

# SOCIAL WORK RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 1 September 2021

## **Chair:**

Councillor John Bradley

## **Councillors Present:**

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Richard Lockhart (*substitute for Councillor Richard Nelson*), Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor David Watson

## **Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor John Ross

## **Attending:**

### **Finance and Corporate Resources**

M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; H Goodwin, Finance Manager; E McPake, HR Business Partner; A Norris, Administration Assistant; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); T Slater, Administration Adviser

### **Health and Social Care/Social Work Resources**

S Sengupta, Director; I Beattie, Head of Health and Social Care (Hamilton and Clydesdale); M Kane, Service Development Manager; L Purdie, Head of Children and Justice Services

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Social Work Resources Committee held on 2 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

**The Committee decided:** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

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## **3 Social Work Resources – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021**

A joint report dated 28 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Director, Health and Social Care was submitted comparing actual expenditure for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 against budgeted expenditure for 2020/2021 for Social Work Resources.

As at 31 March 2021, there was an underspend of £0.408 million before transfer to reserves and an overspend of £0.354 million after transfer to reserves, as detailed in appendices A to F to the report.

The Adult and Older People Services' budget, as detailed in Appendix D to the report, showed a breakeven position. Included within this position, was a commitment in relation to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) which had an underspend of £0.236 million. The Council had agreed to the IJB retaining this non-recurring underspend within its reserves earmarked for future care costs, in line with the approach to integrating health and social care budgets.

The £0.354 million overspend was in relation to additional Covid-19 related expenditure for Children and Families Services which was not funded by the Scottish Government via the Mobilisation Plan as those services were not delegated to the IJB. In addition, the Resource had lost income from services which were not being provided during the pandemic and non-achievement of proposed savings. This totalled £1.767 million.

Details were provided in the appendices to the report on budget virements in respect of Social Work Resources to realign budgets.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Social Work Resources' outturn position as at 31 March 2021 of an overspend of £0.354 million, after approved transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2021 (Paragraph 3)]*

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#### **4 Social Work Resources – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/2022**

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A joint report dated 28 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 16 July 2021 against budgeted expenditure for 2021/2022 for Social Work Resources, together with a forecast of the position for the year to 31 March 2022.

As at 16 July 2021, there was an overspend of £0.650 million against the phased budget, of which £0.395 million was Covid-19 related and £0.255 million non Covid-19 related. The financial forecast for the revenue budget to 31 March 2022 was breakeven.

Continued additional costs incurred in relation to Covid-19 were detailed separately in Appendix B to the report, together with income received from the Scottish Government's Social Care Mobilisation Plan.

The Resource had also experienced a reduction in income of £0.318 million from services not provided as a result of Covid-19, as detailed in Appendix D to the report. Information was provided on the risk, should pressures continue into 2022/2023 where no additional funding for Mobilisation would be available.

Appendix B also detailed additional Covid-19 related expenditure for Children and Families Services which would not be funded through the Mobilisation Plan, as those services were not delegated to the Integration Joint Board.

To date, the additional costs to the Council as a result of Covid-19 were £4.405 million, with £4.087 million received from the Scottish Government through the Social Care Mobilisation Plan.

Details were provided on budget virements in respect of Social Work Resources to realign budgets.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the breakeven position on Social Work Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the forecast to 31 March 2022 of a breakeven position be noted; and
- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in the appendices to the report, be approved.

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**5 Social Work Resources – Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/2021**

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A joint report dated 11 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Director, Health and Social Care was submitted advising of progress on the Social Work Resources' capital programme for the period 1 April 2020 to 21 March 2021.

The total capital programme for Social Work Resources for 2020/2021 was £0.844 million. The total expenditure to 31 March 2021 was £0.529 million, a difference of £0.315 million.

The final expenditure position of £0.529 million was slightly lower than the projected outturn of £0.587 million. The projected outturn position at period 12 of £0.257 million mainly reflected the expected timing of project spend on the Blantyre Care Facility and Community Alarms projects, resulting in budget being required in 2021/2022 rather than 2020/2021. The additional underspend at year end of £0.058 million was again due to timing of spend on projects which had continued to be impacted by Covid-19. Funding would be carried forward into the next financial year as required.

**The Committee decided:** that the Social Work Resources' capital programme of £0.844 million, and expenditure for the year of £0.529 million, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2021 (Paragraph 4)]*

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**6 Social Work Resources – Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/2022**

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A joint report dated 11 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Director, Health and Social Care was submitted advising of progress on the Social Work Resources' capital programme for 2021/2022 and summarising the expenditure position at 16 July 2021.

