

Chief Social Work Officer Report
Angus
2022 – 2023

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Introduction/ Reflections on 2022-23

The national context for social work and social care in 2022-23 was characterised by significant policy and legislative turmoil with continued uncertainty regarding the proposals in development for a National Care Service; consultation and engagement relating to individual, significant pieces of legislation and reform of key national systems and processes impacting the delivery of social work and social care ongoing. The business of this agenda impacts on senior leadership capacity and can have an unsettling impact on those delivering frontline services.

Despite this context, locally we have maintained a focus on delivery of services and improvement. During 2022-23 the Angus multi-agency partnership was subject to a joint inspection of adult protection arrangements. The findings were positive concluding that Angus protecting people partnership's key processes for adult support and protection were very effective and demonstrated major strengths, supporting positive experiences and outcomes for adults at risk of harm. The health and social care partnership play a key role in keeping adults safe and this inspection finding reflects significant and ongoing improvement work over several years.

In support of Angus Council's commitment to maximising inclusion and reducing inequalities, Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) introduced an enhanced community support model for mental health and wellbeing offering a single referral route with no rejected referrals for Adult Community Mental Health Services, Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service and the Psychological Therapy Team. The model was tested in the Northeast area and has been successfully rolled out to the Northwest this year, with plans for further expansion to Southeast and Southwest in 2023. The model, which improves access to critical services, has been recognised through national awards and local evaluation has been very positive.

A pan-Tayside [Care Home](#) website was launched in early 2023 to make it easy for professionals to access key information, referral forms and guidance related to care home provision across the Tayside area supported by our local and pan-Tayside care home support and oversight arrangements.

Social work and social care services have a significant footprint within Angus and are committed to ensure that steps are taken to support the delivery of local climate change objectives. The community meals service has changed their delivery model from diesel to electric vehicles to align with Angus strategic plan.

Following investment approved by members, the Children, Families and Justice Directorate (CFJ) was able to introduce a quality improvement function to promote the retention of qualified, experienced social workers. This capacity supports the development of professional practice, whole service improvements, including delivery of The Promise and increases resilience in the service. The small team have been successful in securing funding of over £300,000 from the Promise Partnership (Cora Foundation) to improve practice and develop the workforce in relation to key areas of practice.

The Strathmore Short Breaks Centre is now permanently open on a fulltime basis with recurring financial support provided via the Carers Support Fund. This development makes it possible to provide much needed breaks for more children living with complex needs, and their families. An external inspection of our children's residential house at Carseburn Road and the Strathmore Short Breaks Centre rated these services as excellent recognising our considered and person-centred approach to supporting young people.

As a key policy driver, The Promise, and the commitments in our local Angus Promise, have shaped the focus of work both in social work services and within wider partnership working to improve services to children and families in Angus. Together with Who Cares? Scotland, we have grown the reach of our Promise Team including our Promise Ambassadors, care experienced staff focussing on engagement. As part of this work and in partnership with young people, we established the 'Promise Hangout' in June 2022, a monthly youth group for care experienced children and young people aged 5 and above, greatly improving our natural engagement opportunities with young people.

This report provides information on how statutory social work responsibilities in Angus are being delivered on behalf of Angus Council. The report gives an overview for 2022-2023 and highlights some key achievements and challenges for services over the reporting year and outlines priorities for the forthcoming year.

In relation to the data included in this report, it is important to note that given the nature and complexity of social work services, an overview report of this nature cannot include detail about every aspect of service delivered. Many elements of social work and social care services are subject to individual reporting requirements, over different reporting timescales, with varied local and national governance routes. This means that data presented in this report may be challenging to directly cross reference with other more detailed theme specific performance reports.

Kathryn Lindsay
Chief Social Work Officer

Angus Profile

The Angus population is estimated at 116,120 ([Statistics.Gov.Scot](#)). The population is dispersed across multiple conurbations and Arbroath is the largest with a population of 23,500 (Office for National Statistics, 2020).

The largest age group in Angus is 45 – 64 (33,236 people) and the smallest age group is 16 – 24 (10,612 people). Office for National Statistics analysis is that the working age population of Angus is 68,900 with just over 59 percent of the population of working age (16-64). This is 4.4 percentage points lower than the national average and the working age population is projected to remain relatively stable until 2028. This demographic information is relevant when we consider the demand for services and the reduced availability of workforce to meet that demand on a local basis.

For the ten-year period 2018-2028, the overall population of Angus is expected to decrease slightly. However, it is projected that there will be fewer people aged 65 and under, reducing the number of working aged adults. Data for 2001 to 2021 showed a significant decrease (13.1 percent) of the proportion of the population in the 25 to 44 age group with the proportion of those aged 75 and over increasing by 45.2 percent.

AHSCP keeps a close review of the wider demographic profile to inform service planning. An aging population has direct implications for the type and density of social work services required. Unless there is a significant reduction in the onset of long-term conditions, or extensive improvement in their management throughout the lifespan, we are likely to continue to experience an increase in the complexity of care needs resulting in higher demand for intensive packages of support and enhanced workforce skills.

When set against national data, Angus has relatively low levels of deprivation overall, with some pockets of high deprivation. However, in 2020-21 just over 20 percent of children (3,809) in Angus were living in poverty. As the cost-of-living continues to impact, it is anticipated that this number will increase, reinforcing the importance of our local commitment to improving the circumstances of children, families, and individuals in Angus, as well as mitigating the impacts of poverty that are within local control.

Local data shows that between 2017 and 2022, the Angus Welfare Rights Team experienced a 51 percent (1,832) increase in the number of referrals. This is a significant increase in the number of enquiries from Angus residents who required advice, support or assistance for matters relating to fuel poverty and energy efficiency. This reporting year saw the largest single annual increase, an additional 1,500 enquiries. The most recent data shows that in one year, just under 5,400 households across Angus sought support from the Welfare Rights Team highlighting challenges post-covid, cost of living crisis impacts and challenges with fuel poverty.

Mental Health and wellbeing across all age groups continues to be an important area of need and early intervention and prevention approaches are needed to ensure that neither adults nor children reach crisis before having had the ability to access services. Whilst the longer-term impact of the pandemic has yet to be fully

understood, an increased demand for mental health and wellbeing support is expected to continue.

Services have been responding and we have continued to see an increase in the overall delivery of mental health and wellbeing support, with a 29 percent increase in accepted referrals in one year in adult Community Mental Health Teams in Angus and the growth of social prescribing approaches to support early intervention and alternative treatment options. Community organisations across Angus have also developed the range of support they provide and are a critical part of the way communities can support the early identification of need.

Poor mental health is a factor driving demand for social work services whether related to an adult's need for support, a child's need for support or a combination. Factors associated with mental health and wellbeing are regularly cited in referrals to social work.

In relation to children and young people, national [research](#) indicates that 10 percent of children and young people (aged 5 to 16) have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, an average of three in every classroom. It is estimated that up to 20 percent of adolescents may experience mental health problems in any given year.

Challenges with mental health and wellbeing are known to disproportionately impact those from lower-income households and living in areas of deprivation. Early help and support services in Angus for children and young people's mental health have grown this year with further investment through the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Funding increasing the availability of Peer Support services for 12 to 16-year-olds and the introduction of CEDAR (support for children affected by domestic abuse).

Governance and Accountability, and Statutory Functions

Under Section 3 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 as amended, all local authorities are required to appoint a Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). 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.

