



EAST AYRSHIRE
**PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMUNICATIONS
AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**
2026-2027



PROTECTING PEOPLE
in East Ayrshire

Contents

1. Background	3
2. Communications in Public Protection.....	5
3. Participation and Engagement in Public Protection	8
4. Vision and Strategic Priorities	12
5. Monitoring and Implementation.....	14
6. Implementation Plan	15

Version	Lead	Date	Key Changes
1	Public Protection Communications and Engagement Strategic Oversight Group	Dec 2025	Review of first draft and changes/additions
2	Public Protection Communications and Engagement Strategic Oversight Group and Public Protection Team	Jan 2025	Review of vision and action plan
3	Public Protection Communications and Engagement Strategic Oversight Group	Feb 2025	Review of second draft and changes/additions
4	Service Manager Planning and Performance	Mar 2025	Graphics designed cover. Document reviewed for accessibility issues.
5	Public Protection Communications and Engagement Strategic Oversight Group	Apr 2025	Finalise draft
6	Senior Manager Protection and Learning	Apr 2025	Final draft review prior to lodgement to Committees /Partnerships

1. Background

In Scotland, public protection is the overarching term for the collaboration of agencies to prevent and respond to harm to people in the community.

Public Protection includes child protection, adult support and protection, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for managing offenders, and addressing issues of violence against women, suicide prevention and substance abuse. The goal is to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and rights of individuals who are at risk of harm. 'Harm' means all harm (including physical, sexual, financial, emotional). This includes neglect, self-harm and self-neglect.

Engaging and communicating with our communities is a key commitment in the East Ayrshire Community Plan 2015-2030 and each relevant individual plan of East Ayrshire's Public Protection Committees/ Partnerships¹. It is key that we create opportunities for those that have lived/living experience of using our services to inform our approaches to the information we share, the mechanisms we put in place to raise concerns and the way in which those concerns are responded to.

East Ayrshire's Public Protection Communications and Engagement Strategy will support the five Public Protection Committees and Partnerships (Child Protection Committee, Adult Protection Committee, Violence against Women Partnership, Alcohol and Drug Partnership and Creating Hope Partnership) in communicating key messages to colleagues and communities across East Ayrshire, with the purpose of increasing awareness and understanding of public protection concerns, highlighting appropriate services and supports available, and supporting people with lived/living experience to engage and influence the services they access. This strategy will be underpinned by trauma-informed approaches to communications and engagement.

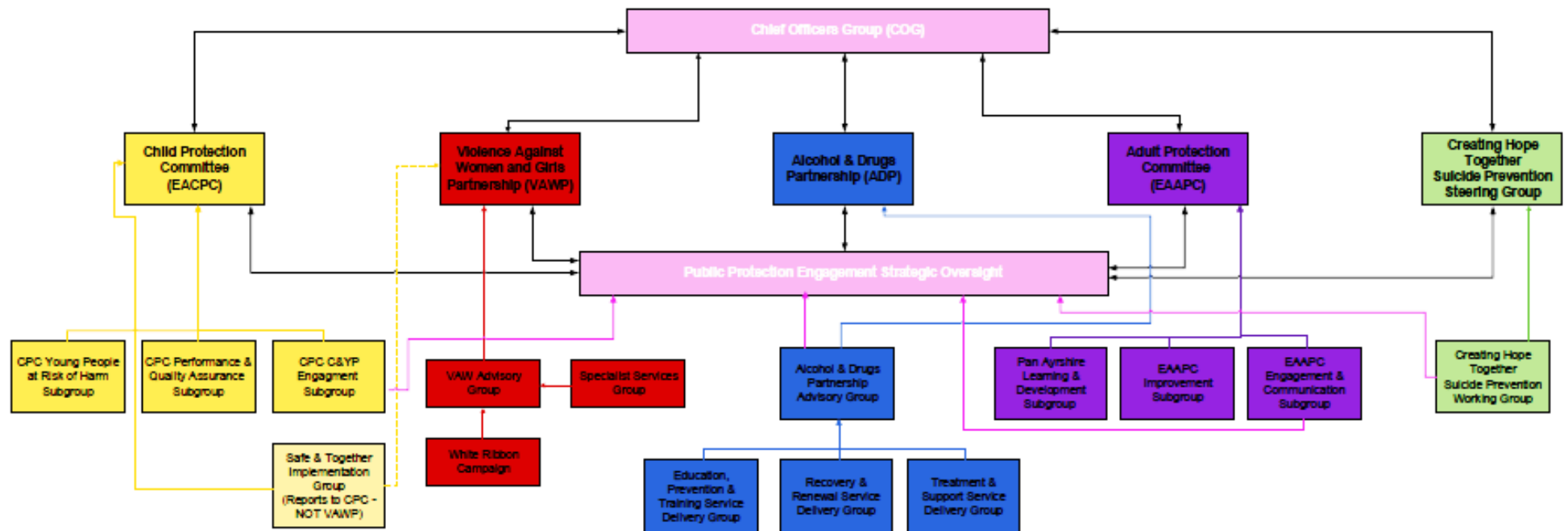
The Communication and Engagement Strategic Oversight Group has led on the development of this strategy. The establishment of this Group provides the opportunity to focus on how key public protection messages are aligned, communicated and how communities are engaged with.

