

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE – 18 NOVEMBER 2024
REPORT ON: CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24
REPORT BY: CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
REPORT NO: 324-2024

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report brings forward for information the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2023-24, attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee:

2.1 Note the content of this report and the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2023-24 attached as appendix 1.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The requirement that every local authority has a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is set out in Section 5 (i) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended by Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. Associated regulations state that the CSWO should be a qualified Social Worker and registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

4.2 The CSWO provides a strategic and professional leadership role in the delivery of Social Work and Social Care services, in addition to certain functions conferred by legislation directly on the officer. The overall objective of the role is to ensure the provision of effective, professional advice and guidance to Elected Members and officers in the provision of Social Work and Social Care services.

4.3 The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 provides for the delegation of certain Social Work functions to an integration authority but the CSWO's responsibilities in relation to local authority Social Work functions continue to apply to services which are being delivered by other bodies under integration arrangements. Responsibility for appointing a CSWO cannot be delegated and must be exercised by the local authority itself. The CSWO also has a role in providing professional advice and guidance to the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

4.4 National guidance requires that the CSWO produces and publishes an annual summary report for local authorities and IJBs on the functions of the CSWO and that the approved report is forwarded to the Scottish Government to contribute towards a national overview of Social Work services. The information in this report complements other more detailed service specific reports on Social Work and Social Care services which have been reported in other ways.

4.5 As can be seen in this year's report (attached as Appendix 1), Social Work and Social Care services have continued to deliver quality support which improves lives and protects vulnerable people, whilst contributing towards and responding to a range of national, regional, and local developments. There are several highlights in the report alongside a description of ongoing challenges and priorities ahead. Some specific achievements include:

- Millview Cottage Young Person's House won the Scottish Social Services Outstanding Residential Service Award 2023.
 - Balcarres Care Home won the Scottish Care, Care Home Service of the Year Award 2023.
 - Menzieshill House Team won the Generations Working Together Excellence Award 2023.
 - The Children and Families Service was a finalist in the UK-wide Local Government Chronicle Awards 2024 for Our Promise.
 - Over 98% of people were discharged from hospital to community supports without delay.
 - One of the 3 highest performing areas nationally in the benchmarking report on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards.
 - The balance of family-based versus residential care increased from 87.2% to 90.5%, above the national average.
 - The proportion of Community Payback Orders completed successfully increased from 65% to 70%.
 - Other adult services evidenced a 21% improvement in Care Inspectorate inspection grades.
 - The Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection graded Leadership and Key Processes as Effective.
 - Children's Services case file audits showed further improvements with 94% graded as Good or better.
 - Over 77% of adults supported at home reported that they are supported to live as independently as possible.
- 4.6 Ongoing challenges facing Social Work and Social Care services throughout 2023/24 included the requirement for the CSWO to operate across multiple organisational and partnership boundaries to help realise a growing incentive for transformational change in how partners work together to provide care and support, whilst managing the day-to-day internal delivery of services. Most services are experiencing increased demands in a context of growing financial constraints, new regulatory or legislative requirements and uncertainty with a National Care Service. Like other areas, there have also been challenges with recruitment in some services.
- 4.7 In response, streamlined Protecting People governance arrangements; an integrated data set for all relevant functions to help Social Work and Social Care services identify service-specific strengths, areas of improvement, challenges and priorities; shifting the balance from residential or institutional care towards community and family-based support; empowering local communities and service users to both contribute towards decisions and self-care; and developing leadership and workforce capacity are all highlighted as key themes over the last 12 months.
- 4.8 The 2023/24 annual report is also forward looking and identifies the key challenges and opportunities for the coming year across Children's Services, Community Justice and Health and Social Care. As well as service specific improvement areas, the report identifies the following improvement priorities to be progressed across the whole Social Work and Social Care service during 2024/25:
- Inform and respond to the National Care Service and National Social Work Agency developments.

- Develop consistent approaches towards workforce recruitment, retention, and support across all service areas.
- Develop and apply an integrated Social Work and Social Care specific dataset on demand, support, and impact.
- Explore the increased use of digital technology to support the workforce to carry out roles more efficiently.
- Develop and implement an improvement plan to increase the meaningful use of chronologies across all services.
- Support arrangements for Significant Adverse Event Reviews, Serious Incident Reviews and Learning Reviews.
- Work with all partners to explore opportunities to develop a cross-cutting prevention plan for vulnerable people.

4.9 The details of service areas specific improvement priorities are contained within the 'Looking Ahead' section of the full report (attached as Appendix 1).

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 This report has not been subject to a risk assessment as it does not require any policy or financial decisions at this time.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer – Scottish Government Publication July 2016. Guidance for local authorities and partnerships to which local authorities have delegated Social Work functions.

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24 October 2024

**Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report
Dundee City Council
2023-24**

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Introduction from the Chief Social Work Officer

I, Glyn Lloyd am extremely proud to present the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24. Over most of this period Diane McCulloch was the CSWO, having assumed the role 4 years earlier and navigated services through the Covid-19 pandemic, demographic pressures, cost of living crisis, financial constraints and some recruitment challenges.

When Diane retired in February 2024, I was honoured to be given the opportunity to lead the profession locally, build on previous developments in partnership with our workforce, other services and local communities and enable all our teams to provide crucial support to vulnerable people across the city.

The report follows a revised Scottish Government template and is shorter than previous versions to allow commentary on key developments relating to governance arrangements, service quality and performance, resources, our workforce and priorities and plans over the year ahead.

It illustrates continued challenges in the delivery of services alongside a fluid and uncertain national policy landscape. We are contending, for instance, with growing concerns over 0–3-year-olds, mental health, substance use, an ageing population, a growing prison population and hospital admissions.

It shows how, at the same time, we are also informing possible developments with a National Care Service, responding to or preparing for new regulatory and legislative requirements and managing both the immediate and anticipated longer-term budget cuts which are affecting the whole public sector.

In other words, services are delivering high quality care whilst exploring or implementing transformational change. There is a focus on streamlining governance arrangements; building capacity to shift a focus towards community and family-based care; empowering service users as groups or individuals; and supporting our teams.

In my view, it highlights some outstanding achievements which reflect the leadership, adaptability and innovation across services. Working collaboratively with partners and service users, they continue to make key contributions to city-wide priorities of addressing inequalities, promoting social inclusion and protecting people from harm.

The report also notes areas for further improvement, current and anticipated national and local challenges and potential risks, which all require a continued focus. I hope it provides a helpful overview of key activities over the 12-month period and explains identified priorities and plans for the period 2024-25 and onwards.

Some Key Achievements in 2023-24

Millview Cottage Young Person's House won the Scottish Social Services Outstanding Residential Service Award 2023

Balcarres Care Home won the Scottish Care, Care Home Service of the Year Award 2023

Menzieshill House Team won the Generations Working Together Excellence Award 2023

The Children and Families Service was a finalist in the UK-wide Local Government Chronicle Awards 2024 for Our Promise

Over 98% of people were discharged from hospital to community supports without delay

One of the 3 highest performing areas nationally in the benchmarking report on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards

The balance of family-based versus residential care increased from 87.2% to 90.5%, above the national average

The proportion of Community Payback Orders completed successfully increased from 65% to 70%

Other adult services evidenced a 21% improvement in Care Inspectorate inspection grades

The Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection graded Leadership and Key Processes as Effective

Children's Services case file audits showed further improvements with 94% graded as Good or better

Over 77% of adults supported at home reported that they are supported to live as independently as possible

Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

In 2023-24, the role of CSWO was carried out by the Head of Service for Health and Community Care within the Health and Social Care Partnership until February 2024. Having previously undertaken a deputising role, the Head of Service for Children's and Community Justice Social Work became the CSWO on 1st March 2024.