The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO)

In compliance with their statutory functions, the CSWO has a requirement to produce an Annual Report. Social work services are delivered within a framework of statutory duties and powers imposed on the local authority, services are also required to meet national standards and to provide best value. Some duties and decisions which relate (mostly), to public protection and the restriction of an individual's freedom, must by law be made by either the CSWO or a professionally qualified and registered social worker who has been given delegated authority by the CSWO. Ultimately, the CSWO remains accountable for all social work functions.

Overview of governance arrangements

The governance of all social work services in Angus continues to be undertaken by the CSWO, who is also the Director of Children, Families and Justice. The CSWO is a key member of the Angus Integration Joint Board (IJB) and is the vice-chair of the IJB Audit Committee, responsible for supporting and scrutinising the delivery of integrated adult care services. As a statutory officer of the Council, the CSWO reports directly to the Chief Executive and ensures that Elected Members are provided with updates regarding relevant developments through ensuring the reporting at Council committees and other fora.

The AHSCP Clinical Care and Professional Governance Group (CCPG) provides assurance to the Angus Integration Joint Board, NHS Tayside Board and Angus Council, that there are effective and embedded systems for Clinical, Care and Professional Governance across all AHSCP services. The CCPG has responsibility for supporting learning across services and agencies, as well as the sharing of good practice and innovative ways of working. All adult services provide ongoing assurance to CCPG that there are robust processes in place for all six areas of the Clinical, Care and Professional Governance Framework [Getting it Right for Everyone](#) domains, and that there are ongoing efforts to further improve. A social work qualified Head of Service with responsibility for adult social work and social care services represents the CSWO on the CCPG and the CSWO remains satisfied that the practice governance arrangements in place are appropriate and proportionate.

Learning from Feedback

Complaints

Social work services are required to report on the volume of complaints received. These are routinely scrutinised through the Council's Scrutiny and Audit Committee by means of a quarterly complaint monitoring report. Analysis of the feedback received from people using services, including formal complaints, are an important source of learning to help drive improvements across our services.

During the reporting period, CFJ closed 30 complaints with 20 of these being managed at Stage 1 and 10 at Stage 2 (those requiring a more complex investigation). One complaint was referred to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) in November 2022. Following review, the SPSO made the decision not to take the complaint forward but asked the Directorate to provide further information to the complainer on concerns raised in the complaint, this action was completed.

In relation to the Stage 2 complaints investigated, three complaints were not upheld, six were partially upheld and one was upheld in full.

Analysis of complaints made, with particular attention to those upheld, showed the main categories of complaint related to:

- Treatment or attitude of staff
- Inadequate standard of service including lack of communication
- Delay in responding to enquiries, or the progress of a case

In the reporting period, AHSCP closed 25 complaints with 23 of these being Stage 1 complaints and two Stage 2 complaints, both Stage 2 complaints were upheld. During the period, the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman investigated one AHSCP complaint regarding the handling of a complaint, recommendations included training of staff on the handling of complaints which have been taken forward. The detail of the Ombudsman's findings can be accessed here: [Decision Report 201911488](#)

Analysis of AHSCP complaints showed the main categories of complaint were:

- Disagreements about care or service decisions
- Quality of service provided, including charging issues
- Attitude of staff and poor communication

The themes emerging from complaints across both services are similar and highlights areas for ongoing improvement including:

- The importance of ensuring clearer communication with adults and families regarding our processes
- The provision of information for families, for AHSCP this included information on charging and financial assessment before services commence
- The importance of clear record keeping in being able to respond to queries and resolve complaints

- For AHSCP, there was specific learning around the importance of implementing checks on generic wheelchairs including footplates, lap belts and overall condition checks which has been addressed within the service.

The CFJ Quality and Improvement Team arrange and support internal learning reviews for all stage 2 complaints as part of our approach to implementing the learning from complaints and to support the use of feedback on a service level and on an individual case basis.

Duty of Candour

All social work and social care services in Scotland have a duty of candour. This is a legal requirement which means that when unintended, or unexpected, events happen that result in death or harm as defined in Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016, the people affected understand what has happened, receive an apology, and that organisations learn from the experience and put in place improvements.

An important part of this duty is the requirement for organisations to provide an annual statement detailing how the duty of candour is implemented across services. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there were no incidents in Angus where the duty of candour applied. The annual Duty of Candour Report 2022-23 which we are required to publish can be found [here](#).

External Scrutiny

Children's Services

During the reporting period children's services had three unannounced inspections evaluating, how well we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing.

Two of our children's residential provisions achieved the highest grade possible (Grade 6 excellent) following inspection. [Carseburn](#) Road was inspected in May 2022 and [Strathmore](#) Centre in January 2023. Logan Cottage, a care home for children and young people, inspected in January 2023 was evaluated as adequate. The two requirements for improvement detailed in the [report](#) have been progressed.

Adult Services

During 2022-23, the Care Inspectorate undertook twenty inspections of adult residential care homes in Angus. Under the quality framework evaluations, a drop in grade was noted for several providers with ongoing support for improvement delivered by the Care Inspectorate and supported by AHSCP's care home support and oversight arrangements.

There were also four inspections of support services during the period. A drop in grades was noted for all providers with one provider notified of six requirements and improvement notices by the Care Inspectorate. This affected their ability to apply for the new care at home framework for 2023. One care at home provider ceased trading gave notice of the withdrawal of approximately 300 hours of care at home service.

Themes noted for requirements and areas for improvement included:

- Medication
- Care planning
- Recording keeping
- Recruitment and induction

Regulation and Scrutiny

The current system for scrutiny, inspection and regulation in Scotland have been in place for 10-20 years during which time the delivery of social care support services and the skills requirements of the social care workforce has changed. The need to review current arrangements has been highlighted by the [Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#), the [Promise](#) and the [Muir Review](#). The Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation was announced looking at how social care services are regulated and inspected in Scotland. The [Review](#) chaired by Dame Sue Bruce was due to report in June 2023 but publication is now expected in September 2023.

Resources

Direct financial support for Angus Council's statutory social work services is a significant component of the Local Authority's overall budget. The total gross expenditure on social work and social care services for the financial period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 was £120.1 million.

Breakdown for 2022-23:

- Justice - £2.04 million

Criminal Justice Social Work Services are specifically funded by a Scottish Government ring-fenced grant administered in accordance with Section 27 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended. The Angus grant allocation is £2,043,342. The allocation has remained static and has not been updated in line with inflation for several years. The budget is under considerable pressure due to meeting the Local Government Pay Settlement for 2021-22 and in anticipation of a further award next year. This in conjunction with other increasing costs in respect of vehicles, fuel, equipment, and property account for a real time cut in the available Justice budget. Temporary covid recovery funding available until 2025 is supporting with some staff capacity, however the service is under pressure in being able to continue to deliver the current range of effective community-based justice interventions.

- Children and Families - £24.6 million

Children's Social Work Services, the main area of cost pressure continues to be in meeting the costs of the demand for external foster care placements and residential care provision for children unable to remain living at home. This is largely generated by the need for externally procured placements to meet the complex and changing needs of our looked after children and young people and limited capacity across of in-house local resources.

- Adult services - £92.7 million

Despite this year's figures (see below) showing a slight shift, the longer-term trend is for continued growth in care at home services. This is a result of more people being supported longer in the community, an aging population in Angus (therefor more people likely to need a service) and the continuing support for the early discharge scheme all play a part towards the decrease in demand for care home placements and an increase in demand for care at home services. Care at home demand continues to exceed the available capacity within AHSCP, resulting in unmet need and costs being incurred at a lower level than would otherwise have been the case. This shift in the balance of care will require to be sustained in future years through the rebalancing of resources.

