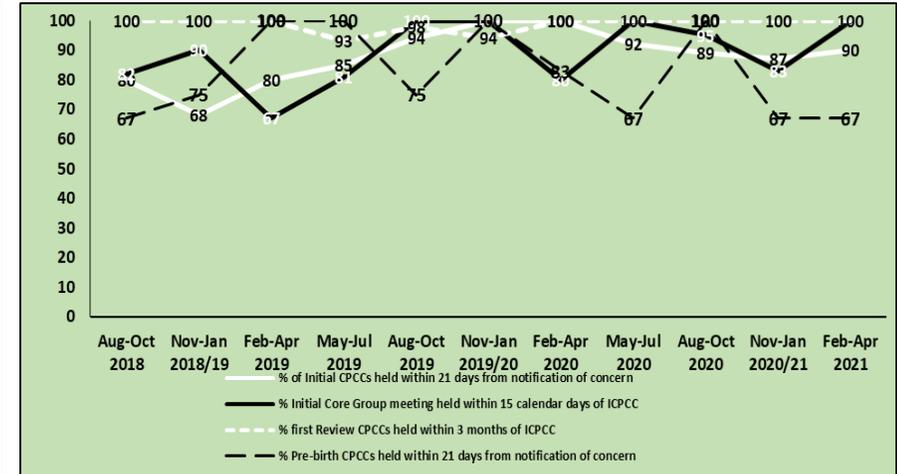


We saw a mixed picture in the number of IRDs in each area over the year, with no identifiable trend quarter on quarter over the past three years. A low point in the year was reached just at the start of lockdown in March 2020, in common with elsewhere across Scotland. East Lothian saw a significant increase when schools returned after the school summer holiday period, with a reduction again after the December restrictions period. In Midlothian we similarly saw a dip following the December restrictions. Our Child Protection IRD Overview Group provides scrutiny, quality assurance and reviews any recurring themes and patterns that would have implications for practice and learning and development.

Through scrutiny of our data, we have continued to review our performance in holding Case Conferences and Core Groups within the timescales laid out in our Child Protection Guidance in both East Lothian and Midlothian. The reasons for any exceptions are explored and explained at our quarterly multi-agency Child Protection meeting of the P&QI Sub-group. East Lothian has adopted Signs of Safety as a key approach in Child Protection and timescales around Case Conferences vary slightly.