The CSWO continues to have direct access to Elected Members, the Chief Executive and Chief Officers of the Council and Integration Joint Board, along with front-line practitioners. They contribute towards strategic partnership meetings, including recently streamlined Protecting People governance arrangements, as follows:

- Reporting to the Chief Executive and Executive Director of Children and Families
- Regular meetings with the Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board
- Member of the Integration Joint Board
- Member of the IJB Performance and Audit Committee
- Member of Child Poverty, Inequalities and Attainment Leadership Group
- Member of the Community Justice and Safety Executive Board
- Member of Chief Officer Group for Protecting People
- Member of all Protecting People Committees
- Member of Alcohol and Drug Partnership Commissioning Group
- Member of the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative.

The CSWO is supported by a Governance Group which brings together Heads of Service and Senior Officers with responsibilities for all Social Work functions across the city. The main function of this group is to support the discharge of statutory duties and enable services to carry out their roles effectively. This includes a focus on:

- Practice governance and continuous improvement;
- Professional advice including where services are commissioned;
- Workforce planning, learning, recruitment and support;
- Making decisions relating to the curtailment of individual freedom;
- Assessment and management of certain offenders who present a risk of harm;
- Reporting significant serious or immediate risks;
- Assisting partners to understand the complexities of Social Work.

Governance Challenges, Opportunities and Next Steps

Going forward, the CSWO Group will maintain a focus on priorities in this report in the context of wider developments, such as a National Care Service; a Care Inspectorate Review of Social Work Governance Arrangements due to be published in March 2025; National Protecting People Group workstreams; and legislative or policy change.

One of the possible outcomes of the Thematic Review, for instance, will be to confirm that following the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, growing financial constraints and policy change, governance arrangements for the delivery of Social Work and Social Care specific services have become more varied and complex.

In some areas, Children's and/or Community Justice Social Work services fall within the remit of IJBs, whereas in others they sit within Council Children's Services. In all areas, all services form an intrinsic part of varying Community Planning Partnership and Protecting People governance arrangements.

Either way, this requires CSWOs to operate across multiple organisational and partnership boundaries to help realise a growing incentive for transformational change in how we provide care and support, whilst managing the day-to-day internal delivery of services. This creates possible leadership capacity issues and risk.

The CSWO Governance Group is therefore currently developing a new integrated dataset covering all Social Work and Social Care specific statutory functions, categorised under levels/types of demand, the nature/quality of subsequent support and its impact on service users.

This will allow members to jointly focus and report on strengths, areas for improvement, challenges and priorities, including national or local arrangements which may help or hinder. It should enhance oversight, provide cross-cutting data to inform improved whole family support and help to respond to and/or escalate identified risks.

This type of approach towards streamlining, integrating, prioritising and focusing will be key and revised Protecting People arrangements, which have involved collapsing the Violence Against Women Partnership into Children and Adults at Risk Committees, are already supporting a better focus on vulnerable 16–17-year-olds and transitions.

As leadership and workforce capacity across all services will also be crucially important, the involvement of Learning and Organisational Development Service and Human Resources will be key. It is essential that all our workforce has the capacity and confidence to lead and respond to change whilst providing day-to-day support.

We know this will be a key focus of a new National Social Work Agency (NSWA) and the Group will need to both inform and be informed by any associated developments. It is likely to include some focus on the profile, visibility and capacity of the profession, which should also support recruitment.

Similarly, the group will inform local positions on possible developments with a National Care Service, including any final revisions to Integrated Joint Boards as local NCS Boards, mandated delegation of Children's and Community Justice Social Work and any new national performance reporting requirements.

If this all illustrates the complexities and uncertainties of the current national and local Social Work and Social Care landscape, it may also confirm the importance of the profession responding jointly and consistently, regardless of whatever structural and governance arrangements may emerge.

In my first few months in the role, I have confidence that Chief Officers and Elected Members understand and support delivery of the statutory functions in this wider context and are committed to responding to challenges and opportunities, with a key focus on continuous improvement in the delivery of services to the people we serve.



Service Quality and Performance

Children's Services

In Children's Social Work, teams responded to an overall stable number of Child Protection referrals to the Multi-Agency Screening Hub (MASH). In 2022-23, a total of 7,769 referrals, or around 148 referrals a week, were made to the hub by partners and members of the public. In 2023-24, this increased very slightly to 7,750, or 149 a week.

However, within these referrals there was a 35% increase in the number of concerns about vulnerable pregnant women, rising from 138 to 187. This mirrors existing concerns about a disproportionate number of 0–3-year-olds on the Child Protection Register or requiring alternative care. In addition to existing support, it informed:

- **Allocation of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) to the Tayside Council on Alcohol Birch Programme and Alternative Counselling services to identified vulnerable women**
- **Work with NHS Tayside and Dundee University on the development of an Infant Pledge resource entitled 'Hello in There Wee One', promoting active listening and positive attachments between mothers and babies**
- **Early discussions with Community Learning and Development on how we might further develop local place-based approaches via the What Matters to You initiative to include a greater focus on 0–3-year-olds**

Following referral to the MASH, there was a small reduction in the number of families requiring more in-depth assessment by a Social Work Intake Team. However, of those, the number of multi-agency Child Protection Planning Meetings increased from 141 to 159 and the number of new Child Protection Registrations (CPR) from 92 to 136.

This shows that where concerns had been identified about some children and young people, a higher number required formal Child Protection support. As there were also 102 de-registrations over the same period, involving decisions to remove a child from the register because risks had been addressed, this support was effective.

It reflects support provided by Children's Services and partners to families with children and young people on the CPR or otherwise on the edge of care, with a focus on helping parents/carers to address any risks of significant harm typically associated with the impact of poverty, mental health, substance use and domestic abuse.

Bairns Hoose

To further enhance these more immediate responses to risks, the service also collaborated with partners in Angus Council, Perth and Kinross Council, NHS Tayside and Police Scotland to submit a successful regional application to Scottish Government to become one of 6 Bairns Hoose Pathfinders across Scotland.

This initiative involves enhancing support across the 4 Bairns Hoose 'rooms' of Protection, Health, Justice and Recovery. The regional partnership received £495k additional revenue funding which currently runs to March 2025. The Implementation Plan is presently focused on a range of activities, including:

1. **Protection** – upgrading the layout and facilities at the MASH at Seymour House to make it a more child-friendly environment and developing work with Speech and Language Therapists and Talking Mats to assist communication
2. **Health** – additional capacity to carry out general GIRFEC assessments and specific Forensic Medical Examinations, along with training to NHST staff not accustomed to attending Initial Referral Discussions
3. **Justice** – introduction of a new Scottish Child Interviewing Model (SCIM) to Police and Social Work teams to replace Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) and improved links with the Procurator Fiscal and Court via a video link
4. **Recovery** – commissioning longer-term flexible family support to assist children, young people and their parents/carers, which includes a focus on families being the key decision-makers in support received.