Performance and Data Summary

Adult Services

Capacity and Demand

As noted earlier in this report, care at home has continued to be an area of significant growth as AHSCP support more people to remain independent in the community for longer. Although demand continues to be high, the provision of care at home hours delivered decreased from 13,500 hours per week last year to 12,317 per week in March 2023. Demand for personal care peaked at 2,291 hours per week in October 2022, a demand services were unable to meet. The level of unmet need reduced slightly to 1,573 hours in March 2023. The level of unmet need for care at home continues to be monitored weekly. The number of delivered or commissioned hours for personal care for the period was 640,525 (12,317 per week):

- Total number of people in receipt of care - 1,895 (increase of 30 people)
- Number of community meals - 94,331 meals for 437 people
- Number of people with a care plan - 4,419 people
- Number of hours unmet need - 1,573 hours

On 31 March 2023, 606 older people were living in a care home in Angus. Over the last four years there has been a consistent downward trend of demand for care home places but the total figure for 2022-23 is 692, just above the figure in 2018-19 of 690. Like last year, around 41 percent of placements were for nursing care rather than residential care, in line with the trend towards more people being supported at home for longer.

During the reporting period, care home vacancies stayed broadly consistent down from 100 last year to 97 vacancies in March 2023 (from an available 1,000 beds). In relation to care home usage in March 2022 the occupied bed rate was 700 and 690 in March 2023. Before October 2022, our average delayed discharge rates were 22 beds per week. Since October, the average delayed discharge rates have reduced to 14 beds per week showing a direct positive impact of the implementation of the Angus Discharge team. Angus continues to have one of the lowest delay discharge rates nationally.

In February 2023, Scottish Government published the [Coming Home Implementation Report](#) which makes recommendations of actions to be taken at national and local levels to reduce the number of delayed discharges and out-of-area placements for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs. An implementation group has been established to advance the Scottish Government's vision around Coming Home, which seeks to minimise hospital stays and out of area placements for people with learning disability and complex needs.

In October 2022, we saw the implementation of the Angus Discharge Team consolidating a Home First ethos when people are admitted to hospital. The team are working across Tayside acute and community hospitals in partnership with the Enablement and Response Team to enhance the service provided for people leaving

hospital on their planned date of discharge. This team will continue to work in partnership across services going forward with a focus on the prevention of hospital admissions.

Additional funding was identified in October 2022, from the older people care at home budget to increase the capacity of the Enablement Response Team through an increase in staff hours. This change was in response to the increasing pressures across health and social care, unmet need and hospital discharges and delays.

Self-Directed Support (SDS)

Self-directed support has been available to adults and children eligible for social care support services since the introduction of Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) [Act 2013](#) giving people more choice and control over how they receive care services. Over the last year, work has begun to review the process, update resources and upskill the workforce in line with ongoing national improvement work. Permanent funding has been agreed by Scottish Government for the establishment of an SDS Review Team.

During 2022-23, the choices made by people in Angus about how they want to manage the support they receive through SDS has remained very similar to the previous three years. The majority of people opt for social work staff to organise support on their behalf (option 3).

- Option 1 (direct payment) – 172 people (9%)
- Option 2 (person selects and directs their support) – 426 people (21%)
- Option 3 (staff organise support on behalf of the person) - 1,258 people (63%)
- Option 4 (combination of directed support (option 3) and choosing support for themselves (option 1 or 2)) – 121 people (7%)

There is no right or wrong approach, with each option having specific advantages. The important factor is that individuals who need care can make real choices about how that care is organised and delivered. Challenges remain in relation to securing a sufficient variety of options available locally so that people can realistically build their own package of care. Services continue to work with the third and independent sector to maintain and develop the range of options available.

Adult support and protection

In 2022-23, Angus was subject to a multi-agency adult protection inspection. The inspection was led by the Care Inspectorate in collaboration with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland with the purpose of seeking assurance that adults at risk of harm in Angus are supported and protected by the arrangements in place.

The inspection [Report](#) highlights that Angus has clear strengths in ensuring adults at risk of harm are safe, protected and supported. It found that AHSCP demonstrated a person-centred approach to adult support and protection which included the regular

use of advocacy, promoting the voice of adults throughout all stages of key processes. The delivery of inquiries, investigations and case conferences themselves were assessed as highly effective. Core group meetings for adults at risk of harm which proceed to case conference were noted as reporting effective oversight of risk assessment and the management of concerns.

This assessment of local Adult Protection arrangements is the culmination of significant local improvement work and the commitment of key staff across AHSCP and wider partner agencies to keeping people in Angus safe.

Following the publication of the inspection findings, a multi-agency [improvement plan](#) was developed to support coordinated progress across the areas of improvement arising from the inspection. The plan has been approved by the Care Inspectorate and is now being implemented.

A Significant Case Review (SCR) [P19](#), published in 2021 and relating to practice from preceding years, has continued to influence adult protection improvement practice through the delivery of a detailed improvement plan. In January 2022, a commission from the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care was made seeking assurance in relation to that improvement plan. The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland jointly worked with Angus partners to deliver the Commission. The joint assurance team concluded in their [report](#) that the Angus partners were providing appropriate and effective strategic leadership and direction in the implementation of the improvement plan.

Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS)

Ensuring access to social work services for people who are affected by substance misuse continues to be a local priority. Angus Integrated Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (AIDARS) supports individuals and their families affected by substance use within their communities. The service operates an open referral system with all referrals assessed by an integrated referral hub which includes health, social work and third sector agencies. This “one stop shop” approach ensures that each referral is signposted to the most appropriate service according to need.

Key to people’s ability to successfully engage with support is the speed with which services are made available and this year has shown an improvement in the percentage of people receiving treatment within 21 days of referral. The nationally determined target is to have 90 percent of people engaged in treatment three weeks after receipt of referral. In 2021-22, 83.9 percent of people received treatment within the target. This improved in 2022-23 with 84.4 percent, 91.9 percent, 93.7 percent and 96.8 percent of people receiving treatment within 21 days for quarter 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

More recently, AHSCP has been reporting performance against the Medically Assisted Treatment ([MATI](#)) standards, which are evidence-based standards promoting the consistent delivery of safe, accessible, high-quality drug treatment across Scotland. Over the last year in Angus there has been continued improvement across the first five standards and services are already working together to deliver standards 6-10.

Reducing the harm associated with substance use remains a priority for services, the multidisciplinary Near Fatal Overdose hub continues to provide assertive outreach and follow up to individuals affected, offering support to engage with services.

Following the successful test of change to align and integrate substance use and mental health services within a hub in Montrose, this model will be rolled out across all localities during 2023-24.

Learning and Physical Disability Services

Improvement Plans are in place for both the Learning and the Physical Disability Services which set out those areas of the service that are a priority for development and further improvement to address current challenges facing the services such as:

- changes to the population
- more people needing support
- new areas of support emerging

The services are experiencing increasing demand due to adults experiencing greater longevity resulting in a diverse range of health needs developing as people grow older. Demographic changes are being experienced, particularly in the areas of increased complexity of need and co-existing conditions, ageing carers and autism and learning disability.