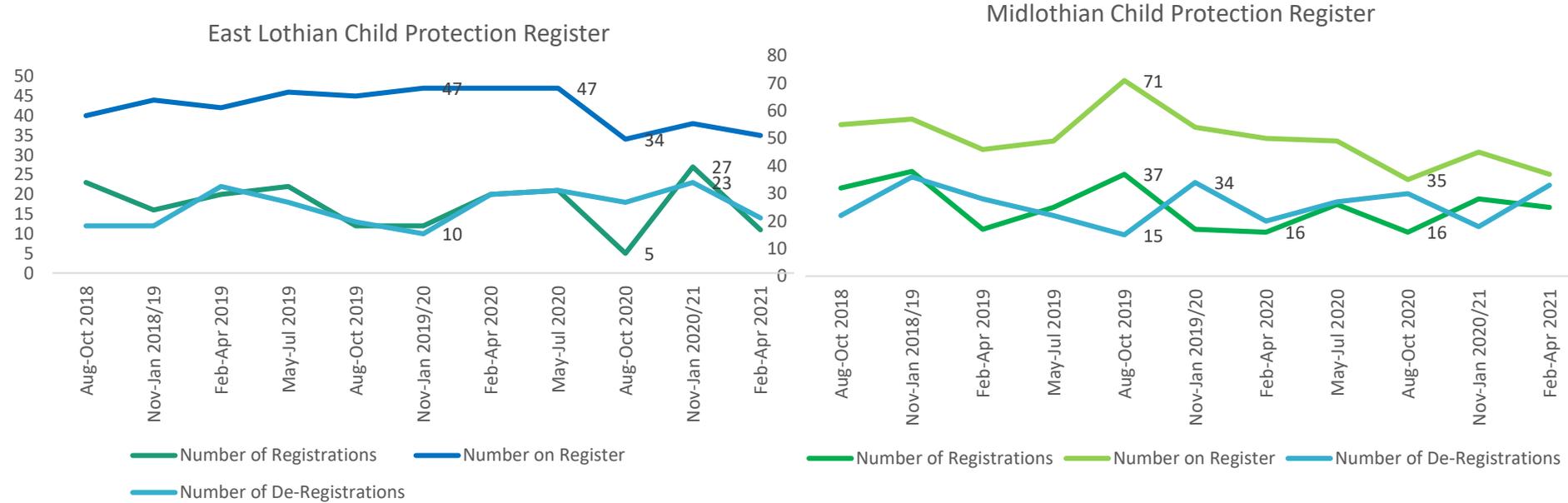
East Lothian



Midlothian

Child Protection

During the year, we implemented our use of the national Child Protection minimum dataset to review our Performance data on an academic quarterly basis, with a small number of additional local measures. We established a separate sub-group of our Performance and Quality Improvement group to undertake this work. Quarterly reviewing of our Child Protection registrations noted that they reached their lowest point in twelve quarters in both East Lothian (34) and Midlothian (35) in October 2020. Feedback from our IRD overview groups continued to evidence that IRD thresholds and decision making are consistent and balanced. This decline reflected what we saw elsewhere in Scotland, most likely as a result of many professionals not seeing children below that threshold of referral for IRD or for a service. Domestic abuse was within the top three most common concerns when a child's name was placed on the Child Protection Register in all three quarters in East Lothian and in two of three quarters in Midlothian. The three most common concerns in each area are highlighted in the table alongside.



Concerns at Registration

Concern	East Lothian Midlothian Scotland			East Lothian Midlothian		East Lothian Midlothian		East Lothian Midlothian	
	Aug 2018-Jul 2019			Aug-Oct 2020		Nov 2020-Jan 2021		Feb-Apr 2021	
Child Placing Themselves at Risk	0%	2%	5%	0%	0%	4%	0%	9%	0%
Child Sexual Exploitation	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Domestic Abuse	70%	55%	41%	60%	38%	33%	57%	27%	24%
Emotional Abuse	82%	44%	40%	60%	25%	26%	29%	9%	12%
Neglect	27%	35%	41%	0%	25%	7%	0%	36%	28%
Non-Engaging Family	17%	27%	27%	0%	13%	11%	43%	18%	48%
Parental Alcohol Misuse	17%	15%	18%	0%	13%	7%	39%	0%	20%
Parental Drug Misuse	47%	29%	23%	20%	13%	37%	25%	36%	32%
Parental Mental Health Problems	16%	39%	34%	80%	63%	33%	14%	0%	48%
Physical Abuse	46%	18%	24%	0%	44%	30%	21%	0%	36%
Sexual Abuse	1%	12%	4%	0%	19%	15%	29%	18%	0%
Other (including Trafficking)	5%	0%	17%	0%	31%	11%	14%	18%	16%
Total Number of Registrations	81	112	2,599	5	16	27	28	11	25

Violence Against Women and Girls

In East Lothian, there were 1163 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the Police, and in Midlothian, 1181. In comparison to the previous year this was a reduction of 8.%(n101) in East Lothian, and a decrease of 1.1%(n13) in Midlothian.

In East Lothian, there were 344 referrals to the Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway, and in Midlothian 314 referrals. Across both areas, this was an increase of 20.5% from the previous year.

We held 16 Maracs for 111 victims in East Lothian and in Midlothian, we held 15 Maracs for 115 victims. Across both areas, this was an increase of 20.7% from the previous year, with five additional Maracs in the year.

In 64.9% of cases referred to Marac in East Lothian, and in 76.5% of cases referred to Marac in Midlothian, there were children involved.

Our Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway is a partnership initiative involving EMPPO Domestic Abuse Service (DAS), Women’s Aid East and Midlothian and Police Scotland J Division, providing a single referral point for victims of domestic abuse following a Police incident, thereby streamlining support for victims. Other services also support the work of the Pathway.

A Marac is a multi-agency meeting where information is shared about the victims who are at the highest risk of serious harm or murder due to domestic abuse. The primary focus of the Marac is to safeguard the adult victim and their children. The Marac will also make links with other fora in relation to child protection, adult support and protection, justice and the disruption of perpetrator behaviour. After sharing relevant information in relation to risk, agency representatives develop multi-agency safety plans for the victim.

In East Lothian, 235 sexual crimes were reported to Police, an increase of 19.3% from 197 the previous year. In Midlothian 198 sexual crimes were reported to Police, a decrease of 3.4% from 205 the previous year.

In both areas, we saw an increase in non-recent sexual crimes being reported, as well as an increase in non-contact online sexual offending.