All partner agencies/services represented within the Public Protection Committees and Partnerships have their own communications and engagement activities and reporting mechanisms (as shown in the structure below). However, all partners understand the need for an aligned approach to public protection communications and engagement activity that will avoid confusion and duplication for our communities.

Nationally, work has taken place to provide multi-agency leadership of public protection in Scotland. The National Public Protection Leadership Group was established in June 2024. As well as its broad role in driving continuous improvement through sharing of best practice, the groups strives to bring more coherence and simplification to public protection policy and related activity on prevention and early intervention.

¹ ASP Improvement Plan 1 Jan 2025 – 31 Dec 2026; the CPC Improvement Plan 2026-2027; Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Plan 2024-2027; East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategic Improvement Plan 2024-2027

FIGURE 1: East Ayrshire Public Protection Reporting Structure



2. Communications in Public Protection

The Public Protection Committees and Partnerships acknowledge the need to continue to increase public awareness and understanding of public protection issues across the East Ayrshire, in line with current local and national objectives.

All partners will be proactive in developing an accessible and consistent series of key awareness and prevention messages about public protection issues using traditional and modern media channels. This strategy will ensure a single strategic approach to public protection communication. This will support prioritisation and co-ordination of communication activity and avoid duplication.

Our approach to communication campaign planning will be the OASIS model. The OASIS model sets out a series of steps that can help bring clarity to the assessment and planning of any campaign and ensures the process is thought through and consistent.

The OASIS model provides five steps to create a campaign:



1. Objectives: what you want to achieve.

The objectives of any campaign should be clearly defined.

2. Audience/Insight: who the campaign is aimed at and why.

This stage identifies if we need to change or influence behaviours or attitudes and whether the campaign will help achieve that objective.

3. Strategy/Ideas: the campaign concept.

The approach to the campaign should be planned with messages tailored to guide the audience step by step to the desired outcome. Any approach can be tested on

a smaller scale and adjustments made to messages or communication channels if indicated.

4. Implementation: channels that will be used.

The range of communication channels used needs to be planned with each specific audience in mind. The resources available for the campaign will also impact on the channels used for the communication.

5. Scoring/Evaluation: how we will know we have achieved what we set out to do.

Outputs of communications campaigns should be monitored in some way. What to measure should be decided in advance so we know if there have been any changes to indicators following the campaign.

Target audiences

As public protection issues must be raised throughout all communities in East Ayrshire, the target audiences are many and varied. Identifying and prioritising target audiences will improve the impact of our communication actions, allow us to develop appropriately tailored messages, and use effective channels that consider our audiences' needs.