The improvement plans identify the priority actions required to ensure that the services are delivered as efficiently as possible, enabling resources to be directed to the areas of most urgent need and addressing current and future service delivery requirements with a focus on future sustainability. Current priorities being progressed include:

- The replacement of The Gables Care Home. Following an options appraisal, alternative accommodation has been secured
- Physical Disability Day Care. A service review of the Physical Disability Day Service is currently being undertaken
- Respite for people with a physical disability. Engagement work is currently being undertaken, to ascertain what the preferred respite options are for carers of and people with a physical disability
- Learning Disability Day Care. Angus has 3 Adult Resource Centres for people with a learning disability which are now lacking physical capacity to accommodate the numbers of individuals with complex health needs and/or behaviour that challenges, that are assessed as requiring a building-based day service. An options appraisal is being progressed to identify potential options for addressing the issue of capacity

Last year the Learning Disability Day Services were successful in achieving the National Autism Certificate of Accreditation. The day services are currently going through the next stage of accreditation and current feedback indicates that we could achieve the advanced level of accreditation. If this is achieved, we would be the only service in Scotland at this level.

We continue to develop a whole system approach for people with Learning Disabilities in Tayside through participation in the Living Lives well improvement work. The progression of the Learning Disability and Physical Disability Improvement plans continues to direct the focus for the disabilities service.

The Coming Home Implementation work has now begun with a strategic oversight group established to provide oversight to ensure we meet the local requirements from the 'Coming Home Implementation: A report from the national working group on complex care and delayed discharge' in relation to reducing delayed discharges, preventing unnecessary hospital admissions, and supporting individuals to stay within their local communities where suitable and possible, supported by specialist staff.

The Dynamic Risk Register is an integral part of this work and was launched in May 2023 with training for staff throughout June. A Care manager has been appointed to support with this work.

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

Information covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023:

- Emergency Detention Certificates decreased from 43 to 37
- Short Term Detention Certificates increased from 86 to 89
- Compulsory Treatment Order applications increased from 43 to 45
- Social Circumstances Reports showed an increase from 77 to 79
- Other reports regarding civil and forensic cases remained static at 85
- Number of people on a Compulsion Order remained the same at two
- Number of people on a Compulsion Order with Restriction remained at seven

This year, the number of Guardianship reports (new and renewal) requested under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 continued to increase with a total of 122 requests (an increase of 31 from last year).

Following a request made by the CSWO for a comprehensive review of the adherence to procedures relating to the recording of guardianships for Adults with Incapacity, Angus Council's Internal Audit team reported on their findings in early 2023. The overall level of assurance for the period covered by the audit testing was "no assurance". And the report evidenced significant areas for improvement needed to ensure compliance with the Office of Public Guardian (OPG) and the Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) requirements. As a result, it was recommended that a full review of the guardianship process be undertaken, and improvements implemented. Work is underway to progress this, an action plan has been developed with a working group meeting monthly to review and update on progress.

The service has supported an additional 45 adults with incapacity case conferences, a total of 141 this year. This may reflect the positive impact of the introduction of senior social work practitioners in AHSCP improving the early identification of capacity issues and influencing the reduction in the number of adult support protection case conferences which have fallen from 35 last year to 26 in 2022-23. This early identification of capacity issues has supported earlier intervention, reducing the need to proceed to conference.

As reported in last year's report, AHSCP continue to experience challenges recruiting and retaining Approved Medical Practitioners (AMP) (also known as Section 22 doctors) in Angus. There are no permanent AMPs in Angus and cover is being provided by one locum AMP for each locality. A total of ten locum AMPs covered the Angus area during 2022-23 providing much needed support and access to services.

Support For Carers

The importance of unpaid carers cannot be underestimated, it is vital that services support unpaid carers to continue providing care for their loved ones, whilst achieving a balanced and fulfilling life for themselves. Grant funding for third sector organisations has continued to support both adult and young carers with the main partner being Angus Carers Centre.

Unpaid carers and staff from across Angus have provided feedback to inform the development of the new Angus Unpaid Carers Strategy 2023-2026. Four core themes emerged from both staff and carer consultations; communication, capacity, clarity, and continuity of care which will be reflected in the new Strategy.

Adult services practitioners completed 315 adult carer support plans in 2022-23, a significant increase on 274 plans during 2021-22. Since implementation of the key requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 a total of 2,489 adult carers have been assessed by adult services with 2,156 carers being awarded a personal budget in their own right.

Young carers service

Angus Young Carers Service has continued to provide support to young carers during 2022-23. Over the 12-month period, 172 young carers (aged 8 to 18) were supported, (compared to 154 in 2021-22).

Primary and secondary schools continue to identify young carers so they can be offered support and the opportunity to develop a Young Carer's Statement setting out their own individual needs and support requirements. Across primary and secondary schools in Angus at the end of March 2023, there had been an increase in the number of identified young carers from 88 last year to 99.

To reflect the differing needs of young carers, a decision has been made by Angus Carers Centre to develop 'age and stage' appropriate supports. The young carers service will be designed to enable different resources for the following groups:

- Carers aged 12 years and under

- Carers aged 13-17 years
- Carers aged 18-24 years

Transitioning from young carers services to adult services can be challenging for many young people and to support this vulnerable group the service will focus support on transitions to adult services to ensure that relationships with young carers transitioning are maintained. Angus Carers Centre have partnered with Dundee and Angus College to provide meaningful opportunities for young adult carers.

Children and Families Services

Family Support Services

During the reporting period, 1,448 referrals were made to children's social work services continuing the slight gradual decline over the last 6 years. However, the proportion of these referrals assessed as requiring social work assessment or intervention has increased substantially. Last year, 622 referrals progressed to social work involvement and that increased to 806 in the year to March 2023, an increase in demand of 30% year on year.

Where appropriate following screening, referrals may be assessed as suitable for continued or enhanced support through universal services and other partners. Last year, 58 percent of referrals were suitable for continued support without social work involvement. In 2022-23, only 32 percent of referrals were considered suitable for de-escalation.

This demonstrates a significant increase in service demand for children and family social work over a 12-month period. With no corresponding increase in the number of social workers and support workers available to deliver the services required, caseloads have become further pressurised.

Though sourcing temporary external funding, an additional two temporary Senior Practitioner roles were created to support and enhance the consistency of the duty response across locality teams and create more capacity within the localities management structure to oversee this additional 184 cases.

Looked after children / Care experienced children and young people

On the 31 March 2023, the number of children 'looked after' was 233, an increase from the 220 reported last year. The continue to experience some statistical anomalies in the process of pulling these statistical reports from our client index system which may result in a variation in this number once manual data checking is completed as part of our annual statutory return. A programme of data improvement activity is ongoing with a view to reduce the need for manual checking of these figures in future reporting cycles.

On 31 March 2022, the proportion of 'looked after children' being supported either at home or with family or friends was 38 percent, a reduction from 43 percent last year. The decrease of children being supported at home or with relatives continues to put pressure on alternative placements with the service struggling to meet demand.

This has resulted in a slight increase in our use of externally commissioned placements. On 31 March 2023, we had 20 external fostering placements in place for 27 children compared to 18 external fostering placements for 25 children last year. External placements are only used when we are unable to identify a suitable placement within our internal resources.

Due to a national shortage of fostering placements across Scotland, more children and young people are being placed in residential care, increasing the need for quality placements both locally and nationally. On 31 March 2023, Angus had 33 children placed in external residential placements. Currently within Angus, we have capacity to care for nine children fulltime between our two internal residential children's houses. Approval was granted by Policy and Resources Committee on 6 December 2022 to extend the Angus Council children's residential estate with the open market acquisition of two new 4 bedded children's houses, with the first of these projected to open in summer 2024.

