

ANGUS

**CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022**

Updated picture
coming from Jane
Stork

Kathryn Lindsay

Chief Social Work Officer

Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to present this Annual Report as Chief Social Work Officer for Angus, reflecting on the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The report presents an overview of social work and social care services within Angus and the delivery of statutory functions during that period. It has taken longer to compile and present the report this year due to a range of capacity issues impacting relevant services.

Last year, my report highlighted many challenges presented by the pandemic. It is important to acknowledge that these continued to have a significant impact on the citizens of Angus, on social work and social care services and on the staff that deliver them during 2021-22.

We started that year with children only just returning to full-time learning in the classroom. There were significant restrictions on travel, socialising, social distancing and face coverings were all required. Enhanced testing arrangements for most social work and social care staff remained in place and guidance was subject to regular review with changes often being needed within very short timescales. Working from home was required wherever possible, a restriction that only eased in January 2022. There were launches of multiple vaccination cohorts and booster cohorts impacting on supported people, staff and communities.

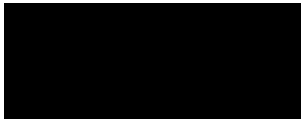
Whilst these changes impacted the whole of society, those delivering services were required to continually review, update and implement revised iterations of guidance, and communicate this to staff and supported people clearly and quickly, often at late notice or during much needed weekends or holiday periods.

Toward the end of 2021-22, awareness was growing that Covid related impacts were being compounded by planning for the humanitarian support response needed for people displaced by the war in Ukraine and to mitigate the impacts of the wider cost of living crisis which looks set to continue to increase.

Such economic, policy and societal pressures are directly related to increasing demand for social work services and other support infrastructure in communities and reflect a growing complexity of needs.

This year has also been characterised by a dynamic and future focused national policy agenda resulting in the sector having been heavily impacted by a range of seminal consultations with the potential to transform the social work and social care landscape. Arguably, the most significant of these in terms of projected scale and impact is the proposal to establish a National Care Service. It is still too early to be definitive about what this will mean at the local level.

Despite the increasing challenges, the context, and the significant uncertainty facing the sector, our social work and social care workforce, our carers and other partners across all services have remained committed to providing services that empower, support and protect local people. As ever, my appreciation goes to everyone who works in social work and social care, and those who otherwise support this important work, for all that they have done in the last year for children, young people, adults, and families.



Kathryn Lindsay

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1. Achievements and highlights during 2021-2022

Some key developments over the last year include:

- Establishing the Angus Promise Team with care experienced employees at the centre delivering on engagement, participation and awareness raising
- Establishing the Improvement Service for practice across children, families and justice services
- Extending the availability of Peer Mental Health Support to those over 12
- Delivery of a central archive to improve access and security of sensitive records
- Extending the provision of care at home to offer more support in communities
- Care at Home recruitment working group; up to 31 March 2022 they recruited 45 new carers
- Reducing the number of outstanding unpaid work hours as restrictions allowed a return to unpaid work in communities
- Our Learning Disability Service achieving the National Autism Certificate of Accreditation
- Delivery of support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children referred under the mandatory National Transfer Scheme

2. Key challenges over the last year

A summary of some of the challenges included:

- Budgetary pressures continue to impact on the ability of services to strengthen core service provision on a recurring basis. Savings and short-term funding allocations have presented challenges
- The continued shortage of a range of suitable care options, despite investment
- Increase in demand for social work services including adult protection and child protection referrals
- Demand for care at home has routinely exceeded the available capacity with gaps in service provision
- Recruitment and retention issues continue to impact across the social work and social care workforce
- The need to prioritise improvement and respond to enhanced scrutiny in relation to the outcome of significant case review P19 diverted capacity across services
- The impact of ongoing covid related impacts and the emerging cost of living crisis on staff health and wellbeing
- National Care Service proposals bring both opportunity and uncertainty for the workforce in already difficult times
- Delivering core social work services from a highly agile working environment and transitioning to new buildings amid pandemic restrictions.
- Introduction of the mandatory National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- Incomplete migration of data to our replacement client index system, particularly impacting children's services.

3. Governance and Accountability

Local authorities are required, under Section 3 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 as amended, to appoint a Chief Social Work Officer. This report is produced to meet the requirement to prepare and publish an annual report in relation to the Chief Social Work Officer's role in professional leadership, oversight of practice, governance, values, and standards as specified in national guidance.

3.1 Role of Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO)

The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is to ensure professional oversight of social work practice and service delivery. This includes professional governance, leadership, and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether provided by the local authority or purchased through the third sector or independent sector.

The role of the CSWO within the context of the pandemic and recovery has been amplified. The leadership aspect of the role gained a level of prominence perhaps not previously experienced. As CSWO there were key responsibilities about supporting a workforce navigate their way safely through a global pandemic. This involved a delicate balance of public protection and safety whilst ensuring the safety of the workforce within an unprecedented, novel and changing landscape in terms of guidance, lockdown and further tier-based restrictions.

At the heart of all decision making was the needs of communities and how within this challenging context they could be met. A key function was to ensure that the voice of social work and social care was heard locally and nationally to ensure that a workforce who continued to visit and support people in their own homes were supported and equipped to do this safely and effectively.

Additional responsibilities in supporting our partner care homes through multi-agency Care Home Oversight and Support was important in ensuring that those living and working in care homes were well supported, practically and in terms of wider wellbeing. The CSWO was a key multi-agency partner with a focus on the human rights of those affected balanced with the need to keep people safe.

The CSWO in Angus is also the Director of Children, Families and Justice and plays an active role both locally and nationally leading and influencing policy and practice within social work and social care.

3.2 Overview of governance arrangements

Following the implementation of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014, different parts of the Social Work Service in Angus have operated within different governance arrangements.

Adult social work and social care services are commissioned by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) from Angus Council and delivered through the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP). Services report to the IJB and relevant Council committees.

The officer with delegated operational responsibility for these services is the Integration Chief Officer of AHSP reporting to the Chief Executive of Angus Council.

Children's and Justice social work and social care are managed through the Children, Families and Justice Service with governance being through the Council committee. The officer with direct operational responsibility for these services is the Director of Children, Families and Justice reporting to the Depute Chief Executive of Angus Council.

In addition, the CSWO has the delegated authority to make direct reports to the Chief Executive, Elected Members and the Integration Joint Board in her professional capacity to ensure that critical risks can be raised. Wherever possible, issues and risks should be raised directly by the operationally responsible leader.

The CSWO retains overall professional accountability for all social work and social care provision and as a statutory officer of the Council reports directly to the Chief Executive of Angus Council on these matters as required.

