



**ANGUS
CHIEF SOCIAL
WORK OFFICER
REPORT 2019-20**



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Chief Social Work Officer

Introduction

My fourth Annual Report as Chief Social Work Officer comes at a very difficult time with the reporting period ending with the challenges presented by Coronavirus (Covid-19) to the citizens of Angus and staff across all services on both a personal and professional level. In particular, the challenges and hardships that Covid-19 presents to our most vulnerable children, young people and adults. It has been important that we continue to support not only those eligible for social care services, but all individuals and families directly impacted by Coronavirus. We are all living with a rapidly changing situation and the positive partnership working between Angus Council, Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and Voluntary Action Angus who have recruited many locally based volunteers, has ensured that we have been able to offer person centred support to the wider population in Angus throughout this period.

The focus of this report however, mostly pre-dates the Covid-19 situation and during 2019/20, social work practice continued to develop with many examples of innovative practice and incremental improvement approaches delivering positive outcomes for people using our services. For example the work being done with care experienced young people and the digital enablement team to develop an App to support children and young people to share their views; the success of the first National Practice Development Day for Review Officers in November 2019 helped us focus on the importance of good practice in assessment, planning and review for children in the care system; the Independent Care Review published its findings encouraging all services to reimagine their approach to care and to focus on early help and support.

The review of overnight support across adult care services has resulted in the increased use of technology enabled care (TEC), to support assessments as part of the safe assessment of overnight support needs, ensuring a focus on enablement and independence and encouraging positive risk taking. The Improvement Hub (ihub), which is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland supported Partnerships to redesign the current approach to sleepovers, while maintaining safe, quality overnight support for people who need it and make best use of available resources. We worked collaboratively with providers and shared experiences and learning to address the challenges associated with redesigning overnight support.

Monifieth Integrated Care has seen the development of a multi-agency co-located service in the Monifieth Health Centre. This service has been very positively reviewed and the intention is to roll out the approach to other areas of the county, building on the methods used.

Following the implementation of the updated client index system "Eclipse" within children's social work service in June 2019, we have continued the preparation to implement the system across the remaining areas of social work practice in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as part of our digital investment in services.

This report outlines how we are performing in social work services but also how we know where we need to focus our improvement efforts to support change in the culture, systems and practice so we ensure the best long-term outcomes for the people in Angus.

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Highlighted Achievements in 2019/20:

Angus Health Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) has continued to grow the multiagency Angus Care Model, supporting more people to be able to continue to live at home.

The review of Supported Housing in older people's services was undertaken and a new support and care model is progressing in St Drostan's Court and Provost Johnson Road. A review of overnight support focussing on enablement and person-centred response options has also been completed.

An Older People's Mental Health Improvement Plan was completed and is now being implemented to support the review, change and redesign of services so as to better meet the changing needs of older people with mental illness.

Each locality within the AHSCP has developed a new improvement plan focussed on enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes based on what people who live in each of the localities have said about how things could be better and what would make a difference. People have told us they want to live healthier, independent lives through access to services; information; local support networks and by anticipating need before it arises. These improvements are now being progressed.

Monifieth Integrated Care has delivered a successful pathfinder approach to District Nursing, Care Management and Enablement Response Teams working as an Integrated Team around a GP practice. The team take a holistic person-centred approach aimed at improving outcomes for people who use services. Opportunities to grow this model across Angus are being developed.

Improvements continued through 2019/20 to address delayed discharge performance, particularly in relation to complex delays. Improvement is in part due to changes to the assessment and pathway process for guardianship applications supported by the Mental Health Officer Team. This work has reduced delays for people accessing appropriate services to support their timely discharge from hospital.

The implementation of a new structure in Children, Families and Justice Services in April 2019, brought resources together to ensure that children and young people in greatest need can access the resources required. These structural changes also emphasised the importance of locality connections and the centrality of relationships to effective practice.

Improved support to kinship carers and improved outcomes for children and young people in kinship placements has been achieved through the provision of an expanded Kinship team offering advice, guidance and practical support. This is

complimented by a dedicated kinship panel to ensure effective and efficient processes for assessment and approval of kinship carers and placements for children.

The Glen Clova Project received temporary funding from 2019/20 to help the service pilot a model of early support for women building on the success of the Glen Isla Project.

It is critical that the voice of care experienced children and young people is heard strongly, and we have worked to develop the opportunities for all our care experienced young people to have their voice heard. A partnership between the Council's Digital Enablement Team, the service, staff and young people has successfully developed and tested an App which enables care experienced young people to share their views with professionals in a way and at a time that suits them. The "My Views" App was launched in April 2020 and provides another route for children and young people to express views and influence decision making that impacts on them directly.

Alongside this, and in partnership with the Third Sector, we have secured significant additional funding to support an increase in the availability of advocacy: £22K for family advocacy, 13K for participation and 23K for individual advocacy alongside a Direct Grant Award to Angus Independent Advocacy for parental advocacy.

Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS) received national recognition for its integrated approach and in 2019 was presented with the COSLA Excellence Award for Service Innovation and Improvement.

Angus was one of three test sites commissioned by the SSSC to develop and implement a supported and assessed year for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) establishing a structured programme of support and development for NQSWs which enable them to consolidate and enhance their knowledge, skills, learning and development. The success of the pilots is being used to develop a Scotland wide approach to a NQSW supported year.

Key Challenges over the last year have included:

Providing high quality services in an environment of steadily increasing demand, such as the continued increase in demand for personal care at home, alongside changing population demographic and additional statutory duties continues to be challenging. The demographic shift includes for example, increasing numbers of people diagnosed with autism. AHSCP are working to improve the range and availability of services to this group people.

AHSCP has successfully implemented Free Personal Care for the under 65's. Whilst this work has placed significant additional demand on local authorities to manage

implementation, it has secured equal access to services based on assessed need, regardless of age.

An area of risk for service users and the organisation arises when vulnerable supported people transition from childhood into adulthood. AHSCP has developed, jointly with the children, families and justice service, a Transitions Group to progress improvement work in this area. During 2019/20 work focused on the connection between child and adult protection, Learning Disability Transitions protocol, the development of a Complex and Co-existing Conditions Case Panel, and enhanced support to vulnerable care leavers.

There continue to be challenges around the integration of IT systems, with different parts of the AHSCP's provision being recorded in separate IT systems. Whilst arrangements are in place to support appropriate information sharing, ideally, these would be supported in practice by the design and implementation of a single system.

Recruitment of sufficient numbers of foster carers and adopters continues to be a challenge locally and nationally and was highlighted in the annual Fostering and Adoption Report.

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) was set up in 2015 to look at the abuse of children in care. Council Chief Executives across Scotland received notice in terms of Section 21(2)(a) of the Inquiries Act 2005 requiring the production of a range of information on Foster Care. A working group led by Legal and Democratic Services was established to progress this work. Following a scoping of the requirements, it was clear that additional resources would be required. As no additional funding was provided nationally to meet our duty to comply with the Section 21 Notice, this work was therefore funded from within existing local resources.

In late 2019, the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland initiated a national investigation into the use of secure care for children and young people. A full response regarding our local practice and arrangements was provided in January 2020. The findings of the investigation are awaited.

