

# **PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**

**7 October 2020**

## **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

**Report by Chief Social Work Officer, Jacquie Pepper (Report No. 20/183)**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides the Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO) overview of social work services in Perth and Kinross during the financial year 2019/20. It sets out how social care and social work and criminal justice social work services have been delivered up until the end of March 2020 and the key challenges in responding to COVID-19 up until the end of July 2020. The report also details the arrangements to enable the CSWO to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Section 5 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended).

### **1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 requires every Local Authority to appoint a single Chief Social Work Officer.
- 1.2 Scottish Ministers published statutory guidance in 2016 on the role of the CSWO for local authorities and partnerships which have certain social work functions delegated to them. The CSWO role was established to ensure the provision of appropriate professional advice in the discharge of the full range of the local authority's statutory functions and the updated guidance sets out the importance of the CSWO role within Integrated Joint Boards.
- 1.3 The CSWO is accountable to elected members of the Council and must be:
  - A qualified social worker, registered with the Scottish Social Services Council;
  - Designated as a 'proper officer' of the local authority;
  - Of sufficient seniority and experience in both the operational and strategic management of social work services; and
  - A non-voting member of the integration authority.
- 1.4 The CSWO is a role and function, rather than a specific job description and is therefore distinct from the post holder's operational management responsibilities and from the role of the Chief Officer of the integration authority. It is for the CSWO to use their authority to challenge and intervene when proposals may have a detrimental impact on vulnerable citizens or to the workforce on whom they depend. In leading the social care and social work profession, the CSWO provides:
  - Professional independent advice to the Chief Executive and elected members in relation to the discharge of the local authority's statutory functions as outlined in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968;

- Strategic and professional leadership in the delivery of social work services;
- Assistance to local authorities and their partners in understanding the complexities and cross-cutting nature of social work services and the key role they play in meeting local and national outcomes; and
- Support for performance management and the management of corporate risk.

1.5 Together with the CSWO, elected members have duties to oversee that effective, professional and high-quality social work and social care services are delivered to professional standards. The annual CSWO report, and its consideration by Perth and Kinross Council and the Perth and Kinross Integrated Joint Board, is one important way to accomplish this. The CSWO annual report is an opportunity to gauge the quality of performance of social work and social care services and to identify the challenges for continuing to meet the needs of local people and communities into the future.

1.6 Over 2019/20, the CSWO role was carried out by Jacquie Pepper alongside her responsibilities as Depute Director (Education and Children's Services). The Head of Adult Social Work and the Head of Services for Children, Young People and Families deputise and provide cover when required.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

2.1 The Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser (CSWA) uses all 32 CSWO Reports to produce a national summary report and this provides an opportunity to set our local social care and social work services in the wider national context.

2.2 The report considers how social work and social care services have been delivered over the last financial year (1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020). It also identifies the challenges which have faced social work and social care services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and where possible, provide performance information for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2020. It was important to provide an overview and give assurance to elected members at the earliest opportunity through an accurate appraisal of demand and performance during a period of unparalleled challenge, and, when the wellbeing of our most vulnerable citizens has never been so compromised.

2.3 The report illustrates how social care and social work services delivered outcomes for service users over 2019/20 including:

- Continuing to achieve a balance of care for children who are looked after in the community at 96% for the second year running.
- The successful implementation of REACH as a new intensive service providing support for young people on the edges of care and their families has helped to maintain the low numbers of young people becoming looked after away from home in residential care since 2018.

- Continued good practice in promoting and supporting Kinship Care and successful efforts to expand the availability of foster care and family-based care.
- The numbers of young people over the age of 16 who are supported to remain in the care placement up to the age of 18 and to take up the option of Continuing Care continues to increase and is currently 27.
- Sustained strong performance in low reconviction rates for adult offenders against national comparisons.
- Sustained performance in reducing delayed discharge and supporting people to return to their own home with independence.
- Continued upward trend in the numbers of people opting for Self- Directed Support and as a percentage of total social work spending on adults aged 18 or over.
- Care services continue to provide high quality care to local people with 86% of quality themes that were evaluated, as good or very good, which is higher than the Scotland figure of 82%.

2.4 Key priorities for 2019/20 were taken forward within a context of integration and multi-agency partnership working. This includes the actions to address demand pressures across a number of key areas. Considerable progress has been made in taking forward transformational change towards earlier intervention and new sustainable models of service delivery which better meet the needs of our communities.

2.5 During the response to COVID-19, social work and social care staff have worked ceaselessly to care for and protect the most vulnerable people across all communities in Perth and Kinross. The Chief Social Work Officer is confident that staff across all sectors have done everything possible to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and have acted professionally, selflessly and safely throughout this unparalleled time. They stepped up to the plate reliably to provide essential services for people from the point of lockdown, learning to work in new ways and managing increasingly complex circumstances and entrenched difficulties. As a result, the needs of our citizens with the most acute and enduring difficulties have been prioritised.

2.6 The Chief Social Work Officer's Report highlights the significantly higher workload as a result of COVID-19 within Services for Children, Young People and Families and notes that the social work teams are managing higher child protection caseloads with no additional staffing resource. In order to ensure that resources are not directed away from preventative, earlier intervention work, it is proposed that additional social work staff are recruited to this area on a temporary basis.

