

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Social Work Officer****Council: 23 March 2022**

Subject: Update - Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020-21**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update to the Council in relation to the [Chief Social Work Officer \(CSWO\) Annual Report for 2020-21](#) (Background Paper) which provides information on the statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf which includes a summary of governance arrangements, service delivery, resources and workforce.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council is asked to note the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020-21 and note the progress and updates provided.

3. Background

- 3.1 The requirement for each Council to have a Chief Social Work Officer was initially set out in section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and is also contained within section 45 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
- 3.2 The role of the CSWO is to provide professional guidance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services – both those provided directly by the HSCP and also those commissioned or purchased from other providers.
- 3.3 The CSWO Annual Report is prepared in line with national guidance: 'The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer' (Scottish Government: 2016). This report also fulfils the statutory requirement for each CSWO to produce an annual report on the activities and performance of social work services within the local area. It should be noted that an amended report template was again agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to ensure local reporting arrangements continue whilst having due regard to current pressures being experienced across the sector and workload implications as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic
- 3.5 Since the 2020-21 CSWO was published no sooner was planning to move back into offices commenced than this required to again be halted due to a new variant Omicron which emerged late in 2021.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** As West Dunbartonshire HSCP goes forward as a fully mature integrated partnership, this report reinforces some of the achievements and diversity of the collaborative relationship in which social work practice and values have, and the significant impact on shaping service delivery. Social Work has a vital role to play in the continued development of the partnership into the future.
- 4.2** The report notes that the programme of national inspection activity was largely paused due to the pandemic, however the CSWO report (appendix 1) makes reference to this recommencing more recently, particularly the Joint Inspection of adult support and protection in 2020. We continue to work on the improvement activity which was developed from the recent inspection regarding Adult Support and Protection.
- 4.3** Both the Independent Audit and the Care Inspectorate Inspection identified several key strengths and West Dunbartonshire scored particularly high on multi-agency participation and involvement. There was clear evidence of good practice in complex case work where there were chronic, un-resolvable problems in the day to day lives of some of the vulnerable adults involved in the asp process. The Care Inspectorate highlighted that the Partnership had made a sound decision to increase the capacity of their duty service at the beginning of the Covid -19 Pandemic. As a result screening and triage of Adult Support & Protection referrals was accurate, timely, effective, and collaborative. Care inspectorate noted the following :staff from the partnership had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to adult support & protection, adult support & protection investigations were routinely undertaken and effectively determined if the Adult was at risk of harm, Partnership Leaders responded well to the unprecedented strategic and operational demands of the Covid 19 Pandemic, support was provided to staff and the partnership ensured good oversight of protection risks and recovery planning.
- 4.4** An improvement plan is now in place following the adult support inspection and is aimed at the development of all adult support & protection front line and support services with a clear focus on providing enhanced outcomes for adults at risk and their families across West Dunbartonshire Council. The priority objectives have been agreed based on the recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate.
- 4.5** In September 2021 the Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm in West Dunbartonshire commenced and has only been possible to partially complete with some aspects of the inspection not able to be progressed due to the Covid Pandemic. Verbal feedback from the Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm in West Dunbartonshire is planned for March 2022. It is uncertain at this time whether a full written report will be produced.
- 4.6** The CSWO report for 2020-21 appropriately, makes significant reference to the work of teams across Children, Adults and Justice Services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The dedication and work of front line staff during the pandemic who have not stopped to deliver services to our most vulnerable citizens requires the utmost recognition for their persistent, flexibility and resilience demonstrated by social work

staff. The adaptability of staff, managers and users of services has been paramount to the continued provision of social work services in local communities