The strategy seeks to communicate its key messages to:

- individual members of the public, identified communities and groups sharing protected characteristics
- service users, patients, carers, families and their representatives or advocates
- people with lived/living experience
- perpetrators

This list is not exhaustive, and additional stakeholders may be identified through the course of a communication piece.

The importance of public protection and its broad relevance to all our communities means that we need to consider how we can increase the reach of our communications and build and segment our audiences. If we can begin to understand what level of awareness and knowledge there is of public protection we can, alongside local public protection data, identify gaps, prioritise areas of focus and target audiences to maximise our activity's impact. Organic marketing is an important and significant aspect of our approach here to grow invested audiences. Paid activity should also form part of our communications mix to deliver the resource and drive in our activity that will be required to increase our reach effectively if we truly want to communicate beyond our existing audiences.

Platforms and Channels

The Media

Public awareness will be raised through proactive media relations. East Ayrshire's Public Protection Committees and Partnerships will develop and continue to improve public awareness of the complexities of public protection issues by communicating key messages to local and regional media outlets.

Print

Proposed printed media to target through the strategy's action plan will include:

- Single agency / specific sector publications
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Accessible documents
- Other marketing materials

Direct marketing

With our email marketing system, we can improve awareness and understanding by delivering relevant, segmented content to the audiences that we build in our email databases.

Direct mail also provides opportunities to target audiences who are not easily accessed online, or where an alternative to digital marketing is needed to directly reach key audience segments.

Social Media

As we continue to develop an active social media presence, we will be able to raise public awareness, as well as communicate with interested parties, quickly and effectively.

Facebook and X have been identified as the main social media platforms for 'spreading the word' about public protection issues.

As the social media landscape continually changes, we need to look at how we use our channels effectively, such as strengthening our storytelling, using video content, and exploring local online groups.

Internal Communications

East Ayrshire's Public Protection Committees and Partnerships communicate to staff across all partner agencies and elected members, largely by electronic means such as, email, intranet and newsletters.

There will also be limited printed materials, alongside hybrid online and in-person communications, including workshops, webinars, presentations, events and focus groups.

Website

The website provides a platform for all multiagency public protection information. East Ayrshire Council's website is a trusted source that performs well on search engines, and East Ayrshire's public protection web pages will be developed as a "go-to" place for contact information for anyone concerned about a child, young person, or adult for guidance, information and signposting to local and national campaigns.

3. Participation and Engagement in Public Protection

Community engagement is defined as:

‘A purposeful process which develops a working relationship between communities, community organisations and public and private bodies to help them to identify and act on community needs and ambitions. It involves respectful dialogue between everyone involved, aimed at improving understanding between them and taking joint action to achieve positive change.’

This is a two-way process and involves listening to and hearing what people say, as well as acknowledging what is not being said, and using this to shape and continuously improve our practice through effective engagement.

In Scotland, community engagement is improved and guided by the good practice principles set out in the seven National Standards for Community Engagement. This means that people with experience of using services, their family and carers and staff are involved from the start of any commissioning, change or redesign of process or service through to developing strategic documents, implementation, and evaluation. It will mean that their voices are heard, and their knowledge and experiences are valued.



All partner agencies represented within the Public Protection Committees and Partnerships have their own engagement activities and reporting mechanisms. All partners can share an understanding and approach to public protection through this strategy.

Importantly, partners acknowledge that it is through effective community and staff engagement that those at risk of harm in our community can be identified. We seek to maintain, review and continually improve engagement practice to respond effectively when protecting those experiencing or at risk of harm.

Target Audiences

As public protection issues must be raised throughout all communities, the target audiences are many and varied. Identifying and engaging with all these target audiences will require an appropriate and varied range of communication and engagement methods and pathways.

The strategy seeks to engage with people with lived/living experience, children, young people, and adults, parents and carers and the wider public.

