



East Lothian and Midlothian
Public Protection Committee



Staff Newsletter November 2025



Welcome to East Lothian and Midlothian Public Protection Committee's latest staff newsletter. Our articles contain hyperlinks to connect you to online resources.

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Message from Keith Mackay, Chair of EMPPC



“As we approach our 16 Days of Activism Campaign for 2025 I was looking back at all the incredible work carried out by the hard working and caring staff across our public protection partnership working in the area of protection and prevention around domestic violence in East Lothian and Midlothian.

I started to think about how we can make a difference and what it means to try. This made me remember the Starfish Story by Antoine de St. Exupery that I read in a Safe Lives article a few years back.

Once there was a man walking down a deserted beach at dawn. As he walked along, he saw a young girl in the distance. As he got closer, he noticed the girl was picking up starfish that had been washed ashore and one at a time was throwing them back in to the water.

When the man asked what she was doing she said, “I’m throwing these starfish back into the ocean, if I don’t throw them back they’ll die from lack of oxygen.” “I understand”, replied the visitor, “but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can’t possibly get to all of them. And this is happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down the coast. Can’t you see that you really cannot make a difference?”

The girl smiled, bent down, picked up another starfish and looked at it in the palm of her hand.

As she threw it back in the sea, she replied, “Well, it made all the difference to that one.”

We are often told that domestic abuse will always be with us, and we will never be able to help all of the victims and families who are forced to live in fear. But remember; to those whose lives we do touch, we will have made the difference.

Message from Keith Mackay, Chair of EMPPC

This short story resonates with me and hopefully you, and makes us remember how important every single step is that we take in the fight to eradicate violence against women and girls. We have such a strong multi agency approach to violence against women and girls but sometimes we need to take stock and think about how the accumulation of the small steps is leading us in the right direction and not take any small action in the right direction for granted. I look forward to celebrating the work of our partners as we move into the 16 Days of Activism campaign on 25th November that will run until 10th December.”



We spend our days caring for others, and hearing, reading and writing about things that may be upsetting and challenging. Sometimes we are not good at asking for help ourselves. The [National Wellbeing Hub](#) is a single point of contact for health, social care, and social work practitioners and unpaid carers to obtain advice, information and support in relation to their wellbeing. It also signposts to other great resources and sources of help and ideas on how to stay well.

Going home checklist

- ✓ Take a moment to think about today.
- ✓ Acknowledge one thing that was difficult during your working day - let it go.
- ✓ Consider three things that went well.
- ✓ Check on your colleagues before you leave - are they OK?
- ✓ Are you OK? Your senior team are here to support you.
- ✓ Now switch your attention to home - rest and recharge.



Resources



Check out the latest documents added to our website – please share them with your teams and use them to help you in your day-to-day practice.

[Risk of Neglect Toolkit – record sheet](#) – save this to your case record. This accompanies the Risk of Neglect Toolkit Practitioner Guidance.

[Vulnerable Young Person’s Protocol](#) – revised version. This complements the Edinburgh and the Lothians multi-agency Child Protection Procedures and outlines the processes for the small number of children at risk of significant harm who need an additional structure of support and protection.

[Human Trafficking and Exploitation Guidance](#) – new guidance for staff in statutory and third sector organisations who may have contact with victims of human trafficking in East Lothian and Midlothian.

Want to know more about EMPPC? In our [Resources Section](#) we have added various documents about EMPPC, including Terms of Reference for different meetings, our new [Communications Strategy](#) and [Committee Member Handbook](#)

**East Lothian and Midlothian
Public Protection
Committee Website**



Meet the Committee
In this edition, meet
**Bec Hooton, Chief
Officer Children's
Services, Communities
and Partnerships,
Midlothian Council**



“I’m Rebecca Hooton, commonly referred to as Bec but also answers to Becs. I qualified as a social worker in Australia over 20 years ago and worked in Mental health services in Australia for before coming in the UK. The plan was to come for 1 or 2 years but 15 years later I am still here. Lots of people don’t understand that but I love the Edinburgh and I feel a strong commitment to Midlothian.

I have been working in Midlothian Children’s Services in various roles ever since – initially in the duty team, team leader for duty then early intervention, managing Hawthorn our family learning centre and then moving into the role of Service manager and now Chief Officer of Children’s Services and Deputy Chief Social work officer.