The final weeks of 2019/20 were heavily focused on preparation and response to the emerging global Covid-19 pandemic. This diverted a significant amount of capacity with both the HSCP and Children, Families and Justice Services to ensuring that appropriate arrangements and contingencies were in place. This single development has presented a challenge to social work and social care services at a level not seen in recent history. The impact on people who use services, internal services, partner providers and unpaid carers was unprecedented and continues into 2020/21.

Governance and Accountability

In Angus, the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is also Director of the Children, Families and Justice Service. The CSWO took up the role of Convenor for Social Work Scotland (SWS) in May 2019, the national organisation for the leadership of social work in Scotland. As the Convenor of SWS, the CSWO has responsibility for overseeing the work of all committees and subgroups within that organisation and led on the delivery of the successful 2019 national Social Work Conference: Rights, Relationships and Recognition.

As a member of the Council's Leadership Team, the CSWO works in partnership with Elected Members, the Chief Executive, managers and practitioners with regard to the delivery of social work services and fulfilling the statutory duties of the role across the Health Social Care Partnership and Children, Families and Justice Service. Leaders are kept informed and engaged through regular reporting on key social work priorities, pressures and the wider social work agenda through Council Committees and the Integrated Joint Board.

The CSWO holds professional accountability for social work and social care services reporting directly to the Chief Executive and Elected Members of Angus Council in respect of professional social work matters. The CSWO is responsible for ensuring that social work and social care services are delivered in accordance with the relevant legislative and practice standards and that both staff and the Council work in accordance with the Code of Practice for employees and employers as set out by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Service Quality and Performance

The CSWO discharges her role to assure the quality of social workers and of social work practice through a variety of arrangements including reviewing practice, listening and acting on feedback and complaints from people who use services as well as through staff involvement in service improvement events. Arrangements are in place for the provision of individual practice supervision and support through line management arrangements across social work and social care services as well as access to a range of professional development opportunities.

A multi-agency Child Protection Practice Review which included a focus on reviewing practice in domestic abuse cases was carried out during May 2019. The reading team from six agencies reviewed eleven children's files from Social Work, Education, Health, Police, Housing and Barnardos. Four staff focus groups were held to discuss multi-agency practice and six telephone interviews were conducted with parents using the Angus Community Planning Partnership Customer Satisfaction Tool.

The thematic audit was identified through a program of self-evaluation which identified areas that needed a 'closer look' and the findings directly influenced the

development work led by the Justice Service on a whole service response to domestic abuse. Adult Support and Protection improvement work has also been identified as a priority for further development and this will be a focus in 2020/21.

Complaints

Our complaints arrangements operate in line with the corporate complaints handling process and the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. All findings from complaint investigations are reviewed by senior managers to ensure the learning or training needs and improvement to services identified are taken forward as appropriate. The following is a summary relating to complaints investigated and closed during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Children, Families and Justice closed 18 complaints in 2019/20, the outcomes are as follows:

- Stage 1 complaints: 9 not upheld; 2 upheld and 1 partially upheld;
- Stage 2 complaints; 3 not upheld and 3 partially upheld;

Angus Health & Social Care Partnership closed 14 complaints in 2019/20, the outcomes are as follows:

- Stage 1 complaints: 5 not upheld, 3 upheld and 5 partially upheld;
- Stage 2 complaints: 1 not upheld

Across both adult and children's services, complaint themes are broadly consistent with previous findings: a perception of poor attitude of a staff member/s; concern about the quality of a service or failure to provide a service; and a perception of poor communication. During 2019/20, one complaint relating to Children, Families and Justice was referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO are still considering the case.

Following the outcome of a care home complaint, it has been agreed with care home providers that the results of largescale Investigations will be shared with residents and their Guardians.

During 2019/2020, AHSCP received a report under Angus Council's Whistleblowing Policy which detailed a number of concerns related to the effective operation of community mental health provision and adherence to adult protection processes. An independent report was commissioned by the service to investigate the concerns raised. The resulting findings have been reported to the Chief Officer and shared with multi-agency partners. A comprehensive action plan is being taken forward operationally to ensure service arrangements are robust and meet people's needs. Ongoing oversight of improvements will be provided through the AHSCP

management team, clinical and care governance arrangements and the Adult Protection Committee.

Social work services in Angus have a duty of candour under the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016 (The Act) and The Duty of Candour Procedure (Scotland) Regulations 2018. This is a legal requirement which means that when things go wrong and mistakes happen, the people affected understand what has happened, receive an apology, and social work services in Angus learn from any mistakes and where necessary make improvements for the future. An important part of this duty is to provide the Care Inspectorate with an annual report of any duty of candour incidents in our services. Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 social work services in Angus had no reported incidents under the duty of candour.

External Scrutiny

The introduction of new [National Health and Social Care Standards](#) on 1 April 2018, heralded a significant modernisation of the expectations of care and support provision in Scotland. There are five headline outcomes or standards in relation to which service are now held accountable. These are:

- 1) I experience high quality care and support that is right for me
- 2) I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support
- 3) I have confidence in the people who support and care for me
- 4) I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support
- 5) I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

Throughout 2019/20, the Care Inspectorate has continued to publish revised quality frameworks to support the ongoing evaluation, scrutiny and improvement support for health and social care services across a range of settings.

In external scrutiny, inspectors grade establishments using a six-point scale from 6 excellent (the highest grade) to 1 unsatisfactory across five domains including staffing arrangements, leadership, the environment, care planning and the quality of care and support for people's wellbeing. The category wording varies slightly depending on the service context.

Health and Social Care Inspections

The Angus area has 78 registered adult care providers. These include residential care homes, care at home services and housing support. There are currently 30 adult care home providers operating in Angus registered with the Care Inspectorate of which 28 are for older people, 3 of which are delivered by Angus HSCP; a further 2 are for adults with learning disabilities, 1 of which is run by Angus HSCP.

During 2019/20, inspections were carried out by the Care Inspectorate at 53 adult care providers. Of these, 77% had a grade of 4 or higher in the areas inspected, 7

providers had requirements made. AHSCP provide support as necessary through work with internal and external partners to ensure the delivery of improvements required and the AHSCP management team keep the quality of service across Angus under regular review.

Themes of recommendations include:

- Improvements to medication management and administration systems
- Monitoring of staffing levels suitably qualified staff which meet the physical and social support needs of people
- Improvements to individual records of needs and preparation of written plans for people using the service ensuring six monthly reviews are in place
- Care plans incorporate person-centred risk assessments keeping people safe
- Quality assurance systems are fully implemented and areas for improvement identified are actioned
- Environmental risk assessments identify issues which may cause harm to service users
- Maintenance checks must be thorough, any significant issues (repairs and equipment breakdown) is reported with robust audit systems in place to ensure appropriate maintenance schedules are maintained

Children's Service Inspections

Brambles children's home was inspected in June 2019 under the new standards and received the following grades:

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing – 5

How well is our care and support planned – 4

The service was asked to review systems for recording important incidents in young people's lives. Systems have been reviewed and support provided to staff on recording practices.

In January 2020, a variation was made to the registration for Bramble Cottages to increase the places available to young people within Logan Cottage at Brambles from 4 to 5 young people. Bramble Cottages are now able offer placements to young people with a physical disability as well as other complex needs.