The CSWO is supported to maintain oversight of all relevant services through her membership of the IJB and IJB Audit Committee; as a member of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and through representation on a range of strategic including the local community planning partnership and key thematic groups; protecting people committees and attendance at the Angus Protecting People Chief Officer's Group.

Within each operational service, there are arrangements in place in Angus to discharge professional governance of services. Within Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, this takes the form of management structures and an integrated Clinical Care and Professional Governance Forum (CCPG). Within Children, Families and Justice, this is delivered directly through the operational management infrastructure.

Elected members are kept apprised of key relevant developments through reporting by specific operational services and representation on the IJB and specific reports to Council committees throughout the year.

4. Learning From Feedback

4.1 Complaints

Social work services are required to report on the volume of complaints received. Analysis of both formal and informal feedback from people who use services is an important source of learning and practice development in social work.

In the reporting period, AHSCP closed 40 complaints with 39 of these being managed at Stage 1 of the complaints process and one at Stage 2 (complex complaints). One complaint was referred onto the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) and was not upheld, with no recommendations made.

Themes emerging from complaints covered several categories. The most received feedback related to a delay in the allocation of a Mental Health Officer, followed by concerns about the quality of service provided and poor communication.

- Delay in allocation of MHO - 12
- Quality of service provided - 8
- Poor communication - 7

The learning from complaints overall highlighted 4 key areas for improvement:

- the need for clear communication with individuals and families
- timely provision of services
- giving accurate information on self-directed support options
- clear record keeping

In the reporting period, the Children, Families and Justice Directorate closed 24 complaints with 21 of these being managed at Stage 1 and three at Stage 2 complaints (complex complaints). Of the Stage 2 complaints, one was not upheld and two were upheld in part.

Analysis of complaints held that the main categories of complaint were:

- Treatment or attitude of a staff member
- Failure to provide a service
- Inadequate standard of service

During the period, the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) investigated four complaints; two were not upheld with no recommendations and two were upheld with recommendations.

The learning complaints highlighted:

- the importance of communication with people using services
- most complaints were resolved quickly at stage 1 by frontline staff
- some complaints related to situations where families disagreed with recommendations and decisions that were being made regarding children.
- the importance of staff making families aware of the supports available to them, including independent advocacy.

As part of the Children, Families and Justice Directorate Self Evaluation Strategy, reflective discussions are now routinely undertaken for all complaints made to the service. These are facilitated by the Quality and Improvement Team. This practice was established in January 2022 to better support learning from feedback and identify areas for thematic improvement in addition to individual case level improvement.

4.2 Duty of Candour

The organisational Duty of Candour provision of the Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016 (The Act) and The Duty of Candour Procedure (Scotland) Regulations 2018 set out the procedure that organisations providing health services, care services and social work services in Scotland are required by law to follow when there has been an unintended or unexpected incident that results in death or harm (or additional treatment is required to prevent injury that would result in death or harm).

[The Duty of Candour Report](#) for 2021/22 covers Angus social work services, including those delivered within AHSCP. The report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. During that time, there were no incidents reported under the Duty of Candour in any relevant Angus social work service.

4.3 External scrutiny

The 77 registered adult care providers in Angus have continued to deliver a critical service in the reporting period in exceptional circumstances. As noted above, additional, multi-agency, oversight arrangements were initiated during the pandemic to ensure clinical oversight of these services.

Between them, these 77 providers deliver residential care home services, housing support services and support services providing care at home and day care. Services are subject to inspection and grading by the Care Inspectorate. The grading system operates by applying a grade between 1 and 6. The lowest grade achieved in any single area of the service is then given as the overall grade for that service.

During 2021-22, the Care Inspectorate undertook 14 inspections of residential care homes and three supported services in Angus. Following the inspections eight providers had requirements to action, and two providers had areas of improvement identified.

The requirements related to:

- Environmental improvement plan
- Infection prevention and control

The areas for improvement were:

- Choice and range of social, creative, and learning activities
- Support at mealtimes
- Contingency planning

AHSCP has provided funding to Scottish Care to appoint an improvement officer to work with our partners across the independent care sector on quality improvement and change locally.

In relation to Children's services, Strathmore Centre was inspected by the Care Inspectorate in December 2021. The unannounced inspection evaluated the Centre as Very Good (Grade 5) across each of the following:

- How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?
 - 1.1 Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect
 - 1.2 Children and young people get the most out of life
 - 1.3 Children and young people's health benefits from their care and support they experience
- How well is our care planned?
 - 5.1 Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs and wishes

There were no other Children's or Justice inspections in the year.

5. Resources

The total gross spend on social work services in Angus during the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was £108.842 million.

All services continue to face significant challenges with financial sustainability due to increased demand and complexity of need, inflationary cost pressures and the impact of legislative and policy changes not necessarily being fully funded by Government.

Total gross expenditure 2021-22

- Justice Service £2.777 million
- Children's Service £20.109 million
- Adult Services £85.956 million

The impact of the pandemic on adult services has seen the shift in demand between Care Homes and Care at Home continue. This acceleration in predicted demographic patterns has created challenges in meeting the increased demand which continued to exceed the available capacity. During 2021-22, the Scottish Government provided some recurring funding to support winter pressures in adult services and to provide longer term improvement in service capacity across health and social care systems.

The Children, Families and Justice Directorate continues to use the largest portion of the available budget to provide care for children, young people and family groups who are not able to remain at home. The budget pressures in relation to this aspect of the service continued to be significant. Despite the growth approved through the budget setting process, resources were immediately under pressure, and this has continued to be the case throughout the year.

Towards the latter part of 2021-22, there was a sharp increase in the requirement for children and young people to be cared for away from home. Our internal residential and fostering placement capacity were not enough to meet the needs of children locally. As a result, we saw an increase in the use of external fostering placements and residential placements, a trend which is projected to continue into the next financial year. As with last year, the continued growth in demand for continuing care placements, as well as increased demand for carer support services (including financial allowances) represent an overall resource challenge.

The financial pressures facing Angus Council have been noted elsewhere, the financial viability of the Council remains critical to ensuring the ongoing capability to meet statutory social work and social care duties.

6. Performance and Data Summary

6.1 Children, Families and Justice Services

6.1.1 Family Support Services

During the reporting period, 1474 referrals were made to children's services about 1635 children. Of these, 622 (42%) required follow up action by our social work teams. This has continued the gradual decrease in numbers we have seen since 2017-18. While no further action was required for 852 referrals in many cases advice or information was given, or a referral was made to another agency for appropriate support. While the number of referrals has continued to show a slight decrease, the number of child protection referrals has increased again this year and is reported below.