I would love to return to be a front line social worker – not because it is easy but because it is more tangible to see how what we do is making a difference in individuals’ lives. I try to think everyday how my current role helps us work towards a system that better supports children, young people and their families to be safe, healthy and achieving despite the adversities they face. And I am honoured to be trusted to lead our services through these challenging times.

I am a member of the PPC and Chair of the PQ&I Subgroup which oversees the Child protection, Adult protection, VAWG, MELDAP and Fire Service roles in public protection.”

Training update

EMPPC Training Calendar

Our [training calendar](#) for the year is on our website. This will help you and your manager to identify what courses and briefings are coming up that might be relevant for your role. Please note that we do not take registrations for training before we advertise them, which is usually around 12 weeks before the course, so we ask you to wait until we advertise a course and respond by completing the online form in the email that accompanies the flyer. We tend to have enough spaces on our training courses so please do look out for them!

You do not need to sign up to a briefing as we do not limit the number of people who can come to these events.



We are delighted to be hosting the UK Safer Internet Centre at Port Seton Community Centre in East Lothian on Wednesday 25th February 2026 from 0930 to 11am.

This is for everyone who wants to learn more about the latest online safety research, developments and laws, and is relevant for anyone in contact with children or adults.

There are 150 spaces available so reserve your place early and [register here via Eventbrite](#).

Adult Support and Protection



If you are working with an adult whose risk of harm in your view is high, you can make a referral to Social Work. A Council Officer will assess whether someone is an adult at risk of harm in terms of the legislation. What happens if the Council Officer assesses that the adult does not meet Adult Support and Protection or any other legislative criteria for risk management, but you are still worried about the person? The Council Officer should advise in those circumstances that you can consider a referral under the [EMPPC Escalating Concerns Procedure](http://www.emppc.co.uk).

The Procedure recognises that in complex cases, professionals are often dealing with long term and entrenched behaviours of adults and therefore this framework aims to provide an effective, co-ordinated and multi-agency response to these 'critical few' cases. A senior manager will consider the referral and, if accepted, a multi-agency Escalating Concerns Meeting will take place to agree a risk management response. This procedure actively encourages solution focused responses, for example, allocating resources not usually available.

Referrals can also be made from Adult Support and Protection Case Conferences and by Social Workers where all other options to provide support and protection have been exhausted.



**Adult Support and Protection
is everyone's responsibility**

www.emppc.org.uk



**East Lothian and Midlothian
Public Protection Committee**

Adult Support and Protection



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

[New statistics released](#) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on 31st October 2025 revealed a record low number of house fires in Scotland. During 2024-25, firefighters across Scotland attended more than 74,000 emergencies – a reduction of nearly 6,000 from the previous year. The new figures concerningly **reveal that more than one quarter of affected homes did not have a smoke alarm fitted.**

The Home Fire Safety Visit Statistics published by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service reported that 475 Home Fire Safety Visits were made in East Lothian in 2024/5 and 393 in Midlothian. In East Lothian, in 10.9% of visits 10.9% of visits resulted in smoke and heat alarms being installed, and in Midlothian this was 15.0%.

Are you visiting a home where there is no sign of smoke alarms? Read more on the next page to find out what you can do to help keep people safe in their own homes.



NHS Education for Scotland

A skilled and sustainable workforce for a healthier Scotland



mental welfare
commission for scotland

The AWI Project is a partnership between the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland. The aim of the project is for professionals across Scotland's Health, Social Work, and Social Care landscape to gain better knowledge of the Adults With Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and to achieve better outcomes for individuals receiving care, treatment, and support. This is for everyone who works with anyone over the age of 16. The AWI Project wants to raise awareness of the educational resources available – watch this [short animation](#) which signposts people to the [Once for Scotland Adults with Incapacity \(AWI\) learning site](#).

Adult Support and Protection



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Vulnerable adults can be more at risk of harm from fire. One way to help is a Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV). The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have reviewed their incident data, which has helped them to have a better understanding of how fires start and who is involved. They are therefore aiming to better target their resources to those most at risk.