Our Carseburn Road setting was inspected in April 2019 and received the following grades:

How good is our leadership - 4

How good is our staffing - 4

How good is our setting - 4

How well is our care and support planned - 4

The service was asked to improve two areas; staffing level and records pertaining to staffing levels in line with Care Inspectorate guidance and to ensure that people using the service have confidence in the people caring for them.

The service developed and implemented a format for assessing and recording appropriate staffing levels taking account of young people's needs as well as staff skills and experience. A training needs analysis and training plan taking account of the specific needs of those using the service is in place.

Strathmore Avenue, our respite provision for children with complex health needs was inspected in August 2019 and received the following grades:

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing – 5

How well is our care and support planned - 5

There were no improvements noted.

Scotland's Children's Commissioner – National Secure Care Investigation

During 2019/20, all local authorities in Scotland were asked to provide the Children's Commissioner with details relating to the local use of and decision-making in relation to secure accommodation for children and young people. Concerns had been raised with the Commissioner's office that young people's views were not consistently taken into account and their right to appeal not routinely communicated.

A response to the request for evidence was submitted in January 2020 and at the time of writing, there has been no local feedback received and the outcome of this national investigation is not known. Our review of the evidence locally highlighted practice that is consistent with the current regulatory framework. Any learning arising from the outcome of the national review will be reported to the Children and Learning Committee and actioned locally as required.

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has been established to consider evidence relating to the abuse of children in care in Scotland between the whole period "in living memory" to 17 December 2014. They are exploring what happened, why and where abuse took place, the effects of abuse on children and their families and whether the organisations responsible for children in care failed in their duties. They will consider whether any failures have been corrected and if changes to the law, policies or procedures are now needed.

In August 2019, all local authorities in Scotland, including Angus Council received a request in terms of section 21(2)(a) of the Inquiries Act 2005 requiring the provision of a range of evidence and analysis in relation to the arrangements across the local authority and all predecessor organisations for the fostering of children and young people. A full response was submitted, following an initial date extension, in

the summer of 2020. The evidence provided will now be considered in full by the inquiry team.

Performance

Children and Families

Children's services aim to give some of our most vulnerable children in Angus, a safe and stable start in life that allows them to achieve and reach their full potential. A key part of the work is assessing need and providing care and protection to vulnerable children at risk of abuse, neglect and harm. The recent redesign of the service has set the structural context in which the service will continue to improve performance. An operational Children Families and Justice Improvement Plan 2019-2022 has four overall improvement themes; Working in partnership with people who use our services ; Delivering effective assessment, planning and support to people who use our services; Promoting a resilient and sustainable social work and social care workforce and Working in collaboration across the Council and wider partnerships to deliver improved outcomes.

During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, the recording system for the children and families service was updated from Carefirst to Eclipse. This modernised client index system will support better quality written records and enable a 'single system' approach to record management. Practical benefits also include a workload management tracking tool to improve efficiency. The recent appointment of a performance information analyst will support the CSWO through regular interrogation and analysis of social work and partnership data to inform decision making.

The changeover to a new recording system has been led and supported by colleagues in the IT service who have worked to minimise the disruption to data collection. As a result of combining data from both Eclipse and the previous system, we can report the total number of referrals to Children and Families was 1949 continuing the slight decrease in referrals from 2204 in 2018/19 and 2360 in 2017/18.

Of these 1949 referrals, follow up action was required for 1059 compared to 1701 last year and 1596 in 2017/18. In summary, 72% of referrals requiring follow up were actioned on the same or day following the referral.

Child Protection

Over the 12-month period, there have been 265 child protection investigations involving 255 children (some children were involved in more than one investigation). This is a decrease on the last two years where it had been static at 295. On average, the number of children on Angus Child Protection Register (CPR) was 54.6.

There were 12 Child Protection Orders granted during 2019/20; an increase of 4 on last year. This figure is lower than the Scottish average as we continue our commitment to offering support early and following the minimal intervention principal.

Angus Child Protection Register (CPR)

102 children were deregistered during the year 1 April to 31 March 2020. They had been on the child protection register for the following durations:

Less than 6 months	67.6%
6 months to 1 year	14.7%
1 year to 18 months	15.7%
Over 18 months	2.0%

We have continued to build on improvements across our services during the 2019/20 period, including ensuring our Child Protection Investigations Team are available to carry out investigations and interviews of children. The restructure has meant that this dedicated team carry out all joint interviews of children following a child protection allegation. This has served to improve practice as the team grow more confident and skilled in the process and practice of joint interviewing. These changes are in line with the recommendations from the [Evidence and Procedure Review Report](#) published in March 2015 to improve the quality and consistency of Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) of children.

Following a successful bid to the Challenge Fund, we have delivered a test of change to ensure the views of young people and families are at the centre of child protection work. We delivered a strength-based practice model for child protection called PREpare (Participation, Relationship, and Equity) which piloted in Angus between October 2019 and April 2020 with very positive outcomes. Evidence shows that the approach increased parental involvement and confidence in the process and better prepared families involved in the child protection system to work as part of a wider team to reduce risk to their children. The evidence gathered as part of the evaluation will be used to inform further changes to improve engagement with families both in child protection and across all children's planning meetings. Early feedback suggests the model is empowering for families.

Quality and Review Officers provide independent oversight of children's plans, whether looked after or on the child protection register. Following the child's initial placement meeting chaired by a Locality Team Manager, all subsequent child's planning meetings are chaired by Quality and Review Officers within a maximum of 21 days and 3 months and 6 monthly thereafter. All children have a plan based on an assessment of need which are shared with the child, family and their network prior to their meeting. Improvement work for meetings this year has focused on improving engagement including supporting attendance of children and families and testing out ways of improving how we plan together. Our recovery work is very much

focused on this area ensuring we offer children and families choice of how they attend their meetings including supporting digital engagement and promoting safe face to face participation. Our planned improvement work for next year is based on the findings of the Independent Care Review and our local consultation with care experienced young people.

Angus chaired the first National Practice Development Day for Review Officers in Scotland in November 2019. The CSWO had the privilege of introducing the event in her capacity as Convener of Social Work Scotland. Over 90 delegates from across Scotland, including Review Officers, Managers of Review Teams and Senior Managers with responsibility for Looked after Children's Reviews were in attendance. The focus was on sharing good practice including ensuring care plans meet the needs of children, how best to improve participation in reviews and providing the delegates with an update on key national policy developments. A second conference is planned for 2021 following the success of the event.

Significant Case Review

During 2019/20, one children's service Significant Case Review under the remit of the Child Protection Committee was completed with findings which impact on social work practice. An Executive Summary has since been published. One referral for an Initial Case Review was completed with an Action Plan currently being progressed. Significant Case Reviews are undertaken on a multi-agency basis and overseen by the Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Group.

Looked After Children / Care Experienced Children and Young People

The figures for 'looked after children' on 31 March of the last four years shows a gradual increase from 244 in 2017, 263 in 2018 to 270 in 2019, this year there were 288. The monthly average number of looked after children this year is 295, a gradual rise over the last four years. Throughout the year on average, we have continued to support just over half (50.7%) of children to remain looked after either at home, or with friends or relatives.

The total number of children placed in secure accommodation between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 remained low, with fewer than 5 requiring a secure placement.