The service has continued to evaluate and review key parts of the service following the significant restructure in 2019 to ensure effective distribution of service provision to meet the fluctuation demand on different parts of the service. Our core locally based teams deliver support for children and young people referred to the service, including those whose needs emerge as complex. Our Enhance Team have offered more intensive support to 78 children on the edges of care this year to prevent family breakdown.

Specific family support services are commissioned through partner providers, including Aberlour Children's Trust, Hillcrest Futures and Home Start, to ensure that families have access to a range of services to meet their needs.

6.1.2 Looked after children / Care experienced children and young people

On 31 March 2022, the number of children 'looked after' had decreased for the second year from 263 last year, to 220. Accuracy of our data has however been impacted by data quality issues related to the migration of information to our new client recording system. A risk relating to data accuracy was escalated to Scrutiny and Audit Committee in January 2022 is currently being addressed as part of a data improvement plan.

The trend of a reduced proportion of 'looked after children' being supported at home or with family or friends has continued. This means that there is continued pressure and demand for alternative placements. This year 43% of children were supported at home with parents or relatives/friends compared to 49% on 31 March 2021.

Externally commissioned placements are only used when we are unable to identify a suitable placement within our internal resources. On 31 March 2022, we had 18 external fostering placements in place for 25 children. As part of our assurance role, external agency foster carers are linked with a supervising social worker from the Angus fostering team to monitor the placement in respect to the carer's role.

The [Angus Promise](#) details our commitment to support brothers and sisters to live together, where it is safe to do so, supporting them to maintain important lifelong relationships. This remained a priority and we have increased the percentage of children and young people living with children who were part of the same 'at home' household from around half to 55 percent or 122 children. Family situations can be complex resulting in some children being affected by a separation from a member of a family group. Care planning for children ensures that where it is a requirement for a child to be separated from brothers or sisters, they are supported to spend quality family time together.

We are also committed to reducing the number of unnecessary placement changes experienced by our children and young people. Angus data shows just that just over 10 percent of looked after children had three or more placements during the reporting year. While this is a decrease from 12 percent the previous year, figures are higher than the national average across Scotland of 5 percent. The data improvement work currently taking place may impact on this data.

The individual planning for children 'looked after' is reviewed in accordance with the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 by Reviewing Officers to bring case objectivity to the multi-agency child's planning meeting. Work was initiated in the reporting period to improve how minutes of meetings are recorded and ensure they are meaningful, but importantly accessible, for children and families to read. Engagement is taking place with key stakeholders including children and young people and key partners, to deliver more accessible plans for children.

6.1.3 Angus Promise

Over the last year our commitment and work as Corporate Parents to #Keep the [Promise Plan 21-24](#) to Angus care experienced children, young people and adults has continued. From the start of 2022 the newly established Quality and Improvement service have taken the lead for implementing the Promise across children, families and justice. The ethos of this work being that the promise should not be a 'standalone' area of work but instead should be values central to all our work. The promise is being incorporated throughout different workstreams including the assessment strategy and Self-Evaluation Framework alongside the development of specific working groups to support key areas of improvement including Brothers and Sisters working group focused on the duties for local authorities outlined in Staying Together and Connected: [Getting it right for Brothers and Sisters national guidance](#).

Children's service successfully secured £100k funding from the CORRA foundation in respect of Brothers and Sisters work some of this funding will be used to employ a senior practitioner for one year to support this work alongside focussing on the creation of nurturing spaces for brothers and sisters to spend quality family time together where they cannot live together.

As part of our Promise work we have in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland established the Angus Promise Team. Leadership for the team is provided by the Quality Improvement Service. The team has care experienced employees at the heart, working with advocates and senior practitioners with a focus on engagement and ensuring children and young people's rights, including being listened to and having their views taken into account, are respected. The team are working on innovative ideas borne from engagement with care experienced young people including establishing a Promise Hangout, engagement events in schools and raising awareness, acceptance and understanding through a range of leadership events. We have extended our advocacy service for children and young people establishing a local advocacy referral pathway in partnership with Angus Council, Angus Independent Advocacy and Who Cares? Scotland. We will continue to support and develop advocacy over the coming year to ensure the delivery of a seamless service which meets the needs of children and young people wherever advocacy is required including non-instructed advocacy for young children and children with complex needs and or limited or no communication.

6.1.4 Looked After Children Attainment Challenge Fund

Inclusion Support Team was established in 2019 to support 'closing the attainment gap' for care experienced young people. This year the service focused on getting back to into school and providing more intensive support for young people. Over 20 young people received a service at any one time, focused on bridging the gap between home and school. Feedback from young people has been very positive however there is limited evidence on impact other than social and personal confidence therefore we are working with colleagues in education to adapt approaches to extend further into schools.

6.1.5 Fostering and Adoption

Angus Council has a statutory duty under Section 1 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, to provide an adoption service. This duty is met through the Adoption Agency which has been in place since 1 April 1996. Responsibility for the functions and decisions of the Adoption Agency rest with the Chief Social Work Officer and authority has been delegated to the Service Leaders Justice and Child Protection and Review to act as the Agency Decision Maker.

Recruitment of foster carers and adoptive parents remains key to achieving better outcomes for looked after children. Whilst there has been a modest increase in foster carers being approved in 2021-22, there has been a reduction in enquiries from 223 in 2020-21 to 117 in 2021-22; this is despite running a local radio campaign, active social

media accounts, new fostering and adoption newsletter and targeted internal campaigns for Angus Council staff.

This year twelve fostering families and one adoptive family were approved along with two supported lodgings providers. There were also three families approved as support carers. Ten fostering families left the service following de-registration. Foster carers leave for a variety of reasons including retirement and other personal reasons. Five fostering families are on time-out or waiting to be de-registered.

As of 31 March 2022, available resources included

- 13 Interim foster carers
- 9 Permanent foster carers
- 16 Short breaks foster carers
- 4 Contingency approved foster carers
- 12 Dual approval (interim/perm/short breaks)
- 16 Dual approval (interim/perm/short breaks plus adult provision)
- 18 External foster carers
- 5 Foster carers on time out

If you are interested in becoming a foster carer you can find more information on [Angus Fostering and Adoption](#) website.

In 2021, the Home Office placed legal responsibility on local authorities to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people as part of a National Transfer Scheme. In response, a supported lodgings scheme and other relevant services have been developed to ensure we can appropriately meet the needs of young people who require care and support.

We are pleased to have introduced a part-time Panel Adviser to improve the coordination, practice support, and improve participation of birth families and children and young people in panel work.

