

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 February 2023
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021/2022
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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 2021/2022

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021/2022 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). They 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 four main sections, a copy of which is attached as an appendix and a brief 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 continued positive response of SWR throughout the global Coronavirus 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 Engagement and Participation Group whose aim is to ensure that care experienced people in South Lanarkshire help to shape the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives and to support the work of the Corporate Parenting Board (Promise Board) and Champions Board. This sub-group 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, resulted in the development of an Improvement Action Plan highlighting five key themes, including:
 - ◆ Corporate Parenting arrangements
 - ◆ Care leavers transitions
 - ◆ Outcome data
 - ◆ Views of children, young people and their families; and
 - ◆ Kinship Care.
- 4.4.5. The Care inspectorate have resumed their full inspection programme. During the Covid-19 Pandemic they introduced an additional key question to the inspection framework. Key question 7 focused on 'how good is our care and support during the Covid-19 Pandemic?' This key question is no longer a part of the framework, however, one of the quality indicators, 1.5 has been developed to ensure that where there are outbreaks of any infectious diseases, people's health and wellbeing continues to be supported and safeguarded by infection, prevention and control practices. This reflects learning from issues relating to infection, prevention and control that arose during the pandemic, and takes into account the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual for older people and adult care homes.

4.4.6. In addition to Covid-recovery, there are several factors which present specific challenges to Social Work Resources in relation to the demand for service provision. In the coming year Social Work Resources will take forward all necessary actions, where reasonable and appropriate, to mitigate or reduce the Resource's exposure to these risks including:

- ◆ affordability of services as a result of new financial pressures brought about by the global pandemic and increased cost of living
- ◆ an increasing ageing population (this is most pronounced in the 75+ age group). As people advance in age their need for Health and Social Care Services increases
- ◆ aligned to this is that the healthy life expectancy for people in South Lanarkshire is lower than the Scottish average and people will spend a higher proportion of their lives in poor health. These factors increase the demand for services
- ◆ there has been a 4% rise in the number of children looked after from 2019 - 2021 (from 725 to 752)
- ◆ South Lanarkshire has a higher percentage of children with a concern at the 27–30-month health visitor review compared to Scotland
- ◆ increased Adult Support and Protection activity from 2020-21 to 2021-22 with an 11% increase (from 1,144 to 1,273) in the number of adult protection investigations to support vulnerable adults
- ◆ In 2020-21, 14% of the South Lanarkshire population had three or more long-term health conditions (LTCs). The rate of people with 3+LTCs is projected to increase steadily between 2022 and 2025 across most age groups 18+, again increasing the demand on services
- ◆ the impact of deprivation. South Lanarkshire is more deprived than Scotland as a whole, the publication of the latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) statistics highlights persistent levels of deprivation within a number of South Lanarkshire communities
- ◆ the effect of health inequality. Many factors combine to affect the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their social and economic circumstances and the wider environment all of which contribute to health inequalities. The Pandemic will accentuate these inequalities and service provision will continue to be targeted at the most vulnerable in our communities
- ◆ exponential and unprecedented pressure on the Health and Social Care workforce capacity nationally, with increasing challenges to recruit new staff and retain the current workforce impacting on the delivery of critical care

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 remain committed to assessing those most at risk with the focus on public protection.

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 a number of 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. Key priorities for recovery

4.7.1. 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.

4.7.2. Service delivery models have been reorganised with the continuation of agile working and the use of key IT solutions such as Microsoft Teams and Near continue to be invaluable to service delivery and to the recovery process. Working arrangements put in place to deliver services during this public health crisis continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis as we recover.

4.7.3. 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.

4.7.4. The majority of services are working back towards full service provision, whilst recognising the specific arrangements that remain within some of our services such as day care and care homes, such as the enhanced infection prevention and control measures.

4.7.5. The CSWO ensures operational risks continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure further mitigating measures are taken where and when required.

4.8. Performance, Data and Trends

4.8.1. 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 sustainable development issues associated with this report.
- 8.3. 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

14 October 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ people live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ our children and young people thrive
- ◆ we will work to put people first and reduce inequality

Previous References

- ◆ none

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Annual Report – Chief Social Work Officer, South Lanarkshire Council 2021/2022

Contact for Further Information

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

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