Local and national data highlights the comparatively poor attainment outcomes for some care experienced young people. Locally, we have used nationally allocated LAC Attainment Challenge Funds, to create a multidisciplinary Inclusion Support Team. This includes an Education Psychologist and 3 dedicated inclusion support workers working in partnership with residential staff, young people and families to focus on improving educational outcomes for looked after children and young people. The team set up in 2019 link closely with Skills Development Scotland, Angus

Works, 16Plus and Voluntary Action Angus to create a network of opportunities to enhance inclusion and raise attainment for our care experienced young people.

During the service review, the need for a flexible, responsive resource to meet the needs of children, young people at risk of becoming accommodated or those already looked after and at risk of placement breakdown was identified. Resources were reconfigured internally to create the new Enhance Team operational from April 2019.

The team of 2 social workers and 4.5 Family Support Workers have supported 51 children and young people in their first year. The average time intensive support was provided was 10 weeks, with 34 families also provided with parenting support.

This year (year 1), there were 22 referrals ranging from 7y to 16y olds, with over half of the referrals within the teenage age range. All referrals were for looked after children: 13 at home; 4 foster care and 5 in residential placements. 11 children received support for between 0-3 months, 8 between 3-6 months and 3 between 6-12 months over the year. Only one young person declined to engage. Individual support is provided to all the young people; 15 received practical and emotional support in school or home; 11 received coaching and support via volunteering, work experience or working towards awards; 4 were supported via restorative approaches to rebuild relationships in school which had broken down.

Fostering, Adoption and Permanence

We continue to focus on permanence for children who cannot live within their birth family. This year, there has been a reduction in the number of children being presented with permanence plans but an increase in the number of children who have been matched with prospective adoptive parents. Whilst some children have successfully been placed in permanent families, there remains a number for whom family finding is a challenge and in particular, finding permanent fostering families.

During the year, 72 panels were held to consider the circumstances of children and/or carers. In 2019/2020, two standalone permanence orders and six with authority to adopt as well as two adoption orders were granted.

There were 9 foster carers approved this year: 3 as interim carers; 5 for short breaks; and one long-term carer. This is a 50% decrease from last year despite an ongoing active recruitment campaign. During the year, 16 fostering families left the council following deregistration: 9 interim; 5 short breaks; and 2 support carers. These valued colleagues left for a variety of reasons including retirement and other personal commitments. We currently have 8 fostering families on time-out or awaiting de-registration.

"Change lives for the better. Adopt or foster an Angus child today"

To improve the experience of our children and young people, the fostering service is exploring the wider use of “informal carers” as part of the support available to looked after children and young people. Informal carers are trusted adults who are well known to the carer/s and child and who can provide care for the child up to a period of 23 hours. The development of the proposal is part of our work to recognise and act on feedback from children and care leavers who told us that they want access to more “normal” experiences, like staying over with their extended foster family and trips away.

On 31 March 2020, a total of 73 children were looked after and accommodated with approved Angus foster carers. Externally commissioned placements are only used when we are unable to identify a suitable placement within our own resources. On 31 March 2020, we had nine external fostering placements for 11 Angus children, one of whom was placed on a continuing care basis.

Kinship

This year, the Kinship Team and Kinship Panel were established to assess and offer advice and provide guidance and support to kinship carers. The Kinship Team have had a very successful first year and are looking to develop their role further as link workers to kinship carers. A kinship support group was formed in August 2019 with as many as 16 carers attending fortnightly support sessions, feedback from carers has been very positive.

QUOTES

Kinship event March 2020 - Kinship Carer

“I had a great day, enjoyed meeting other grandparents in my position, everyone was really kind. I loved the food and all the activities! Hopes there’s more events in the future.”

Kinship carer

“My husband and I both feel very supported by the kinship team, feel we have someone available that can support us, gives us the opportunity to openly discuss any concerns or issues we have the team give us guidance, advice and training so we can continue to meet the needs the of the child”

More detail on our performance in these areas can be found in the [Adoption and Fostering Annual committee report No 159/19](#).

In November 2019, the Resources service took responsibility for Continuing Care and Supported Lodging providers in line with the improvement recommendations from the Children, Families and Justice Service review. On 31 March 2020, there were 10 carers offering continuing care placements to 12 young people and two carers offering supported lodgings one with a young person in placement and one provider had a vacancy.

Justice Service

The performance information for Criminal Justice Social Work Services is reported publicly via Scottish Government (SG) and restrictions prohibit publication of 2019/20 information before the information is laid before parliament. Available information on data for 2018/19 can be accessed [here](#). The information for 2019/20 is due to be published early 2021.

Following the approval of additional funding by Angus Council, The Glen Clova Project launched in September 2019. The project received 27 referrals during the part-year of operation supporting vulnerable women either at risk of entering the criminal justice system; pregnant and requiring additional support; have support needs in respect of parenting likely to result in an adverse impact on their children; or have a history of poor/non-engagement with services. Women referred have been aged between 16 and 25, many whom have experienced significant social disadvantage such as family relationship breakdown, homelessness, substance misuse, mental health difficulties, unemployment and poverty. Some are women at increased risk due to abusive relationships, sexual exploitation, self-harm and suicidal ideation or accidental death.

The Glen Clova Project uses a trauma informed approach to engage and support women. Through building therapeutic relationships, opportunities are created for personal development and increased probability of women working with support agencies to improve their circumstances. The staff have also been involved in delivering Trauma Informed Practice Workshops to teams across the Council.

The women and staff from both Glen Isla and Glen Clova projects took part in group work programmes including music groups in partnership with Red Rock Music; keep fit in partnership with Street Soccer; drama in partnership with Underground Cinema Club; cycle group in partnership with Angus Cycle Hub and an arts and crafts group in partnership with Beech Hill Care Centre. The women were also invited and attended the Scottish Parliament to observe First Minister's Questions.

The Munro Team supervises and manages males subject to Court orders or parole licence. The team also supports males released from short prison sentences who wish to receive support through voluntary throughcare. The team are responsible for managing Community Payback Orders, supporting and supervising males subject to Court Orders, including those with an unpaid work requirement. Over the past year, community projects have included work at youth clubs, community halls and hubs, football clubs, schools, playparks, community landscaping and the creation of flower meadows.

Equally important in the Munro Team, staff take a trauma informed approach to support males experiencing inequality and social isolation. The main aim is to reduce re-offending and support community reintegration. The Munro Team also lead the Whole Service response to domestic abuse and work in collaboration with children's

services, Angus Violence Against women Partnership, Protecting People Angus and Third Sector organisations to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse.

The service also offers a range of group-work programmes for males, including:

- Moving on Group (life skills, including budgeting, cooking, self-care)
- Steps to Change (to address offending behaviour and victim empathy)
- Steps to Health (a 'walk and talk' group in the Angus glens)
- Sleep Clinic [emotional wellbeing; promoting constructive use of time]
- Understanding Relationships (including communication, healthy relationships, loss and change)
- Fergus Programme (for high risk male perpetrators of domestic abuse)

During 2019/20, a new pilot project commenced, in partnership with Penumbra, to address service users' emotional wellbeing. This resulted in a Mental Health Wellbeing Support Worker joining the Munro Team offering 1:1 support and small groups, focusing on topics such as anxiety; social inclusion; and motivation.

Over the last year, the Munro Team has proudly supported several final year social worker students on placement with the team and has delivered a range of training input to colleagues across other services in the Council.