6.1.6 Permanence

There has been an increase in the number of legal orders securing children's permanence this year, largely due to covid related delays in court processes last year.

In 2020-21, there was one permanence order, one permanence order with authority to adopt and one adoption order granted. In this reporting year, five permanence orders, three permanence orders with authority to adopt and five adoption orders have been granted. Whilst permanence has been achieved for some children, there remain others for whom family finding is a challenge. The recruitment of families for these children is a service priority.

In 2021-22, the Adoption Agency also received three notifications of intent to apply to become adoptive parents of relatives/stepchildren and produced the required reports for Court.

Notably, there has been an increase in requests for adoption support for young people reaching teenage years. We have offered one-to-one support and group

sessions. This support is available to all adoptive families living in Angus, including those whose children were not placed by Angus Council.

6.1.7 Kinship Care

Family care (Kinship) has seen some growth this year in the number of children who are placed longer term and where financial support is provided to the family (Kinship Orders).

During 2021-22 Angus Council paid adoption allowances for 13 children and kinship allowances for 133 children. There has been a steady increase in the volume of kinship allowances paid in line with changes in legislation in 2015.

Our Carer Support Service continues to deliver specific support for kinship carers providing care for looked after children and children subject to Kinship Orders. The team have developed their role to provide regular support visits to kinship carers of looked after children, group support sessions and access to training.

6.1.8 Continuing Care and Supported Lodgings

Section 67 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 amended the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and placed local authorities under a duty to provide continuing care in certain circumstances. The amendment gives all eligible young people an entitlement to remain in their care setting up to their twenty first birthday. This is positive for some young people as it allows a more gradual transition into adulthood and a longer time to prepare for independence. The policy is also ethically consistent with the Council's role as corporate parents in promoting delivery of "[The Promise](#)".

This year has seen an increase in requests from eligible young people to remain in placements, both in fostering and in residential services. As a result, there has been a significant and commensurate increase in expenditure to meet this demand. Since 2018-19, the number of young people accessing continuing care placements has fluctuated from 11 young people in the first year to 19 young people in 2020-21. During 2021-22, 17 young people have taken up their eligibility for Continuing Care. Whilst hugely positive for individual young people, widened eligibility has impacted on both financial resources and the availability of placements.

6.1.9 Child Protection

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, there were 396 child protection investigations involving 250 children (some children were involved in more than one investigation). The number of child protection investigations has seen a steady increase over the last four years with a greater number of children being considered through multi-agency Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs).

The average number of children on Angus Child Protection Register (ACPR) this year was 49, which has been consistent over the last year and shows a reduction from the previous year where covid impacts resulted in children being on the register for longer periods. The numbers of children on the ACPR and therefore with a child protection plan are monitored closely in terms of total numbers, sibling groups and types of harm. Domestic abuse features as at least one risk factor in over half of registrations highlighting the significance of this type of harm for children.

Angus has continued to be lower than the Scottish average for number of children on the CPR at just over 7 per 1,000 of the population aged 0-15 years. Engagement and support to families at an earlier stage, referrals for children to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration where necessary, alongside providing early support at the pre-birth stage contributes to supporting children for whom there are significant concerns.

Reviewing the length of time children are subject to registration is important when understanding the lived experiences and the impact of the supports provided. Last year, half of children were on the register for less than 6 months with a further 40% registered for under 1 year. A small number of children (8%) were on the register for more than 1 year. Our routine practice is now to undertake a learning review for any child registered for more than 1 year to ensure that the supports in place are sufficient to meet the child's needs and reduce risk.

Protecting children and young people has been a continued priority during response to and recovery from the covid pandemic. Weekly monitoring of data on referrals, investigations, registrations, and referrals to the Scottish Children's Reporter has taken place allowing quick exploration of changes in the data. We have observed consistent referral patterns this year with between 13 and 66 children referred to children's social work services each week with greater numbers during school term time as would be expected. Where possible, we support families in a planned way however use Child Protection Order's where there is immediate risk of harm identified and this year, we have used this legislation for 18 children compared to 22 the previous year. Learning Reviews now take place where a CPO has been used to identify any opportunities for earlier help and support and this practice is being embedded throughout the coming year.

As noted in CSWO report last year the rollout of 'PREpare', a strength-based approach to improving family engagement in child protection planning and decision-making was delayed due to the restrictions brought about by the pandemic. The approach has now been rolled out and is positively evaluated with parents and professionals reporting greater understanding and confidence in the child protection system and feeling partners to the child's protection plan. There has been success using the approach to support parents with learning disabilities and those who have had children removed from their care in the past. With the support of a dedicated steering group, the CFJ service will continue to further roll out the 'PREpare' approach.

We have maintained overview of pre-birth referrals following on from the improvement and assurance work carried out last year. Six monthly overview reports have offered assurance that pregnant women who may need support are being considered at the local Pre-birth Resource Allocation Meeting (PRAM) and are offered

enhanced help and support at an early stage. There is evidence of close partnership working between agencies and support being offered from early help initiatives such as the Glen Clova Project.

Identifying and responding to incidences of non-accidental injuries to children had been highlighted as a learning theme across Tayside during 2021 following a small increase in reports. A proactive learning analysis was undertaken in partnership with Police Scotland, Angus Council and NHS Tayside to explore the circumstances of young babies in the child protection system where non-accidental injury has been a concern. Learning was identified alongside good practice examples. This work, together with local improvement work in Angus, has led to the development of an 'Involving Dad's' working group. A project plan has now been established to ensure proactive engagement with male parents/ parenting figures, and to oversee the extension of Safe and Together approaches to Domestic Abuse.

We have updated our operational instructions and guidance relating to local Care and Risk Management (CARM) arrangements in line with Scottish Government guidance on the assessment of young people who present a risk of harm. This approach has traditionally been used to support young people who present a risk of harm to others however we are extending the approach to better support our work with young people at risk due to complex trauma, self-harm, poor mental health and those at risk of suicide.

6.1.10 Court Services

This year saw the closure of previous service locations at Fergus Square, Arbroath and Carseview Road, Forfar. The Justice service moved to a single base within County Buildings, Forfar in March 2022.

The Justice Service includes all Criminal Justice Social Work Services, care leaver support services and early help services for women. The service has assumed responsibility for the provision of support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

Performance information for all Criminal Justice Social Work Services is reported publicly by Community Justice Scotland and embargo restrictions prohibit publication of 2021-22 information before their report is laid before Parliament. Available information on data for 2020-21 can be accessed [Here](#). The full information for 2021-22 is due to be published early in 2023.