Violence Against Women and Girls

- Pressures on services and staff in the area of gender based violence increased in ways which are not necessarily reflected by the numbers of referrals to the Police. The impact of the COVID pandemic on domestic abuse saw increased opportunities for perpetrators to exert coercive control, and concerns for the increased invisibility of victims and perpetrators during lockdown. Heightened levels of trauma and isolation will have longstanding impacts and we have seen the impact on the women, children and young people who have sought support. Our survivors who have been able to access support have often needed more frequent contact, longer sessions and longer term support. At the same time, video or phone were not appropriate ways of providing longer term sexual abuse therapeutic support. The closure of courts, followed by long delays in processes and frequent release of abusers on bail rather than detention were a source of significant anxiety for many survivors.
- In this context Women's Aid East and Midlothian (WAEML) had to open waiting lists for longer term support for the first time ever, which reached three months' waiting time for support for more than 70 women. This was exacerbated when the Domestic Abuse Service, which provides short term intensive support for survivors at highest risk, reached its full capacity and had to refer on to WAEML services.
- Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (ERCC) delivers longer term specialist support for survivors of rape and sexual assault. In the year, in East Lothian, ERCC supported 30 survivors, including 5 new referrals. This was a significant reduction from 51 survivors supported, including 31 new referrals in 2019/20. In Midlothian, ERCC supported a total of 33 survivors including 5 new referrals in the year. This was a similar reduction from 71 survivors supported, including 46 new referrals the previous year. Our rape crisis support services had to close to new referrals for most of the year, except for cases of recent rape and sexual assault, to avoid increasing trauma. The services also lost access to local shared venues which impacted on the possibility of providing face to face support in periods out with lockdown. The services continued to support those already in service, however by the end of the year the waiting list for long term support had increased exponentially.
- In response to the widely acknowledged heightened risk to survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and their children during the COVID pandemic, with people being asked to stay at home and isolate, we put in place a number of measures to ensure that victims and services were able to access information about available supports. We circulated information to the public via our EMPPC website and our partner agency social media feeds, assuring them VAWG services were still open and how to access them.
- We developed a new set of online resources for survivors of sexual violence to support ways of coping during the pandemic. Click on the link here to view [ERCC online resources](#)
- ERCC also adapted their model of support to be able to provide six initial sessions of support to enable survivors to better cope with the waiting time for longer term support.
- We provided information to frontline services to raise awareness of risk and how to provide support, including guidance, briefings and bespoke training on VAWG and Marac.
- We worked with children's services to enhance their support for survivors of domestic abuse and for children through the local Hubs where there was capacity.
- Justice Services, the Police and the VAWG Co-ordinator collaborated to provide a snap fax-style leaflet with advice and supports for help with stress which Police gave to perpetrators when attending an incident.
- Local VAWG support services rapidly adapted to virtual operation for service provision (contact with survivors and operation of meetings), for Marac, Domestic Abuse Service, WAEML and Sexual Abuse Services – we redesigned our approach in offering support where it was safe for survivors, recognising that virtual or telephone contact was less appropriate for therapeutic support for trauma.
- We responded to the marked increase in survivors' demand for domestic abuse services whilst reporting to the Police reduced due to safety concerns. We saw a 20% increase in demand for support following a Police incident and services have had to provide more intensive support for longer periods due to heightened fear and accumulated trauma from abuse and living in the conditions posed by the COVID pandemic.

Violence Against Women and Girls

- We put in place weekly data monitoring and our COVID 19 VAWG risk assessment, adjusting services accordingly and moved to monthly VAWG group action-focused meetings to monitor service delivery and respond to demand.
- We developed and implemented East Lothian Council 'Covid 19 and Domestic Abuse Community Housing and Homelessness' staff briefings to raise awareness and give guidance on how to support survivors and set up four single points of contact. Midlothian Council developed similar guidance towards the end of the year.
- We developed a local approach to prevention based on gender inequality and VAWG, and began developing our prevention plan.
- We updated our position statement on commercial sexual exploitation; this is to be further implemented and promoted across both areas, with supporting guidance.
- Both Councils provided additional short-term COVID funding to reduce waiting lists for the Sexual Abuse Services and domestic abuse services in East Lothian provided by WAEML.
- The 16 Days of Activism tackling violence against women and girls campaign, 25 November – 10 December, had the Scottish theme "Build back Better". It was more important than ever to get the message out to survivors, to allies, to abusers and also to decision makers and we focused mainly on social media lining up across partners. Below is an example of one of our 16 days messages.
- We continued to seek feedback from our service users about the quality and impact of our support. Below are some examples from women who received support via our Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway.