Improvement Events – Continuing the Trend

During January and February 2020, we held three Children, Families and Justice improvement events entitled 'Continuing the Trend'. These were focused on the CFJ Improvement Plan 2019 – 2022 and offered staff an opportunity to hear updates about the ongoing improvement work on the four main themes:

1. Working in partnership with people who use our services.
2. Delivering effective assessment, planning and support to people who use our services.
3. Promoting a resilient and sustainable social work and social care workforce.
4. Working in collaboration across the council and wider partnerships to deliver improved outcomes.

Participants had the opportunity to reflect on the following questions: Where are the strengths; Where are the gaps; Are the actions the right ones; What can I do; What can my team do. Staff shared their views, ideas and specifically committed to work with others to improve practice in specific areas such as Care Plans; My Views; staff and service user engagement.

Adult Care

Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) offers a range of supports which enable older adults to be safe and stay independent for longer, meeting the increasingly complex care and support needs throughout the wider adult population in Angus including adults experiencing difficulties in their daily living as the result of a learning disability, substance use and mental health difficulties.

Care home placements form an important element of the Angus Care Model supporting people with the highest level of need and dependency. The number of older people placed in a care home at any one time has continued to reduce as a result of the positive impact of the Help to Live at Home Programme 730 in 2016/17, 690 in 2018/19 down to 681 in 2019/20. In 2019/20, 27% of placements were for nursing care rather than residential care an increase from 25% in the previous year. This is in line with expectations due to demographic change and reductions in care home provision which means that more people are being supported at home for longer.

Delivery of our home care services is central to supporting independent living, citizenship, and participation in society. They enable people who use services to lead a fulfilling life at home. AHSCP delivered or commissioned 9,759 personal care hours per week, up 2,759 hours on last year this continues to be area of significant growth as we support people to remain independent in the community for longer. At some point throughout 2019/20, 1,718 people received personal care, an 8% increase from the previous year.

A total of 441 people received 98,049 community meals (either hot lunch and/or sandwich tea). The number of people receiving this service has almost halved since 2018/19 when from 869 people received 113,275 community meals. Despite this, those requiring the service this year have required it more often, reflecting the general trend of increased levels of need of those supported at home.

Access to long term social care support requires an assessment of need by Care Management Teams. Individuals then make choices about what services would meet their needs and personal outcomes, how and when those supports will be delivered/accessed and who will provide them. Self-directed support is the mechanism by which these choices are provided. The options available are:

- Option 1 - direct payment
- Option 2 - person directs the available support
- Option 3 - local authority arranges the support
- Option 4 - mix of the above

Across Angus, 3,132 people had a care plan in place which includes a self-directed support option. There continues to be a decline in the proportion of people using 'option 3' (which is where HSCP staff organise support on behalf of the person) and an increase in the proportion of people choosing 'option 2' (when a person selects

and directs their support) as people are empowered to take more control of their support plans. There is also a slight increase in the number of people using option 4 which means they are receiving a combination of directed support (option 3) and choosing support for themselves (options 1 and 2)

By the end of the reporting period 2019/20, care managers were working in an agile fashion and due to Covid-19, undertaking assessments and reviews online or by telephone with face to face support provided only where necessary. To ensure that staff could do so in a safe manner, all staff had access to appropriate PPE.

Some services, such as planned respite and day care services, were closed by mid-March 2020. Care at home services and care homes continued to operate with improved approaches to infection protection and control measures.

Carers Support

[Carers in Partnership - A strategy for unpaid carers in Angus 2019-22](#) was published in February 2020. The strategy was developed in partnership with adult and young carers by the Angus Carers Strategic Partnership Group and sets out priorities and a three year improvement plan.

At 31 March there were an estimated 1000 carers identified and supported across both adult services and Angus Carers Centre this includes parent carers supported by children service. This is a significant increase on the last census figure at 31 March 2019 which was around 600 carers. This year AHSCP have supported around 900 carers who have either a carers assessment or a carers support plan in place. Not all carers chose to register as carers with ACC.

As part of the delivery of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, funding is provided to Angus Carers Centre (ACC) to enable them to delivery of a range of information, signposting and advice as well as the development of support plans and wider supports for carers. Carers who have greater levels of need can access a personal budget through adult and children's services, allowing them access to support, including respite. Adult support plans have been introduced to replace carers assessments. All carers assessments will be replaced with support plans in 2020/21. Eligibility criteria was agreed and introduced with AHSCP increasing funding to Angus Carers to allow them to support more carers earlier with lower level needs.

By mid-March 2020, in response to Covid-19, Angus Carers were supporting more carers online and by telephone and developing new approaches to group support that could be delivered through digital means.

The 2016 Act came into force on 1st April 2018 imposing a duty on local authorities to prepare a Young Carer Statement (YCS) for carers aged under 18 years, or over 18 but still at school. The YCS sets out the Young Carer's identified personal outcomes and needs and any supports to be provided. By February 2020, Angus schools had

offered 104 YCSs to children and young people from across both primary and secondary settings. The option of support was taken up by half, with 52 YCSs in place. Young people gave a number of reasons for not wanting a statement or support, with the main reasons being either they did not see themselves as cares or did not feel they needed any support. The option to access support at a later time remains open to all young people.

Adult Support and Protection

The number of adult protection referrals has increased from 385 in 2018/19 to 485 during 2019/20. Police Scotland continue to be the main referrer making 417 referrals during the period. The overall figures show an increase in the number of referrals made by AHSCP staff, up from 19 to 24.

Of the referrals received, 37% resulted in an initial enquiry, 73 referrals (or 41% of those where initial enquiries were undertaken) resulted in an adult protection investigation with 45 adults going on to be considered at an initial adult protection case conference. The principal type of harm for adults referred to case conference has changed over time. Historically financial harm was the main reason for referral, last year this changed to physical harm, this year self-harm was the principal type of harm for adults going through the Angus Adult Protection system.

Initial and Significant Case Reviews

During 2019/20, two adult Significant Case Reviews were commissioned. One has been completed with publication due in 2020, whilst the other is ongoing. In the same period, 3 referrals for Initial Case Reviews were requested. One did not meet the criteria for an Initial Case review, one progressed to a Significant Case Review and one Initial Case Review is ongoing. Significant Case Reviews are undertaken on a multi-agency basis and overseen by the Adult Protection Committee and Chief Officer Group.

Mental Health Officer Function

Statutory social work services provided under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 are delivered by AHSCP. The workload under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 has continued to rise as awareness and understanding among the public increases.

