

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 March 2024
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022/2023
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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 2022/2023

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022/2023 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 brief summary of highlights are outlined below:

4.2. Introduction

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

4.3. **Section 1: 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. 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 University Health and Social Care Partnership (South Lanarkshire University HSCP), Integration Joint Board (IJB), Children's Services, Public Protection, Community Planning, and the corporate responsibilities of the Council.

4.4. **Section 2: Service Quality, Performance and Challenges**

4.4.1. The report provides a service overview which highlights the resumption of full service provision during 2022/2023, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific arrangements put in place are now considered the norm with enhanced infection prevention and control measures fully embedded in areas such as day services and care homes and hybrid working arrangements remaining for many office-based services. The pandemic did result in a backlog for some services such as Unpaid Work and assessment activity across adult, children and justice services. As routines have resumed performance has improved and case managers continue to address the backlog based on prioritised risk and need.

4.4.2. Engagement with service users and communities remains strong and is supported by the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Forum. This is an independent group of community volunteers who work to engage health service and social care users, carers, and communities to improve local services. The Forum also supports wider public involvement in planning and decision-making, and keeps local people informed about the range and location of services.

4.4.3. The South Lanarkshire Inspection of Adult Support and Protection was carried out in August/September 2022 by the Care Inspectorate in collaboration with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). The inspection findings concluded that the partnership's key processes and strategic leadership for adult support and protection were effective at keeping adults safe from harm and interventions supported positive experiences and improved outcomes for adults at risk of harm. Overall, there were clear strengths that collectively outweighed areas for improvement.

4.4.4. Similar to all public services across Scotland, Social Work Resources continues to work in a challenging environment. The cost-of-living crisis; increased morbidity; and financial implications are a few of the ongoing pressures which are faced by social work services. These are coupled with immediate financial pressures being experienced with a number of risks and uncertainties in the health and social care environment and beyond. This level of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) means that successfully planning and delivering sustainable change becomes even more critical to ensure that we continue to support the most vulnerable people in South Lanarkshire.

4.5. **Section 3: Resources**

4.5.1. Social Work Resources had a net revenue budget of £212 million for 2022/2023. 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. There are several financial challenges which Social Work Resources continues to manage including:

- the financial impact of demographic growth and an ageing population
- the increasing numbers of people supported in their community with long term health conditions
- an increase in ASP activity
- an increase in the number of care experienced children and young people
- service user and carer expectations
- the Council's requirement to achieve ongoing savings
- the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

4.6. **Section 4: 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. A significant number of staff are projected to reach retirement age over the next ten years and this together with high turnover of staff and an ongoing requirement to retain and increase numbers of qualified workers presents a particular challenge. The Social Work Workforce Plan 2022-2025 aims to mitigate the risks of a diminishing workforce against areas of growing demand by enhancing career pathways and succession planning, and the establishment of a Care Academy to 'grow our own' workforce.

4.7. **Section 5: Looking Ahead**

4.7.1. The Resource has continued to reinforce capacity across all social work services to ensure it meets statutory requirements, increased demand and changes in complexity of service users.

4.7.2. A consistent approach remains to be taken through all key stages of transitions, including:-

- accelerating the use of technology-enabled care
- a commitment to Discharge Without Delay
- embedding Home First across the Council area
- increasing the use and consistency of Self-directed Support (SDS)
- developing provision of intermediate care beds in the community (Blantyre LIFE)
- promoting carer support plans
- more collaborative working to shape local housing provision

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.

Professor Soumen Sengupta
Director, Health and Social Care

29 December 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- Focused on people and their needs
- Working with and respecting others
- Accountable, effective, efficient, and transparent
- Ambitious, self-aware and improving
- Fair, open and sustainable
- Excellent employer

Previous References

Social Work Resources Committee 15 February 2023

List of Background Papers

Annual Report – Chief Social Work Officer, South Lanarkshire Council 2022-2023

Contact for Further Information

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

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