If you are causing upset, pain or fear to a woman or a girl at home, at work, in the street, in a bar or online

stopping it starts with you



PUBLIC PROTECTION
East Lothian & Midlothian
Supporting Safer Communities

(Worker)... was lovely and she did her best to get to the bottom of the last court appearance, or non-appearance. It helped me just having someone to phone me and check it was ok. She offered me all different kinds of advice and things I could try. I'm really grateful.

She listened, she was very sympathetic and ended up helping with a payday loan and put me in touch with CAB to help me with retrieving the money I lost. She also helped to push through my mental health assessment

I dinny sleep at night time at all - I used to sleep well, it's not just the pandemic, I'm still thinking about what happened but my mind just canny stop, going through parts of the event that I'm not clear on.

Offender Management

- Justice Social Work, in line with other aspects of Public Protection activity, was always identified as an 'essential' service and we were expected to return to full provision from June 2020 – in many ways the impact was more about how we altered, not stopped, provision. Attendance (digital platform) was still instructed and expected and non-compliance was dealt with via formal action.
- In Justice Services across East Lothian and Midlothian, we quickly put in place RAG rating for all service users when we moved into national lockdown – this was based on risk of harm to self or others alongside issues of severe and enduring poverty/deprivation, mental ill-health or substance use which, if left unchecked or unsupported (by other agencies alongside JSW), could have resulted in serious harm or self-neglect. Where such risk was identified individuals would be provided with in persons support in appropriate office spaces and/or doorsteps, if necessary. To continue delivering our essential services we redeployed staff and increased PPE activities.
- Justice Social Workers continued to provide services based on risk and need. Justice Workers reviewed all those subject to oversight relating to domestic abuse offences and made specific effort to increase contact and support where there was a victim/survivor in the home and/or the perpetrator was in contact with an intimate partner. Staff undertook additional training to deliver the Caledonian Programme on an individual basis.
- Staff undertook consolation and additional engagement with partners in the Community Intervention Service for Sex Offenders to address the needs of sexual offenders in the community.
- Services were provided via digital platforms, including telephone, Skype for Business, WhatsApp, ZOOM, MS Teams to those subject to statutory supervisory expectations as part of a non-custodial Court disposal or as part of post-release Licence or Order. Where necessary, digital inclusion was addressed and phones/data were provided to service users to enable connectivity with both their workers and any other third sector partners. In person contacts for reports (Court and Parole Board) were difficult to undertake full assessments/build trusting working relationships when phone contact is the primary platform for social worker and service users.
- The Coronavirus Scotland Act extended all periods of unpaid work/other activity by 12 months and required any new Orders imposed by Courts to be of a minimum of 12 months regardless of the number of hours imposed. All unpaid work/other activity was suspended – as the year progressed home working activities and learning packs were developed. When possible and at points during the reporting year work groups were arranged with 1:1 to 1:5 provision depending on the activity, site and Scottish Government level. In March 2021 the Scottish Government enacted a 35% reduction in outstanding unpaid work/other activity for all individuals except those whose conviction was for a sexual, domestic abuse or stalking based offence.
- Criminal Justice Social Work Reports advised sentencers that the provision of community based disposals was limited and the normal expectations relating to in person contact and/or offence focused interventions may either not be available or require longer Orders for completion.
- From the Early Prisoner Release programme both East Lothian and Midlothian developed multi-agency pre-release planning groups to address the risk and needs of individuals (housing, mental health, substance use, finances etc.) prior to release to improve chances and opportunities for resettlement. Additional financial resource was also provided alongside access to mobile phone/top-ups.
- Orders and Licences were timed out without final in person reviews.
- We undertook significant recovery planning, with Operational Management Teams completing Recovery and Renewal Plans based on the advice and guidance of the Scottish Government. Additional funding was made available for Third Sector procurement, however we did not take this up due to the extensive reporting requirements and unmanageable timeframes.

Learning and Practice Development

The COVID pandemic had a significant impact on our Learning and Development plans and training offering. All training offered by EMPPC face-to-face, multi-agency training was suspended when we went into lockdown in March 2020. Our EMPPC Learning and Practice Development Sub-group was also suspended for a period during the COVID pandemic, resuming in February 2021 with a new Chairperson. Incompatibility of virtual platforms amongst our partner agencies and the lack of Microsoft Teams within the EMPPC posed significant challenges in transferring our training delivery to on-line learning. Notwithstanding this, in the year, we delivered 17 multi-agency training events across the areas of Public Protection to 259 people working across East Lothian and Midlothian. We are grateful to the support of our statutory and third sector partners in supporting our training offering. 15 of these events were delivered on virtual platforms and two were on a face-to-face basis, following Scottish Government COVID guidance, and at a point when restrictions eased temporarily. Our delivery and number of staff per course is shown below.

