

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER 2019/2020 REPORT

1. Governance and Accountability

The Chief Social Work Officer in Moray sits within the Health & Social Care Partnership. The CSWO role was established to ensure the provision of appropriate professional advice in the discharge of a local authority's statutory functions in relation to the delivery of Social Work services. In this role, the CSWO provides professional advice and guidance to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) for adult services and to Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee/ Full Council on matters relating to children and young people and Justice Social Work.

The CSWO meets with the Chief Executive of Moray council on any matters of concern.

The CSWO is a member of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group (COG), the Community Planning Officers Group (CPOG), the Child Protection Committee, the Adult Protection Committee, GIRFEC Leadership Group, Community Justice Partnership, and Clinical and Care Governance Committee of the Integrated Joint Board.

Internally the quality of Social Work is assured by Practice Governance meetings. Any issues are reported to the Clinical & Care Governance Committee of the IJB for adults. Posts of Consultant Social Work Practitioners are well established in Adult Services and also now in Children's Services. Consultants work with Line Managers to support Social Work in complex cases, model best practice and set practice standards in their respective areas. Consultants also undertake practice audits in Adult Social Work. A practice audit on respite use, including assessment of situations that resulted in respite use was undertaken in 19/20.

An Improvement plan for Adult Support and Protection was devised along with stakeholders during 19/20. Implementation of that plan began prior to the Covid pause on work, but restarted in September 2020.

Within Adult Services the dispersal of Social Work management arrangements means that, other than in Learning Disability, Team Managers, or first Line Managers are the most senior qualified Social Workers within the management structure. Maintaining Social Work integrity and value within the Integrated Joint Board is a high priority for the CSWO

There is an 'in principle' agreement for Children's Social Work and Criminal Justice to transfer into the IJB in 2021. Accordingly, 2020/2021 is regarded as a 'shadow' year, with the Interim Chief Officer of the IJB taking managerial responsibility for Children's Social Work and Criminal Justice through line management of the Interim Head of Children and Families and Justice Social Work.

During this shadow year papers for discussion and development have been taken to the Integrated Joint Board on the roles, function and performance of Children's social work, in addition to being tabled where applicable at Council/ Committee.

The CSWO will be participating in the project work relating to the potential delegation of children's Social Work to the Integration Joint Board.

Going forward the CSWO would like to establish regular meetings with elected members to brief on relevant and current issues.

Looking back to 2019, June 2019 saw significant changes within Children and Families and Justice Social Work. Following a senior management review within the council it was agreed to delete the post of

Director of Education and Social Care, and to propose to transfer Children, Families and Justice Social Work to the IJB. At the same time the Acting Head of Integrated Children's Services left to take up a post elsewhere in Scotland. A decision was made to split the post's responsibilities to another head of service and to have an interim head of Children and Families and Justice Social Work during the period of transition into the IJB.

The relationship between the CSWO, Head of Children's Social Work and the Care Inspectorate continues to develop to support the development of Social Work professional practice. Whilst the follow up review of Children's Services across the Community Planning Partnership, published in Jan 2019 was supportive of the progress made to date, it was clear that there was still much to do in turning intention and initial actions into lasting change. Children's Social Work have developed a modernisation and improvement plan that identifies three key aims: developing Kinship and Foster Care, embedding new models of Social Work and establishing improved commissioning practice. To this end the Care Inspectorate have agreed to support the Service in reviewing all relevant improvement and action plans, so that they can be combined with relevant improvement actions agreed.

2. Service Quality and Performance

Quality issues are considered and assured within Practice Governance. There are separate meetings for Children's Social Work and Adults. Adult Practice Governance will report any issues of system concern to the Clinical & Care Governance Committee of the IJB. Any areas of significant concern in either child or adult services which impacts on employees should also be raised with the Council as staff will remain Council employees.

Children's Social Work, now in shadow year with the IJB, may also bring a report of note to IJB but direct governance remains with the Council. Social Work matters are to be dealt with in Full Moray Council and/or Education, Communities and Organisational Development committee meetings during 2020/21.

Performance reporting and management has likewise been operating separately in children and adult services. During this shadow year attention has been given to bringing information reports to IJB. During the COVID period weekly reporting of Child and Adult Protection has begun with the Public Protection Chief Officers Group convened weekly between April and July to consider.

In Adult Services, there were 3,768 Service Agreements commissioned for 2,325 service users. 78.2% (2,947) of these agreements were for external services with 21.8% (821) for internal services. The total weekly hours show Internal care providers commissioned for 29.7% of the hours and External 70.3%.

Additionally in 2019/20; 3,871 Support Plan Reviews were completed, 2,554 Review meetings took place and 2,136 Annual Service Package Reviews were done.