Information covering the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020:

- Emergency detentions figures have declined. 45 compared to 58 in 2018/19
- Numbers of short-term detentions declined from 97 last year to 69 (15 in the community, 54 in hospital). Out of the 69 short term detentions, 57 were within working hours, 12 out with office hours

- A shortage of Section 22 approved doctors in Angus has had a significant impact on the number of detentions and a distinct pattern has emerged:
 - As the number of Doctors reduce so do the number of detentions
 - As the number of Doctors increase so do the number of detentions
- Although the number of detentions has decreased this year, the number of Mental Health Officer (MHO) callouts for advice and assessment has changed very little. With fewer Section 22 approved doctors, an increasing number of non-approved doctors e.g. General Practitioners, have begun requesting MHO assessment with many not proceeding to detention.
- The number of reports provided under the Mental Health Act has continued to be high with Mental Health Officers completing 157 reports: 57 Social Circumstances Reports; 37 Compulsory Treatment Order applications; and 63 other reports relating to both civil and forensic cases.
- The number of Local Authority and Private Guardianship Orders in operation on 31 March 2020 was 327 (115 Local Authority, 212 Private)
- The number of adults subject to a Compulsion Order has remained low with less than 5 over the period
- There were 98 Guardianship requests (an increase of 15 on last year). There were 75 new applications and 23 renewals. On 31 March 2020, 81 Guardianship reports had been completed during 2019/20 and 17 requests were pending allocation.
- Between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there was a 36% reduction in delayed discharge due to complex delays (usually associated with Guardianship applications)

The role of senior social work practitioner has been introduced within the adult mental health service providing a senior supervisory role supporting the service to deliver on its statutory responsibilities. Consideration is being given to extending the use of such roles across AHSCP.

Given the well publicised shortage of accredited MHOs at a national level, the Scottish Government established an MHO development grant. The Angus MHO Service applied to the fund in February 2020 and in March were awarded a development grant of £35,057 for the financial year 2020/21. This funding will support Angus Council to train three MHOs from our existing workforce next year, an additional one place. This will support the growth of local capacity, including the availability of necessary training and development work for the wider workforce.

Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS)

Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS) continues to support people and their families affected by substance misuse within their own communities, working in partnership with third sector agencies to ensure early access to the right service, at the right time to meet people's needs. This collaborative approach with partners is embedded within a recovery orientated system of care, which ensures a person's recovery sits at the centre of service delivery. AIDARS has received national

recognition of its integrated approach in this area of work and in 2019 was presented with the COSLA Excellence Award for Service Innovation and Improvement.

With the increasing incidence of drug related deaths across Scotland, AIDARS has developed an approach to try and retain people in treatment, specifically those who require Opiate Substitution therapy, thereby reducing the risk of non-fatal and fatal overdose within this group of vulnerable people. This approach has significantly reduced the revolving door referral culture and supported a mutual trust relationship with those most at risk. As a result, there has been an increase in numbers involved with the service; circa 740 people with alcohol or drug difficulties have been in contact with teams. By retaining people in treatment, referrals have reduced during the past year, although the workload has increased with a notable upsurge in adult protection cases across teams.

The non-fatal overdose pathway, in partnership with Scottish Ambulance Service and Public Health, has moved from pilot to mainstream provision. This continues the drive to reduce drug related deaths within our community. Similar models are now being developed across other Alcohol and Drug Partnership areas in Scotland. The recent drug related death figures for Angus show a ratio of 0.11 per 1000 of population, with the Scottish average at 0.22 per 1000.

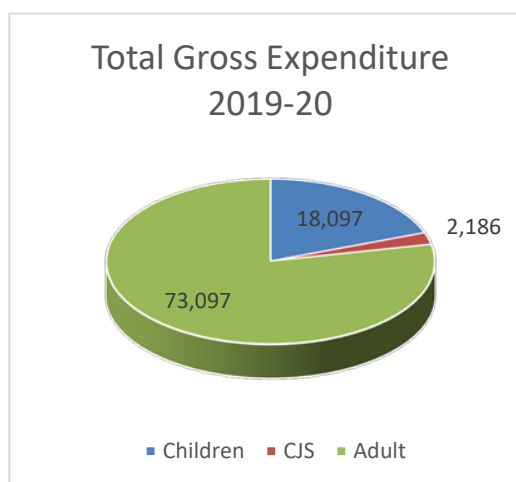
In partnership with General Adult Psychiatry in Angus, an Improvement Project commenced in early 2019, to develop a more aligned and integrated operational approach to people presenting with co-existing conditions of substance use and severe and enduring mental health issues. This project has been supported by the recent recommendations from the Strang Report 'Trust and Respect' published in February 2020 and the findings of the Dundee Drugs Commission, with the project leads liaising with national bodies on its development.

AIDARS continues to meet the HEAT standard of '90% of people engaged in treatment three weeks after receipt of referral', this remains a key driver to engagement, the service has achieved 97% of this standard during the reporting period.

Resources

The total gross spend on social work services in Angus during financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 was £93,380 million (excluding all income).

- Children's Service 18,097 million
- Justice Service 2,186 million
- Adult Services 73,097 million



Deployment of Resources

The funding of social work and social care services remains challenging. This is consistent with the wider financial pressures faced by the public sector generally and reflects other local pressures. The most significant pressures facing AHSCP continue to be the growth in demand for personal care at home (as a result of demographic change in Older People Services), and the transition of young people with additional and complex needs.

The main budget pressures in Children's Service relate to the costs of delivering and supporting kinship, fostering, residential and continuing care placements to meet children's needs. We are experiencing local growth in the number of looked after children. We remain committed to supporting children to live within their extended families where this is safe and appropriate, however demand is also growing for the provision of both financial and other forms of support to kinship carers. This presents a recognised financial pressure on the children's services budget.

Angus Council has sought to mitigate the impact of increased placement costs through incremental budget uplifts which is welcomed. There is also a further need to consider the suitability of the underpinning core resource to manage children's care adequately given the reported and continuing rise in the number of looked after children and young people.

Workforce

Key to the delivery of good quality social work and social care services is the skill and capacity of the workforce. Several improvement themed engagement events were held for Children, Families and Justice staff, the last one in January 2020. All events were well attended, supporting staff engagement in improvement work for the service.

Care experienced young people told us about the importance of their relationships with their brothers and sisters so we have developed "Siblings together" training which will be delivered to staff, foster carers, prospective adopters and kinship carers to promote the importance of maintaining sibling relationships.

In the past year, in conjunction with colleagues in Perth and Kinross and Dundee City, we have developed and delivered new Tayside-wide learning and development opportunities including:

- 2 courses of Second Worker Training
- 3 courses of Defensible Decision-Making in Adult Protection
- 1 course of Council Officer Training
- 3 courses Assessing Risk
- 3 courses Information Sharing
- 4 courses of Adult Support and Protection, Roles and Responsibilities
- Crossing the Acts, 1 course delivered by MHO Service

Training Quotes

"Thanks for a brilliant training day, learnt lots!"
"Kept interested all day!"
"I really enjoyed the coming together and learning from colleagues of different local authorities"

Work has commenced on a Tayside Adult Support and Protection e-learning resource suitable and accessible for a multi-agency workforce. Work is also being undertaken on the conversion of courses normally delivered face-to-face, to digital delivery methods where appropriate.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

During the year we recruited 11 newly qualified social workers (NQSW) via the graduate recruitment scheme, 7 took up posts in Children, Families and Justice and 4 within AHSCP. Through normal recruitment processes, we also employed 16 qualified social workers: 12 in CFJ and 4 in AHSCP. All 24 recruitments were to permanent posts.

Our local pilot NQSW programme was suspended mid-March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, plans are in place to restart in August. The feedback on the format of the NQSW programme has been positive with NQSW's enjoying monthly protected time at a drop-in, bespoke induction package and practice-based learning assessment in the form of online 'open badges'. We plan to continue this model of enhanced support for 2020/21. The SSSC have published a report [Learning from the NQSW pilots and next steps in developing a supported year](#) June 2020 based on the independent evaluation of the pilots which Angus was a participant.

