

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 29 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**ANGUS COUNCIL CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014 - 2015**

**REPORT BY TIM ARMSTRONG, HEAD OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES,  
CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER**

**ABSTRACT**

This report presents to elected members the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Report for 2014/2015.

**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 2014/2015 (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 will be increasingly important in the context of the impending integration of health and social care. As the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership will be a distinct legal body there will be no capacity for Angus

Council to independently sanction or veto decisions made by the partnership, yet the Council will be reliant on the new partnership for the fulfilment of its statutory duties for which the Council will remain 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. This is the first report to be submitted to members that follows the revised national guidance issued in 2014.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

The Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2014/15 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. Over the course of 2014/15 there were particular demands on child protection services. In response to these demands Angus Council was able to identify additional resources to ensure that services were able to continue to respond effectively to children and young people in need of protection.

##### **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 worked 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 2015/16**

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, in many areas, rising levels of need relating to demographic changes within our communities.
- **Demands made by implementation of policy and legislative changes:** We are facing significant legislative changes. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 brings additional responsibilities in relation to child care and learning, looked after children and the implications of the GIRFEC programme.
- **Implementing and realising the potential of health and social care integration:** The aspiration is to provide more accessible, locally based care where at all possible, empowering individuals and communities and correspondingly reducing demand on social care. This approach is not about service withdrawal, but providing support in a different way.
- **Welfare Reform** remains a concern for social work services. Due to the incremental nature of the implementation of Welfare Reform the true impact in Angus remains

uncertain at this point however there is some evidence that the reduction in income for individuals and families has resulted in an increased demand on services including a rise in “discretionary payments”.

- **Changing how we deliver services.** There is a need to shift the balance of resources across all sectors from reactive responses at times of crisis to proactive early interventions and in particular to support early years.

## 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.

There are well established systems and process in place to ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory duties in respect of the assessment, care planning and provision of services to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The report also details the well-developed systems and process in place in Angus to promote the safety and protection of vulnerable children and adults in need of protection.

In Angus social work and social care 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 focused on and are responsive to the needs of the people who use them and that they are subject to continuous improvement. There is also evidence from external regulation and scrutiny that care services, both Council and services provided by the third and private sectors, are of high quality and are provided to a high standard.

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 service development, planning, delivery and evaluation of services. It is however recognised these arrangements need to be continually developed to ensure their effectiveness, particularly as the council and social work services face difficult decisions in the future about prioritising the use of available resources.

The Chief Social Work 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 and for which the CSWO remains accountable. The report details a range of performance information as an assurance as to how these functions are being discharged.

It is however 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 to the council’s ability to continue to deliver its current range of services whilst promoting and maintaining professional values and standards posed by the difficult financial climate and welfare reform. There are also risks to the safety and integrity of our current service provision posed by new legislative and policy changes, including Health and Social Care Integration. Such risk needs to be effectively managed into the future.

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 of 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 within their own community;
- 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 services delivered by the Council is, and will continue to be, key to ensuring success.

**6. PROPOSALS**

It is proposed that the Angus Council Chief Social Work Officers Report for 2014- 2015 is submitted to the Scottish Government Chief Social Work Adviser as required by national guidance.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**8. 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 2014 – 2015.