The total number of hours of unpaid work imposed during 2021-22 was 14,812 and the number of hours completed during the year to the benefit of local communities in Angus was 11,673 hours. Although numbers increased in 2020-21, they have not yet returned to the numbers seen in pre-covid. Heavily impacted by covid restrictions, the number of completed unpaid work hours were approximately 35 percent lower and imposed unpaid work hours were approximately 48 percent lower than 2019-20.

During 2021-22, the Justice service worked to clear a backlog of Unpaid Work Hours which had accumulated during covid restrictions. The pandemic had a significant impact on the delivery of unpaid work both nationally and locally with a bottleneck

of hours being generated by the restriction on activity, social distancing requirements and the closure of many settings where unpaid work would be carried out. Despite the inability to implement orders, sentencing Courts were obliged to continue to make new Orders, including those with an unpaid work requirement, when this was indicated. Special legislation was introduced extending the time period permitted for individuals to complete such a Court sentence. Since returning to more ordinary operating conditions, the service has successfully addressed the backlog and has no weekday wait and a very short wait for a weekend placement.

During 2020-21, 81 percent of all Community Payback Orders, (CPO) were completed successfully. The completion rate in Angus remains above the national average of 70 percent.

Diversion from prosecution remains a critical part of the overall justice system. Following a significant upturn in the number of Diversion assessments requested during 2020-21 (53 percent), this reduced by 15 percent in the reporting period. Overall, this reflects a continuing and significant upturn in demand. A high percentage (64 percent) of those assessed as suitable agree to undertake Diversion activity. We are seeing a trend towards more assessments being deemed appropriate and a higher proportion of individuals referred agreeing to undertake diversion work than pre-covid. This prevents specified cases unnecessarily moving into the Court system.

The service has taken a partnership approach to enhance the supports available to people presenting through the Justice system including:

- using funds provided by the Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership to establish a temporary Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner hosted within the Justice Service to support the increasing number of adults and young people with co-presentations of mental ill-health and substance use issues
- Partnering with Positive Steps, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils to pilot a Custody Assessment and Referral Service to offer support to Angus residents being held in police custody in Dundee
- In collaboration with the Women's Rape and Sexual Assault Centre, recruited a Safety Support Practitioner seconded to the Justice Service to support survivors of domestic and sexual abuse
- Upskilled staff in the Public Protection team to use a new risk assessment Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT) to support the assessment of men who offend by downloading indecent images of children
- Embedding trauma informed practice in Angus, becoming one of three local authorities piloting a Trauma Informed groupwork programme for men

6.1.11 Horizon (Through Care and Aftercare)

Horizon staff have continued to support care experienced young people and adults into further education, with 31 young people completing courses at college, 1 at university, and 1 undertaking a modern apprenticeship.

The Care Leavers Housing Protocol set up to support a more inclusive and choice-based approach to supporting young people setting up their first homes, now includes

not only care leavers but young males engaged in offending who are referred to the youth justice service. This was reviewed in May 2021 to reflect the change in the Horizon remit to include young people in conflict with law. As corporate parents, we are committed to delivering services based on the needs of individuals and recognise that supporting young people as early as possible could protect them from experiencing further disadvantage in later life.

The team's partnership working is key to ensuring that 16 and 17-year-olds are not placed in Young Offenders Institutes for sentence or on remand in line with 'The Promise Scotland Plan 21-24', which also helps to prevent the criminalisation of care experienced children and young people. Next year the team will focus on the support to young people detained through the development of Throughcare Assessment for Release on Licence.

In addition to care leavers, since the UK Government mandated the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in December 2021, the team have taken the lead in providing support to young people placed locally via the National Transfer Scheme, with one young person received in Angus by 31 March 2022. Demand for placements is expected to increase and the team are working collaboratively with colleagues in Carers Support and Housing to identify appropriate accommodation options.

Care experienced young people are often impacted by financial challenges, isolation, and mental health issues and the team's work to support this vulnerable group through transition is vital. Among the support offered is:

- A weekly mother and baby group has continued to run through 2021-22 with 6 care experienced parents attending with their children and benefiting from a range of tailored supports
- The team successfully secured funding to support care experienced young people to enjoy a programme of summer activities
- A Horizon football team for young people supported by the service is now established offering an inclusive opportunity to participate in team sport and travel to team events

6.2 Adult Services

6.2.1 Capacity and Demand

Care at home continued to be an area of significant growth as we support people to remain independent in the community for longer. The provision of care at home hours increased from 11,776 hours per week last year to 13,500 in March 2022. Demand for personal care peaked at 15,123 hours per week in December 2021, but services were unable to meet that demand, resulting in 1,591 hours of unmet need. The unmet need for care at home is monitored weekly. During 2021-22, the number of people receiving personal care remained broadly static at 1,865 individuals.

Whilst there was a slight increase in demand for care home places in 2021-22, the overall trend is declining. Regardless of this, and our assessment that the level of

demand is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels, the provision of residential care home support remains an important part of the support available to people in Angus. During the reporting period, care home vacancies increased to 100 beds (from an available 1,000).

- Number of older people in care homes (on 31 March 2022) - 635
- Number of delivered or commissioned hours for personal care - 666,184 (an average of 12,811 per week)
- Total number of people in receipt of care - 1,865
- Number of community meals - 94,344 meals for 401 people over the year
- Number of adults with a care plan - 3,815

Care home placements have shown a continuing downward trend over the last four years from 690 in 2018-19 to 635 in 2021-22. Similar to last year, around 40 percent of placements were for nursing care rather than residential care. This is in line with expectations around demographic change and the trend towards more people being supported at home for longer.

6.2.2 Self-Directed Support

There are four options under self-directed support arrangements:

- Option 1 - direct payment
- Option 2 - person selects and directs their support
- Option 3 - HSCP staff organise support on behalf of the person
- Option 4 - combination of directed support (option 3) and choosing support for themselves (options 1 and 2)

Across Angus, 3,815 adults had a care plan in place (4 percent increase from 2020-21). This year the choice of self-directed support option 3 increased to 63 percent with a slight decline in the number of people choosing option 2. The proportion of people using option 4 (a combination of options) has also seen a slight decline from 7 percent to 5 percent and option 1 (direct payment) has remained stable at 9 percent.

A change in the community meals staffing establishment and rotas has allowed for the provision of community meals to be extended to 7 days a week and resulting in improvements in staff recruitment and retention.

Toward the end of this reporting period, a Board and Steering Group were established to review day care provision with engagement planned with key stakeholders, including day care providers. Enhanced care services are working on a pathway for escalating care in relation to day care provision as a test of change to ensure more seamless transition to enhanced support where this is needed.