Extending our local provision will offer more choices for matching children and young people to a home within their communities where it is safe to do so. This will support children to maintain their relationships with people who are important to them and contribute to a reduction in placement breakdown for children and the associated poorer outcomes for children with multiple moves in care. This will also enable us to achieve best value by ensuring more children and young people remain in Angus, whilst mitigating cost pressures.

During the development of the children's residential business case, 26 children were placed externally. Analysis at that time showed that 58 percent of these children could have been successfully placed in our internal resources if there had been availability. The remaining 42 percent required specialist provision, including 32 percent who required an educational resource.

We are committed to reducing the number of unnecessary placement changes experienced by our children and young people. This year the data shows 15 children (just over 6 percent) of our looked after children had three or more placements during the reporting year, positively this is a decrease of 2 percent on last year but remains above the Scottish average of 4 percent.

Children 'looked after' continue to have individual planning meetings reviewed in accordance with the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 by independent Reviewing Officers who can offer case objectivity to the multi-agency child's planning meeting. Work has been ongoing to improve how the minutes of meetings are recorded ensuring they are meaningful, but importantly accessible, for children and families to read. A pilot started in July 2022 sending My Plan accessible letters directly to primary age children explaining what happened at their meeting and detailing who was there, who is available to help them and what support they will be given.

As a result of positive feedback from young people and social workers on the My Plan letters, individualised letters are now being sent to secondary age young people and those under school age, letters are also written for babies which are kept on their records to support their understanding at a late date.

Continuing Care

Local authorities have a duty to provide Continuing Care in certain circumstances under Section 67 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This amendment to the Children (Scotland) Act afforded all eligible young people an entitlement to remain in their care setting up to their twenty first birthday.

On 31 March 2023, twelve young people were exercising their eligibility for Continuing Care, remaining in their foster care or residential placement. This is a reduction on the previous year due in part to the age bound eligibility criterion. The number of young people accessing continuing care placements has fluctuated since 2018-19, from eleven young people in the first year to nineteen young people in 2020-21, last year seventeen young people exercised their eligibility for Continuing Care. Extending placements is generally very positive for individual young people supporting them through a period of transition into independence, an approach which is in-line with the Promise and our Corporate Parenting responsibilities. However, the Continuing Care eligibility has not been fully funded and therefore does impact on both financial resources and the availability of placements for children entering in to care.

The Promise

At the beginning of 2023, the Angus promise team started a mapping project alongside Promise Scotland to assess local progress towards meeting the [Plan 21-24](#) Calls to Action. This includes multi-agency input from social work, housing, health, education, police and third sector to determine where we need to focus our efforts to ensure we keep our Promise to the children of Angus.

The Hangout, a monthly youth group for care experienced children and young people aged 5 and above, started during the reporting year and has continued to run with consistently high numbers attending. Volunteers from the Promise team, Advocacy services, Active Schools, Reporters Office, and Review Officers support the group helping to break down some of the barriers children and young people experience.

As well as building relationships, the young people can get involved with project work and provide their views. For example, a focus group of young people worked with a communications and media consultant for Child Protection Committees Scotland contributing to the design, language, and content of the new Child Protection Committee Scotland "Keeping Safe" campaign. Our young people came up with the creative social media idea of using Tik Tok adverts as a way of reaching large numbers of young people.

In November 2022, the Virtual Promise Team attended the Scottish Social Services Award Ceremony in Glasgow. The team were shortlisted to the final three in the category of Excellence in Children's Services. Whilst the team lost out to amazing competition, we are immensely proud that Angus reached the final three.

In June 2022, more than 65 care experienced young people in Angus came with their families, carers, friends, and workers to have fun and take part in a variety of activities at the Angus Promise Fun Day at Monikie Park. The young people and families enjoyed taking part in fun activities such as circus skills, Fire Brigade challenges, face painting, orienteering, bike rides, outdoor games, STEM activities, and took time to relax by getting involved in yoga and story time sessions. The packed scheduled continued throughout the day with a BBQ provided for lunch. The event was made possible by the hard work of the promise team and all the partners who helped make the day a success.

Integrated Children's Services Partnerships have been allocated funding to support the enhancement of Whole Family Wellbeing Services. Social work services have been involved alongside partners in shaping the plans for the development of the Angus Whole Family Wellbeing Programme to improve the availability of community-based supports and services for families to access when they need support.

Social work data and feedback from staff and service users has been a critical part of informing the local needs assessment. A partnership consultation held in November 2022 set the direction of the programme with a focus on developing improved access to supports, enhancing the range of provision and scaling up services including supports out of office hours, building on gendered specific interventions as reported from the Glen Clova evaluation. The focus of the support is on families with one child in the range of pre-birth to 5 as a priority group.

Following the restructure of children's services in 2019, Enhance team was formed to meet the need for intensive support for children 0-18, and parents/carers who were in crisis. Enhance provides the third tier of staged intensive support available in Angus with commissioned services through Aberlour, Sustain providing stage 2 and Hillcrest Futures offering early support at stage 1. These services collectively offer a staged approach and work closely to ensure the families in greatest need of support are targeted appropriately.

During the reporting period, 79 children and their parents/carers received support from Enhanced team with 61 cases being closed during the period. Many families referred experience multiple disadvantages including poor mental health, poverty, addictions, domestic abuse, offending behaviour and attachment difficulties. Of the 61 children closed to the team, 13 were either not able to remain safely where they were living or required specialist resource, the outcomes for the other 48 children were:

- 33 remained with their parents/family
- 14 were supported with a transition
- 1 placement in residential care was sustained

Child Protection

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there were 234 child protection investigations involving 212 children, 22 children had more than one investigation. This is lower than last year where there were 396 child protection investigations involving 250 children. Further consideration will be required to manage the introduction of the new model of joint investigative interviewing during 2024 due to the significant training requirements impacting workforce capacity as well as the increased operational demands the model involves.

The average number of children on Angus Child Protection Register (CPR) over this year has risen from 49 last year to 63 this reporting period. Domestic abuse continues to feature as at least one risk factor in just over half of all registrations highlighting the significance this type of harm continues to have for children.

Angus is just above the Scottish average for numbers of children on the CPR with 2.8 percent per 1,000 of the population aged 0-15 years compared to the Scottish average of 2.2 percent per 1,000 of the population aged 0-15 years. Due to the small population involved, individual family variances can impact significantly on the value of these benchmark comparisons.

The length of time children are subject to registration is monitored to ensure that supports in place are having a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of children. The majority of children (92 percent) are on the register for less than one year (46 percent less than 6 months). A very small number of children (6 percent) are on the register for between one year and 18 months and 2 percent for over 18 months. This year's breakdown is broadly the same as last year.

There is an internal reflective learning review in every case where a child is on the register for over one year to ensure that the supports in place are sufficient to meet the child's needs and reduce risk. These sessions are well received by social workers and managers to aid reflective practice and identify learning at the case, team and organisational level.

Where possible, we support families in a planned way, however Child Protection Orders (CPOs) are sought where immediate risk of significant harm is identified. This year, we have used this legislation for 26 individual children up from 18 last year. The overall number of families affected is however similar as there have been more circumstances this year in which an application was made for more than one child in a family. An internal reflective learning review takes place for every circumstance in which a CPO has been taken to support learning and identify any missed potential opportunities for earlier support.