Children and Young People Requiring Temporary or Permanent Alternative Care

Over the period, there was a marked reduction in the overall number of care experienced children and young people requiring temporary or permanent alternative care alongside positive changes in the balance of family-based versus residential care. This can be seen in the table below with snapshot dates on 31 March:

Care Experienced Children and Young People			
Types of Care	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	% Variation
Secure Care	3	0	-100%
External Residential	34	17	-50%
Internal Residential	19	20	+5%
External Foster Care	95	83	-13%
Internal Foster Care	95	83	-13%
Kinship Care	104	111	+7%
Prospective Adopters	24	21	-13%
At Home	52	50	-4%
Flat/supported Accom	10	4	-60%
Grand total	436	389	-11%
Balance of Family-Based	87.2%	90.5%	+3.3%
% Externally Placed	36.7%	31.4%	-5.3%

This reduction in the overall number and shift towards family-based support was achieved by support to children and young people on the edge of care; building the networks of support provided by the Kinship Care Team; re-provisioning Craigie Cottage to match the age-profile of children in external residential care; and care planning.

A concerning reduction in the number of Foster Carers continued to mirror national trends and led to work on an 'Ideas to Action Programme'. This has involved the development of a new website and extended out of hours support to Foster Carers. It has led to a small increase in recruitment. A review of fees/allowances is underway.

In addition to reducing the number of care experienced children and young people and altering the balance of care arrangements, educational attainment continues to improve but they still lag their peers, especially when they remain at home or in kinship care. On this basis, further support to Kinship Carers over the period included:

- ✓ **Kinship Care Team and Pupil Support Workers providing targeted support to pupils with lower school attendance levels**
- ✓ **Maximising the income of kinship carers through welfare rights assessments to help promote stable nurturing homes**
- ✓ **Therapeutic support to kinship care families to strengthen relationships during periods of significant change in parenting roles**
- ✓ **Engagement with What Matters to You to promote local community-based support provided by and for other kinship carers**

Adolescents

Specifically in relation to vulnerable young people and young adults, the service also led on a partnership review of multi-agency approaches towards vulnerable adolescents which will lead to the development of a new co-located multi-agency service focused on both Child Protection and Youth/Criminal Justice from April 2025.

Continuing Care and Aftercare

In Continuing Care, a young person can remain in the same care arrangement until they are aged 21 years as part of a more supported transition to adulthood. The total number of young people wanting to remain reduced from 40 to 31 but there were marginal decreases in respect of each placement type, such as 19 to 16 in Foster Care.

Nevertheless, to try and maximise the uptake of Continuing Care, the service revised a protocol which now involves the Aftercare Team explaining options to young people sooner. The service also developed 2 new Supported Accommodation facilities at Reid Square and Fairbairn Street to extend the range of alternative options.

The revised protocol has led to a significant increase in the number of young people receiving compulsory Aftercare up to the age of 21 years and discretionary aftercare up to the age of 26 years. The former increased from 36 to 52 and the latter from 101 to 119, with a total increase in young people receiving Aftercare from 137 to 171.

However, although positive destinations for care experienced young people reached a high of 100% in 2022-23, it reduced to 70% in 2023-24. Whilst this involved only a small proportion of around 20 care experienced school leavers, they nevertheless generally lag their peers and can struggle to maintain progress longer-term.

The sustainable further education, training and employment of care experienced young people is therefore also a key priority and formed a key part of a Council review of Youth Participation. It led to the development of a comprehensive action plan, including the development of post-school mentoring and flexible opportunities.



Children and Young People with a Disability

Following a review, the service has retained a specialist Children with Disabilities Team to maintain and develop specialist knowledge and skills. The team continues to support families where there have been identified concerns, whilst also now coordinating Self Directed Support (SDS) assessments and plans.

Currently, 140 families are in receipt of various forms of SDS, ranging from funding to support Personal Assistants and/or equipment through to short-breaks and assistance over school holidays. A new assessment tool is ensuring that types/levels of support are informed by available evidence, mirror needs and are equitable across the city.

The team is currently developing an action plan in response to a national Care Inspectorate Thematic Review of Approaches Towards Children with a Disability, which they contributed towards. The review identified a range of good practice whilst noting a need for greater clarity of available support and greater consistency in its delivery.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Since January 2023, 9 UASC have newly arrived in the city via the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and were accommodated under S.25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. As such, they were legally defined as care experienced and the service supported these young people in Young People's Houses and Supported Accommodation.

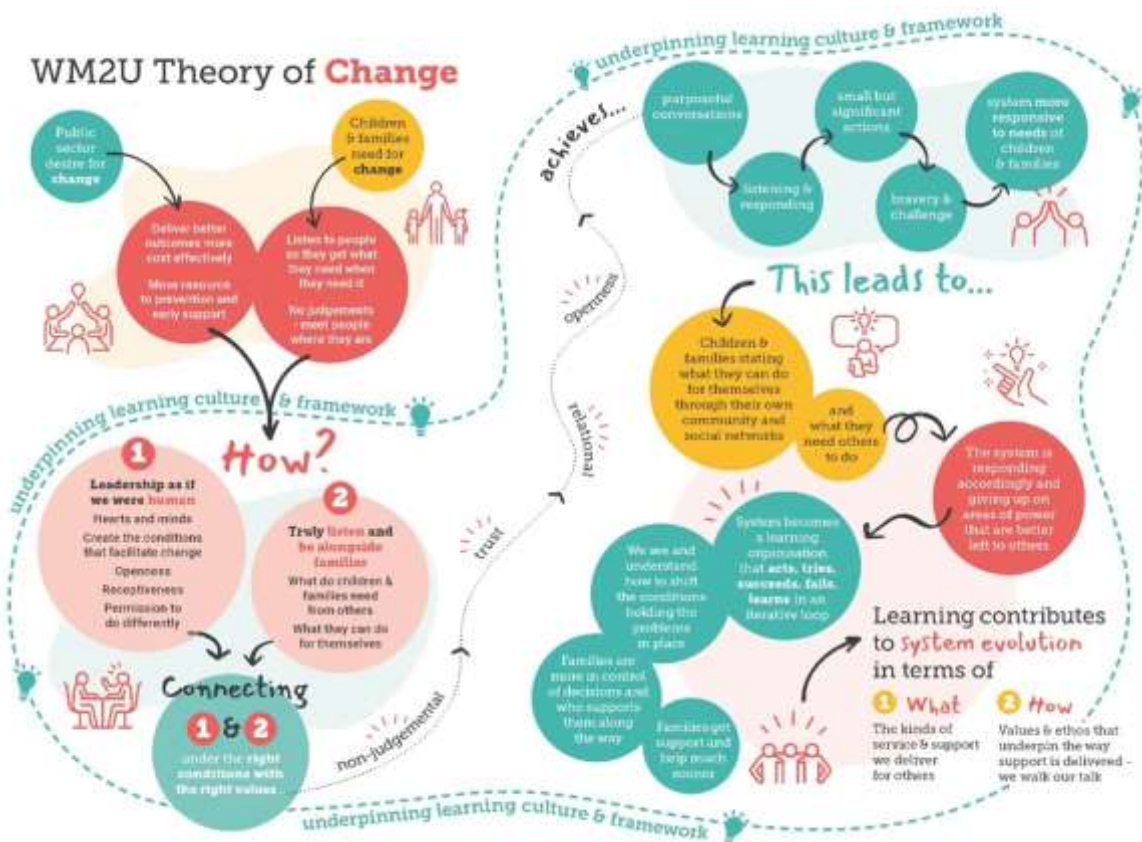
The service also carried out age assessments on a further 25 asylum seekers who had been moved to the city after having initially been assessed by the Home Office as adults on arrival. A total of 10 were subsequently confirmed as under 18 years and received similar support as UASC arriving via the NTS.