The Carers Emergency Card system has been extended to provide an additional card for the cared for person, so that if anything unforeseen happens whilst the carer isn't present, they can be contacted. Kirriemuir Connections have been commissioned to extend their meeting centre model across Angus. The model provides evidence-based support which includes a safe place where both people with dementia and

their family carers can adjust to living with dementia, access creative and stimulating activities and get effective advice and peer support.

As part of the expansion of support available to people a free [LifeCurve™](#) app was launched. The app asks people a series of questions about their day-to-day activities to work out their own personalised plan to encourage healthy ageing and provide professional advice to help people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.

Whilst national restrictions remained in place, adult resource centres for people with a learning disability adapted their approach to provide outreach support to individuals at home and in their communities, video technology supported a large variety of group activities and helped to maintain connections amongst peers. Activity packs were created and delivered to individuals. Although full face-to-face service had resumed by the end of the reporting period, some of these adaptations have been retained due to their effectiveness for some families.

6.2.3 Adult support and protection

Last year saw a continuation of the overall upward trend in all areas of adult protection activity which remained high during 2021-22.

Adult Protection referrals increased from 406 in 2019-20 to 728 in 2020-21 before falling back slightly to 681 during the reporting period. There was an increase in referrals being made by Police Scotland, who remain the largest source of adult protection referrals.

There was a continued increase in the number of adult protection case conferences increased from 179 to 207 in 2021-22, of these, 80 were initial case conferences and 127 review case conferences.

Adult Protection Case Conferences (APCC) called by teams:

- Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs under 65s) increased this year from 44 to 55, there were only 7 in 2019/20.
- Learning Disability Service increased this year from 22 to 42.
- Physical Disabilities Service also rose from 12 to 23.

An analysis of the adults at risk during 2020-21 showed for the first time that people with mental health problems formed the largest single group referred. Adults with alcohol and drugs related issues were a significant cohort. This remained the same in 2021-22 with substance misuse and mental health now equal in terms of the main client group considered at APCC.

Physical harm and financial harm remain the most common principal type of harm experienced by adults at risk, with physical harm being the most prevalent. The age profile of those referred shows a marked increase in the 21-64 age group.

Resources have been realigned and continue to be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient capacity to respond to the increased level of Adult Protection work, both within core teams and within the reviewing service.

The Angus Financial Abuse Support Team (FAST) has continued to support those affected by scams, including one retired couple who lost £120,000, a life changing figure, highlighting the continued need to focus on this type of support. The pilot is due to be evaluated with outcomes published next year.

Significant improvement work has been undertaken in Adult Support and Protection and Adults with Incapacity. Key areas of improvement work include:

- A renewed focus on Council Officer training, both first-time and refresher training, and the uptake of university level post-qualifying Adult Support and Protection training.
- Incorporating the learning from the Adult Protection Improvement Plan (arising from AHSCP audit), SCR P19 and initial case and learning reviews.
- Improving professional supervision to develop staff skills, grow professional curiosity and accountability
- The development of a new audit framework and tool.
- A monthly Adult Protection Planning meeting within AHSCP.
- Updating of related operational procedures, including addressing the use of emergency protection measures in Core Group Meetings.

6.2.4 Mental Health Officer (MHO) 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 for both children and adults. Only specially trained and MHO accredited social workers are permitted to deliver MHO services.

Information covering period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022:

- Emergency Detention figures increased by one on previous year to 43
- Number of short-term detentions decreased from 91 to 86

Mental Health Officers (MHOs) completed:

- 77 Social Circumstance Reports, small decrease of three on last year
- 43 Compulsory Treatment Order applications, an increase of seven
- 85 other reports relating to both civil and forensic cases plus reports to Scottish Ministers, an increase of 10
- Adults subject to Compulsion Orders remains static at two with nine adults subject to a Compulsion Order or a Restriction Order, an increase of three.
- 91 Guardianship reports were requested under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, an increase of 10
- 69 new Guardianship requests (down by 18)
- 22 renewal requests (increase of one)

Active Guardianship Orders at March 2022:

- Local Authority - 126 (decrease of 11)
- Private - 275 (increase of 38)
- Overall total - 401 (increase of 26)

MHOs work closely with colleagues in NHS Tayside where there continues to be a shortage of Section 22 approved doctors and a limited number of locums available to provide specialist cover. This has a significant impact on the number of assessments the Mental Health Officer (MHO) Service have been asked to undertake.

The shortfall has resulted in General Practitioners undertaking an increased number of assessments for emergency detention. As not all General Practitioners have experience of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, a higher number of such detentions are being quickly revoked upon arrival at hospital as consent from an MHO has not been sought, in contravention of the law. Training for GPs on the use of Emergency Detentions under the Mental Health Act is currently being planned.

As in 2020-21, the number of detentions and revocations correlates with the number of Section 22 Approved Doctors available. As the number of doctors slowly increases it has highlighted a shortage of beds. This has resulted in a number of individuals not being admitted to hospital or have had their admission delayed.

Proportionately the largest increase in Mental Health Act work during this reporting period occurred in the 14 to 18-year-old age bracket. Themes include diagnoses of eating disorder, personality disorder and/or emerging personality disorder.

With the reopening of Courts and the Office of the Public Guardian operating at pre-pandemic levels, the number of Welfare Guardianships has increased.

6.2.5 Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS)

Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS) continues to support individuals and their families affected by substance misuse within our communities. AIDARS has an open referral system and a drop in facility at Wellbeing Cafes and at third sector services in Arbroath. Arrangements continue to be reviewed to ensure early engagement and access to treatment. There have also been tests of change to explore how we can further improve the alignment and integration of mental health and substance services locally.

This reporting period Angus services have not achieved the HEAT standard of '90 percent of people engaged in treatment three weeks after receipt of referral'. This year the service achieved 83.4 percent of this standard. Reasons for the reduced performance level includes sickness absence rates, vacancies, and increased complexity of referrals. AHSCP have recruitment underway and the impact of having a full staffing compliment across the multi-disciplinary team will support a return to improved performance.

The Scottish Government has introduced new standards for [Medically Assisted Treatment](#) (MAT Standards) to help reduce deaths and to promote recovery. All Alcohol and Drug Partnership areas in Scotland are required to adopt the standards and report regularly on progress. The MAT standards define what is needed for the consistent delivery of safe and accessible drug treatment and support.

Importantly, all suspected drug deaths in Angus continue to be reviewed as part of the pan-Tayside Drugs Death Review Group led by colleagues in Public Health. Learning continues to be reviewed locally with partners to identify themes and improvements needed. During the reporting period, there were 16 suspected drug deaths in Angus.