Improving the retention of staff has been a focus over the last year however, we had 12 qualified social work staff (QSWR) leaving our services. The snapshot of vacant posts shows over two years, shows an increase in vacant QSWR posts.

Vacant QSWR posts	01/02/19	01/02/20
CFJ	6	7
AHSCP	9	14

Traineeship scheme

Angus Council currently supports existing paraprofessional staff to become QSWRs through our Traineeship Scheme. All those recruited to the scheme have remained employed in Angus following completion of their training and beyond. The existing traineeship scheme has been running for just over 7 years with 100% completion and retention rate. The scheme is recognised now as a well-established career pathway for workers in Angus.

In 2019/20, two workers were recruited from within the Children, Families and Justice Service workforce and are currently in their second year of the 4 year degree course. Having been based in children's services teams so far, both trainees will move to new Host teams in Adult Services prior to their assessed placement in February 2021. They will be due to qualify as social workers in September 2022.

Registration of the workforce

The assessment centre team continues to support services in line with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) registration categories. The registration deadline for workers in housing support and care at home is December 2020, all applicable staff in Angus are registered. The timescale for new staff to register has been temporarily extended through legislative measures from 6 months to 12 months under temporary Coronavirus provisions.

Figures for workers across services now qualified are:

- Residential childcare 58% qualified
- Care Home services for adults 70% qualified
- Housing support services 99% qualified
- Care at Home services 66% qualified
- Managers of adult day care services 100% qualified

Only qualified and specifically registered Social Workers can be appointed to a Social Worker post.

COVID-19

Significantly in the final weeks of 2019/20, the country was impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Social work and social care staff and leadership

teams have been significantly involved in the response and subsequent planning for recovery throughout the pandemic. In particular, social workers, care managers and social care workers have continued to work in our community during this challenging period. This involved close working with members of the public who need support and/or protection to uphold their human rights. This has included delivering personal care, providing emergency financial and practical support to people who use services and their carers, transportation, emotional support and the implementation of direct protection measures as well as the continued provision of care in care homes for adults and for children across Angus.

HSCP and CFJ colleagues have worked together with other partners to ensure that humanitarian assistance has been available to those in need; to undertake more than 4000 calls to support people (often not known to services) who received a 'shielding' letter. They have worked to ensure that independent providers and carers had access to the necessary personal protective equipment as well as early access to testing to minimise the transmission of infection. By mid-March, AHSCP had worked with Voluntary Action Angus to support the availability of a volunteer support programme for the wider community. A partnership approach ensured that day care providers were able to offer home based visiting support and care at home providers worked together so that all planned care was delivered.

Early decisions were made by the Council's leadership team to shut office bases for everything other than essential service provision. Staff embraced the relocation to home, or other premises, and were flexible in responding to the initial challenges that this presented. Many worked from home juggling childcare and other caring commitments as well as providing continued support to our most vulnerable citizens.

Social workers and support workers across Angus helped to deliver food, undertook 'window visits' to check on people they knew would be isolated and provided extensive support by telephone and video link or where essential, in people's own homes. At the same time, they continued to undertake assessments, organise packages of care, transport children to placement, supervise or facilitate contact and attend multiagency meetings to ensure that risk was appropriately responded to.

Early indications have been that working from home has been successful. Many staff in CFJ were equipped with most of the tools necessary to successfully work at home and colleagues in IT prioritised access to equipment for remaining staff although some requests remain outstanding due to demand. The position is different in AHSCP where a lower proportion of the workforce had agile working kit available at the outset of the pandemic.

Managers from across the HSCP and CFJ service have worked to ensure that staff working from home continue to have access to support and regular supervision. Internal survey results suggest that staff satisfaction has been high.

The demands on adult care homes during the pandemic have been severe with the impact of lockdown on residents and staff; the stringency of the testing regime; the impact on staff morale; loss of income due to fewer admissions; increased staffing and PPE costs; police investigations in some instances; and most importantly the impact of the death of individual residents. The sector has had to work to manage and operationalise frequently updated guidance and respond to complex and changing oversight and regulatory activity. All of these factors are likely to impact on the mental wellbeing of care staff, the desirability of a career in care and confidence in the sector as a whole.

In the short-term, we expect an unusually low proportion of annual leave to have been taken by the end of July 2020 with proportionately more annual leave scheduled for the remaining months of the financial year. Whilst there has been an agreement of flexibility in the carry forward of annual leave, there is a risk that deferral may constrain workforce capacity at a later point.

At the outset of the Covid-19 period, immediate action was taken to recruit additional residential care staff in children's service increasing capacity through a range of full-time, part-time and sessional appointments. A redeployment register and plan were put in place across the Council which included an assessment of which of our current staff would be available to provide cover in critical services such as residential childcare if required. So far, minimal redeployment has been necessary and successful fast track recruitment of new staff has enabled the service to meet staffing demands during the pandemic.

Most staff undertaking frontline roles in Children, Families and Justice Service remain home-based with access to technology to support the continuation of business and access to personal protective equipment (PPE) for essential visits. A number of key offices are available for direct work with members of the public with a range of hygiene and other measures in place to minimise risk of Covid-19 transmission. Further information on the impact and response to Covid-19 on CFJ is available in [Scrutiny and Audit committee report No166/20](#).

All residential, home care and field work services have sufficient PPE available to ensure staff and public safety. Routes for replenishing stock are now more consistently in place and regular oversight of provision is in place.

Several social care activities still require staff to work in environments where physical distancing and ordinary measures (such as hand washing) are not possible. PPE is necessary to protect the workforce undertaking a range of essential caring roles. This includes delivering personal care, conducting home visits or critical office appointments, supporting contact arrangements, providing transportation and carrying out child protection investigations, longer term arrangements will require to be kept under review.

The initial impact on the MHO workforce was not as significant as had been anticipated, from the early stage of the pandemic it was a concern Welfare Guardianships, for the most part, would not be dealt with by the Courts. The inability to progress Guardianships through the Courts has consequently left many people either vulnerable and or at risk, with limited guidance on what constitutes 'urgent' the impact of this on services has been significant, particularly in cases where Guardianship has been deemed necessary and there are no legal routes to address this.

Services have taken a direct role in supporting the design and delivery of support to people shielding and others supported via the Shielding and Humanitarian Aid Angus Response Team (HAART). Staffing has been heavily supported by Justice staff alongside the skills of professional social work staff, partners from within and outside the council. This has supported a trauma informed and whole family approach to identifying and responding to people in need across Angus. There have been clear benefits to staff from being involved in this work with a high level of satisfaction being reported from staff involved in helping people directly affected by the pandemic.

Key Priorities for Recovery in response to Covid-19 Pandemic

We will continue to work in partnership across all services to take forward learning from COVID-19 pandemic. It is acknowledged there is still a level of uncertainty around how the pandemic will develop and how responding to this will intersect for example, with "traditional" winter planning over the coming months.

As parts of the social work and social care and related systems are moving towards recovery, other elements of provision are still in the active response to pandemic phase, such as in residential care homes. It is likely that localised episodes will continue to impact on service available or format throughout 2020/21.