What Matters to You

The Children's Service was also closely involved in the development of What Matters to You in partnership with the Hunter Foundation, BBC Children in Need, Columba 1400 wider Council and other partners. This initiative places the voice, needs, aspirations and capacity of communities and families at the centre of engagement and support.

It has been piloted in Lochee, Strathmartine and Whitfield, where engagement and support has occurred via Columba 1400 Values Based Leadership Experiences, Community Cafes, family sessions and activities organised by Community Learning and Development.

Families have reported a positive difference to their lives involving a greater sense of belonging, growing self-efficacy, heightened trust, improved emotional health and more hope. The initiative has made further progress this year and Local Community Planning Partnerships will be instrumental in scaling and sustaining the approach.



For our overall approach to The Promise, the service was shortlisted as a finalist in the UK Local Government Chronicle Awards 2024 in the category of Children’s Services. An Expert Panel commented on a ‘strategic approach to improving outcomes engaging a variety of partners evidencing good progress in a challenging context’.



Community Justice Services

In Community Justice, the service continued to deliver and develop a range of interventions across the criminal justice system to ensure that timely, proportionate and effective responses are available. For the first time in 4 years, levels of demand across most areas returned to pre-pandemic levels. Comparisons with last year were:

- **Diversion from Prosecution** – increased from 77 to 92 referrals from the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
- **Court Reports** – increased from 1165 to 1185 reports which inform sentencing decisions
- **Structured Deferred Sentences** – increased from 44 to 96 to provide people with an opportunity to engage with support prior to final sentencing
- **Community Payback Orders (CPO)** – increased from 447 to 553 Orders imposed by the High Court and Sheriff Court
- **Unpaid Work** – increased from 38,101 hours imposed to 43,616, with work carried out at various locations across the city
- **Supervised Release Orders** – increased from 16 to 29 people receiving a custodial sentence of less than 4 years with specific conditions on release
- **Long-term prisoners** – increased from 153 to 165 people serving prison sentences of 4 years or more.

This increase is consistent with national trends and was associated with Police Scotland, the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Court Service continuing to address the pandemic backlog, alongside arrest and conviction rates for new offences. It was manageable within available capacity.

As such, the proportion of people successfully completing a CPO increased from 65% to 70%, in line with the national average. Our Unpaid Work projects received 100% positive feedback from recipients and included painting buildings at Clatto Park, refurbishing benches at cemeteries and repainting railings (see below).



However, also consistent with national trends was a continued increase in the use of remands and short-term prison sentences. This included an increase of young people aged 16-20 receiving a prison sentence from 6 in 2022-23 to 10 in 2023-24. These trends have contributed to the national Early Release Scheme this year.

The service continues to offer community-based alternatives to custody where an assessment indicates risks of re-offending can be managed, usually via a combination of restrictive or punitive measures such as a Restriction of Liberty Order and Unpaid Work alongside a supervisory or programmed element focused on rehabilitation.

It also continues to jointly risk assess, supervise, and support Registered Sex Offenders and high risk of harm Violent Offenders under Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). There was a slight reduction in the number of jointly managed RSOs from 58 to 55.

Going forward, the service will develop a specific improvement plan in response to a Care Inspectorate Thematic Review of Prison Based Social Work in partnership with the Bella Centre. It will also work nationally with partners to develop an implementation plan for MAPPs, which is scheduled to replace ViSOR from 2026.

Adult Services

In Adult Services, all teams continued to respond to some similar demographic challenges and support people with a range of needs. As with Children's and Justice Services, there was an emphasis on adapting to changing levels of need by building capacity, enhancing preventative support and safely promoting independence.

Hospital Admission and Discharge

The rate of admissions to hospital continued to increase from 12,698 in 2019-20 to 14,335 last year. Conversely, emergency bed days continued to reduce, from 120,840 in 2018-19 to 110,015 last year. **Moreover, 98% of people were discharged from hospital without delay and the number of bed days lost reduced from 604 to 94.**

This reduction in bed days and timely discharge mirrored continued efforts to improve discharge planning processes and community-based support. To this end, initiatives over the last 12 months included a new enhanced flow coordinator role within the Discharge Team and enhanced support from Community Independent Living Service.

The Care at Home Team was also involved in projects where they planned with others to improve pathways and services. This includes Falls Prevention and Education Training which involved co-working with Scottish Ambulance Service, a Falls Team and Social Care Response Service.

✓ **As a result of this initiative there was a reduction of 428 falls in the cohorts**

This work will need to remain a key priority for the IJB and partners, as in addition to growing admission rates the city has a high rate of readmission where the patient had been discharged within the last 28 days. In 2018-19, the rate was 129 readmissions per 1,000 population and this rose to 147 readmissions in 2023.

It will need to include a concerted focus on slips, trips and falls, as the city also continues to have a high rate of falls related admissions to hospital for people aged 65+. The rate increased from 30.9 admissions per 1,000 of the 65+ population in 2018-19 to 34.6 admissions per 1,000 of the 65+ population in 2023.

Some key challenges associated with a smaller number of patients with more complex or acute needs include supported housing provision with appropriate facilities, staffing capacity and guardianship legislation. The service reported on these to Scottish Government whilst addressing delays and engaging with patients and their families.

Carers

In 2023-24, the IJB allocated Carers Partnership funding to the Carers Centre for a Winter Fund to support carers most in need. The fund was set up for carers to help to alleviate some of the increasing financial pressures being experienced over the winter period. It also aimed to enable people to continue their caring roles with less anxiety.

This year's applicants identified having to make choices between 'heating' and 'eating' and there was a corresponding increase in the percentage of awards for fuel and food. Over the period, the fund distributed 429 grants totalling £124,019, covering costs such as food and fuel, travel, white goods, winter clothing, bedding and furniture.

Mental Health

Last year, Hope Point was established as a key landmark in the development of accessible 24/7 support for people experiencing distress. The centre opened in July 2023 and 2,466 contacts with the service were made up to March 2024. The service has been co-designed to take account of individual needs and is extremely well received:

"The staff at Hope Point saved my life. Amazing people! Amazing Service!"

"It was beneficial for me to see staff here and feel valued and listened to"

"I was absolutely hopeless before finding Hope Point, now I'm full of hope"

"You guys have saved my life many times over"



Where appropriate, a distress measure is used whereby people self-rate the degree of their distress on a scale of 0 to 10. This takes place at the start and at the end of an intervention

and 100% of people saw a decrease in their score. The average was 3.6 points reduced distress rating. Other initiatives focused on mental health included:

- ✓ **Appointment of a full-time Suicide Prevention Coordinator**
- ✓ **A Suicide Prevention Stakeholder Event to inform a Prevention Delivery Plan**
- ✓ **Contributions to a Tayside Multi-Agency Suicide Review Group**
- ✓ **Targeted work around locations of concern**
- ✓ **Starting the co-production of a service to support people bereaved by suicide**
- ✓ **Refreshment of a Tayside [Suicide? Help!](#) App and website**
- ✓ **Suicide prevention courses across the partnership**

The proportion of patients referred to psychological therapies who commenced their treatment within 18 weeks of referral (completed waits) has risen from 46% in Q1 21/22 to 71% in Q4 23/24. This is a significant achievement to help people with more acute concerns to access timely support.