Police Scotland have joined with AIDARS, NHS Tayside Harm Reduction Service and Scottish Ambulance Service to identify individuals who have experienced a near fatal overdose. An assertive outreach approach is then taken with contact made directly by AIDARS staff to support engagement with the service. This is monitored through Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy Group.

6.2.6 Carers support

As part of the functions delegated to the Integration Joint Board, AHSCP has continued to progress implementation of the Angus strategy for unpaid carers which was published in February 2020. Although some improvement actions were impacted by the pandemic, most have now been achieved. Key achievements include an audit of the adult carer support plan; involvement of carers in co-producing and co-presenting training for newly qualified social workers; the provision of training sessions on mental health awareness and suicide prevention for staff, volunteers, and unpaid carers at Angus Carers Centre.

Implementation of the key requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 has continued. Adult services practitioners completed 274 adult carer support plans in 2021-22, a significant increase on 174 plans during 2020-21. In total 1,153 adult carers have been assessed by adult services with 1,015 carers being awarded a personal budget.

Grant funding for third sector organisations supporting adult and young carers in Angus continued during 2021-22 to our key partner Angus Carers Centre (ACC) and Dundee Carers Centre who provide independent support for carers using SDS Option 1 and Support in Mind (support for carers of people with mental health issues). Funding was extended to Kirriemuir Connections to grow the support provided to the carers of people with dementia through development of a meeting centres model across other Angus localities.

ACC is going through a period of change with the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer and some change in personnel over the reporting period. The focus of the team remains on offering a range of good quality services to the people of Angus. This includes delivery of information and independent advice as well as emotional and practical support, access to short breaks, counselling services and peer connection opportunities such as befriending and volunteering. The partnership between AHSCP and Angus Carers Centre ensures effective routes of supports are developed and maintained to help unpaid carers sustain their caring role where they wish to and create opportunities to have a fulfilling life outside of caring.

In 2021-22, ACC supported 1,331 adult carers through individual and collective services. This was predominantly over the phone or online, with the team of staff and

volunteers working from home and finding creative ways of supporting unpaid carers and their families, including a telephone befriending service. Although the number of unpaid carers supported was down on the previous year, the number of referrals this year rose by 33% to 517.

6.2.7 Young Carers Service

As part of the overall Carer Support strategy, Angus Young Carers Service has continued to provide support to young carers during 2021-22 and adapted services to ensure this was maintained during the pandemic. Over the 12-month period, 154 young carers (aged 8 to 18) were supported, a slight increase on 151 in 2020-21. Schools continued to lead in the identification of young carers and completion of Young Carer Statements. A Triangle Trust funded Education Development Worker was appointed within ACC in January 2022 to strengthen links between schools and Angus Young Carers Service and to support carer awareness raising and early identification of young carers.

Across primary and secondary schools in Angus at the end of March 2022, there were 83 young carers recorded on SEEMiS, down from 88 last year. All young carers identified are offered support and a Young Carer's Statement which sets out the personal needs and outcomes for each young person and the support required. Numbers remain low for young people taking up the offer of a Young Carer Statement relative to other local authorities. An audit of the Young Carer Statement is underway to identify and address barriers to identification and provision of support to this important group. The offer of support is available to all carers under 18 years or over 18, if still at school.

The needs of young adult carers differ from older adults, often requiring active support relating to finances, housing and future planning. Those aged 16 – 25 have been challenging to identify and engage and there remain concerns that current service configuration may not fully meet their needs. A short life working group focusing on young carers in transition was established in October 2021 to identify gaps and emerging issues and propose actions for improvement, this work continues.

6.3 Service quality and performance

Angus Adult Protection Committee published the outcome of [SCR P19](#) in August 2021 following the death of a 50-year-old adult who was in receipt of health and social care services and subject to an adult support and protection plan. Whilst the SCR reported on good practice examples, it also highlighted significant systemic failures and identified improvements necessary, with these having been subject to separate reporting to the Council's Scrutiny and Audit Committee, [Report 18/22](#) refers. Following publication, a multi-agency subgroup has been progressing actions with regular reporting to the Angus Chief Officers Group and scrutiny of the impact being made.

Following a wide scale audit of adult protection practice, a more targeted audit of Adult Support and Protection supervision was carried out between October 2021 and March 2022. Work is now underway to support more reflective supervision and support supervisors in their role. This aligns with workforce development and the work in response to the significant case reviews (SCR) P19 and the Care Management Improvement Programme.

There have been no initial or significant case reviews for children during the current reporting period. We continue to deliver the actions and improvements arising from the 2019 review, Isabelle, alongside our statutory partners.

Following investment, the Children, Families and Justice Directorate established a quality and improvement service in January 2022. The remit of this small team is to promote high quality social work practice and support operational staff to develop skills and knowledge. It was recognised as a critical area of investment to support the adequate development and oversight of practice given the high proportion of newly qualified social work staff. The service also delivers individual case level and thematic reviews and scrutiny of practice as well as delivering practitioner forums and coordinating practice placements for students and support to newly qualified social workers. Within its first three months, the team established a refreshed self-evaluation framework providing a model to assess practice, plan and deliver improvements.

During 2021, children's services developed an assessment strategy to support social workers to provide high quality assessments focusing on the needs of the child, improved analysis of lived experience, and promotes evidenced-based, robust recommendations to inform the child's plan. New guidance is in place and Assessment Champions identified from key operational teams. The champions will be responsible for supporting colleagues to implement the model and contributing to the Assessment Framework monitoring group to ensure our guidance remains relevant and up to date with current research and evidence on good practice.

7. Workforce

7.1 Capacity and growth

Scottish policy ambitions including the formation of a National Care Service, the embedding of human rights and delivery of "The Promise" to Scotland's children add additional pressure on staff. For social work, this vision requires 'a skilled and valued workforce' with 'a focus on prevention, early intervention and enablement. Over the last few years several issues have been identified by Social Work Scotland (the national body for social work leadership) as hindering the achievement of this vision.

In particular, issues impacted by resourcing such as high caseloads, make it difficult for social work staff to achieve good, consistent practice and support people effectively. Since the implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, there has been a significant proliferation of legislation, regulation and policy which directly affects social work and social workers. Responsibility is often placed on individual practitioners to absorb increasing workload, complexity, and regulatory requirements

without the understanding among those drafting and setting policy that the social work profession (like others) cannot simply do more and more.