A significant area of concern during 19/20 was the quality of care provided in some local care homes. Two large scale investigations were concluded just prior to the Covid lockdown period, and there were 6 homes with enhanced monitoring and improvement plans agreed. Working closely together with providers of care, commissioning and Social Work staff have seen significant improvements across Moray. There were no outbreaks of COVID in local care homes, and quality of care during the COVID period has been remarkably high.

Self-Directed Support (SDS) is an integral mechanism as to how we deliver social care. Our Local Evaluation Report was published in 2019 by the Care Inspectorate following on from the positive thematic inspection in October 2018. The key recommendations from this Report have formed the basis of our local SDS Action Plan moving forward to further embed SDS principles and values in every practice, ensuring that the people in Moray have a positive experience of Social Care delivery and personalised support to meet their outcomes. Individual's in Moray took part in a national survey at the end of 2019 into early 2020, exploring people's lived experience of SDS. Feedback was collated and developed into a national report, again delivering a set of key recommendations for local health and social care partnerships to ensure people had a positive experience of SDS. Health and Social Care Moray is using the key recommendations from these reports to build on the positive foundations for SDS which have been laid over the years.

The SDS team have been supporting Direct Payment recipients in the early stages of COVID lockdown to ensure that they remain up to date with the ever changing guidelines for Personal Assistants (PA's). Alongside this the team were actively involved to ensure that PA employers got access to the vital PPE they needed to allow their support to be delivered safely in line with Health Protection Guidelines.

Health and Social Care Moray have been working collaboratively with our local Carers Centre (Quarriers) to review process and practise for unpaid carers completing an Adult Carers Support Plan in line with the Carers Act (2016). Work was being progressed prior to COVID to review the processes already in place against our legal duties with the Act, unfortunately this work did slow during early 2020 as COVID restrictions diverted resources. Quarriers ensured that their service delivery at the start of lockdown continued, to ensure unpaid carers received the support they required. They have adopted multiple online platforms to engage with carers, alongside regular phone calls with those carers not comfortable with online platforms

The Children's Services Plan 2020-23, emphasised the need for Social Work to shift the culture and practice of Social Work to focus on helping families find solutions that will work for them, and will allow them to remain together wherever that is safe and possible.

To support this shift in culture, since August 2019, regular performance meetings have been established in in Children and Families and Justice Social Work. Whilst Criminal Justice Social work consistently meets national and local performance indicators, there is work to do in other areas. The work with The Permanence and Care Excellence team (PACE) at CELSIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) has given a significant focus on planning for children, and we are beginning to see better arrangements being put in place to make sure our children have clear and permanent family relationships and homes to grow up in.

Child Protection

As at the 31 March 2020 there were 36 children whose names were on the Child Protection Register (CPR). This shows a significant drop of 21 children from the same period of 2018/19. Most recent data shows that the numbers are continuing to fall. There has been a reduction in the number of those registered during each quarter of 2019-20.

Professionals supporting families are being asked to be clear about specific risks and concerns, to ensure that plans put in place to support parents are in turn clearer and work more focussed. With the exception of one quarterly period during 2019-20 the proportion of children registered for more than 12 months has remained below the target value of 15%.

Looked After Children

The number of Looked After Children has fallen over the past four reporting years with the most noticeable drop within the last year. The number of Looked After Children has in previous years

consistently remained between 213 and 222, in the past year however the number had fallen to 188 by the end of March 2020.

Due to the significant fall in the number of Looked After Children cognisance must be taken that with smaller cohort of children proportions are more greatly affected by changes in numbers. Whilst the proportion of children looked after within a community-based setting has improved slightly from previous years it still remains significantly below our comparator authority median of 87.3%. As at 31 March 2020 Moray had 78.7% of Looked After Children within a community-based placement. The area where Moray compares poorly with our comparator Authorities is with the number of children placed within home supervision which at the end of March 2020 was 19.1% against a target of 29.3%.

The implications of this fall is that fewer children are leaving their extended families; more children are staying together as brother and sisters; fewer children are going through lengthy court processes and our foster carer families who offer care to younger children have had significantly fewer children to care for.

Whilst the numbers of children looked after in a residential placement have decreased, due to the fall in overall numbers, the proportions remain consistently high and significantly higher than our comparator median of 12.7%. At the end of March 2020 20.1% of Moray's looked after population were in residential accommodation.

The number of new foster carers and the numbers leaving the authority's scheme are balanced. September 2019 saw the launch of a new fostering scheme. The new scheme is designed to offer a range of placements, to be responsive to need, and to offer children who might otherwise have needs met in residential care.

Following service inspection by the Care Inspectorate in October, an improvement plan, approved by the Children and Young People's Committee in January 2020, is underway to raise the quality and performance and the experience of children.

The numbers of young people aged 18-21 choosing to stay in Continuing Care has increased from 2 in 17-18 to 7 in Q4 19-20. We expect young people requesting this provision to increase incrementally.

