

Perth And Kinross Council

6 March 2024

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Jacquie Pepper Chief Officer/Director of Integrated Health & Social Care
(Report No. 24/66)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides the Chief Social Work Officer's overview of social work services in Perth and Kinross during 2022/23. It sets out how social care, social work, and criminal justice social work services, have been delivered up until end of March 2023, and in some instances up to end of July 2023. It covers the key challenges that have continued, many associated with Covid-19 and outlines the additional needs and demands that were managed over the year for our most vulnerable and at-risk citizens. The report also details the arrangements to enable the Chief Social Work Officer to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Section 5 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:
- **Approves** the annual report on social care and social work services for 2022-23.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background/Main Issues arising from a review and analysis of social work and social care performance over 2022-23.
 - Section 5: Key Challenges going forward.
 - Section 6: Conclusion and assessment of performance.

4. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 requires every Local Authority to appoint a single Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO).
- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 Together with the CSWO, elected members have duties to oversee 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. 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.
- 4.6 Over 2022/23 the CSWO role was carried out by Jacquie Pepper alongside her responsibilities as Chief Officer for the Health and Social Care Partnership. The Interim Head of Adult Social Work and the Head of Services for Children, Young People and Families deputised and provided cover when required.
- 4.7 Perth & Kinross Council approved a new Executive and Strategic Leadership Structure in June 2023. This will result in a reduction in the numbers of officers at strategic leadership level and reflects an ongoing focus on efficiency, better integration of service functions and the prioritisation of

frontline services. The statutory role of the Chief Social Work Officer will now be aligned to the Strategic Lead for Children, Families and Justice and the job profile ensures that the statutory qualifications and experience are met by the new postholder. Transitional arrangements are in place and the new Strategic Lead took up post on 29 January in 2024. The current Chief Social Work Officer will continue in the role of Chief Officer for Health and Social Care.

- 4.8 The report considers how social work and social care services have been delivered over the last financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023). It identifies the challenges which have faced social work and social care services. There continues to be a significantly higher workload at our “front door” services however, the Council’s social work services are performing very effectively to fulfil statutory responsibilities and address this increased demand. Our social work services can demonstrate notable successes in redesigning services, providing earlier intervention, and successful efforts to achieve continuous improvement in key areas.
- 4.9 The report highlights the challenges associated with delivering highly effective services in the face of increased levels of need for support and protection. The data and information in this report shows that our social work and social care services are intervening earlier and preventing escalation of difficulties within families and vulnerable adults. Increasing numbers of concerns are being reported for both children and vulnerable adults and social work staff are addressing these at an early stage. The effectiveness of this earlier intervention has reduced the number of children and young people for whom formal child protection measures are required.
- 4.10 The Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee in compliance with Scottish Government guidance, publishes an annual Standards and Quality (S&Q) report. This report is routinely presented to Perth and Kinross Council annually and is usually considered alongside the CSWO annual report. The Child Protection Committee concluded that improved multi-agency partnership working (in particular with the third sector), recent service re-design, a shift towards much earlier intervention, with support being provided at a much earlier stage have all had a bearing on the effectiveness of interventions and keeping children out of the child protection system. Effective use of multi-agency child or young person’s plans co-ordinated by social workers as lead professionals is also reducing the need for formal multi-agency child protection procedures.
- 4.11 Over the last few years new processes and an emphasis on a multiagency response for vulnerable adults has ensured more people are protected through protection plans. Over 2022/23, a 30% increase in adult protection concerns was received by adult social work teams. This coincides with increased publicity to raise awareness about adults at risk of harm. Notwithstanding this steep increase in the numbers of adult protection concerns, almost all (98.2%), were screened by social workers within 24-hours. This is notable performance in the face of increased demand. The number of initial Adult Support & Protection case conferences increased by

15% in 2022/23 which demonstrates the increased use of multi-agency assessment and protection planning.

- 4.12 A joint inspection of Adult Protection in Perth & Kinross led by the Care Inspectorate reported in August 2022. This was part of the Scottish Government's improvement programme for adult support and protection. The inspection findings were positive and identified strong multi-agency adult support and protection arrangements in Perth and Kinross. Key strengths included leadership and governance, multiagency arrangements and policies and processes. Areas for improvement included engagement of adults in ASP process and use of medical examinations and these actions are set out in the Adult Protection Committee's Improvement Plan.
- 4.13 There was a reduction in the overall number of looked after children and this is most notable in the number of children looked after at home which has reduced by 58%. This demonstrates the effectiveness of voluntary support and intervention with families and reducing the need for compulsory measures.
- 4.14 The number of children looked after away from home in all settings has slightly increased and this is placing pressure on the associated budgets for looked after children, particularly residential placements. The Council provided additional non-recurring funding of £1.952k in March 2023 to offset budget pressures for looked after children & young people in residential placements. Prior to the pandemic there had been significant impact through the implementation of REACH which introduced a successful team to prevent the need for residential care for young people in crisis. During 2022-23, young people with complex behavioural problems post Covid, struggled to manage in the community and the number requiring specialist residential care increased. The increase in numbers is small but these specialist placements come at a high unit cost.

5. KEY CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD

5.1 The key challenges going forward are:

- pressing ahead with review and transformation to secure earlier intervention and prevention in the context of demand pressures and considerable budget constraints;
- continuing to meet our corporate parenting responsibilities through the corporate parenting plan, Our Promise to You;
- continuing the support for care home and care at home services to manage the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and to reduce levels of unmet need for care at home;
- implementation of MOSAIC by June 2024 to create a fit for purpose social work and social care IT system and associated staff development;
- managing the financial pressures and increasing demands across all sectors;
- responding to workforce pressures and recruitment challenges in social care services;

- 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 trauma-informed practices, public protection and disseminating learning from case reviews; and
- prepare for the establishment of the National Care Service and National Social Work Agency.

6. CONCLUSION & ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 The CSWO's assessment of performance over 2022/23 is that overall performance in securing high quality experiences for people who use social work and social care services has remained positive overall despite major challenges. The demand for social work and social care services has continued to increase in almost all areas.
- 6.2 Determined and committed staff are delivering a high quality of service to our citizens and continuing to innovate, improve and adapt practices. 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. There is a need to ensure that this staff receive support for their health and wellbeing to stay well and to continue to provide essential and critical services in the longer term.
- 6.3 The Council and the Integrated Joint Board (to which the Council has delegated adult social care and social work services) must work with the new Chief Social Work Officer to keep under review the adequacy of social work and social care staffing to meet the increased level of needs and demands and ensure statutory responsibilities are met.

Authors

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Jacquie Pepper	Chief Social Work Officer until 29 January 2024	

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report supports the following priorities within the Community Plan 2022-27.

- (i) *Reducing Poverty (including child poverty, fuel poverty and food poverty)*
- (ii) *Mental and physical wellbeing*
- (iii) *Employability*

Corporate Plan

1.2 This report supports the following objectives within the Corporate Plan: -

- (iv) *enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential*
- (v) *protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people*
- (vi) *supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing*

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no direct financial implications.

Workforce

- 2.2 The report highlights the workforce implications associated with the fulfilment of statutory social work duties and addressing increasing demand and complexity of need in caring for and protecting the most vulnerable and at-risk people in our communities.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 N/A

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 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 proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.3 N/A.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The statutory role of Chief Social Work Officer will be undertaken by the Strategic Lead, Children, Families & Justice from 29 January 2024.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with the Council's Executive Leadership Team and the Head of Children, Families and Young People and Interim Head of Adult Social Work & Social Care.

External

- 4.2 N/A

5. Communication

5.1 N/A

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 Appendix 1 The Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022-23