Engagement Methods

We will use a variety of methods of engaging including:

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Drop in sessions
- One-to-one's
- Case studies
- Learning Reviews and other less formal improvement activities

We need to be flexible and recognise that one approach does not fit all. There are a range of approaches that encourage and enable people and our stakeholders to be involved in ways that best suit them.

To assist with promoting an open and transparent approach when conducting participation and engagement activities, the following sets out the impact these activities have in line with the [International Association of Public Participation \(IAP2\) Spectrum of Public Participation](#) (see table below). The IAP2 will be helpful when evaluating our participation and engagement activity.

TABLE 1: International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation for Public Protection in East Ayrshire


	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in participating (if they choose to) and to access the right support at the right time for them.	A formal, time limited exercise for gathering public views on specific proposals to inform us and enhance decision-making.	To work directly with the public throughout our engagement processes to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of decision-making including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions. Creating equal and reciprocal relationships between our Committees and Partnerships and the public.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to you and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations. We will provide feedback and share widely how public input influenced the decision-making.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in developments. We will provide feedback and share widely the difference that our activities and public input has on decision-making.	We will look to the public for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations in the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR PUBLIC	Providing good quality accessible information relevant to our	This allows us to hear people's views and value their input into	The people who use our services, families, carers and the wider	Working in partnership with people at the earliest possible	To put choice and control in the hands of local people and our

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PROTECTION IN EAST AYRSHIRE	Committees and Partnerships purposes' and supports offered. Communicated via a range of ways such as: Newsletters, Social Media, Website, Posters, Leaflets, Information Displays and Signposting.	shaping our strategies and plans. This can be through paper or online surveys, public events such as discussion groups or feedback sessions.	public support the ongoing delivery of our Committees, Partnerships and associated services. This can be through ongoing user or carer forums or reference groups such as the ADP Lived Experience Panel.	opportunity as to how we create, design and deliver our Committees and Partnership objectives. Collective Advocacy or short-life working groups create these opportunities for ongoing collaboration or topic specific focus.	communities through topic specific projects relevant to them and our Committees and Partnerships.
IMPACT /OUTCOME	Our communities understand how to access services at the right time and place and where to find out more information (if needed) on our services or our engagement activities. In turn, the public have increased knowledge and are able to participate in engagement activity effectively and confidently.	Decision making and the strategic direction of our Committees and Partnerships is informed by the views and experiences of our communities. The impact of consultation findings is back to those relevant communities.	Services are informed and shaped by the experiences of those who use them, families, carers and our communities aiming to achieve the best value in delivery and the best outcomes for users and carers.	Developing new or improving existing models of care or delivery with the public, users of our services, families and carers. Ensuring services created in partnership are more likely to be right first time.	Members of the public and communities have choice and control over what matters most to them.

4. Vision and Strategic Priorities

The aim of the strategy is:

For East Ayrshire's communities to know where to find help if they suspect someone is experiencing harm or have experienced harm themselves and to ensure the voices of those with lived/living experience influences the work across public protection.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1. Our communication and engagement activities are informed by data and research.

- ❖ ACTION – Carry out benchmarking of public protection communication and engagement activities and good practice in other areas across Scotland.
- ❖ ACTION – Identify data sources and subsequent areas of focus for communication and engagement activity.
- ❖ ACTION – Build an understanding of East Ayrshire's level of awareness and prioritise key audience groups to grow and target.
- ❖ ACTION – Ensure our communications and engagement activities are trauma-informed.

2. Our communication and engagement activities are coordinated and avoid duplication.

- ❖ ACTION – Carry out a mapping and scheduling activity to develop a Public Protection Communications and Engagement Calendar
- ❖ ACTION – Improve awareness of local groups and services by promoting the ALISS directory.
- ❖ ACTION – Gather and map East Ayrshire public protection information and materials
- ❖ ACTION – Review public protection's presence on East Ayrshire Council website.
- ❖ ACTION – Explore and understand the potential, sustainability and use of Engagement HQ.

- ❖ ACTION – Develop a public protection feedback method toolkit.