- 4.7** Enhanced oversight arrangements, public protection activity and information pertaining to demand, performance and achievements is balanced by recognition of the challenges faced by services during 2020-21.
Having recently been appointed to the role CSWO in West Dunbartonshire it is my intention to further develop our use of data and performance measure to be able better understand the impact and outcomes for our services users. Areas of further improvement for adult, older people, Justice and children services are in relation to strengthening our self -evaluation to ensure a continued improvement cycle is embedded moving forward through recovery.
- 4.8** The Adult Mental Health Service has continued to operate as an integrated team including social work and health colleagues to support a holistic model of delivery where joint working is embedded. An immediate same day response service continued during the last year and joint working with Police housing, criminal justice, Addiction Services and third sector partners were key to the assertive outreach model for people with complex needs. Throughout the year there have been challenges with staffing due to impact of the pandemic however we have worked with our partners in Greater Glasgow and Clyde to ensure that consistent services remain open and individuals are seen in a timely manner.
- 4.9** Learning Disabilities Services continued to provide support throughout the pandemic although face to face contact was reduced. However staff have worked flexibly to ensure that service users were prioritised for support as required. The Day Service although closed in the main however did continue to provide support to critical cases and staff provided outreach support to those service users who had to remain at home. The integrated approach to service delivery across community health and care, as well as third sector providers, has supported the delivery of effective and targeted specialist services which are prioritised around the key aims of people with a learning disability using an outcome-focussed approach to promote person-centred assessment and planning.
- 4.10** Care homes environments have proven to be particularly susceptible to the corona virus with elderly residents at risk of poorer outcomes due to pre-existing conditions. Sadly a number of our care homes experienced deaths of older residents due to Covid 19.
- 4.11** The need for additional whole system support to protect residents and staff was identified. There were no changes to Chief Officers or Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities or accountabilities. However, additional requirements regarding accountability for provision of nursing leadership, professional oversight, implementation of infection prevention control measures, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and quality of care required a new model of support to be developed.
- 4.12** An enhanced system of care assurance was developed around the safety and wellbeing of care home residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. This support included establishing a West Dunbartonshire multiagency professional oversight group. The role of the group is to analyse issues, develop and implement

solutions, and ensure care homes remain able to sustain services during the pandemic. The group provides access to expert advice on infection prevention and control and enabled care homes to secure responsive clinical support when required.

- 4.13** Clinical and care governance is the process by which accountability for the quality of health and social care is monitored and assured, supporting staff in continuously improving the quality and safety of care and ensuring that wherever possible good performance is highlighted and poor performance is identified and addressed. The HSCP Clinical and Care Governance Group has maintained oversight of the key areas of clinical risk and quality, creating connections with all governance structures in the Partnership to assure the quality of care provided throughout the pandemic.
- 4.14** Despite the pandemic widespread activity is evident across the HSCP and hosted services in pursuit of the key quality ambitions of delivering safe, effective, high quality person centred care. The use of technology had been instrumental in mitigating risks to service delivery and the learning from this will inform future service developments.
- 4.15** The scrutiny oversight and diligence provided to protect our most physically vulnerable citizens those in care home and older people requiring packages of home support has been unprecedented. Currently only one care home has an outbreak of Covid and at times daily quality assurance and scrutiny has taken place within the partnership. The HSCP multi-agency care home group continues to meet weekly to provide oversight and support to care homes to provide assurance that care quality is of the highest possible standard and any risks to this are identified early and addressed timeously.
- 4.16** Multiagency Care assurance visits to care homes are conducted by a Senior Nurse and Senior Social Worker and have allowed the HSCP to build on previously good relationships and partnership working with all local care home providers. Reflecting the significant work undertaken during the pandemic these assurance visits now adopt an approach of appreciative enquiry. The last cycle was undertaken between September and November 2021. No significant areas of concern were identified and many areas of good practice were evident.
- 4.17** Where homes were identified as having support requirements we are now able to augment HSCP support with input from the NHSSGHC Care Home Collaborative Hub which is a recently established resource that will enhance capacity to accelerate and support continuous improvement across all our care homes. Examples include support from specialist infection control nurses to provide an additional layer of assurance regarding practice within care homes as we adapt to life with Covid 19.
- 4.18** Our care homes continue to experience challenges in relation to Covid 19 outbreaks reflecting the position in the wider community. Encouragingly we have 100% uptake of the vaccine in all eligible residents. This has greatly reduced the impact of Covid 19 infections on residents, with most thankfully now experiencing only mild cold symptoms. The impact on staffing continues but this has also been ameliorated by vaccine uptake and changes to isolation requirements following infection
- 4.19** Looking forward there are the clear opportunities for improvement in how we evaluate impact of services and ensure the voices of service users is at the centre of co-produced and designed services with and for adults and children who use them. Reporting on outcomes for people arising both from national policy commitments and building on the recent inspections across adult and children's service will enable

development of highly personalised services to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens. There are acknowledged challenges associated with service and workforce pressures and level of change, and capacity required, as well as the uncertainties about future structural reform in relation to the National Care Service. The importance of collaboration to overcome challenges in key areas as well as a clear focus on best value and aligns resource to our strategic priorities

4.20 Significant policy and legislative changes in Children's services present real opportunities, with associated challenges both in relation to the culture and practice shift aligned to implementation of 'the Promise' enabling relation based practice and establishing a rights based approach with strengthened UNCRC legislation to ensure children and young people receive help and support they are entitled to

4.21 Government Policy and Legislative drivers for Strategic drivers for Children services:

- Implementation of National Child Protection Guidance
- National Transfer Scheme / UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers)
- Scottish Model for Joint Investigative model for Scotland 2022/23
- National Care Service
- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child UNCRC embedded in Scots law 2021
- Age of Criminal Responsibility (2019)
- Better Hearings Programme across Scotland
- Support to Kinship carers and Kinship Payments
- GIRFEC Getting It Right for Every Child (Refresh) planned 2022.

