

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 November 2021
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Chief Social Work Officer Report 2020-2021
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ◆ outline the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020/2021

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s): -

- (1) that the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020/2021 be noted.

3. Background

3.1. There is a statutory requirement for all local authorities to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). He/she must be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The role of the CSWO is to provide professional advice and guidance to local authorities, elected members and officers in the provision of Social Work Services, whether commissioned or directly provided. The CSWO has a responsibility for overall performance improvement and the identification and management of corporate risk insofar as these relate to Social Work Services.

3.2. The CSWO is required to prepare an Annual Report of activity to the Chief Social Work Advisor for Scotland. The report follows a standardised reporting framework and timeframe to ensure key issues are highlighted and to aid learning and the sharing of information nationally. A summary report is also published annually by the Scottish Government.

4. CSWO Report

4.1. The report is split into an introduction and five main sections, a copy of which is attached as an appendix and a summary of highlights is outlined below:

4.2. Introduction

4.2.1. Introduces the purpose of the report and contextualises the role of the CSWO.

4.3. Governance and Accountability

4.3.1. This section details the vision, values, and objectives of South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) and how these link to the work of Social Work Resources (SWR). It outlines the key role and responsibilities of the CSWO and the systems, structures and reporting arrangements which assure the quality of Social Work Services. Responsibilities are outlined in relation to the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership (SLHSCP), Integration Joint Board (IJB), Children's Services, Public Protection, Community Planning, and the corporate responsibilities of the Council.

4.4. Service Quality and Performance Arrangements

4.4.1. The report provides a service overview which highlights the positive response of SWR throughout the Pandemic, alongside key challenges, and areas for development within the national context in which Social Work Services are delivered and key legislation and strategies which currently frame that delivery.

4.4.2. Significant work has been undertaken to develop a consistent and meaningful approach to service user and carer participation and involvement within Social Work and this is a key responsibility of the CSWO. An example of this is the development of an Engagement and Participation group to support the work of the newly established Corporate Parenting Board (Promise Board) and Champions Board. This subgroup upholds the values of relationships, growth, inclusion, learning, opportunities and voice for care experienced children and young people.

4.4.3. The Care Inspectorate continues to regulate and inspect our 39 registered care services. Attached in the appendix are the most up to date grades in respect of our registered services. The CSWO has responsibility to respond to Care Inspectorate reports and findings from local and national activity, addressing the requirements of internal and external audit and reporting on progress against outcomes and follow-up actions from this activity. This includes discussion with the Chair of Social Work Resources Committee.

4.4.4. The report on the Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Care and Protection, undertaken in 2019, was published by the Care Inspectorate on 16 June 2020. An Improvement Action Plan was developed, based on the Care Inspectorate's findings, and has continued to progress with revised timelines to ensure all pertinent areas identified within the inspection report are addressed.

4.4.5. Care at Home Services continues to make progress in respect of the improvement plan established in 2019 following the inspection of services within Hamilton and Rutherglen localities. The Service has continued, throughout the Pandemic, to evidence sufficient progress against Care Inspectorate requirements and this was acknowledged following the reinspection of Hamilton in October 2020 and Rutherglen in November 2020 with both resulting in improved gradings.

4.4.6. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Care inspectorate has duties placed upon it by the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act and subsequent guidance, to evaluate infection prevention control and staffing levels within care homes and report inspection activity fortnightly to the Scottish Parliament. The Care Inspectorate adapted its inspection programme and augmented the existing quality framework for care homes. Throughout the last year, the CSWO has had a critical role providing professional leadership and oversight in response to the global COVID-19 Pandemic.

4.4.7. In addition to the continuing demands presented by COVID-19, there are other factors that continue to bring specific challenges to SWR and will require continued focus and action. These include:

- ◆ an increase in demand for Social Work Services over the last three years which includes a 32% rise in the number of children looked after; 14% rise in the number of people on Guardianship Orders; an 80% increase in the number of Adult Protection Plans to support vulnerable adults
- ◆ an increasing ageing population (this is most pronounced in the 75+ age group).
- ◆ increasing prevalence of dementia from 8 per 1,000 of the population in 2012/13 projected to be 9.7 per 1,000 of the population for 2020/21
- ◆ rising numbers of people living with long term health conditions and requiring Social Care Services, including Care at Home. For example, the number of people living with depression or anxiety is projected to grow from 224 to 281 per 1,000 of the population in 2020/21

4.5. Delivery of Statutory functions

4.5.1. The priority of Social Work Services is to ensure effective delivery of critical services, complying with statutory legislation to protect vulnerable children, young people, and adults in our communities. Services have continued to be delivered to those assessed as most at risk with the focus on public protection throughout the last year.