In line with our ongoing commitment to improve the experience of families involved in our child protection processes, we have extended the rollout of PREpare, a social work led, strengths-based model that improves child and parental engagement in the child protection planning and decision-making process. The evaluations show that parents who attended a facilitated PREpare meeting prior to Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) were more engaged in the CPPM and contributed to the care and safety planning for their children.

The voice of children, including very young children, is central to the PREpare approach, seeing risk and strength from the perspective of the child. The model aims to reduce the level of risk and harm experienced by children, ensure families can act as partners in planning and decision-making, and ensure their views and opinions are voiced and acted upon. The model offers workers a greater understanding of the benefits of a strengths-based approach to Child Protection planning. A short [film](#) has been made providing information for families and professionals on PREpare. We will continue to extend the rollout of PREpare into next year.

Children and Families Carers Support Service

The Permanence Team, Fostering Team and the Kinship Team sit within the Carers Service which aims to provide a service to ensure children and young people live in an environment which promotes equality, valuing and respecting children's individuality and diversity. Details relating to the performance of the Adoption Agency and Fostering Panel were reported in the Annual Report 2022-23 [Report No 157/23](#).

Permanence Team

Under Section 1 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, Angus Council has a statutory duty 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 sit with the Chief Social Work Officer. In January 2023, delegated authority to act as Agency Decision Maker (ADM) was transferred from Service Leader to specifically appointed Managers within Children's Services. This was necessitated by a further reduction of senior management capacity within the service and the need to ensure a sufficient external perspective in the role of ADM. All those undertaking the role of ADM attended a bespoke training session in May 2023 and received induction into the role.

There has been an increase in the number of permanence orders granted this year from eight in 2021-22 to eleven in this reporting period. Whilst low volume, the significance of these figures is that each child now has security in the legal mechanism for decision-making and the provision of care for the remainder of their childhood.

The Adoption Agency also received five notifications of intent to apply to become adoptive parents of relatives/stepchildren and produced the required reports for Court, an increase of two from last year.

As part of extending the support available in Angus for birth parents affected by permanence, we supported 'Alternatives Dundee' to apply for external funding which enabled them to extend their valuable service into Angus in December 2022. Three birth parents took up the service in the first three months of availability and proactive efforts to ensure that all parents are aware of the service will continue to encourage uptake.

Fostering Service

The fostering service supports foster carers who provide care for children on a temporary (less than 2 years) basis, short breaks or continuing care basis as well as supported lodging providers who provide care and accommodation for young adults. The team provide a range of training opportunities, facilitate regular support groups and provide regular individual supervision sessions for carers.

Although the recruitment of foster carers and adoptive parents has continued to be a priority, it has remained difficult over the last year to increase the numbers of foster carers reflecting a wider national challenge.

Local capacity has been impacted by this year by the resignation of three interim carers and four short break carers due to ill health. Another four interim carers, three short break carers and three permanent carers have decided to take time out from fostering for a variety of reasons. The service was also pleased to welcome back one couple returning after a break of 6 months.

During 2022-23, there has been some success with the recruitment and approval of three foster carers, three adoptive parents and one supported lodgings carer. Whilst our work to recruit carers remains a key focus, we are developing our focus on the retention of existing carers. In partnership and consultation with our carers, we have further refined the skills level scheme to improve fairness and equity of our arrangements based on the needs of individual children, we have improved the information available to carers about children at the point of referral and have provided guidance on the informal support available for carers.

Kinship Team

The Kinship Team was established in 2019 to improve the support available for kinship carers with the aim of ensuring children can remain safely within their extended family when they cannot safely stay at home. On 31 March 2023, we were supporting 129 children and young people living with kinship carers including those looked after, subject to residence orders and those living with extended family before social work involvement.

Demand for Kinship Care support has been a developing area of practice and following feedback from kinship carers, a review of our Kinship support arrangements began in January 2023. The review will establish whether the balance of resource remains in line with demand and is sufficient to meet the range of needs carers identified. The review also offers an opportunity to consider different models of delivering the service. This will ensure we provide the right support to kinship carers minimising the risk of children experiencing breakdown in placements and placement moves, alongside minimising the financial impact on the service of children moving into higher cost placements. The review is expected to conclude mid-2023. During the period of transition, interim measures have been put in place to ensure continuity of provision.

Horizon (Through Care and Aftercare)

The Council is required to provide services that support children leaving care and to eligible care experienced young people. In Angus, these services are delivered through the Horizon service alongside certain youth justice services and the planning and provision of support for unaccompanied children. During the reporting period, Horizon continued to offer support to a range of young people including:

- Care leavers aged 15 to 26 years who are preparing for or moving on to independent living.
- Care leavers who need supported accommodation, including our registered provision Millgate Loan, independent flats, or training flats
- Young males in conflict with the law age 16-19 years
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)
- Unaccompanied Young People supported under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme

This year, fourteen care experienced young people have been supported into further education, with ten enrolled in Dundee & Angus college placements. Two young people secured a modern apprenticeship with a further two young people attending university, one now in their second year.

In 2022, Horizon ran a weekly mother and baby group with six care experienced parents attending with their children, benefiting from a range of tailored supports. The group came to a natural end at the start of 2023 with parents and their children integrating confidently into community groups and local nurseries. A further group will be stepped up as needed to support new and expectant mothers.

The Horizon football team offers opportunities for young people, many of whom are isolated, to participate in a team sport and travel to participate in events. The football group is in its second year and continues to grow in numbers. We are continually sourcing funding to support our care experienced young people to have opportunities to engage in community activities to support community connections. We have successfully applied for National Lottery funding to support an ambitious program of summer activities in 2023.

As part of the team's Justice remit, we work in partnership to ensure that no 16 or 17-year-old from Angus is placed in a Young Offenders Institute (YOI) for sentence or on remand. This approach is in line with 'The Promise Scotland Plan 21-24' and children's rights more broadly. Our overall approach and provision of diversion from prosecution services further helps to prevent the criminalisation of care experienced children and young people. In the last year, there have been no 16/17-year-olds from Angus placed in a YOI. During the reporting year, the team provided extensive and professionally exceptional support to ensure that a 16-year-old young person was managed through the Justice System in accordance with these principles.

Since the UK Government mandated the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (NTS) in December 2021, Angus Council have received 7 young people all aged 16 or 17. A combination of supported

lodgings placements and independent flats have been used to meet their needs on a case-by-case basis. Tailored support offered from a range of agencies and coordinated by the Horizon team has enabled our young people to access support and services to meet their ongoing cultural, religious, health and recovery needs.

The next 12 months are likely to be increasingly challenging as it is likely we will see younger children being referred under the NTS. This will require the sourcing of foster or residential placements which are already under significant pressure. With an increase in the frequency and number of referrals anticipated.

Horizon also deliver support to unaccompanied minors through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Since April 2022, three young people have been supported to settle in Angus under the scheme.

Justice Services and Community Payback

Angus Justice Services deliver a range of services, including the statutory Criminal Justice Social Work functions of delivering support and supervision to people who have committed offences and are involved in the court and/or prison system.

Our arrangements for the delivery for these services include the Munro Team supporting men over the age of 21, an Unpaid Work Team supporting community payback in relation to unpaid work carried out in the local community, the Public Protection Team who supervise and monitor men who commit sexual and other high-risk violent offences, and the Glen Isla Project - a gender specific, trauma informed service for women in conflict with the law.

