**Harm against adults harder to see during the pandemic**

**National Adult Support and Protection Day: 20 Feb 2022**

The pandemic has made vulnerable adults less visible. As part of National Adult Support and Protection Day 2022, people are being asked to keep an eye out for things that don’t look right, and to report concerns as an adult protection referral.

We can all think of someone we know who we worry about sometimes; a friend, family member or neighbour. During the pandemic, social workers have been going above and beyond to make sure that reports of concerns about adults who are vulnerable have been followed up.

Early indications from data looking at the impact of Covid-19 suggest that across Scotland, there were around 750 Adult Support and Protection referrals per week, on average;this average increases to around 780 per week when using data from the past six months. Although there is volatility in the figures, there has been a general upward trend in Adult Support and Protection referrals since May 2020*.*

For every seven referrals, one went on to an Adult Protection Investigation. For those that did not go on to investigation, other steps were frequently taken to ensure that the adult was supported and protected.

In general, physical harm and financial harm are the most common forms of harm perpetrated against adults at risk, but adult protection covers a wide range of harm. This includes everything from sexual harm to psychological harm; self-harm to neglect or self-neglect – when people struggle to take care of themselves.

John Paterson, Chair of the National Adult Support and Protection Scotland Independent Convenors’ Group said, “Covid-19 has had an impact on many people’s well-being and mental health; some people were more isolated than ever before. As we are emerging from the pandemic, we are mindful of the crucial role our communities play in safeguarding. Just like with the protection of children, Adult Support and Protection is important every day of the year and we want to ensure that the right supports are in place to protect people who are unable to keep themselves, their money, or their belongings safe.”

Making an adult protection referral can be a vital puzzle-piece of the information jigsaw to ensure that someone receives the attention and support they need. An adult protection referral can also be a good sign that someone needs support to stay safe, and can stop things getting worse. We can only act on concerns that are known about, so if something doesn’t seem right, you can help by making an adult protection referral.

Mr Paterson said, “Adult protection is everyone’s business and every member of our community is due our consideration and protection. You might provide the vital piece in the jigsaw that helps keep someone safe. If you see something, say something.”

**Key Resources**

Act against Harm - see something say something

<https://youtu.be/OzAG1fDtb_0>

tricky friends

<https://youtu.be/lo_6NcdygOE>

Both these resources explore harm and abuse from the perspective of adults at risk.

**Seen Something, Say Something – If you are concerned about someone make an Adult Support and Protection referral by contacting The Adult Protection phone line on 01383 602200 or in an emergency call 999. #seensomethingsaysomething**