Adult Support and Protection Council Officer training (2 courses/20 people)	Child Protection Multi-agency Risk Assessment and Processes (1 course/5 people)	Child Sexual Exploitation (4 courses/50 people)
Harmful Sexual Behaviour (4 courses/61 people)	Improving Our Practice on Violence Against Women and Girls: Spotlight on Domestic Abuse (1 course/26 people)	Protecting People from Serious Harm from Domestic Abuse: Assessing Risk and Referring to Marac (4 courses/71 people)
	Safe and Together: Working with Perpetrators (1 course/26 people)	

We continued to commit to introducing and embedding the Safe and Together approach across East Lothian and Midlothian, moving from face-to-face training to self-directed on-line learning. Local implementation groups in each area met to progress their implementation plans, and also continued to deliver 'Level one' awareness raising training on virtual platforms. The Safe & Together™ Model CORE Training provides a skills-oriented foundation for domestic violence-informed practice, comprising four one-day modules on assessment, interviewing, documentation and case planning. 21 staff in Children's Services in East Lothian and Midlothian, Women's Aid East and Midlothian and Justice Services in East Lothian successfully completed the Core Training and 18 staff commenced the training in the year. We partnered with Scottish Women's Aid to deliver virtual foundation courses on domestic abuse. We also promoted the national Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Tool produced by SafeLives and funded by the Scottish Government, and converted this to Learn-pro for staff in Midlothian and East Lothian Councils.



Looking Forward – Our Priorities

Adult Protection

- We will undertake self-evaluation of our Adult Support and Protection services in East Lothian, following the Care Inspectorate framework for Joint Inspection.
- We will plan for and implement any changes arising from the review of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 Part 1 (Guidance for Adult Protection Committees) and the Code of Practice.
- We will engage in the work being undertaken by IRISS and the Scottish Government to develop a national dataset of performance information, and will plan for implementation of this.
- We will revise our approach to Council Officer training and evaluate its effectiveness.
- We will undertake a thematic review of Large Scale Investigations in East Lothian and Midlothian, to identify and progress common areas for improvement.

Child Protection

- We will prepare for implementation of the new National Guidance for Child Protection.
- We will prepare for implementation of the Learning Review Guidance.
- We will develop a shared approach to the identification and assessment of cumulative neglect, adapting the Glasgow Assessment of Care Neglect toolkit.
- We will conclude a Significant Case Review and take forward identified areas for improvement arising from this and other reviews relating to children and young people.
- We will review and further embed the use of our EMPPC Inter-agency Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol across East Lothian and Midlothian.

Violence Against Women and Girls

- We will work with partners to develop an Equally Safe Strategy for each local authority area, focusing on prevention through culture change and education, and enhanced service response for survivors and their families.
- We will progress our VAWG prevention plan.
- We will deliver our approach to commercial sexual exploitation.
- We will further develop our training offering to ensure we cover all aspects of VAWG, specifically including working with men and with young people.
- We will support Equally Safe At Work Accreditation with Midlothian Council now working to silver level and with East Lothian Council to launch bronze level.

Looking Forward – Our Priorities

Learning and Development

- We will implement our 2021-23 Learning and Development Strategy.
- A key priority for us includes ‘recovery’ activities to deliver our core training courses, and to review and revise our training courses so that we can take opportunities to use virtual platforms, where appropriate. We will increase the use of Microsoft Teams to deliver training, where feasible.
- We will embed the seeking of feedback by on-line survey and use this to better report on and assess the effectiveness of our training offering.
- We will review and revise our key performance indicators.

Communications

- We will continue to build our relationships with communications colleagues in our partner agencies, and to develop the key communication themes and messages that we want to deliver as a Public Protection Committee.
- We will plan improvements to our website, to ensure that it is accessible and contains useful information and signposts for staff and the public.
- We will increase our use of social media to communicate our key messages.
- We will improve the way in which we disseminate information about Public Protection to staff working in East Lothian and Midlothian.
- We will undertake a communications workshop with our EMPPC and will further develop our key communications messages.

Performance and Quality Improvement Sub-group

- We will embed our review of Child Protection Performance Information using the national Child Protection Minimum Dataset.
- We will improve the way in which we present our Performance Information and Key Performance Indicators, and how we share these with operational staff across services.
- We will seek to improve how we measure and assess impact and outcome of our work, to complement process and output measures.
- We will improve our approach to quality assurance activity across our areas of business.
- We will use improvement tools to refine our approach to identifying, planning and measuring our improvement priorities for Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection and Violence Against Women and Girls.



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