3. Our participation and engagement activity is focused on listening to those with lived/living experience.

- ❖ ACTION – Understand how people can currently participate and engage in public protection processes by undertaking a mapping exercise.
- ❖ ACTION – Evaluate the effectiveness of existing Lived Experience Panels.

5. Monitoring and Implementation

It will be important to record and measure our communication and engagement activities to ensure we are connecting with the right audiences, growing our networks and reaching those with lived and living experience.

We can measure the quality of our communications and engagement work by understanding how communities and partners perceive our activities, channels and support and whether they feel they are inclusive and effective. Ultimately, we expect to measure quality of communications and engagement by seeing our activities lead to a deeper understanding of Public Protection in East Ayrshire and an increase in people actively participating and contributing.

The actions set out in this Strategy will be taken forward through a continually updated action plan overseen by the Public Protection Committees and Partnerships.

All actions will be carried out in collaboration with partners to ensure consistency across our communication and engagement activities.

6. Implementation Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Our communication and engagement activities are informed by data and research.

NO.	ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	EVIDENCE
1.1	Carry out benchmarking of public protection communication and engagement activities and good practice in other areas across Scotland.	VAW Lead Officer	30 June 2026	Report on benchmarking activity. Learning incorporated into East Ayrshire work.
1.2	Identify data sources and subsequent areas of focus for communication and engagement activity.	Public Protection Leads/ Communications Programme Officer	31 August 2026	Our activity themes / objectives are prioritised with a clear rationale based on the current environment in East Ayrshire. Our data sources support our monitoring.
1.3	Build an understanding of East Ayrshire's level of awareness and prioritise key audience groups to grow and target.	Public Protection Leads/ Communications Programme Officer	15 December 2026	A methodology is developed and implemented to build a baseline for monitoring. Initial priority audiences have been identified.
1.4	Ensure our communications and engagement activities are trauma informed.	Public Protection Leads/ Communications Programme Officer/Partnership Engagement Officer	Ongoing – 31 March 2027	Research / best practice examples. Guidance / policy developed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Our communication and engagement activities are coordinated and avoid duplication.

NO.	ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	EVIDENCE
2.1	Carry out a mapping and scheduling activity to develop a Public Protection Communications and Engagement Calendar.	Public Protection Leads/ Communications Programme Officer	30 June 2026	Public Protection activities are coordinated and aligned to the annual calendar.
2.2	Improve awareness of local groups and services by promoting the ALISS directory.	Public Protection Leads/HSCP Digital Resource Worker	Ongoing – 31 March 2027	Increase in numbers accessing ALISS directory. Communications campaign evaluates well.
2.3	Gather and map East Ayrshire public protection information and materials.	Public Protection Graduate Intern	30 June 2026	Catalogue of information and materials collated. Gaps and crossover identified.
2.4	Review the presence of public protection information on the East Ayrshire Council website.	Public Protection Leads/ Communications Programme Officer	30 September 2026	Public protection information on the website is up-to-date and can be navigated easily.
2.5	Explore and understand the potential, sustainability and use of Sentiment and Feedback (previously Engagement HQ).	ASP Lead Officer/HSCP Communications Programme Officer/Partnership Engagement Officer	30 September 2026	Clear direction on the use of Engagement HQ.

NO.	ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	EVIDENCE
2.6	Develop a public protection feedback method toolkit.	Public Protection Leads/ HSCP Communications Programme Officer/Partnership Engagement Officer	31 December 2026	Toolkit developed. Increase in people feeling listened to and involved.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Our participation and engagement activity is focused on listening to those with lived/living experience.

NO.	ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	EVIDENCE
3.1	Understand how people can currently participate and engage in public protection processes by undertaking a mapping exercise.	Public Protection Leads	30 September 2026	Pathways of participation and engagement mapped. Gaps/blocks identified.
3.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of existing Lived Experience Panels.	Public Protection Leads	31 December 2026	Report on evaluation completed. Findings incorporated into improvement work.