The revised capital programme for Social Work Resources for 2021/2022 was £6.768 million. Anticipated spend to date was £1.100 million and spend to 16 July 2021 amounted to £1.239 million. This represented a position of £0.139 million ahead of profile and mainly reflected good progress made on the Blantyre Care Facility project.

**The Committee decided:** that the Social Work Resources' capital programme of £6.768 million, and expenditure to date of £1.239 million, be noted.

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## **7 Social Work Resources – Workforce Monitoring – April to June 2021**

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A joint report dated 12 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Director, Health and Social Care was submitted on the following employee information for Social Work Resources for the period April to June 2021:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 13 March 2021

The attendance information contained within the report included absences as a result of Covid-19 and employees were being supported through this difficult time to maintain attendance levels where possible.

In response to members' questions, officers advised that:-

- ◆ general absence rates tended to be higher in the Resource due to the demographic of the workforce and delays to treatment and hospital appointments as a result of Covid-19
- ◆ to give a more reflective picture, comparative figures for 2019 could be provided
- ◆ information could be provided on the percentage of Covid-19 related absences that were in relation to Home Care employees

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2021 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **8 Social Work Resource Plan – Quarter 4 Progress Report 2020/2021**

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A report dated 2 June 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted on the Social Work Resource Plan for 2020/2021.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ progress made against all Resource Plan measures, as detailed in the Quarter 4 Progress Report, attached as Appendix 2 to the report
- ◆ key achievements made by the Resource to date, as detailed in Section 5.3 of the report
- ◆ areas for improvement and associated management actions, as detailed in Section 5.4 of the report
- ◆ those measures which had changed in blue/red/amber/green status, during the period from Quarter 2 to Quarter 4, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report

Officers responded to members' questions in relation to the impact on Community Payback Orders due of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Quarter 4 Progress report for 2020/2021, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the key achievements made by the Resource to date, as detailed in Section 5.3 of the report, be noted;

- (3) that the areas for improvement and management actions, as detailed in paragraph 5.4 of the report, be noted; and
- (4) that additional scrutiny of those measures which had changed in the blue/red/amber/green status during the period between Quarter 2 to Quarter 4, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 19 August 2020 (Paragraph 8)]*

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## **9 Practice Assessor/Mental Health Officer Post – Increase in Establishment**

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A joint report dated 2 August 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the proposal to establish a post of Practice Assessor/Mental Health Officer to support Mental Health Officer capacity.

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 required local authorities to appoint sufficient Mental Health Officers (MHOs) to discharge the functions of MHOs in the Council area. Many local authorities had faced challenges in recent years with the recruitment and retention of MHOs and in nominating Social Workers to undertake the MHO Training Programme. The Scottish Government had established the MHO Capacity Building Grant Scheme to address the shortfall of MHOs nationally.

It was anticipated that within the Council there would be 3 candidates undertaking the MHO Training Programme at Strathclyde University starting in August 2021 and ending in June 2022. It would be beneficial to use the funds from the MHO Capacity Building Grant to appoint a dedicated Practice Assessor to assess the practice element of the course for those 3 candidates.

The time commitment for Practice Assessment for 3 candidates was 0.6 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) post. Appointing a dedicated Practice Assessor would decrease pressure on MHOs, allowing them to concentrate on statutory work.

It was, therefore, proposed that a 0.6 FTE post of Practice Assessor/MHO on Grade 3, Level 8, SCP 79-80 (£25,062 to £25,446) be added to Social Work Resources' staffing establishment on a fixed-term basis for a period of one year.

The costs of the Practice Assessor/MHO post would be met from grant funding received from the Scottish Government.

**The Committee decided:** that a 0.6 FTE post of Practice Assessor/MHO be added to Social Work Resources' staffing establishment on a fixed-term basis for a period of one year, as detailed in the report.

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## **10 Additional Occupational Therapy Posts**

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A joint report dated 30 June 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care and Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the proposal to increase Social Work Resources' staffing establishment by 4 full-time equivalent (FTE) Occupational Therapist posts for a fixed-term period of 6 months.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been an unprecedented increase in referrals to the Community Occupational Therapy (OT) Service. The recent number of unallocated referrals was 501% higher than at a similar point in 2020, with a mean of 308% higher than at the same point over the past 4 years.

A 28-day response to assessment performance target had historically been in place to support the effective management of OT referrals. This target had not been achieved as a consequence of the step down of services due to Covid-19, with the longest waiting time on 1 June 2021 being up to 11 months or 48 weeks in length.