Mental Health Officer Service

The Mental Health Officer (MHO) Service continues to experience a high demand in both areas of Mental Health and Adults with Incapacity. In respect of mental health, there have been increases in Short-Term Detention certificates and Compulsory Treatment Orders, alongside a reduction in the number of practicing MHOs.

The service has since had 2 successful candidates for this year's MHO course but capacity is an ongoing challenge and there is an acknowledgement that promoting this role is required across all services. This will be one aspect of work that will be progressed over the coming year.

In relation to Adults with Incapacity, requests for new guardianship applications have remained consistent but in the past 2 years there has been an increase in requests for reports related to renewals of welfare guardianship orders. This has continued to increase over this reporting year.

The overall capacity of mental health services is therefore a key priority, including in relation to supervising private welfare guardianships. To this end, the service is undertaking a workforce analysis across all adult services, whilst instigating a training program for all teams around various aspects of Guardianship roles.

Adults with Incapacity Act Amendment Consultation

The service response has been supportive of proposed changes in numerous areas, especially around streamlining processes such as changes to guardianship applications and financial management arrangements, with the caveat of ensuring safeguards for individuals are not reduced.

The service also welcomes considerations to promote supported decision making throughout the recommendations, whilst also trying to address significant issues around deprivation of liberty issues. Once finalised, all changes will be embedded via a local mental health action plan.

Like hospital admissions and discharge, our approach towards people with mental health concerns will need to remain a key priority. The trends in relation to levels of demand, complexity and risk are growing and there will need to be a particular focus on prevention, alongside support to people with acute concerns. Some key data:

- **Suicide** - across Scotland there was an increase in probable suicides from 2022, with a total of 792 deaths in 2023. In Dundee, 30 people died by probable suicide in 2023, an increase of one person from 2022. The rate was higher than the Scottish average in Highland, Dundee City and East Ayrshire Council areas.



Older People

Clearly, work to support older people was encompassed within approaches towards hospital admission and discharge; carers; and mental health. This this was augmented by specific initiatives focused on care homes, designed to enhance the experience of residents and their families. It included:

- ✓ **Intergenerational Practice in Care Homes Award** - this recognised Menzieshill's activity programme for promoting quality outcomes, including via the re-establishment of links

with the local community such as Menzieshill Nursery and Tayview Primary School after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Activities involved a focus on boosting resident’s wellbeing and reducing social isolation. One of the care home residents said of the young people; *“They are lovely. They all have their own idiosyncrasies and personalities- I love getting to know them. They take me right back to when I was that age.”*



- ✓ **Supporting Tayside Excellence Programme (STEP) for Tayside Care Homes** - the STEP was rolled out across Tayside in July 2023 to collaboratively enhance care to residents via a supportive tool that provides the ability to self-assess against the healthcare framework for adults living in care homes.

Drug and Alcohol Services

The implementation of the national Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards was a key aspect of the work of all Alcohol and Drug Partnerships in 2023-24. The national benchmarking report on MAT implementation was published on 9 July 2024 (see [MAT Benchmarking 2024](#) for full report) and demonstrated considerable progress:

	MA T 1	MA T 2	MA T 3	MA T 4	MA T 5	MA T 6	MA T 6 (& 10)	MA T 7	MA T 8	MA T 9	MA T 10
2022						N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2023							N/A				
2024						N/A					N/A

	Red		202 2	MAT 6 to MAT 10 were not assessed
	Provisional Amber		202 3	MAT 6 and MAT 10 were assessed separately
	Amber		202 4	MAT 6 and MAT 10 were assessed jointly
	Provisional Green			
	Green			

Other than 2 ADP areas in Dumfries & Galloway and Greater Glasgow, these were the highest scores achieved nationally and testimony to the focus and drive of local partners. In terms of what this means in practice for local people with a substance use concern:

- ✓ Individuals have fast access to treatment, a choice of prescribed medication, wraparound support and support to remain in treatment for as long as required.
- ✓ Those who have experienced a non-fatal overdose are quickly identified and supported to access treatment.
- ✓ Individuals can opt out to be supported by the new shared-care arrangements with Primary Care
- ✓ Everyone can access the support of independent advocates at any stage of their recovery journey
- ✓ Harm reduction support and equipment is available at any stage for those accessing MAT
- ✓ In 2023/24 94% of people referred to services for drug use began their treatment within 21 days of referral.
- ✓ The number of Alcohol Brief Interventions has increased from 996 in 2022-23 to 1,415 in 2023-24.

In addition to progress around the MAT Standards, a Non-Opioid Pathway to services and support is being implemented with partners. There have been some delays to the planned review of an alcohol pathway but a dedicated member of staff is now in post and progressing this as part of the wider programme on the non-opioids' pathway.

This work will again need to remain a key priority, including in relation to prevention. There were 46 drug deaths in the city in 2023 compared with 38 in 2022-23. The city had the 2nd highest rate of drug misuse deaths in Scotland and there were 192 suspected non-fatal overdose incidents.

Out-of-hours Service

The Social Work Out of Hours Service (OOHS) continued to coordinate responses to vulnerable families and adults in crisis, in partnership with key professionals from Health, Police, Private and Third Sector Agencies. The service still covers both Angus and Dundee and in the last year provided the following services to local people:

- Responded to 4,849 calls and undertook 1,009 visits concerning Children and Young People across the Dundee area. Of these visits, 820 were in response to the 426 planned work referrals received from daytime services and 189 were because of a crisis referral to the service.

Resources

Given growing levels of demand and/or complexity in several key areas, alongside reductions to funding and intermittent recruitment challenges, most services have reported that resources were stretched at times and outline concerns about sustainability. In 2023/24, the total Social Work budget was £144.775m:

Service Area	2023/24 Budget
Children's Services	£37.194m
Community Justice Services	£5.144m
Adult Social Care Services*	£102.437m
Total	£144.775m

In all services, this has required services to apply day-to-day measures which deploy resources efficiently, including in relation to proportionate support and defensible risk management, whilst strategically implementing whole system measures which make best use of the total resource and focus on key priorities.

* Delegated to Dundee Integration Joint Board – net of funding transfer from NHST

Children's Services

Over the period, Children's Social Work responded to financial pressures associated with children and young people in external residential care by bringing Kinship Care developments

to fruition, re-provisioning the new Craigie Cottage for younger children and strengthening care planning arrangements for all children and young people.

As noted above, the service also attempted to increase the recruitment of internal Foster Carers to avoid an over-reliance on external Foster Carers and/or external residential care but although this led to some new carers, they have not yet reached previous levels and fees/allowances are being reviewed.

The review of approaches towards vulnerable adolescents, which included integrating the management arrangements of Locality Teams and Young People's Houses to promote consistent oversight and support, has contributed towards there being no placements in Secure Care for 18 months and a reduction in missing episodes.

The service will need to maintain this approach to avoid the high financial and potential human costs of Secure Care, which should only be used when no internal capacity is available and/or is not suitable to meet complex needs and/or when certain legal criteria are met and risks cannot be managed defensibly in the local community.

Going forwards, the implementation of the Care and Justice (Scotland) Act 2024 has now ended the use of prisons for 16- to 17-year-olds in the justice system and replaces it with Secure Care. Currently, these placements are funded by Scottish Government and announcement of longer-term funding implications are expected in early 2025.