The Home Fire Safety Visit criteria is a list of behaviours or circumstances that are known to contribute to a higher risk from fire. So, please be aware of the referral criteria and the importance of a referral, as this could save a life:

- Aged 65+.
- Anyone in the household has a history, or may be a target of, fire related crime (consider also those experiencing domestic abuse and/or hate crime).
- High levels of clutter/hoarding history of fire, including signs of burns/scorch marks on furniture or clothing.
- Use of medical oxygen, emollient products, or medical airflow mattress where someone in the household smokes.
- Unable to evacuate the property in an emergency due to mobility issues or medical condition including hearing and/or visual impairment.
- Dementia or cognitive impairment.
- Use medication that causes drowsiness, visual disturbance or dizziness.
- Alcohol or drug dependant.
- Anyone in the household has shown an interest in starting fires.

Early intervention by SFRS and staff who support vulnerable people will enable people to maintain independence and live longer in their own home, maintain personal resilience and improve their quality of life.

Familiarise yourself with the [Home Safety Partner Guidance](#).

Adult Support and Protection

The impact of financial harm

Being harmed financially as a result of fraud and cyber-crime can create 'secondary' harms, beyond being short of money. [Experiences of Victims of Fraud and Cyber Crime](#) research published earlier this year examined the impact of fraud and cyber-crime. Although this related to England and Wales there are key messages that equally apply to Scotland:

- Emotional harms such as anger, stress and anxiety were the most common types of harms; shame, embarrassment and self-blame are also common feelings and can be a barrier to self-reporting.
- The impacts of loss varied by individual circumstances and did not necessarily correlate with the amount lost.
- While rarer, some victims reported serious health harms, including suicidal thoughts and self-harm. For some victims, harms had a long-term impact.
- The research found that there were notable differences in the harms experienced by different victim groups, with cyber-crime victims, females, ethnic minorities and less affluent victims experiencing more significant harm than other groups. This suggests that support should be tailored for specific groups.

A victim put it like this: "Everything was gone from the savings account]. All we worked for, my money, [daughter's] money, [husband's] money] - gone I was very emotional. I was suicidal - my husband wouldn't leave me on my own."

It is important that concerns about financial harm are looked at as the impact could range from being without the means to pay for food to embarrassment to thoughts of serious self-harm. If you have concerns about someone who has been the victim of fraud or some other type of financial harm, please report them to Police and Social Work.

You can read more about the different forms of [cyber related financial harm](#) on the Police Scotland website.

Adult Support and Protection

Involvement of relatives in helping to disseminate the learning from Learning Reviews

If a vulnerable adult suffers significant harm or dies, any agency can ask for the circumstances to be reviewed to learn more about what works to protect adults at risk of harm. Learning from such cases is an essential element of improving how agencies work together to appropriately support and intervene to protect children and adults. Our local [Learning Review Procedure](#) says that a core element of a Learning Review is to explore the perspectives of the child, adult and family and hear from them about their experience of services, what they found helpful or unhelpful and their suggestions about how services could be improved.

Clackmannanshire and Stirling completed a Learning Review in 2024 following the death of an adult male called Murray. The main issues related to substance use and poor physical health which resulted in physical, financial and psychological harm. His brother Steven spoke about his desire to be part of disseminating the learning from Review. Supported by the Health and Social Care Partnership, he presented to four meetings of staff. Go to [1 hr 26 min](#) to hear Steven reflect on his experiences at an ASPire event, and see the presentation slides [here](#).

Steven spoke powerfully of providing professionals chances to learn in a different way. He reflected that, although challenging, it helped him to process his grief. It was useful to be part of learning that would reduce the chance of the same thing happening to someone else. "I thought it was important to take part...to personalise my brother and to give a nod to his memory."

Steven's presentation gives pause for thought. When and how should we involve relatives in disseminating learning - A quote? A recording? Participating in delivery of training? Video of an input? Joan Sweeney, Adult Support and Protection Lead Officer said they were 'inundated' with feedback on how impactful Steven's sessions were. Ultimately, if appropriate and done in a way that is trauma informed, this way of disseminating learning can be powerful and keep the adult at the centre.

Child Protection



Do you know enough about children's experiences in the digital world? The report [A Life Behind The Screens](#) provides a detailed overview of data collected in the 2024-25 academic year from over 9,000 children (aged 8-15) across Ireland. It is a vital insight into how children spend their time online, levels of access, and children's experiences, both positive and negative. Some key findings:

- 26% of primary school children (aged 8–12) and 36% of secondary school (aged 12–15) used chatbots for homework, friendship and information.
- 28% of 8–12-year-olds and 26% of 12–15-year-olds experienced content or unsolicited contact that 'bothered' them, including exposure to horror, violence, sexual material, threats, scams, and dangerous ideas.