As a consequence of delays in accessing services and increased deconditioning and social isolation throughout the last year, staff caseloads were currently highly weighted with cases of higher risk and complexity. The open caseloads of existing staff had also increased in number due, in part, to the reduced service capacity and provision of partners in Housing and Technical Resources and commissioned services, who had been unable, at times, to provide the requested adaptation services, again as a result of COVID-19.

The proposed additional staff resource would aid mobilisation and recovery to restore the 28-day service standard by tackling legacy waiting lists. One Occupational Therapist would be assigned initially to each of the 4 localities, with the ability to flex this additional resource across South Lanarkshire, as required, to deliver equity of service in liaison with locality managers.

It was, therefore, proposed that 4 FTE posts of Occupational Therapist on Grade 3, Level 4, SCP 72-74 (£37,611 to £38,779) be added to Social Work Resources' staffing establishment. on a fixed-term basis for a period of 6 months.

The costs of the Occupational Therapist posts would be met from Scottish Government Social Care Mobilisation Plan funding.

**The Committee decided:** that 4 FTE posts of Occupational Therapist be added to Social Work Resources' staffing establishment on a fixed-term basis for a period of 6 months, as detailed in the report.

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## **11 Social Work Trauma Recovery Service**

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A report dated 23 July 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted on the support the Trauma Recovery Service offered to Children and Young People, including the numbers of families that had accessed the service in the last year.

The Service was established in 2000 after the Resource had identified a need for a service with a specific remit of supporting children and young people recovering from trauma. The therapeutic input was seen as an integral part of the Social Work Care Plan and was viewed and admired nationally as progressive and forward-thinking at the time.

Over 20 years, the Service had continued to support some of South Lanarkshire's most vulnerable children and families recovering from trauma and/or abuse (more than 2,000 families over that time). It had become a respected and valued Service by families and other therapeutic partner agencies across Lanarkshire and had consistently received positive feedback from the Care Inspectorate.

During the period June 2020 to June 2021, 134 requests for assistance had been received. The team supported 38 young people who continued to reside with birth parents, 25 who were residing in Kinship Care, 40 children who were in Foster Care, 12 who were in adoption, 4 in residential care and 15 young adults who were in receipt of aftercare.

The figure of 134 was consistent with previous years. The Service had not had the capacity to allocate all referrals for counselling, due to the level of demand. Mental Health and Wellbeing funding from the Scottish Government had been allocated to recruit an additional Counsellor who would be focused solely on providing support to the FAS (under 12yrs) and Intensive Family Support Service teams (over 12yrs).

The Council's continued use of Child and Family Trauma Counsellors to work with Social Work Care Plans remained a forward thinking and progressive initiative, which kept reflective practice at the centre of social work interventions and which aligned with The Promise's commitment to families having access to family type therapies.

**The Committee decided:** that the vital support that the Trauma Recovery Service had offered families over 20 years and the continued need for this specialised Service be noted.

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## **12 Progress of Throughcare and Aftercare Team**

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A report dated 23 July 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted providing an update on:-

- ◆ the progress of the Throughcare and Aftercare Service
- ◆ priority improvement areas as it related to young people in receipt of Throughcare and Aftercare

The introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 brought about additional responsibilities for the Council's Social Work Resources in respect of the expansion of support to care leavers and the rights of young people to remain in care up until the age of 21 years (previously 18 years).

The Act also increased the age of young people entitled to Aftercare Service from 21 to 26 years of age. This had required the local authority to provide an increased 5 years of service to each young adult meeting the criteria for aftercare.

The Care Inspectorate's Joint Inspection evaluated services delivered by South Lanarkshire Partnership in autumn 2019. The inspection highlighted that the services to young people in receipt of Throughcare and Aftercare required significant improvements, noting that young people in this group experienced some of the poorest outcomes.

The Throughcare and Aftercare Service, which had been disbanded 10 years previously, was re-established in June 2020, during the early part of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was in recognition of highly vulnerable young people eligible for aftercare living alone within the community.

There were over 150 young people who were in direct receipt of Aftercare Services. The Service had provided vital support during the pandemic to young people who were care experienced and living in the community. Partnerships with Who Cares? Scotland and other charities had provided young people with food vouchers and essential items.

The Service was also supporting young people who were currently over 16 years and in continuing care placements. The focus had been on planning for those young people and supporting them to remain in their placement. When young people decided they did not wish to remain in their care placement, the Service had been proactively supporting them to transition to either a supported placement or their own tenancy. The Service had access to 2 training flats that had been used successfully as a step to more independent living.

