

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2016  
ANGUS COUNCIL – 8 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**ANGUS COUNCIL CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015 - 2016**

**REPORT BY TIM ARMSTRONG, CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER**

**ABSTRACT**

This report presents to elected members the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Report for 2015/2016.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) Scrutinises and consider the content of the Angus Council Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2015/2016 (Appended); and
- (ii) Commends the report to Angus Council for their respective consideration.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced
- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services.

**3. BACKGROUND**

The report on the 21st Century Social Work Review, 'Changing Lives', set out a vision for the future for social work services in Scotland. In particular the Changing Lives report recommended a strengthening of the role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) as contained in Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Reference is made to Committee Report Number 01/09 that detailed the Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation on the role of the CSWO in 2009. The finalised guidance published in January 2010 sets out the role and function of the CSWO; competencies, scope and responsibilities of the CSWO, including responsibility for values and standards; access issues; leadership responsibilities and accountability and reporting arrangements.

The overall objective of the CSWO post is to ensure the provision of effective, professional advice to local authorities, including elected members and officers, in the authority's provision of statutory social work duties and to provide professional governance and leadership in the delivery of social work and social care services. This role has gained an increased importance in the context of the integration of health and social care. As the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership is a distinct legal body there is no capacity for Angus Council to independently sanction or veto decisions made by the partnership, yet the Council is reliant on the partnership for the fulfilment of its statutory duties for which the Council remains ultimately accountable. The Chief Social Work Officer's care and professional governance

role will become more and more important as the partnership arrangements in Angus develop.

The national guidance requires that a Chief Social Work Officer Report is provided to elected members on an annual basis.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

The Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2015/16 provides details for elected members as to how the CSWO for Angus Council discharges the specific statutory elements of the role and outlines the important contribution social work services make to the well-being and safety of the people of Angus. It also details key developments across the range of services and highlights challenges for the year ahead.

##### **Children's Services**

Within children's services there has been a continued drive to embed "Getting It Right For Every Child" as the foundation for services for all children and young people. Children and Family Services continue to balance the need to target resources towards those who need them most whilst at the same time focus on early intervention and prevention.

##### **Criminal Justice Services**

Criminal justice services continue to provide a range of services to adults and young people involved in or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. During the course of the past year the service has continued to work with the Tayside Community Justice Authority (CJA) to prepare for the development of the new model for the provision of criminal justice services and the disbandment of the CJA.

##### **Adult Care Services**

Over the past year adult care services have continued to implement the direction of travel set by the Scottish Government, namely that of health and social care integration and the personalisation of services. The emphasis continues to be on preventative services and early intervention to avoid increasing levels of dependency. Across adult care services there are programmes of change and service redesign which are beginning to show improvements in the range, level and quality of services provided.

##### **Challenges for 2016/17**

The CSWO's report details a number of challenges for the year ahead including:

- **Financial pressures.** We are operating in an increasingly difficult financial climate in which we must strive to deliver services within available budgets whilst promoting and maintaining professional values and standards.
- **Increasing need and public expectations.** We are facing rising public expectations and, rising levels of need relating to demographic changes.
- **Legislative changes.** We are facing significant legislative changes, including Self Directed Support, the redesign of the Criminal Justice Social Work and the Children's and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- **Changing how we deliver services.** There is a need to shift the balance of resources across all sectors from reactive responses to proactive early interventions.
- **Improving outcomes for looked after children.** Whilst we have been successful in reducing the numbers of and improving outcomes for looked after children there is still scope for improvement to address the inequalities and disadvantages this group of children and young people face.
- **Self-Directed Support.** Redesigning services to promote personalisation and choice and to realise the potential and aspirations of Self Directed Support (SDS).
- **The impact of alcohol and drugs on our communities.** The Impact not only those who misuse substances but also on children affected by parental substance misuse, other family members and the wider community.
- **The impact of domestic abuse.** Identifying and addressing the impact of domestic abuse on both victims and on children and young people affected and put at risk by domestic abuse.

## 5. ASSURANCE

The CSWO annual report is offered to elected members as an assurance as to the operational and governance arrangements in place for the delivery of statutory social work services in Angus.

In Angus social work services are developed and delivered within the context of the Community Planning Partnership. A wide range of both partnership and single agency self-evaluation activity is undertaken to ensure that services are responsive to the needs of the people who use them and are subject to continuous improvement. There is also evidence from external regulation and scrutiny that care services in Angus are of high quality. Whilst there are well established Governance arrangements in place for social work services these are being reviewed and revised in light of the establishment of the Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (IJB).

The effective engagement and involvement of communities and service users is at the heart of the delivery of social work services and there are systems in place within Angus for engaging and involving users, carers and communities as partners in the development, planning, delivery and evaluation of services. These arrangements will be continually reviewed and developed for effectiveness, particularly as the council and social work take decisions in the future about prioritising the use of available resources.

There are well established systems and process in place to ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory duties in the provision of social work services in relation to the assessment, care planning and provision of services to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The CSWO Officer has a range of specific statutory responsibilities, primarily relating to restriction of individual's freedom and the protection of both individuals and the public which must be made either by the CSWO or by a professionally qualified social worker to whom the responsibility has been delegated by the CSWO. The report sets out a range of performance information as an assurance as to how these functions are being discharged.

The report also details the established systems and process in place to ensure the safety of children, vulnerable adults and the management of those who present risk to others. Key to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults is the effective identification and assessment of risk. The partners in Angus have recognised that there is need to improve the use of chorologies to allow us to more effectively identify children at risk. Work is also being undertaken in a number of areas to ensure that children access services at an early stage to avoid difficulties escalating into child protection concerns.

It is recognised that the Council is facing a number of significant and ongoing challenges in relation to its provision of social work services all of which present risk for the future. Specifically there is a risk, posed by the difficult financial climate and welfare reform, to the council's ability to continue to deliver its current range of services whilst promoting and maintaining professional values and standards.

The work social work staff undertake on behalf of Angus Council is life changing. It enables vulnerable citizens to gain independence, to be safe and to be cared for and contributes to the overall safety and well-being of our communities. Although not often publicly recognised, our staff are skilled, experienced and highly committed to delivering the best possible services to the people in Angus. The continued provision of high quality social work services in Angus is essential if we are to continue to:

- effectively support vulnerable, children, young people and adults;
- promote independence and inclusion;
- protect children and adults at risk; and
- improve outcomes for all the citizens of Angus

The interdependence of social work and other universal services delivered by the Council and partner agencies is, and will continue to be, key to ensuring success.

## 5. PROPOSALS

It is proposed that the Angus Council Chief Social Work Officers Report for 2015- 2016 is submitted to the Scottish Government Chief Social Work Adviser.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

**7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Human Rights**

There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report.

**Equalities**

The issues considered with in the report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective and an equality impact assessment has been completed.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: ANGUS COUNCIL CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015 – 2016.