- For 8–12-year-olds, this most commonly occurred on YouTube (60%) and Roblox (59%) for 8-12-year-olds. For 12–15-year-olds, this occurred most commonly on TikTok (51%) and Snapchat (40%).
- 42% of 8–12-year-olds, and 62% of 12-14-year-olds do not talk to their parents about their online activity.
- 63% of primary school-aged children (79% in secondary school) say their parents cannot see what they are doing online.
- 47% of 8–12-year-olds did not tell a parent when bothered by something online, rising to 73% for 12-15-year-olds.
- Boys are more likely to report problems with online gaming than girls: 58% vs. 11%. This likely reflects usage levels, but can also be linked to boys' choice to play over-18s games that can expose them to extreme levels of violence, sexual encounters and more, as well as a greater inclination to game with people they do not know in real life. These choices increase the risk of coming across harmful content and contact and point to a lack of guidance when it comes to gaming.

Child Protection



NSPCC Learning has published a [Helplines insight briefing on young people's experiences of suicidal thoughts and feelings](#).

The briefing uses insights from 18,981 Childline counselling sessions in 2024/25 sharing young people's varied experiences of suicidal thoughts and feelings. In 80% of these, young people were seeking support outside of a crisis. Since 2019/20 suicidal thoughts and feelings has been the second highest recorded topic for counselling sessions with Childline. It is also the most common reason for Childline to make a referral to an external agency.

Young people shared a wide range of experiences including:

- How young people spoke about and described their suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- Help seeking for suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- Unhelpful responses from others after seeking support.
- Young people's use of coping mechanisms and techniques.

There is a perception that discussing suicidal thoughts and feelings with someone experiencing them can increase the risk of suicidal tendencies. However, asking someone about their thoughts, feelings, plans or ideation can instead protect them. Professionals can use these insights to consider how they might respond to and support young people if they talk about thoughts and feelings like this.

Childline gives the following key messages when supporting a young person with suicidal thoughts and feelings:

- Know when to get emergency help.
- Listen without judgement.
- Reassure them that they are not alone.
- Encourage them to talk to safe adults.
- Help them find safe ways to cope.
- Support them to make a safety plan.
- Stay connected and be patient.

Why language matters ➔

improving safeguarding and child protection practice with words



NSPCC Learning has [published the latest blog](#) in the Why Language Matters series. The blog explores the ‘baby blind spot’ and the importance of including babies in the language of safeguarding. It discusses how not including ‘babies’ when talking about ‘children and young people’ can lead professionals to overlook the needs and experiences of babies in safeguarding policy, practice and service provision. It also outlines the importance of acknowledging the early years and what professionals can do to keep babies in mind.

NSPCC
Learning

NSPCC Learning has published [an updated statistics briefing](#) on emotional abuse. The briefing looks at data and statistics about emotional abuse in the UK to help professionals make evidence-based decisions. It covers the scale of the issue and what data tells us about children who have been emotionally abused.

Around one in 15 children in the UK have been emotionally abused by a parent or carer. Most forms of abuse include an emotional element, but it is recorded as a specific concern for over one in three children who are the subject of a child Protection Plan. This is no different to what we see locally every quarter when we look at our data of Child Protection Registration in both areas.

[Childline](#) recognises that emotional abuse can be hard to spot and has some useful advice on how to get support even when someone is not sure what is happening is abuse.

