

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Social Work Officer****Council: 29 September 2021**

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

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Annual Report for 2020-21 (Appendix 1) which provides information on the statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf, including 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 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 a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, however once again this year, given the workload implications caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, an amended template has been provided. This ensures local reporting arrangements continue whilst having due regard to current pressures being experienced across the sector.
- 4.2** The Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor will use completed reports to prepare a national overview later in the year.
- 4.3** The report for 2020-21, understandably, makes significant reference to the work of teams across Children & Families, Adults and Justice services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The adaptability of staff, managers and users of services has been paramount to the continued provision of social work services in local communities.
- 4.4** 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.
- 4.5** The report notes that the programme of national inspection activity was largely paused due to the pandemic, however refers to this recommencing more recently, particularly the joint inspection of adult support and protection.
- 4.6** Recruitment to a range of posts across services continued, reflecting both the continued commitment to practice and performance improvement within a shift for much activity to remote means. As a profession based on building relationships to engage with and support individuals, families and carers towards better outcomes, this enabled vital social work services to continue during the pandemic but has similarly presented challenges where relational practice is pivotal to comprehensive, rights-focussed assessment and interventions.
- 4.7** In line with Scottish Government, professional and public health guidance, services have continued to adapt to lockdown, the relaxation of restrictions and the impact of these increasing once again during the past year. The focus on the most vulnerable in our communities, however, has remained constant and the learning from the many challenges of the past year is already informing opportunities for service development, adaptation and change during 2021-22. As such, priorities for service delivery, support to staff and managers and details of recovery planning are included.

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** Furthermore, the report highlights the range of staff wellbeing supports that have been provided during 2020-21 and the continued importance of staff wellbeing as a priority to support the workforce.

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 provide assurance that the planning and delivery of social work services in West Dunbartonshire continue 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.
- 11.3** The strategic direction of services will undoubtedly continue to reflect the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2021-22 and shape how services are prioritised and designed to meet the needs of our communities in West Dunbartonshire.

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Appendices:	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020-21
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	All