The impact of court closures on adult and children's services has resulted in delays processing critical business such as Guardianship applications for adults and permanence plans for children. Progress will remain limited whilst Courts remain under special arrangements. Services are working to avoid unnecessary future delay in the process once court business is re-established. It is important to recognise that demands on both social work, including MHOs, and the Council's legal service are likely to increase during the recovery phase as services at court resume.

The Justice Service is developing arrangements to support the safe resumption of unpaid work (specified by the Court as part of a Community Payback Order) as restrictions permit. Plans will require to accommodate the existing backlog of hours, (average 1400h per month) alongside meeting the requirements of new orders imposed as the Courts start to resume normal activity.

As we move towards winter, we anticipate pressures relating to fuel poverty for families and adults are likely to increase. As debt recovery begins and furlough

arrangements end, financial pressures are likely to emerge and cause significant stress. This will be especially the case for our most vulnerable individuals and families.

There is an established correlation between financial hardship and social work referrals of all forms. We are therefore anticipating an increase in demand for both AHSCP and children's services during 2020/21. This will require active monitoring of our capacity to meet statutory obligations within the existing workforce.

Planned respite care and Disability Day Centres have been closed since early March 2020, with alternative outreach support available. Due to the significant impact on individuals and families of the continued non-availability of these services, their re-opening will be a priority once this is permitted nationally and the necessary national guidance is available. Disability Services have strong service Improvement Plans which are regularly updated and reported to the Integrated Joint Board (IJB). These plans are being scrutinised in the context of Covid-19 impact and response and will be adjusted accordingly.

We anticipate an increase in demand for services by people which vulnerabilities particularly adversely impacted by the pandemic. National data is suggesting a higher proportion of people with long-term health conditions 59%, single parents 63%, those aged 25-34 65%, and women 63% reported feeling anxious/worried compared to the overall adult population 54%. A higher proportion of people with a mental health diagnosis 27%, a long-term health condition 25% and unemployed people 23% are not coping well compared to the population overall 13%.

Two additional social workers will be employed to work within the Community Mental Health Teams. This will increase the overall capacity of staff to manage increased demand. Plans are in place to support our third sector providers by up to 10% increased funding to manage changes in demand for their services including managing substance misuse, counselling, suicide support, and early intervention and self-management projects.

Digital interventions are now seen as critically important as part of the emergency Covid-19 response and to support service recovery. Access to IT equipment will need to be reviewed for all staff, mobile handsets also require to be upgraded to enable staff to use video communication effectively. Using technology to facilitate virtual Fostering, Kinship and Permanence panels has allowed work to progress to support children who have been assessed as requiring permanent alternative care arrangements and to review and approve foster and kinship carers and adoptive parents.

Children's rights are central to recovery and renew plans, we will be building on lessons learned and what works for families (i.e. digital connection for families to attend meetings, buildings to support safe contact).

We anticipate increasing resource pressures across AHSCP and CFJ which will require us to keep staffing levels under close review ensuring we maintain safe staffing levels as we work on recovery and renew plans, including mitigating for the anticipated

impact of the pandemic on the safety, health and wellbeing of children, families and adults as we move into the next stage.

Challenges for the Year Ahead

Implementing recovery plans as we come through the Coronavirus epidemic will remain a challenge as the position is not static and services need to anticipate resource pressures and response phasing. Ensuring that we meet the support and protection needs of children and vulnerable adults and providing care for those with multiple and complex needs remains the priority.

The continued demographic and increasing demand challenge in the context of continued financial constraint will impact on all social work services in 2020/21 and beyond. Mitigation will require active prioritisation by local and national decision makers to fund core social work and social care service provision.

The growing demand in AHSCP for care at home provision will be a major priority for AHSCP and will require investment to reflect the complexity of the needs experienced by older and disabled people.

At the same time, AHSCP will need to continue to modernise and transform social care provision to deliver better anticipatory and preventative care, provide a greater emphasis on community-based care, and enable increased choice and control in the way that people receive services. Digital connectivity within the community and for the workforce will be central to delivery on these aspirations.

The longer-term financial implications of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) are as yet unknown. The Council is receiving an increased number of enquiries regarding potential compensation claims as the legislative time bar has been lifted. There has also been a resulting increase in the number of Subject Access Requests received with no permanent funded arrangement to support the delivery of this statutory function.

There are a number of areas of legislative change anticipated during 2020/21 all of which would require resources locally to implement and deliver. There are ongoing developments at a national level relating to the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); a review of Adult Care, Self-Directed Support, the implementation of The Care Review findings and a plethora of other social work and social care related workstreams. The complexity and interrelated nature of these, and the challenge of local engagement and implementation cannot be underestimated.

Implementing the recommendations from the Care Review will require us to rethink how to better support our care experienced children and young people. Amid Covid-19 and through the recovery phase we must ensure that our commitment to those for whom we have parenting responsibility remains a priority. In Angus we must ensure that the voices of children who often suffer the greatest hardship in times of crisis are heard and they are loved, safe and respected (#KeepThePromise).

As a result of Covid-19 response, there has been a delay to a number of projects and improvement work within AHSCP. Whilst some change work has recently recommenced, the demands of the pandemic on project management capacity remain high. This is likely to result to impact on the ability to deliver savings elements of programmes. The long term effect of Covid-19 on some services, in particular the changed demand for residential care home and Care at Home sectors, is being considered strategically.

As other systems move through the phases of recovery, there is likely to be a period of concentrated demand for social work services related to the progress of various court activity. This will impact across mental health, justice and children's services. Ensuring the availability of a sufficient number of skilled staff will be essential.

Priorities for 2020/21

As highlighted throughout the report, the implementation of Coronavirus (Covid-19) recovery plans are a priority for all services. In addition, the following specific areas have been identified as priority:

Continued focus and review of the implementation of new duties to support carers as introduced by the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

Further progress on the development and adoption of technology enabled care. Sustaining a range of high quality placements to meet the needs of children who require alternative care.

Enhancing early intervention and family support service provision.

Improving the access to and range of independent advocacy services for those with child protection needs.

Explore the potential to extend the Enhanced Community Support model tested in Monifieth.

Establish a clear understanding of the consistency and quality of adult protection practice across AHSCP and prioritise the implementation of learning from reviews.

Continue to build on the strong working relationship with partner providers in the local care sector and recently enhanced joint assurance arrangements.

Work with communities, who demonstrated a high level of compassion during the Covid-19 response, to deliver on the strategic aim of developing an Angus that Actively Cares.

Conclusion

As this report concludes the AHSCP and Children, Families and Justice Service along with our communities are working hard to protect those most at risk from the spread of Covid-19 alongside the daily pressures of providing services to some of our most vulnerable children, families and adults both now and as the pandemic continues to impact on our community in the weeks and months ahead. Staff across Angus are playing a vital role, not only by sharing advice and guidance, but particularly drawing on their own strengths, talents and experience to help keep children and adults safe and well. I would like to personally thank everyone for their hard work and continued commitment to supporting, caring and protecting the citizens of Angus.

This annual report is also an opportunity to look back over the last year and highlight the important work that has taken place and reflect on the progress made on the priorities set in 2019/20. We have continued to support the development of individual workers through continuing professional development and our traineeship scheme, it is important for us to continue to do this, without professionals who are supported, valued and confident practitioners we would not be able to deliver high quality, person centred services to the citizens of Angus.