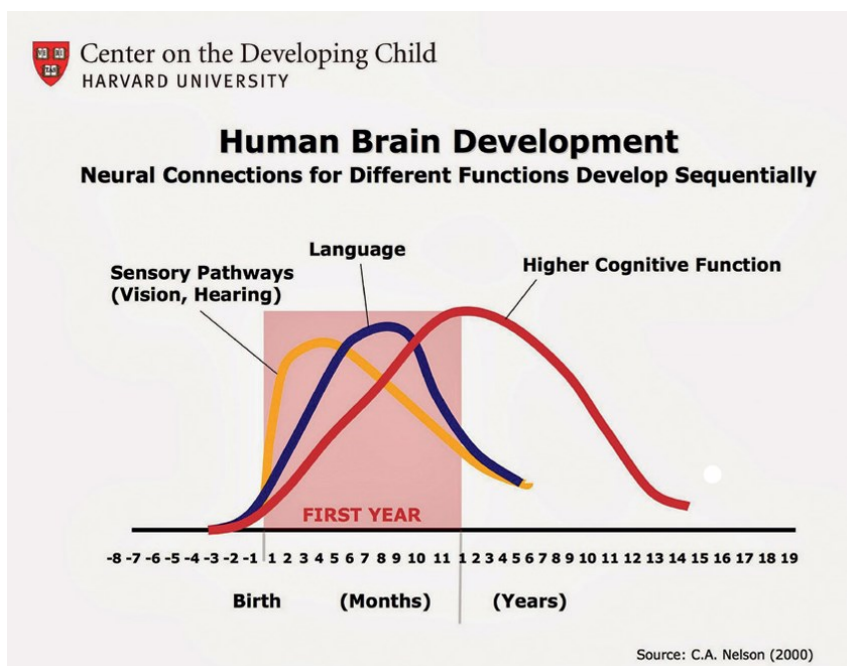
Child Protection

Parental Mental Health

For Baby's Sake has published new research on the mental health of parents in the UK during the first 1001 days of parenthood - from pregnancy to a child's second birthday. A YouGov poll surveyed over 700 parents of children aged 10 and under. Findings show: 50% of participants experienced a rise in mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety and depression during the first 1001 days of their child's life; nearly one in 10 dads said they turned to alcohol or substances more; and 34% of parents overall reported more conflict in their relationship during the first 1001 days.

The For Baby's Sake Trust is calling for all professionals who work with expectant and new parents – from midwives and health visitors to GPs and social workers – to embed routine questions about mental health and emotional wellbeing into their practice, ensuring both parents are supported during the first 1001 days.

Read this series of [six Evidence Briefs from the First 1001 Days Movement](#) Together, they tell the story of why the first 1001 days is so important, describe the factors that are necessary to optimise the wellbeing of our babies and young children, and explain the current state of government policy and services for families in the first 1001 days.



The Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University [has lots of resources](#) to help learn “how the brain is built from the bottom up”. More than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second in the first few years of life. The early years are the most active period for establishing neural connections, but new connections can form throughout life. Responsive, serve and return interactions with caregivers play an essential role in supporting healthy brain development.

Child Protection

MORE THAN WORDS:
how definitions impact on
the UK's response to child
trafficking and exploitation



Child trafficking is child abuse and a human rights violation. In the UK, children are being trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour exploitation, criminal exploitation - to deal drugs, and carry out criminal activities, organ harvesting, slavery, and slavery-like practices. This abuse causes significant harm to children and those with safeguarding responsibilities must know how to recognise, prevent, and identify it so that children and young people can be protected and supported effectively.

In 2024, over half (61%) of all refusals to officially recognise that someone had been trafficked ([National Referral Mechanism](#)) for children were on the grounds that the referral did not meet the definitional threshold. Of these, 85% were children aged 15 to 17.

Every Child Protected Against Trafficking has [published a new report](#) looking at how child trafficking and exploitation is defined and understood across the UK. The report highlights how overlaps and gaps in terminology, and differing uses of terms like 'modern slavery,' 'child sexual exploitation (CSE),' 'forced labour,' 'child criminal exploitation (CCE),' or 'human trafficking' have created confusion that hinders effective identification and intervention. These inconsistencies impact frontline practice, from safeguarding to policing and prosecution, resulting in missed opportunities to protect children from harm. The report makes a number of recommendations, including consistent statutory definitions of exploitation across the UK.

Are you AWARE? Do you know what AWARE stands for when hearing the voice of a child?

Watch this short video lasting less than three minutes to learn more – a quick impactful way to know what to look out for.

[Voice of the child – are you AWARE?](#)

Violence Against Women and Girls



CLOSE THE GAP BRIEFING

There is an 8.3% pay gap between men's and women's average hourly pay, which represents a lifetime of pay inequality for women. Close the Gap has two decades' experience of working with policymakers, employers, and unions on women and work. They are experts on the barriers which affect women's participation in Scotland's labour market. Read this blog they published for Challenge Poverty Week in October – [Better jobs, pay, hours, conditions and worker voice for all women](#).

Close the Gap have also published a Briefing which sets out an urgent need to strengthen the Scottish-specific duties of the public sector equality duty by introducing a requirement for listed public bodies to publish mandatory gender pay gap action plans. Read more [here](#) to find out what the public sector equality duty is, and what is needed to secure meaningful change for women in Scotland.