The service also completed a review of Self-Directed Support (SDS) assessment processes, to ensure support is equitable and mirrors types/levels of need. It will enable this part of the service to operate within budget or use evidence from assessments to demonstrate and respond to any identified unmet need.



Community Justice

In Community Justice, there were no financial pressures in 2023-24 and the service continued to meet all requirements via its ringfenced budget. The number of Court Reports and CPOs did not yet reach pre-pandemic levels and levels of demand remained manageable, although there was evidence of greater complexity.

In 2024-25, levels of demand have increased more markedly, particularly in relation to Restriction of Liberty Order (ROLO) requests. As this has occurred at the same time as some staffing absences, it has created some challenges which the service is responding to by collaborating with the Court to streamline some arrangements.

Adult Social Care Services

In the context of a challenging overall financial settlement, the IJB continued to deal with increasing levels of demand associated with the requirements of people with disabilities, mental health and substance use issues, alongside the legacy impact from the pandemic and cost of living crisis. It reported a year end overspend of £3.744m.

The partnership was also impacted by the same recruitment challenges in other key service areas across Scotland. The lack of capacity in the social care workforce has continued to provide whole-system challenges in further reducing delayed discharges from hospital.

Other professions such as Nursing, Allied Health Professionals (such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Dieticians and Speech and Language Therapists) and GP's, alongside specialist areas such as substance use and mental health services, also continued to face recruitment challenges which had some impact on services.

The Health and Social Care Partnership's operational delivery model therefore continued to embed a model of fully integrated health and social care services to support the delivery of the Integration Joint Board's strategic priorities, with managers covering both Council and NHST services.

Given the financial challenges during 2023-24 and anticipated demands and constraints going forwards, transformation across all Social Work and Social Care services will be key to developing a sustainable service model which meets strategic priorities within existing resources, including financial, workforce and property.

Workforce

Recruitment and Support

The Social Work and Social Care workforce provides support to vulnerable groups in sometimes challenging situations. Teams frequently support people who have been traumatised and who, in various ways, may present a risk of harm to themselves, to others or from others.

They are required to engage with service users and empower them whilst sometimes informing statutory decisions made by the Children's Hearing, Sheriff Court or Parole Board which may restrict their liberty, including in relation to Secure Care, mental health treatment or detention and enforcement of community sentences.

The workforce is therefore highly valued and currently consists of 1,313 people employed within the Children and Families Service (371) and the Health and Social Care Partnership (942). As an overview of their employment status, age, ethnic identity, recruitment, retention and absences in 2023-24:

- Over 98% are employed on a permanent basis
- Just over 10% of the workforce are aged 30 years or under
- Almost 50% are aged 51 years or older
- At 81% most of the workforce are women
- Over 6% identify as having a disability
- Just under 4% identify as being of black or minority ethnic origin
- Workforce leavers in children's and community justice services was 8.09%.
- Workforce leavers in adult services was 10.93%
- Just under 32% of new starts were aged 30 years or under
- Over 23% of new starts were 51 years or older.
- Excluding Covid related absence 24 days were lost per FTE
- This is higher than the Council figure of 15 days lost per FTE
- There was an increase in working days lost across all sections
- There were more long-term absences than the Council at 81% and 73%
- The most common reason for lost days was mental health at 40.55%

It is therefore apparent that the workforce is under-represented across many of the protected equality characteristics. The population of the city comprises of 10.64% people of minority ethnic origin and 31.27% of people who have a disability, respectively compared with 4% and 6% in our workforce.

The recruitment pattern also provides some indication that some progress is being made in addressing challenges related to an ageing workforce and a desire to increase the young workforce but this will also need to continue to be a priority, whilst building on a range of measures introduced to enhance support and retention:

- ✓ Collaboration with Dundee University to increase student placements
- ✓ Delivery of mandatory qualifications to meet SSSC registration requirements.
- ✓ Fair Work First Commitments, such as payment of the Living Wage.
- ✓ Introduction of a national Newly Qualified Social Worker Scheme (NQSWS)
- ✓ Support with manageable caseloads informed by a Setting the Bar report
- ✓ Using Artificial Intelligence to record and transcribe assessments and support
- ✓ Launch of the Health & Wellbeing Framework in 2023
- ✓ New [Navigating Individual and Organisational Resilience](#) workshop
- ✓ Ongoing [Reflection and Resilience](#) work with teams
- ✓ The Employee Health & Wellbeing Service SharePoint site wellbeing information
- ✓ The Scottish Government's [National Wellbeing Hub](#)
- ✓ Wellbeing Ambassadors with 6 currently willing to undertake this role.
- ✓ Trauma informed response to potentially traumatic events in the workplace
- ✓ Absence Review Learning
- ✓ Targeted focus group work where data indicates there are wellbeing concerns
- ✓ Able Futures Access to Work Mental Health Support Service
- ✓ A focus on race discrimination towards both the workforce and service users

Training and Development

Protecting People Multi Agency Framework

In addition to general support, training is key to build the confidence and competence of teams. A training needs analysis has not yet been conducted but a comprehensive multi-agency framework was launched in February 2024 and provides a basis of protection learning for all workers across the city.



Going forwards, in addition to this generic training a training needs analysis will also be explored with Learning and Organisational Development. Teams across Children's and Community Justice Social Work and the Health and Social Care Partnership will implement Quality Conversations.

Adult Support and Protection Week

In February 2024, Dundee co-ordinated a calendar of events to celebrate and promote national Adult Support and Protection Day. Nine multi-agency events were co-ordinated across the 5 days and 250 people booked on the sessions. Following evaluation, knowledge ratings increased from 3.5 to 4.5 on average and 97.5% wanted to see similar events.

“I had not realised that there were so many different projects supporting adults and young people in Dundee”

This training is critical as the Significant Case Review on Ms L included recommendations for partners to more effectively work together in a trauma informed manner and make timely referrals to Adult Support and Protection arrangements. It has been enhanced by half day sessions, where feedback has been positive. Other training over the year has included:

- **Defensible Decision Making** – collating, analysing, making decisions and acting on information about risks/needs, including consideration of bias
- Council Officer Learning – legislation, codes of practice, recent learning reviews, chronologies, risk assessment, professional curiosity and undue pressure.
- **Adult Protection Practitioners Forum** - action learning sets, including in relation to the development of policies and procedures
- Child Protection – introduction to child protection and workshops on chronologies, child sexual exploitation and online abuse.