A survey [Setting the Bar](#) for Social Work in Scotland has been undertaken to establish an evidence-based indicative caseload limit for social work staff. Staff in Angus have been encouraged and supported staff to engage in this important research. Our own work in this area suggests that Angus social workers carry above average caseloads, although we do continue a strong emphasis on protected caseloads for newly qualified workers. Over the next year, we will use the outcome of the Setting the Bar research and continue to engage with our staff on what is needed to deliver safe and effective social work services.

Changing demographics, including an ageing population and an increase in the complexity of presenting need and increased demand for care at home services have had a direct impact on capacity within adult care management services. Additional posts have been added to teams using Scottish Government funding. This has improved service capacity and promoted the resilience of teams. AHSCP continue to review the infrastructure in place to support practitioners in their role, including the introduction of additional adult support and protection roles and improvements to the support for managing complex financial cases to help reduce the accumulation of debt.

Of course, ensuring a sufficiency of suitably qualified staff is essential to the delivery of social work and social care services. During 2021-22, 13 newly qualified social workers (NQSW) were recruited through the Angus graduate recruitment scheme with a further three NQSW's being recruited outside the scheme. Ten joined teams within the Children, Families and Justice service, and six joined AHSCP. As recruitment was undertaken during covid, restrictions prevented newly qualified staff from attending face to face support sessions with MS Teams continuing to be used to facilitate protected time and drop-in sessions for staff to access support, training opportunities and build peer support networks.

NQSWs who started in 2020 are due to complete training in Autumn 2022, however, we anticipate some will request extensions to enable them to complete their NQSW year due to the disruption. The 2019 and 2020 cohorts all completed the qualified social worker support programme successfully. AHSCP have introduced a comprehensive induction programme for all new staff.

Recognising the potential of existing staff and supporting them to gain a social work qualification continues through the internal traineeship scheme. Two workers have undertaken their final year and continued to be supported through the traineeship scheme during 2021-22. In 2022, a further three social work trainees have been recruited.

Despite this, during 2021-22 services continued to experience staff recruitment and retention challenges with key posts across the social work and social care sector locally often attracting low numbers of applicants. This reflects a national shortage of certain staff groups and a high degree of competition for available workforce. Gaps in services can be exacerbated by lengthy recruitment timescales and processes.

7.2 Workforce Development

The Scottish Social Services Council set the qualifications required by staff to undertake registered roles in social work and social care settings. The SSSC registration period reverted to six months in March 2022 having been extended during the pandemic. In the reporting period, 15 staff gained qualifications required for registration in social care roles, with a further 10 starting qualifications during this period. Many candidate awards have taken longer than normal due to redeployments and continued pressures of the pandemic.

All SVQ qualifications were delivered in house by the Organisation Development Assessment Centre apart from the PDA in Health and Social Care Supervision at SCQF level 7 which was undertaken by seven staff at supervisory level and was delivered jointly with Dundee City Council.

During the reporting period, multi-agency and single agency training continued to be delivered to support staff development. Due to the ongoing restrictions, most sessions continued to be hosted online as they were last year. Some training was cancelled or postponed due to staff shortages and covid during the year.

Sessions offered have covered a range of topics including Council Officer training and Defensible Decision Making. Grade Care Profile 2 continued to be rolled out successfully through an online model, delivered by local champions. To mark National Children's Day thirteen sessions were delivered in the lead up week by multi-agency partners from across Angus and included Corporate Parenting and Keeping the Promise, a Q&A session with the Child Protection Committee Chair and Lead officer, Q&A with Review Officers, Advocacy and Children's Hearings and Welfare Rights.

All Mental Health Officers continued to meet the minimum requirements for reaccreditation and alternative methods of delivering MHO training have now been developed to expand the uptake of training next year. This is critical to ensure that we continue to have the capacity to deliver these specific statutory functions.

Safe and Together champions built a training package for staff, with a plan to roll it out on a multi-agency basis. As a result of the positive progress made, AVAWP have agreed to fund further places for champions to be trained and to deliver the first session on a multi-agency basis.

Joint Investigative Interview training continues to be delivered twice yearly. As in previous years, this is delivered on a pan-Tayside basis with partners at Police Scotland. We anticipate that the training for the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) will be rolled out in Tayside towards the end of 2023. Additionally, we have four social workers completing the Post Grade Certificate Professional Studies (Child Welfare & Protection).

Growing the social work workforce more widely remains a significant priority and we are supporting a further four workers to become accredited Social Work Practice Educators. This will grow our capacity to host and assess social work student placements in partnership with local schools of social work.

8. Looking Forward

Some key areas of note for the coming year include:

- 1) The anticipated continued increase in demand for social work services created by the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing impact from the pandemic and increased complexity of referrals
- 2) Ensuring a sufficient range of local family-based, residential and educational placements are available to support for children and young people in need of care away from home.
- 3) Ensuring management and senior practitioner capacity is sufficient to maintain safe standards of practice and support a newly qualified workforce
- 4) As core partners, scope a whole family support model that takes a whole family wellbeing approach to support children to stay at home where it is safe.
- 5) Increased external scrutiny activity, preparation for and participation in large scale external Joint Inspection/s.
- 6) Through Protecting People arrangements, support services to deliver improvements detailed in the Adult Protection Improvement plan and P19 Action Plan
- 7) AHSCP will review and refresh the 2019-2022 AHSCP Strategic Commissioning Plan in the context of reduced resources and increased demand.
- 8) Development of a new local carer strategy and improvement plan by March 2023.
- 9) Progress the implementation of the Justice and Finance Modules of the updated client index system, Eclipse
- 10) To manage the uncertainty around the proposals for the National Care Service and support staff to engage and feel heard in the consultation.

9. Conclusion

As we brought this reporting year to a close, we awaited legislation to support the establishment of a National Care Service and anticipated both the challenge and opportunity this might bring. We are moving into a period of significant transformation in social work and social care and our engagement in this as a profession, and as an organisation, is critical. We expect external joint inspection of Adult Protection (subsequently confirmed for autumn 2022) and Child Protection (not confirmed as yet) over the coming year and look forward to the findings in due course.

As corporate parents, our local long-term aspirations, ambitions and priorities for care experienced children and young people must include implementing the key principles set out in The Promise, alongside implementing, and embedding the United

Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) approach across all services. The continued commitment of Angus Council to tackling poverty and mitigating its impact for children, families, adults and communities is key to achieving positive outcomes for the citizens of Angus.

This report has highlighted the challenges that people who deliver and receive services have experienced over the past year, challenges that have been met head on with remarkable commitment and creativity in ensuring that people in communities who most need support received it. It remains a credit to all that despite the relentless nature of the current context of social work and social care staff, carers and providers across Angus continued to support people with compassion and sensitivity.