DSDAS is ten years old!

The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) reached its tenth anniversary on 1st October. It was launched on 1 October 2015 with the aim of enabling anyone with concerns about the history of their partner, or the partner of someone they know, to apply for a disclosure. The scheme operates two pathways. Right to Ask and Power to Tell. Under the Right to Ask, anyone who has a concern, be it the individual in the relationship, their family, friends, colleagues or neighbours can submit an application. Under Power to Tell, professionals including the police and partner support agencies, such as social workers or medical staff, can apply for a disclosure to be made where they have reason to believe a person could be at risk of domestic abuse. Look out for our Briefings that we run twice a year to let people know more about the scheme and its benefits – the next one is **on Wednesday 3rd December at 2pm**. Since its introduction **35,847** applications have been submitted to the scheme and **19,867** disclosures (55%) have been given across Scotland.

Violence Against Women and Girls



CSE Aware has produced an Easy Read booklet focusing on the issue of Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

It can be used by anyone looking to understand and/or share information about Commercial Sexual Exploitation and where to get support.

Download the booklet [here](#).

Commercial sexual exploitation (CSE)

What it is and how you can get support



Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls
in Scotland
25th November - 10th December

*All Together
to prevent and end
violence against women and girls*



Read our [Spotlight article](#) to find out more about how 16 days came about and why it is wrapped around two key dates – 25th November and 10th December. This year's theme for the national campaign is 'All Together to prevent and end violence against women and girls.' The aim for this theme is to emphasise that violence against women and girls is everyone's business, and to promote and celebrate joined up, collaborative working to tackle this issue.

Locally, our Launch event is focusing on young people and the impact of gender-based violence. **Look out for our calendar of local and national events which includes the links for registering and joining.**

Violence Against Women and Girls



Zero Tolerance has published its [manifesto](#) in advance of next year's election, to show every party that ending men's violence against women and girls must be a national priority. They say, "by investing in prevention, we can build a safer, fairer Scotland for everyone."

Zero Tolerance is urging people to share the manifesto with your MSP or candidate and ask them to back prevention. You can find out more [here](#).

Zero Tolerance makes five 'asks' in its manifesto:

- A commitment to a long-term public campaign, backed by evidence to shift harmful attitudes about masculinity.
- Community prevention programmes for men and boys.
- Statutory education on relationships and sex for young people.
- Follow through on promises made in the Equally Safe Strategy.
- Regulation of online platforms.



Read the latest Safe & Together blogs:

[‘When Children Become Weapons’](#) to find out how “Perpetrators don’t just harm their partners—they strategically use children as both tools and targets in their campaign of coercive control.”

[Living in a Body Shaped by Violence: What Practitioners Need to Know About Identifying Child Abuse](#) – “This is to help practitioners

learn how to better identify and work with children who are being chronically abused but do not fit the injury focus of “radial fractures and bruises,” which dominates the thinking of mandatory reporters and dangerously renders those children and the abuse they are enduring invisible.”

What is it and why is it important?

How often do you get time in your working week to reflect on your practice with colleagues and explore issues you are facing in your day-to-day work? Reflection is an essential part of learning and professional practice, especially when working in any aspect of Public Protection. Donald Schön, an American philosopher and educator, describes reflective practice as “the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning”. His model emphasises learning from experience, an essential aspect for professionals who face complex situations.

Reflective practice provides staff with a safe space to connect practice and theory and can take a number of forms to flexibly suit different situations and needs – either individual reflection, process recordings, reflection in supervision, mentoring, informal reflection with a peer, or a group session.

What are the benefits of reflective practice?

Reflective practice has been associated with a number of benefits, leading to better communication between staff, improving team functioning and supporting staff to feel valued and respected. It:

- Enhances critical thinking and help analyse situations more effectively, leading to better decision-making and practice improvement.
- Enhances self-awareness. It helps us to be conscious of bias and discrimination, to remain open minded and reconsider an interpretation of a case.
- Helps us to be professionally curious.
- Helps maximise opportunities for learning and practice improvement by sharing ideas to incorporate into our own practice.
- Helps build resilience. It can be a source of emotional support, providing a safe space to think about what you and your colleagues may need help with.

- Provides team support around professional dilemmas, help with practical issues and learning from others' input into their cases.
- Can be useful in situations where professionals feel 'stuck' or unclear about the systems, processes or decisions being made.
- Identifies positive experiences and helps recognise what works well and what to keep doing.