Scoping our strategic drivers within protection services in adults older people and justice has commenced and interim strategic plan developed for 2022/23 to ensure the transformation and strategic direction of our social work and social care services is clear, communicated to our service users and workforce and deliverable aligned to a busy National policy context.

4.22 Person centred, rights based services with an emphasis on early help, holistic family and community support enabling families to remain together wherever possible through the right community based support aligns with our themed local strategic HSCP Strategic Priorities – Early Intervention, Access, Resilience, Assets. Addressing Inequalities effectively and improve outcomes for those most vulnerable in our communities requires both capacity and effective resources across the system. As CSWO, and Head of Service for Children's Health Care and Justice, it is my intention to work closely with Heads of service in Adult and Older People's services to review both these key areas including services access.

In essence, 'shifting the balance of care' aligned to our transformation and improvement agenda and asking our staff to consider 'what would it take' to keep children and adults safely within community settings.

4.23 Figures released in November 2021 indicate West Dunbartonshire as the second highest area for prevalence of Domestic Abuse in Scotland. National figures indicate 119 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by police per 10,000 population in 20-21. WDC sits at 168 per 10,000, an increase on the previous year from 150.

- 4.24** Discussions held between Justice/Children and Families Services and the National Caledonian Team have developed the Caledonian 1-1 programme being implemented in West Dunbartonshire. Whilst pandemic has resulted in delayed implementation and we are now in a position to confirm WDC as one of the authorities in Scotland to host a court and non-court mandated 1-1 programme later in 2022.
- 4.25** In January 2021 West Dunbartonshire's Community Planning Partnership has agreed the approach and implementation of a Community Justice Partnership within West Dunbartonshire. In February 2021 the first workshop has taken place bringing together Senior Officer and Leaders from across the HSCP and wider council with contributions from Community Justice Scotland.
- 4.26** This vital focus on prevention and improving outcomes for those individual and victims who have been involved or affected by offending behaviour is delivered in line with Community Justice (Scotland) 2016 legislation. This whole systems approach is a key priority for Community Planning moving forward in order to more effectively address cycles of offending behaviour within our communities in West Dunbartonshire.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** The CSWO Annual Report refers to workforce planning and development which recognises activity to support staff compliance with professional registration as well as recruitment and retention activity.
- 5.2** Recruitment to a range of posts across services has continued, reflecting both the continued commitment to practice and performance improvement within a shift for much activity to online working. The opportunities that relaxation of Coved measures and ability to move to a hybrid model of working brings greater opportunities to engage in more face to face contact with services users to deliver relational based practice, with services users. As a profession based on building relationships to engage with and support individuals, families and carers towards better outcomes, where relational practice is pivotal to comprehensive, rights-focussed assessment and interventions.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications arising from the CSWO annual report, however the report highlights the financial implications upon the HSCP budget and the importance of spend that is compliant with procurement arrangements.
- 6.2** Budgetary oversight of services provided by the HSCP continues to be provided by the HSCP Board and senior officers continue to address these issues to meet statutory duties

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Provision of statutory social work services requires appropriately qualified and skilled staff; analysis of activity and future demand is intended to inform future service planning to continue to meet statutory duties.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** There is no equalities impact as the report does not recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy.

9. Environmental Sustainability

- 9.1** There are no implications for environmental sustainability.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** The CSWO Annual Report has been informed by information provided by managers across the HSCP; members of the HSCP Senior Management Team have also been consulted on the report content.

11. Strategic Assessment

- 11.1** Analysis of activity, resources and performance within the CSWO Annual Report provides assurance that the planning and delivery of social work services in West Dunbartonshire continue to reflect statutory requirements.
- 11.2** The strategic direction of services will undoubtedly continue to reflect the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2022 and shape how services are able to be prioritised and designed to meet the needs of our communities in West Dunbartonshire.

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14 February 2022

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Appendices: **N/A**

Background Papers: [Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020-21](#)

Wards Affected: **All**