Corporate Parenting

From November 2019 we explored what we consider is a unique approach to develop our "community of schools"; using some of the extended Life Changes Trust funding (for years 2020/21 and 2021/22) together with sums allocated for raising attainment of care experienced children and young people.

Further areas for attention are for Young Carers and also for Self Directed Support. The establishment of a Young Carer strategy officer will help ensure that our responsibilities are met, and that young people can support and also feel supported with caring responsibilities. This will include access to Self-Directed Support.

3. Resources

The combined spend in Social Care in 2019/20 was £61.4 million. In 2021/21 the total budget is £63.3 million.

Moray Council are experiencing significant financial constraints that are impacting upon many council services including social care. Children and Families social work budget remains under significant scrutiny.

During 2019/20 children's Social Work made savings of £225,268. The savings were achieved by implementing a management restructure within the service. There was an addition, the underspend for 2019/20 is noted at £845,434.

Adult social care contributed £493k to IJB savings.

Informed by The Promise and looking to the future, we want to be confident that the financial commitments we make support the best quality and experience for children and families.

The spend on the out of area placements for children for the financial year 2019/2020 was £5,992,245 and was significantly less than the sum for financial years - 2018/19 and 2017/18, which respectively were £7,239,521 and £6,361,091. However there remains concern that the number and balance of Moray's children in residential care is greater than any other Scottish local authority.

4. Workforce

The period 2019/20 saw some challenges in recruitment for social care assistants / home care staff in particular.

Recruitment for Social Workers in both Adult and Children's services was not problematic. However we anticipate significant changes in senior staff over the coming two years as long serving staff with extensive knowledge and experience move towards retirement.

The most significant factor in terms of workforce was the recruitment of 3 consultant practitioner posts in children's services to support the change in social work practice required.

In Adult services a further consultant practitioner was recruited to support Social Work practice as the line management of services diversified.

Training and development was a challenge in 2019/20 due to financial constraints and staff capacity. It is fair to note that staff development requires attention moving forward to support the changes in practice required in Social Work.

The anticipation of more learning and development opportunities being made available on line has yet to materialise locally, as efforts have been focussed on managing the COVID period.

5. COVID 19

The COVID Pandemic created in Moray as everywhere else an urgent need to take action to secure the maximum wellbeing of clients, staff and the Moray population. Initially this meant that capacity in Hospitals should be made available for the anticipated surge of COVID related infections, that critical care at home be maintained for the most vulnerable clients and that staff were provided with protection via the provision of appropriate PPE.

Service users within Care at Home were assessed and those identified with a critical need or who were categorised in the shielding groups and did not cancel their own care, remained with their care unaltered. The changes to the service had a greater impact on individuals with lower needs, as they discussed the outcome of their assessment, agreed to a reduction in care, or suspending their care package, which meant they had more independence and were given ownership of their outcomes. Any individual who received an adjustment was able to contact HSCM if they felt they were struggling, or their condition worsened, and these packages were reassessed to ensure they received the appropriate level of care for support.

This resulted in 331 people with Care at Home having care packages changed. Of these 295 had a reduced service where family, friends and informal carers agreed to support where appropriate. 36 service users did require an increased service, and this was provided. Prior to this, 902 service users required 11,364 of weekly care hours and this was reduced by 1,280 care hours. Service so 11% previously committed hours were made available.

We worked closely with local care at home providers to support them throughout. In the early stages, this was particularly around provision of PPE, staffing and care availability.

Our communication with care homes and other care providers was through a dedicated post, a member of the commissioning Team who took the fulltime role of speaking with each provider often more than once daily. This role has continued throughout the COVID period and has been essential in supporting providers and building resilience in our system.

To facilitate discharge of clients from hospital and the allocation of social care resource an enhanced Discharge Hub was created that saw Home Care Managers work together with Social Work staff to review support to clients, receive communication from those wanting to suspend care and prioritise allocation of resource on a daily basis. This enabled Moray to rapidly reduce number of delayed discharges in hospital from 35 at census in March to 10 at census in June.

In the three months from March to May 2020 41 people were admitted to Care Homes. Of these 28 were from Hospital. Moray utilised 13za as a method of discharging those with incapacity to care homes only where that person was not objecting or clearly in disagreement, or there was next of kin support for the move.

Prior to COVID there was a wait for provision of care at home, collated within a brokerage list. The guidance on staff shielding saw an immediate reduction of 210 number of staff. The enhanced Discharge Hub were able to maintain care for those at critical level through daily consideration of resource demands and availability.

As time has gone however, we are experiencing an increase in referrals to Social Work teams as increasing stress in family/informal carers, find it difficult to continue. The inability to provide planned respite and day service has been particularly difficult.