The Justice Service also hosts the Glen Clova Project which extends the model of gender specific trauma informed support to those who may be in need of support to access universal services, including throughout pregnancy, those who may be on the periphery of offending or who have completed statutory orders and may benefit from ongoing support to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and improve personal wellbeing. The Glen Clova Project's 4-year pilot concluded in 2022 with an independent evaluation finding that women who engaged in the project did so on average for 12 months and benefited from the approach to address issues of poverty, substance use, mental health, and parenting. In February 2023, Angus Council agreed permanent core funding for the Glen Clova Project in recognition of the positive outcomes for women. We are exploring the potential to develop the model further as part of our whole family wellbeing programme.

Performance information for all Justice Social Work Services is reported publicly by Community Justice Scotland and embargo restrictions prohibit publication of some of the 2022-23 information before their report is laid before Parliament. Available information on data for 2021-22 can be accessed [here](#). The full information for 2022-23 is due to be published early in 2024, the information referred to below is permitted for the public domain in the meantime.

The total number of hours of unpaid work imposed during 2022-23 was 21,015 an increase of 55 percent on 2021-22. The number of hours completed to the benefit of local communities in Angus was 15,593 hours, a 34 percent increase on the 11,673 hours completed in 2021-22 and the equivalent of 421 full time equivalent weeks of work.

Although these numbers are continuing to increase in 2022-23, they have not yet returned to pre-covid levels. The number of completed unpaid work hours were approximately 14 percent lower than 2020-21, in comparison to approximately 28 percent lower than 2019-20. By March 2023, the service had successfully addressed the covid related backlog achieving no delay in starting a weekday work placement a very short wait for a weekend placement.

During 2022-23, 88 percent of all Community Payback Orders were completed successfully. The successful completion rate in Angus remains above the national average of 70 percent.

Diversion from prosecution remains a critical part of the justice system. There has been a significant upturn in the number of Diversion assessments requested during 2022-23 (20 percent). This reflects a continuing and significant increase in demand for this service. A high percentage (62 percent) of those assessed as suitable agree to undertake Diversion activity thereby directly reducing pressure on Court time.

We are seeing a trend both locally and nationally towards a greater proportion of assessments for those aged under 19 being deemed appropriate to undertake Diversion activities, 40 percent of all assessments undertaken in Angus are for people under the age of 19. Availability of Diversion as an option prevents specified cases unnecessarily moving into the adult Court system. As part of our Community Justice Partnership work, we are currently developing a partnership improvement and development plan for Diversion to support us to meet the increased demand and suitably address presenting needs in more creative ways.

Forfar Sheriff Court has a court custody unit where those appearing from police custody in Angus are held. This was not used during covid and all those appearing from custody were held in Dundee making it much more challenging to provide direct contact and support for Angus residents who were arrested and furnish the Court with suitable and timely advice. During this time, we partnered with Positive Steps, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils to offer a Custody Assessment and Referral Service whilst recognising that the needs of people are better met in their local area. Forfar custody unit returned to operational use in January 2023, enabling a more responsive support service to people leaving the custody unit.

Service improvements have included developing partnership approaches to enhance the range of supports available to people presenting through the Justice system including:

- Introduction of a Penumbra Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner hosted within Justice Services in partnership with Angus Alcohol and Drug Partnership and AHSCP enabling direct support for males presenting with mild to moderate mental health issues and co-presenting issues of substance use without the need for onward referral. Success has been demonstrated by the number of men accessing supports showing positive outcomes including improved mental wellbeing, reduced substance use, moving on to training and employment and supported access to specialist services. Building on successful evaluation, a similar post will be established next year with a focus on young people aged 16-25.
- As part of a group work programme to improve confidence and wellbeing, women from Glen Isla and Glen Clova Projects designed and installed a permanent piece of artwork titled "A look through a window" which is installed at the Arbroath Marina in celebration of the unique contribution of women to Angus communities.
- The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Community Justice published in 2022 sets out an ambition for a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive workforce and services in Scotland. This reflects the growing recognition of the prevalence and impact of trauma on people's lives and the intrinsic links to

those caught up in the criminal justice system. The Connecture Programme is a 16-session programme developed in response to a need for increased interventions to work with people who have been traumatised and commit offences. Angus Justice Services was one of three local authorities to facilitate the pilot. Staff were trained and supported six men to complete the programme. An external evaluation of the pilot will report next year however local feedback has been very positive with staff and participants rating the programme as highly effective. Moving forward we will consider the findings of the evaluation and plan next steps.

Service quality and performance

Following the publication of [National Guidance](#) for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews, we have updated our local arrangements and replaced SCRs and Initial Case Reviews with multi-agency Learning Reviews in line with national guidance. Angus have jointly commissioned a consultant with Dundee Protecting People to review and develop local learning review guidance for all protecting people committees.

During the reporting period, there were three requests for Adult Protection Learning Reviews. One referral progressed to a multi-agency case review group with learning recommendations made and accepted by the Adult Protection Committee. An outcome is pending for another which was taken forward using internal NHS Tayside review mechanisms. Following initial investigation, the final referral did not meet the criteria for a review.

One request was made for a Child Protection Learning Review which was considered by a multi-agency case review group and recommendations made, and accepted, by the Child Protection Committee.

As part of a multi-agency national approach, NHS Tayside lead implementation of Tayside's Child Death Review Hub to ensure appropriate and proportionate learning occurs from every child death (those under 18 years of age and any person up to the age of 25 with care experience). As part of this approach, CFJ are supporting a small test of change with a children's services manager and health manager jointly chairing reviews using NHS Tayside's internal Local Adverse Event Review process to ensure a shared focus on learning actions.

Through work with the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership, the Children Families and Justice Directorate have taken a whole service approach to improving practice in situations involving domestic abuse. Angus began to embed the Safe and Together model in 2017 initially training 20 champions, by 31 March 2023, there were over 70 champions in both frontline and strategic positions. The model derives its name from the concept that children who have experienced domestic abuse are best served when professionals work in partnership to keep them safe and together with the non-offending parent.

A critical component of our work includes the support our Justice Service provides in engaging with perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse with the service having adopted a Safe and Together approach to working with perpetrators resulting in closer links with the children and families service to deliver a whole family approach. Almost all social workers and community justice assistants have completed the Safe and Together 4-day core training and staff continue to deliver multi-agency training in Angus 'Engaging with Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse'.

In collaboration with the Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre, a Women and Families Safety Support Practitioner was recruited to the Justice Service to support survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. This service ensures a focus on victim support takes a gender focussed approach to supporting women who have experienced harm.

Justice Services continue to deliver intervention programmes including focused 2:1 work and groupwork with perpetrators. The Fergus Programme has been developed and updated to better support men in Angus to desist from domestically abusing women and children. Recent developments within the programme include collaborating with children's services to deliver a 'Parenting Module' addressing the impact on children and young people.

The Quality and Improvement Team are working with representatives from across children and families locality teams to support improved engagement with perpetrators of domestic abuse. A pilot project started in December 2022 and will run to May 2023 to hold fathers and male caregivers to account for domestically abusive behaviours towards partners and children. This work has been identified as an essential component of successful early intervention with perpetrators.

Workforce

Capacity and growth

Serious challenges face social workers and social care staff with heavy and complex caseloads, limited resources for early intervention and preventive work. Together with a highly competitive environment for recruitment and retention, this context contributes to the pressures on the local social work and social care workforce.