Collaboration with a wider range of partners and services was required when young people were transitioning from care. Those transitions could be complex and could fall between child and adult health and social care systems. Under the Corporate Parenting agenda, the Throughcare and Aftercare Strategic Improvement Plan was represented by a wide range of partners, the Improvement Plan had 4 themed priorities for improvement: Pathways Planning; Health and Wellbeing; Education, Training and Employment; Accommodation and Housing. Progress had been made in all areas outlined in the Improvement Plan.

**The Committee decided:** that the areas of positive progress since the reinstatement of the Throughcare and Aftercare Team in South Lanarkshire be noted.

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## 13 Care at Home

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A report dated 15 July 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted on the outcome of the recent Care Inspectorate activity within the Care at Home Service.

South Lanarkshire Council imposed a voluntary moratorium on the Care at Home Service in both Hamilton and Rutherglen in January 2020. This moratorium was introduced following concerns that had been highlighted in inspections carried out by the Care Inspectorate and placed a suspension on new referrals to the Service.

In December 2019, the Hamilton Service was issued with a formal Improvement Notice that required improvements to be undertaken. The original notice, for a period of 8 weeks, was extended to the end of May 2020 and then subsequently extended until 30 September 2020 because of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Similar concerns were highlighted within the Rutherglen Service following an inspection in October 2019. This did not result in an improvement notice, however, a decision was taken to initiate a moratorium on new referrals to enable the Service to focus on the improvement required.

The Services embarked on a significant programme of improvement to address the requirements arising from the inspection activity. This had been wide ranging and had involved the recruitment of new management teams that had developed and led improvement action plans aimed at bringing about positive change within the Service.

During the pandemic the Care Inspectorate maintained weekly contact with the Services and acknowledged that significant progress was being made. As a result of this progress, agreement was reached to lift the moratorium on new referrals in the Rutherglen Service from 31 August 2020.

The Hamilton Service was subject to a positive inspection in October 2020. This resulted in lifting of the Improvement Notice and agreement was reached to lift the moratorium on new services from 11 November 2020.

As restrictions had eased, Inspections had now taken place in Rutherglen and Hamilton Services, resulting in very positive outcomes with both Services.

The Care Inspectors, having been satisfied with the progress, re-categorised the Rutherglen Service from high risk to medium risk.

The Hamilton Service was subject to a further inspection in June 2021. Again, feedback from the inspection was exceptionally positive, highlighting the very positive steps that had been taken to improve the Service and the improvements in the management of the Service.

The Care Inspectors highlighted several areas of good practice during the inspection and were complimentary regarding the scale of improvement that had been achieved in such a short period of time, amid a pandemic. The Hamilton Service had also been re-categorised from high risk to medium risk.

Officers responded to members' questions in relation to a 'critical friend' report that had been undertaken.



**The Committee decided:** that the outcome of the recent Care Inspectorate activity within the Care at Home Service be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2021 (Paragraph 15)]*

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## **14 Rates and Charges for Care Services for 2021/2022**

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A report dated 23 July 2021 by the Director, Health and Social Care was submitted providing an update on the 2021/2022 rates and charges for care services.

Each year, Social Work Resources was required to confirm the rates and charges that would be adopted for residential, nursing, supported living, non-residential care services and care at home services. The rates to be charged to other local authorities for care services must also be set.

In recognition of the need to implement contractual uplifts in 2021/2022 without delay to providers, the Social Work Resources Committee, at its meeting on 17 March 2021, authorised the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and Director, Health and Social Care to agree the following rates, as detailed in the report:-

- ◆ Care at Home, Supported Living, Day Care and Integrated Care Facilities
- ◆ Residential and Nursing Care through the National Care Home Contract
- ◆ Residential services outwith the National Care Home Contract

In response to the Covid-19 emergency, the Scottish Government and COSLA had recommended a national living wage uplift for contractual hourly rates paid to adult social care providers.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the revised rates and associated arrangements to Residential and Nursing Care rates, as detailed in Section 4 of the report, be noted;
- (2) that the revised Nursing and Residential Respite charges, as detailed in Section 5 of the report, be noted;
- (3) that the revised rates and associated arrangements for Care at Home, Supported Living and Day Care, as detailed in Section 6 of the report, be noted; and
- (4) that the arrangements for Non-Residential Charges, as detailed in Section 7 of the report, be noted.

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## **15 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.