A significant difficulty for Social work in both Children's and Adult services was that prior to lockdown, very few non managerial staff had access to mobile technology. The Council prioritised the needs of Social Work staff but this did cause and continues to cause operational difficulties. Teams operated shift systems to enable them to work safely out of buildings until technology was provided. Teams then rapidly developed systems of support for remote working. As we go forward social work will increasingly become a flexibly based profession and we must develop systems, processes and support mechanisms to replace the previous office based culture of Social Work.

Non-essential Social Work visits were not made, but clients and families contacted in the main by telephone. This has created some challenges for delivery of Social Work, to which frontline staff have adapted, in many and various ways, from meeting outside with clients and families to developing telephone assessments and reviews. In one of our senior leadership virtual face to face sessions, one Social Worker has commented "being a Social Worker without being social just doesn't work".

Essential protection focused visits have continued in both Adult and Child Protection with staff following relevant Health protection advice.

Social care recruitment continued early in the pandemic, but adaptations were made in the induction process for care staff, with this being reduced in time and with much delivered online.

Direct Payment care staff were supported via provision of PPE and from advice and support of our Self Directed Support Team. As a result most direct payment carers were enabled to continue to work with their clients throughout.

The Learning Disability service took particular steps to ensure the wellbeing of their clients. The complex and challenging behaviour unit, Woodview saw up to 27 staff absent at one time due to self-isolation, shielding or sickness, but the remaining staff were able to support all clients to continue to live independently with no marked increase in distress or incidents noted. Social Work staff maintained contact with the most vulnerable families and offered support where this was needed through bespoke individual arrangements.

The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted staff and services considerably and required staff to be mobilised and ready to offer a new kind of support to families in Moray. Children's services was one of those services which had to continue their core business and this threw up challenges for staff who needed to shield, who had children out of school or who were generally fearful to be in spaces with other people. There was also a requirement for Social Work to ensure that all the vulnerable children who required it, were offered a space in the hub provision provided by education.

Children were seen throughout lockdown by Social Workers, who were often one of the only professionals who still maintained that contact with families by visiting. There was an increase in food poverty throughout this time and a recognition that families would experience other types of hardship, including people living with domestic violence. Contact between family members was supported through video calls mainly and meetings continued to take place on a virtual basis. As restrictions lessened, family and community walks proved to be effective in seeing children and their parents as the weather improved.

The Criminal Justice service, in line with national guidance, cancelled unpaid work squads and suspended all unpaid work Community Orders. Staff within the unpaid work team were redeployed to help with crises work which included emergency food supplies to local communities. High risk and vulnerable people were prioritised for face visits but the majority of contact was made by telephone. MAPPA arrangements continued but meetings were held virtually using different platforms. The Moving Forward Making Changes group work programme for working with Sex Offenders was also cancelled and this initially proved

a challenge for workers as to how to work effectively with those participants. Work has since been adapted to take into account the limitations during COVID and lockdown.

An increase in calls during the pandemic to the Out of Hours service was anticipated and therefore enhanced the service by having back up staff available; however there was no evidence in an uplift of demand for the social work service out of hours. This may have been due to the online services set up elsewhere i.e. the community hubs, which was meeting the demand during daytime hours.

Mental Health Social Work worked with their Multi-disciplinary Teams to support the most vulnerable, and were able to utilise this opportunity to review their work with their clients. The Mental Health team assumed responsibility primarily for provision of Mental Health Officer rota allowing other staff to focus on their priority work. Moving forward, training for MHO's will continue to be an issue to ensure adequate staff availability is maintained.

Being able to connect more easily to national groups, particularly through the CSWO group and SWS has been a particular advantage, and had allowed us to contribute to and have an understanding of and to influence new directions, approaches and national agendas in a way that wasn't possible before with Central Belt meetings.

Most recently, many staff have begun to express feelings of stress and fatigue, relating to the increased anxiety reported to them by clients and their families, a type of social care debt, but also the pressure to increase activity, with fewer resources available in order to support Health and Social Care recovery. The CSWO has arranged with Human Resources in Moray to begin a stress assessment and recovery project to support staff in both children and adult services.

On review I would say that in Moray, Social Work services responded quickly and effectively and with compassion during this most exceptional period of time.

Summary

Social Work in Moray faced very significant challenges over the period 19/20 and then in March 2020 the incredibly difficult COVID disruption.

All Social Workers and Social Care staff worked hard to maintain critical care services during this period, often taking on at the same time new ways of working with new technology.

Inevitably, this has been stressful for Social Workers and Social Care staff. Ensuring that all staff are supported and valued in the following months is vital.

The structures of management and Governance in Moray have been fluid and changeable, particularly during this reporting period.

To ensure the best outcome for all who are reliant on Social Care services, and for those that deliver it, the priority is to ensure that all within the Governance and Leadership group recognise and value, the importance and uniqueness of Social Care and Social Work.