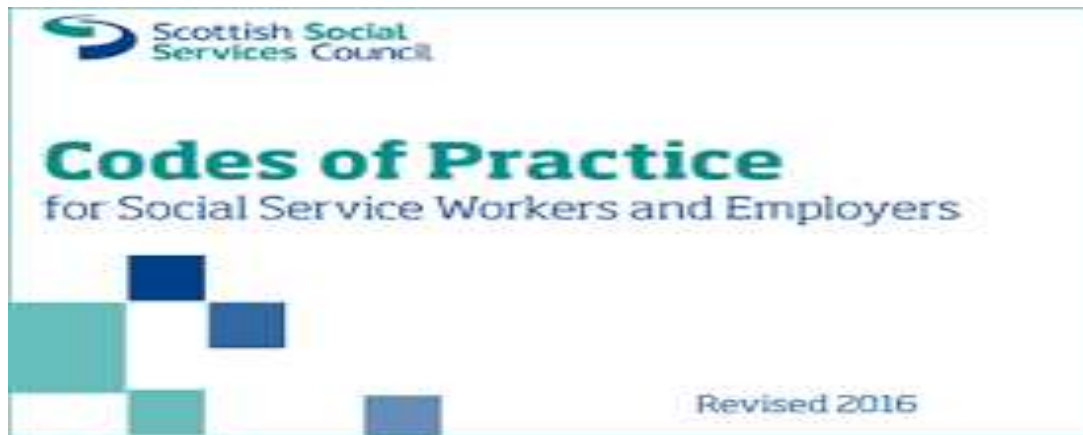
“I feel better equipped now to be able to know when I need to raise a child protection concern, who to report to and how to support the young person”

“This course has been amazing hard hitting and very insightful. I am less worried now about my role and feel so much more confident in what I am doing”

Scottish Social Service Council requirements

The Learning and Organisational Development Team have coordinated the delivery of vocational qualifications which enable employees to demonstrate that they can work to national occupational standards, along with academic credits to meet management registration requirements.

In addition to professional Social Work training, this training ensures that the values, knowledge and skills of the workforce are maintained. It contributes to both the Council as an employer and the workforce meeting the SSSC Codes of Practice, which clearly outline joint expectations.



Inspection Findings and Improvement Actions

Children's Services

In Children's Services, Craigie Cottage opened as a new provision for 6–11-year-old children in September 2023. It was inspected 2 weeks after opening and received 2 grades of Weak. The inspectorate issued 4 requirements and 3 areas for improvement to be met by February 2024.

With support from the external leadership team, the management team in the house implemented an improvement plan and on their return to the house in May 2024, the inspectorate concluded that all requirements and areas for improvement had been met within timescales.

In the more recent inspection, the house was graded in 2 categories of Leadership as Good and Care and Support as Adequate, with an overall grade of Adequate based on the inspection methodology. The inspector noted considerable improvements in the competence and confidence of the team to support vulnerable younger children.

Adult Services

In the 46 registered adult services, 69 inspections were undertaken during 2023-24. This included 44 inspections carried out across 24 care homes and 25 inspections carried out across 22 other adult services. Three care homes operated by the HSCP were inspected during the reporting year. Table 2 illustrates:

Table 2: Grade Received by Service	Care Homes				Other Adult Services			
	2023-24		2022-23		2023-24		2022-23	
Number of Services Inspected	24		22		22		18	
6 'excellent' in one or more key questions	2	8%	1	5%	0	0	0	0
5 'very good' in one or more key questions	5	21%	6	27%	11	50%	9	50%
4 'good' in one or more key questions	17	71%	13	59%	17	77%	12	67%
3 'adequate' in one or more key questions	15	63%	12	55%	7	32%	7	39%
2 'weak' in one or more key questions	4	17%	4	18%	0	0	2	11%
1 'unsatisfactory' in one or more key questions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 'good' and above in all grades (first annual inspection)	9	38%	9	41%	17	77%	10	56%
3 'adequate' or below in all grades (first annual inspection)	8	33%	3	14%	0	0	2	11%

This gradings data evidence a significant improvement in grades between 2022-23 and 2023-24 for other adult services, whilst care home grades remained similar with a noted increase in the number of care homes receiving a grade of 'adequate' or less in all assessed aspects. As such, care homes will need to remain a key focus.

Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People at Risk of Harm

The Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People at Risk of Harm was published in January 2022. The inspection graded services as Good overall and highlighted 4 areas for improvement, which mirrored a local partnership self-evaluation. Progress over the last 12 months has included:

1. **Approaches to recognising and responding to concerns about risk of harm and providing support to young people were not as effective as those for younger children** - funding has been secured to co-locate teams and after renovation work is completed the new service will operate from March 2025.

In preparation for the move, a monthly team development programme is in place facilitated by Learning and Organisational Development to support effective transition to the new model. The multi-disciplinary team has received additional advance training in risk assessments.

A new infrastructure has been put in place to support implementation of the Care and Risk Management protocol; leadership and management of Young People's Houses have been revised; Supported Accommodation facilities for Care Leavers have been extended; and a Transitions Protocol is being revised.

2. **Children and young people at risk of harm and their parents or carers were not consistently being supported to participate in protective processes** – a Child Protection Charter which mirrors the principles of Trauma Informed Practice has been developed by young people.

The service has introduced a Mind of My Own app, which enables children and young people to comment on the support they receive in their own time. The Champions Board now operates in all 8 Secondary Schools and young people have participated in Columba 1400 Values Based Leadership Academies.

"I'm not the greatest with technology but I explained what Mind Of My Own is to a 15-year-old and he downloaded the app onto his phone - he enjoys having a way to communicate with me and working through some of the questions in his own time that he normally would avoid answering."

The service also continued to commission an independent advocacy provider in Who Cares? Scotland, who have a strong presence in the Young People's Houses. Feedback

from young people indicates they value the support they provide in enabling them to present their views to inform professional decisions.

3. **The partnership did not yet have in place arrangements for the joint and systematic review of outcomes data to evidence the difference it was making to the lives of children at risk of harm and their families** – this has also been a key focus and developments over the last year have included:

- ✓ Child Protection Committee Data Scrutiny Group and quarterly reporting to the Child Protection Committee.
- ✓ Dundee and Angus Learning Review Project to transition to Learning Reviews and identify opportunities for joint working with Tayside partners
- ✓ Child Protection Committee Case Review Group established to oversee identification and implementation of improvement actions
- ✓ Single agency quality assurance activities/frameworks are in place across public sector partners and some third sector partners but reporting is to be enhanced.

Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection

The Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection was published on November 19 2023. The inspection focused on two key quality indicators in the [ASP Quality Indicator framework](#) of key ASP Processes and Strategic Leadership. It graded both as Effective with clear strengths which collectively outweighed areas for improvement.

Key Areas for Improvement Highlighted by the Inspection Report

- The partnership needed to improve the consistent application and quality of investigation, chronology, and risk assessment templates
- Adult support and protection guidance and procedures should be updated as a matter of priority
- Quality assurance, self-evaluation and audit activities were embedded but to varying degrees, particularly across social work services
- The adult support and protection lead officer and support team should ensure they remain sighted on quality and prioritise the necessary improvements
- The pace of strategic change and improvement needed accelerated following similar findings in the previous inspection in 2017
- The partnership should ensure that strategic planning and implementation of initiatives are well resourced, sustainable and impact assessed.

In response, the Adult Support and Protection Committee developed a multi-agency improvement plan to address the 6 key areas of improvement. This was approved by the Chief Officers Group for Protecting People and submitted to the Care Inspectorate in February 2024.

As there was close alignment between the inspection findings and internal self-evaluation activity which meant that most areas for improvement were already subject to ongoing improvement activity. Work is ongoing to implement the agreed improvements throughout 2024-25.



Learning Reviews

During 2023-24, the Protecting People Committees focused on improving their approach to learning reviews. The new Dundee and Angus Learning Review Guidance introduced a single process for undertaking reviews that will be used in partnerships, applies to all types of harm and is aligned to recently revised national guidance.

This has been developed with a clear focus on taking a trauma-informed approach for both family members and the workforce. Development sessions were held in early 2024 to develop an accompanying local Protecting People Learning Review Oversight Group and the new protocol was officially launched April 1st 2024.