The essential elements of reflective practice

- Understanding what it means to be involved in a reflective session – the expectations, the benefits and how it works.
- Buy in from managers, demonstrating organisational commitment to staff wellbeing.
- Having protected time, away from the normal working environment.
- Creating a physically and psychologically safe space and blame free environment where practitioners can speak openly and honestly.
- [Experienced facilitation](#) – including the ability to provoke critical thinking and hypothesising, clarifying roles and expectations.

Reflective groups

Reflective groups can take different forms and there is no prescribed best approach. The National Wellbeing Hub has created a [Reflective Practice Toolkit for Scotland's Health and Social Care Workforce](#) to help guide whether reflective practice may meet the needs of your team. It outlines the key considerations, including whether the facilitator is internal or external, whether attendance is voluntary or mandatory and when and how groups should be scheduled.

Informal reflection

Informal reflection within Public Protection work is a spontaneous, ongoing process of considering your experiences to learn and improve practice, often occurring through quick discussions with colleagues or a brief daily mental review. It differs from formal reflection because it is typically unstructured and can happen 'in the moment' such as an opportunistic chat after a visit or meeting, or during a review of the day's events.

How to engage in informal reflection:

- Opportunistic discussions: Talk with a colleague right after a specific event to discuss what happened, why you acted in a certain way, and what you learned.
- Daily review: Take a few minutes at the end of each day to think about what you did well, what was challenging, and how you could improve your practice moving forward.
- Group reflection: Engage in informal discussions with peers on placement or with other team members to share experiences and insights in a less formal setting.
- Honest self-assessment: Be honest with yourself about your actions, decisions, and feelings in a particular situation.
- Identify opportunities: Recognise the value in even quick reflections. Acknowledging the learning from an informal chat or a brief daily review is the first step to improvement.

Models to support reflection

There is a number of different models to support reflection, one of the most well-known being Gibbs' Reflective Cycle. This offers a framework for examining experiences, allowing you to learn and plan for things that either went well or did not go well. It covers six stages:

- Description of the experience.
- Feelings and thoughts about the experience.
- Evaluation of the experience, both good and bad.
- Analysis to make sense of the situation.

- Conclusion about what you learned and what you could have done differently.
- Action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future, or general changes you might find appropriate.

Read more about [models to structure reflection on experiences](#).

The stages of reflective practice

The stages of reflective practice

Watch this [five-minute video](#) to learn more about the stages of reflection.

Reflection for action – this is arguably the most important stage, but in busy work environments, we may lose sight of the importance of this stage. It is important to slow down, tune into the situation and look forward. The following prompt questions are useful at this stage – What do I know? What do I not know? What environment am I going into? What might happen?, What are the opportunities in this piece of work? What are the obstacles? What am I worried about? Could I use supervision to help plan for this piece of work?

Reflection in action – this happens during the interaction ('in' can stand for 'I' and 'now') – your own thinking, responsibility and immediacy skills while undertaking a task. Reflecting on what you can change about your approach at that time allows you to react and change an event at the time it happens. In this stage, we would consider What can I do right now? What influence am I having on this situation? Why am I here? What am I seeing and hearing? Why do I feel like this?

Reflection on action ('on' can stand for 'others' and 'next') is the stage most people think reflective practice is, following a piece of work or an interaction. At this stage we can consult with others, share what happened and get feedback to help see the situation differently. What could have been happening for others in that situation? What was the other person's understanding of the situation? How clear what the other person about what was to happen next?

Resources

[Stages of Reflection - what reflective practice means - 5 minute video](#)

[Understanding Reflective Practice - three minute video](#)

[8 things to know about the experiential learning cycle - 8 minute video](#)

[Reflection Toolkit - University of Edinburgh](#)

[What is the Schon Model of Reflection?](#)

[Reflective Practice: A Quick Guide](#)

[Reflective Practice Toolkit for Scotland's Health and Social Care Workforce - National Wellbeing Hub](#)

[Research in practice podcast – the importance of reflective supervision](#)

[Process Recording as a Learning Tool for Social Workers](#)

[Facilitating reflection: a review and synthesis of the factors enabling effective facilitation of reflective practice](#)

**“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”
(Confucius, Chinese Philosopher)**



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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What would you like to see in a future newsletter?

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Find out more about us at

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