4.5.2. The CSWO is active in overseeing the quality of services and is responsible for ensuring that Social Work staff are appropriately trained and supported to carry out their professional and statutory duties. This is undertaken in several ways including regular meetings between the CSWO and Senior Managers to discuss performance and other operational issues, fulfilling corporate governance requirements through the annual Internal Statement of Assurance and overall Governance Assessment Framework with the agreement of the Chair of the Social Work Resources Committee.

4.6. Workforce

4.6.1. Social Work and Social Care Services are a diverse sector in terms of job roles, career pathways and service structures. The CSWO has a key leadership role in relation to workforce planning and development, from both a local authority and Partnership perspective.

4.6.2. The report details the responsibility and activity of the CSWO to ensure that Social Work staff and that of external providers adhere to the standards of conduct and practice within the sector and are equipped to support service users.

4.7. COVID-19 Pandemic

4.7.1. Ensuring that essential services could be delivered safely, the CSWO participated in a strategic command centre, initially daily, to take decisions for the Partnership in response to the spread of the virus and subsequent fast-paced guidance issued by the UK and Scottish Governments, Public Health, and other organisations. The priorities remained to ensure safe, effective delivery of critical services that support and protect vulnerable children, young people, and adults in our communities, complying with statutory legislation.

- 4.7.2. The exponential rise in the use of IT has also provided a safe and effective method of continuing assessment and treatment by health professionals where physical contact has not been essential. It has been of value where families have been able to be included in care discussions remotely and maintained positive contact between care home residents and families when visiting was restricted. Many services are actively re designing previous care pathways to include video consultations as a standard where possible.
- 4.7.3. Access to IT equipment and links to communication software have enabled home/agile working at an unprecedented level. The incidence of employees working from home long term (over 28 days) has increased from 26 in March 2020 to 823 by late August 2020.
- 4.7.4. Staffing challenges have been experienced across Social Work Services as a result of the Pandemic, with employees absent due to the infection of COVID or requiring to shield, or self-isolate. Local arrangements were established to realign staff on a temporary basis from other Council Resources to ensure the most essential services were maintained.
- 4.7.5. A PPE Hub was established immediately to ensure all care providers could work safely and protect both their workforce and service users. Housing and Technical Resources colleagues have been integral to the development of the Hub, providing the logistics for the delivery of PPE to internal and external care providers across the SLHSCP.
- 4.8. Key priorities for recovery
 - 4.8.1. The challenges facing both local and national government are expected to continue throughout the recovery phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Notwithstanding the financial constraints, the Council continues to do everything in its power to protect and maintain vital services, keep people safe, save lives, and protect our National Health Services.
 - 4.8.2. Delivery models have been reorganised to adhere to social distancing by reducing the footfall in offices and homes, thus supporting the most vulnerable people. Care homes and Care at Home Services have introduced revised guidance and procedures to ensure enhanced infection prevention control standards are being met.
 - 4.8.3. The Council began its process of recovery from COVID-19 in June 2020 with the publication of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, which continues to be reviewed whilst the virus remains within the community. It does acknowledge that changes to priorities were forced upon Resources and consideration will be given to future service delivery in line with new innovative practice adopted during the emergency period.
 - 4.8.4. The CSWO ensures operational risks continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure further mitigating measures are taken where and when required.
- 4.9. Performance, Data and Trends
 - 4.9.1. Some additional information laid out in charts and tables have been incorporated into the report to give an understanding of trends over time across a range of service areas.

5. Employee Implications

5.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

7.1. There are no implications for climate change associated with this report.

7.2. There are no sustainable development issues associated with this report.

7.3. There are no environment Implications associated with this report.

8. Other Implications

8.1. There are no risks associated with this report.

8.2. There are no other issues associated with this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function, or strategy, or recommend a change to existing policy, function, or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

9.2. There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

Soumen Sengupta
Director, Health and Social Care

12 October 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve later life
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people, and adults
- ◆ Deliver better Health and Social Care outcomes for all

Previous References

- ◆ Social Work Resources Committee 20 January 2021

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Annual Report – Chief Social Work Officer, South Lanarkshire Council 2020/2021

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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