2.7 The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 (the Act) commenced in April 2020 and provided Local Authorities with the power to apply easements to statutory requirements set out in:

- Section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968– this relates to the duty to support people in need of assistance, carry out an assessment of need and to act to meet these needs;

- Section 23 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995–this relates to the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular for children and their families affected by disability;
- Section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995– this relates to the duty to provide after-care (in the form of advice, guidance and assistance) to young people, for example, those who were formerly looked after; and
- Section 24 of the Social Care (Self-directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013 and Sections 6 and 12 of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016– these relate to the duty to provide support to adult carers and young carers.

2.8 The purpose of the Act and associated statutory guidance was to allow local authorities and integration authorities to manage intense localised outbreaks and to work in a more flexible way to assess and meet needs. Demand pressures and staffing have been monitored closely since March 2020 and it has not been necessary to apply these powers to date. Staff and managers have responded with huge determination to continue to offer the optimum response and level of service to all service users and it is to their credit that statutory requirements have continued to be met. As we move into winter and with the prospect of a resurgence of the virus, the option to “switch on” these easements will remain under constant review.

2.9 The CSWO annual report emphasises a commitment across social work and social care services to the principles of recovery and renewal agreed by Council. There are many heartening and successful examples of involving people who use services in their redesign. In addition, there are many examples of inventive and adaptive changes to working practices that have been put into place to ensure that essential services are maintained and core statutory duties fulfilled during the global pandemic. Many of these changes have proven to be efficient and effective and work will be taken forward in the renewal and recovery work in due course.

2.10 The key challenges going into 2020/21 will be:

- Pressing ahead with review and transformation in line with the principles for Recovery and Renewal and the Perth and Kinross Offer to address recurring demand pressures and to secure earlier intervention and prevention including:
  - Developing new models of support for adults with complex needs and to improve transitions from children to adult services
  - Continued development of technology enabled care
  - The increased demand in relation to adults with incapacity or mental disorder
  - Extending the reach of early help and family support learning the lessons of REACH (taking a preventative approach to address the increase in the numbers children and young people for whom there is a concern for their welfare or who need protection)
- Continuing to meet our corporate parenting responsibilities and responding to the recommendations of the Independent Care Review set out in The Promise to achieve whole-systems change for care experienced children and young people;

- Continuing the support for care home and care at home services to manage the ongoing impact of COVID-19 focusing on infection, prevention and control and managing the additional demands arising from that and workforce pressures;
- Procurement and implementation of a new fit for purpose social work and social care IT system and associated staff development;
- Embedding positive changes to working practices, including the use of technology;
- Managing the financial pressures and increasing demands across all sectors;
- Responding to workforce pressures and recruitment challenges in social care services;
- Enhancing the availability of Self-Directed Support to provide personalised care for individuals and families;
- Working in partnership with key third sector organisations to deliver a range of essential services and continuing to explore areas for collaboration and jointly commissioning services with partners;
- Developing and implementing new workforce development programmes in public protection and disseminating learning from case reviews; and
- Implement a new service for supporting men in the justice system early in 2021.

### **3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The CSWO's assessment of performance over 2019/20 is that overall performance in securing high quality experiences for people who use social work and social care services has remained good despite major challenges. The continued improvements in outcomes for children and young people in need of care are demonstrated showing that the focus on prevention is having a positive impact on outcomes and bringing down spend on external residential placements. Within adult services, the strong partnership approach that exists at team and practitioner level continues to be evident. Determined and committed staff are delivering a high quality of service to our citizens. That is a huge achievement and demonstration of the contribution our social care and social work staff can make to the experience of our most vulnerable citizens.
- 3.2 Since COVID-19 restrictions were imposed in March 2020, social work and social care staff have worked continuously to care for and protect the most vulnerable people across all communities in Perth and Kinross. They have adapted well to new working conditions and have shown creativity in devising new ways of working that continue to meet needs. There is a challenge to ensure that this valued workforce receive the support they need to continue to provide these essential and critical services heading into winter and during resurgences of the virus. The Recovery and Renewal work in the Education and Learning and Equalities and Fairness workstreams should help to address this and the development of the Perth and Kinross Offer will be central to the redesign and transformation of social work and social care services.

- 3.3 This report provides examples of social work and social care professionals leading the redesign of services towards prevention, earlier intervention and personalisation. This innovation and investment in new ways of working are now making significant inroads to addressing longstanding pressures in areas such as residential care for young people. Continued investment in a skilled, adaptable and digitally aware workforce which is supported by a more advanced IT system from 2020 will be key over the next few years.
- 3.4 It is recommended that Council:
- (i) Approves the CSWO Annual Report for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1.

#### Author

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#### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)	29 September 2020

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>None</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>None</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>None</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>None</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>None</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>None</b>
Risk	<b>None</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>None</b>
External	<b>None</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>None</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to Objective No. (i), (ii) and (iv).

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (i), (ii) and (iv).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Integrated Working

## 2. Resource Implications

### Financial

- 2.1 None

### Workforce

- 2.2 Any future workforce implications will be reported via individual service reports.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 None

## 3. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

This section reflects that the proposals have been considered under the Act and no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### Sustainability

- 3.3 Not applicable



### Legal and Governance

3.4 Not applicable

3.5 Not applicable

### Risk

3.6 Not applicable.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

4.1 Head of Service Adult Social work and Head of Services for Children, Young People and Families have contributed to this report.

### External

4.2 Not applicable.

## **5. Communication**

5.1 Not applicable

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **3. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2019/20