

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Lesley James, Head of Children's Health,  
Care & Justice and Chief Social Work Officer**

**Meeting: Council - 26 October 2022**

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**Subject: Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO) Annual Report for 2021-22 (Appendix 1) which provides information on the statutory work undertaken on the Board's behalf, including a summary of governance arrangements, service delivery, resources and workforce.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Board are asked to note the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22 and approve its submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government.

**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 has been 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.
- 3.4** Following approval, the Annual Report will be provided to the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government and will be posted on the Council and HSCP websites.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** Each CSWO produces an Annual Report based on an agreed template by the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser. This ensures local reporting arrangements continue whilst having due regard to current pressures being experienced across the sector. The Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor will use completed reports to prepare a national overview later in the year.

- 4.2** The report for 2021-22, makes significant reference to the work of teams across Children & Families, Adults, Older people and Justice Services. The report gives both performance information and highlights the extensive and varied contribution that social work makes to the lives of our most vulnerable citizens within West Dunbartonshire. Adaptability of social workers, support staff, managers and users of services through fluctuating and changing environments, in pandemic conditions, has been required to ensure continuity of services in our local communities.
- 4.4** Oversight arrangements, public protection activity and performance information is detailed as well as external scrutiny of those regulated services delivering statutory functions during 2021-22.
- 4.5** Recruitment challenges to a range of posts across services has been highlighted and is both a local and national issue for our social work workforce. As a profession based on building relationships to engage with children and adults and deliver rights based services to individuals, families and carers towards better outcomes, our skilled workforce is key as is their wellbeing. The Social Work services workforce is diverse and includes Social Workers; Occupational Therapists; residential and day care staff; home care staff; Mental Health Officers and people working with Children, Adults and Justice Services. Services are delivered by a skilled, dedicated workforce who require support, training and effective leadership to undertake complex and often challenging work.
- 4.6** This year has seen services able to more fully recover and reset from a pandemic driven service response, with increased numbers of staff returning to the workplace and buildings more accessible to services users particularly since early 2022. Staff vacancies across services areas is a notable challenge across nearly all service deliver areas.

It is to the credit of the entire social work and social care workforce that vital services in West Dunbartonshire have continued throughout the pandemic and beyond and it is testament to the dedication, commitment and individual effort of each social worker, social care worker and manager in providing continuity of service through these unprecedented times, where those with the greatest inequalities in life have been most impacted through the pandemic. Unfortunately the impact on citizens and communities is still not fully visible and it is likely that additional needs for families and individuals will be evident for some time to come.

- 4.7** The clarity of objective of the social work ambition to deliver earliest and preventative services to enable children and adults to live their best lives in community settings where possible is clear across all delivery areas. The shared understanding of the impact services make, not simply activity, is at the heart of all social work delivery, and the culture change in services to ensure meaningful participation and self- direction is growing. The focus on the most vulnerable in our communities is required to ensure reduction in health and social inequalities with improved outcomes. As such, priorities for service delivery, support to staff and managers and details of workforce planning are included.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** The CSWO Annual Report refers to workforce planning and development which recognises activity to support staff wellbeing and ensure successful recruitment and retention.

**5.2** The report highlights developments of key posts across social work services to support an on-going improvement agenda and identified priorities for the delivery of social work services.

## **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; the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will undoubtedly continue to shape the budgetary and financial arrangements for HSCP services during 2021-22 and beyond.

## **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 continues to reflect statutory requirements.

**11.2** The report also demonstrates how services support the Council's strategic priorities and the HSCP Strategic Plan, working with local residents and communities to improve lives.

**Lesley James**  
**Head of Children's Health, Care and Justice**  
**Chief Social Work Officer**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

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**Appendices:** Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All