Continued implementation of the new approach will take place over the upcoming 2024-25 year. This will include further development of a Dundee Protecting People Learning Review Group and associated actions plan and accompanying tools and resources.

In December 2023, a Significant Case Review (SCR) on behalf of Ms. L was published with 16 recommendations. The Public Protection Committees developed an action plan and further information is found in the 7-Minute Briefing that was developed for the workforce: [7 Minute Briefing - MS L.pdf](#)

Over the year, a total of 7 other cases were also referred for consideration for review to the Child and Adult Support and Protection Committees. Five of these did not progress to a formal Learning Review and 2 are still pending but action points were identified and added to improvement plans.

Quality Assurance

Children's Services

For the last three years Children's Social Work has been carrying out regular audits using a Care Inspectorate evaluation tool focused on the quality of chronologies, assessments, plans and support. The audits are undertaken by pairs of managers in the service and reports are completed on a quarterly basis highlighting key themes.

The most recent audit in May 2024 found that overall 94% of files were rated as 'Good' or better, compared with 93% in the previous audit and 53% when the process commenced in 2020-21. It illustrates a clear trajectory of overall improvement, whilst confirming further support is required to improve chronologies.

Categories of case file audit tool	Number rated good or better	Percentage rated good or better
Overall	16	94%
Accuracy of Information	25	88%
Assessment	16	94%
Chronology	11	65%
Care Plan	13	76%
Supervision/ Support	11	65%

The service-wide audit programme has been expanded to include quality assurance of family-based care, where results have been mirrored in terms of percentages rated as Good or above. In addition to this, we have also undertaken a specific case file audit of adolescent services, where 83% were rated as Good or above.

Community Justice

This auditing process is mirrored in Community Justice, where over 80% of Court Reports were assessed as being Good or better; 100% of LSCMI risk assessments were assessed as Good or better; and 70% of Risk Management Plans were assessed as Good or better.

Areas for improvement were noted as ensuring all relevant documentation is uploaded and available on the case recording system and increasing the number of home visits in line with National Standards and Objectives. These are being progressed by the Service Manager and management team.

Adult Services

Over summer 2023, the Health and Social Care Partnership completed a single agency audit of adult protection practice, based on an audit tool developed in partnership with practitioners and through collaboration with Perth & Kinross and Dumfries & Galloway colleagues. This audit found that:

- Files contained risk assessment information, but this remained of variable quality and was recorded in a variety of places rather than a specific workflow
- Protection plans although present were not always easily identifiable, being captured within IRD, case conference minutes and case notes.

- Good evidence of multi-agency input and discussion across all stages of the ASP process but a need for protection plans to include SMART actions.
- One third of cases evidenced that advocacy had been discussed and encouraged, noting referrals made and evidencing involvement.
- Close to 60% of files included evidence of supervision that was Good or better, with all cases including some evidence of case discussions with a line manager.
- This is an improved position from a multi-agency audit undertaken in August 2020, where most files had no evidence of management oversight.

Overall, key strengths included clear evidence of good practice in all cases with protective measures keeping people safe whilst recognising and respecting their views and the least restrictive principle. These findings were supported by the outcomes of the audit work undertaken by the joint inspection team later in the year.

Feedback from teams involved in the process has informed further amendments to the workflows within MOSAIC to aid practice improvement, management oversight and quality assurance. Managers and teams are being supported to focus on consistently making separate recordings of supervision, as well as day-to-day case discussions.

Protecting People

In addition to Social Work specific audits, services also contributed towards wider partnership audits focused on specific groups and/or risks of harm. This included an audit of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) in October 2023, when 15 MARAC cases were reviewed in pairs by members of the VAWP Scrutiny Group.

Overall, the findings of the review highlighted clear strengths in multi-agency working alongside some issues relating to infrastructure and resourcing of MARAC and a need for work to be undertaken to raise awareness of the purpose and function of MARAC across agencies. Meetings have since been increased from fortnightly to weekly.

Looking Ahead

This report has shown how our Social Work and Social Care services have provided and in many cases improved support to vulnerable groups, including children on the edge of care; people subject to community sentences; people at risk of hospital admission or leaving hospital; older people; and people with substance use concerns.

In some areas, there have been some nationally recognised achievements, such as our approach towards The Promise as a finalist in the LGC Awards, a Generations Working Together Award, Scottish Care Home Service of the Year Award, Scottish Social Services Outstanding Residential Care Award and MAT Standards.

It shows a clear focus on providing crucial support to the workforce, with numerous measures on recruitment, induction, wellbeing, training, shared learning via quality assurance processes and joint responses to the findings of Care Inspectorate inspections of Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection and regulated services.

However, the report highlights some challenges, such as concerns about vulnerable pregnant women and babies/infants; the recruitment of Foster Carers; high levels of remands and short-term prison sentences; hospital admissions/re-admissions/discharge; slips, trips and falls; mental health; and substance use.

There are also some enduring workforce issues, including an under-representation of key groups, recruitment challenges in some key areas and capacity within Social Work mental health services to meet levels of need in relation to mental health and welfare guardianship.

Uncertainty in the national environment may also unsettle teams and potential developments could have a profound impact on the way services are managed, commissioned and delivered. This includes financial constraints, a National Care Service, a National Social Work Agency and multiple new legislative requirements.

This is all determining our priorities, including through collaboration with key partners. To realise transformational change, we will need to work together to jointly understand and respond to opportunities and challenges across care systems, with vulnerable groups at the centre of everything we do.

In addition to service specific improvement plans and alongside key partners and/or partnerships, the table below therefore shows key some areas of work for the CSWO and the Social Work and Social Care leadership and management teams and practitioners over next 12 months.

General

Inform and respond to National Care Service and National Social Work Agency developments

Respond to the findings of the Care Inspectorate review of Social Work Governance Arrangements

Develop consistent approaches towards workforce recruitment, retention and support across all service areas

Develop and apply an integrated Social Work and Social Care specific dataset on demand, support and impact

Explore the increased use of digital technology to support the workforce to carry out roles more efficiently

Develop and implement an improvement plan to increase the meaningful use of chronologies across all services

Support arrangements for Significant Adverse Event Reviews, Serious Incident Reviews and Learning Reviews

Work with all partners to explore opportunities to develop a cross-cutting prevention plan for vulnerable people

<p>Children's Services</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to enhance targeted support to vulnerable families with 0–3-year-old babies/infants</p> <p>Implement co-located multi-agency services for vulnerable adolescents in the child protection and justice systems</p> <p>Complete a review of fees/allowances for internal Foster Carers to maintain or enhance capacity in family-based care</p> <p>Develop and implement a local Children with Disabilities Service Improvement Plan with key partners</p>
<p>Community Justice Service</p>	<p>Complete a Care Inspectorate supported self-evaluation of approaches towards alternatives to imprisonment</p> <p>Respond to any Scottish Government initiatives to change sentence planning and release arrangements for prisoners</p> <p>Implement improvement plans relating to Prison Based Social Work and the implementation of MAPPS</p>
<p>Adult Services</p>	<p>Work with the ADP to retain and develop a focus on substance use, particularly in relation to drug deaths</p> <p>Work with the Adult Support and Protection Committee to implement the ASP Inspection Improvement Plan</p>

	<p>Work with the Chief Officer and Integrated Joint Board on delays in hospital discharge for the critical few</p> <p>Work to build capacity of MHOs and specialist mental health teams to meet all legislative requirements</p>
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