

COMMUNITY CARE PROVIDERS SCOTLAND

<p>Scottish Parliament Health Committee Call for Written Evidence on the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill August 2006</p>
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Community Care Providers Scotland is the association of voluntary sector organisations providing care and support services in Scottish communities. Its membership comprises all leading national non-profit and charitable providers in Scotland.

CCPS members provide a variety of services for adults, both in registered residential settings and in their own homes.

This response deals with areas of the Bill which would impact on voluntary sector service providers. Member organisations have been encouraged to submit individual responses to the call for evidence where they have concerns around the impact of the Bill on adults at risk.

CCPS has previously responded to three Scottish Executive consultations on the protection of vulnerable adults; the responses can be viewed at www.ccpscotland.org/policy. CCPS is also represented on the national Steering Group.

Comments in this response address the Health Committee's final question: **What views do you have on the role, structures and powers of the proposed Adult Protection Committees?**

The concept of Adult Protection Committees was raised by CCPS in its response to the Executive's 2004 consultation on vulnerable adults. At that time, we made the case for a co-ordinated response to adult protection, which would streamline investigation arrangements and provide local, accessible, relevant support to organisations. We continue to support this position.

However, we are disappointed that voluntary sector service providers are not to be represented on APCs, and would ask the Committee to consider this omission in its examination of the Bill.

As the voluntary sector provides up to one third of all publicly funded adult community care services, including 60% of all residential care homes, its absence from APC's would leave a significant gap between those working most closely with vulnerable adults and the work of the Adult Protection Committees.

The voluntary sector was recognised as a key provider of services in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, section 6.¹ It seems out of keeping with the aims of the Scottish Executive's work in 2006 to strengthen the voluntary sector and increase its involvement as a partner in the planning and provision of services, that the sector is not to be fully involved in the work of APCs.

¹ P.2, s.6, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill, Policy Memorandum, Session 2 (2006)

As the Executive's own Policy Memorandum states, there is a danger that where agencies are not obliged to work together and to share information, "agencies receiving information on suspected abuse from another agency may give a low priority to the response."² The voluntary sector has not traditionally been seen as an equal partner by statutory agencies, and there is a danger that their non-inclusion in APCs will result in a key player being missing from discussions around adult protection.

CCPS notes the intention that councils "may also appoint as Committee members such other persons who appear to it to have skills and knowledge relevant to the functions of the Adult Protection Committee."³ While this presents a theoretical opportunity for the involvement of the voluntary sector in APCs, without an obligation to do so, it is unlikely that many local authorities will include voluntary sector representation. Indeed, the Executive acknowledges that the voluntary sector is unlikely to be given a strategic role in APCs when it states that "[o]n occasion, representatives from the voluntary and/or private sector may be involved in attending adult protection case conferences, professional concern meetings and helping to support and monitor adult protection plans..."⁴

CCPS asks the Committee to consider the key role which could be played by voluntary sector service providers in Adult Protection Committees, and how the sector can be empowered to play its full role.

CCPS would be happy to provide further details, or to discuss anything in this response. Please contact:

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² P.5, s.26, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill, Policy Memorandum, Session 2 (2006)

³ P.16, s.40(5), Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill, Session 2 (2006)

⁴ P.30, s.166, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill, Explanatory Notes (and other accompanying documents), Session 2 (2006)