A Social Work Scotland research report 'Setting The Bar for Social Work in Scotland' was published in May 2022 and sought to address some fundamental questions: can our workforce realistically work with people in the way that they are trained to do, and in line with Scotland's legislative and policy aspiration? How much work is too much for social workers? In December 2022 a follow up report "Taking the Wheel" was published, reflecting the views of social workers on the original report findings. Together, these reports represent the significant publications with the potential to inform concrete assessment of the demand for services against the resource available.

Locally, the AHSCP Workforce [Plan](#) 2022-2025 includes a Workforce Implementation [Action Plan](#), which sets out how we aim to make sure we have a workforce which is fit for purpose and is able to deliver to meet the current and future needs of those who rely on our services. The plan also details what we will do to anticipate future workforce needs, based on legislative requirements, changes in demographics, the impact of ongoing change implementation and in particular a shift towards the provision of more community-based health and care services. This specifically attends to the workforce needed to deliver, and competently oversee, the Council's statutory social work functions within AHSCP.

As noted last year, the health and social care workforce continue to experience unprecedented recruitment challenges alongside managing a reducing workforce. Many factors are influencing the situation such as low wages for social care staff, changes in employment and immigration regulations linked to EU withdrawal and the changing demographics, including an ageing population and staff group. In response to the challenges, we continue to develop initiatives looking at upskilling staff, developing career pathways that will aid retention of our workforce including development of a leadership mentoring scheme, staff qualifications assistance scheme as well as ensuring pathways for staff to access SVQ qualifications.

To support the retention of new staff, Angus has a well-established programme of support for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW). During the reporting period ten NQSWs were recruited through the graduate recruitment scheme with a further two NQSWs recruited outside the scheme. Of the twelve NQSWs six joined CFJ and six joined AHSCP. One of our internal trainee social workers also graduated joining the NQSW programme. In 2022, Angus Council recruited three internal social work trainees, all are progressing in their course.

Significantly, 'Case Managers' in AHSCP have been renamed 'Social Workers' for those who are social work qualified with positive feedback from practitioners. It is anticipated that this will support the recruitment of social workers into adult services.

Supported by our organisational development colleagues, social work services in Angus are working jointly with Dundee and Aberdeen Universities to increase the number of social work student placements available within Angus. A dedicated workforce steering group have oversight of this work to provide high quality learning opportunities which in turn will increase the likelihood of students seeking employment in Angus post qualification. During the reporting period, there were 17 students on placements across adult and children's services with seven of the students securing permanent posts following qualification.

Workforce development

The workforce development team continues to support staff training and development across the social work and social care workforce. The qualifications required by staff are set by The Scottish Social Services Council. In the reporting period, 15 staff gained SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF Level 6 or 7. Four staff have completed PDA Health and Social Care Supervision and four staff gained the HNC Social Services combining SVQ Social Services Children and Young People at SCQF level 7. The training programme is in line with the SSSC requirements for social care and social work staff to be appropriately qualified.

The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 comes into effect from April 2024, replacing Regulation 15 of the Public Services Reform Act 2010. The local authority is required to ensure that staff are in training to achieve the necessary standard by September 2025 so that we have enough staff to meet safe staffing requirements. Appropriate steps have been taken to ensure sufficient capacity to maintain the required assessment centre verification capacity through increasing the number of work-based assessors.

The Protecting People workforce training programme has continued to be delivered during 2022-23 with a combination of virtual, online and e-learning opportunities available. The learning and development framework is updated every 2-months with newly available learning resources ensuring the workforce has access to the most up-to-date and relevant materials. A monthly newsletter for internal and external frontline staff is issued with just over 1,190 subscriptions. This allows for a more coordinated approach and increased opportunities for multiagency attendance at training events covering a variety of topics including substance use, child neglect, child sexual exploitation, adult protection, and a comprehensive program on responding to domestic abuse.

Looking Forward to 2023-24

Social work and social care services in Angus remain committed to continually striving to achieve a collegiate learning culture reflecting the importance of reflective conversations and relationships in delivering change for individuals, teams, services and places. AHSCP scheduled its first Shared Learning Event for May 2023 to provide protected time for teams to network, share and learn from each other.

Work is underway to enhance the role of the Social Work profession within AHSCP and a newly appointed Head of Service with an Executive Lead for Social Work will further solidify the professional leadership of social work and social care within adult services. Following improvement work and engagement carried out within the partnership, a renewed commitment has been secured to ensure that all teams delivering social work services have an appropriate number of qualified social work practitioners and managers to deliver and oversee social work duties.

Over the next year, SDS Transformational funding 2023-24 will be utilised to create a temporary Senior Planning Officer post hosted within AHSCP to focus on the delivery of SDS across both Adult and Children's Services with an aim of improving the continuity of arrangements across the lifespan and simplifying arrangements through transition.

Social work and social care services will continue to work alongside key partners in the delivery of wider protecting people and community planning partnership outcomes. Notably, supporting the delivery of the ADP's strategy to reduce the level of drug and alcohol related harms in Angus. The ADP launched its new strategy in spring 2023 and delivery will support better outcomes for people engaged in a range of social work services.

We will continue to promote care as a career; AHSCP has begun filming videos with representatives from care at home, care homes and adult resource centre to promote understanding of the roles available. We will continue to invest in and develop our career pathways and improve opportunities locally.

The completion of the Kinship Review will allow us to develop the service to better reflect the needs of kinship carers and support the children in their care. Our priority remains to support families to care for their children within their extended families where that is safe and right for them.

As noted earlier in the report, investment was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee to support an extension in our residential placements for children and young people in Angus. A key priority is the completion of the first stage of this programme by opening a new residential house in summer 2024. This will offer an opportunity for an additional four children to remain in Angus or be returned to Angus from external placements if that is appropriate for them.

In terms of the wider context, we will track progress in respect of the development of proposals for a National Care Service noting that further consideration of the Bill by Parliament is now due in early 2024 following the publication of evidence reviews relating to the reform of children and justice services.

Conclusion

This report offers a summary of some key developments, improvements and challenges across social work and social care services in Angus during 2022-23. Specific and more detailed performance reporting is available across a range of other updates reported to relevant Committees or the Integration Joint Board for members' interest, scrutiny and direction.

The operating environment for social work and social care remains both complex and fluid with a high degree of uncertainty regarding the future arrangements for service delivery and governance as well as a busy legislative and policy development landscape; challenges in relation to workforce capacity and availability; constrained resource availability and increased demand.

The report highlights clear challenges in relation to unmet need and a requirement to continue to improve timely access to services within our communities. Maintaining a balance of focus and prioritisation of the provision of support for people in the community, alongside facilitation of prompt discharge from inpatient care, will be of critical importance in the coming year.

Despite this challenging context, social work and social care services across Angus, together with unpaid carers and a range of partner providers, continue to evidence a high commitment to providing good quality care that empowers, supports and protects people.

Glossary of acronyms

ADP	Alcohol and Drug Partnership
ADM	Agency Decision Maker
AHSCP	Angus Health and Social Care Partnership
AMP	Approved Medical Practitioners
CCPG	Clinical Care and Professional Governance Group
CFJ	Children, Families and Justice Directorate
CPO	Child Protection Order
CPPM	Child Protecting Planning Meeting
CPR	Child Protection Register
CSWO	Chief Social Work Officer
IJB	Integration Joint Board
MAT	Medical Assisted Treatment Standards
MHO	Mental Health Officer
MWC	Mental Welfare Commission
NHS	National Health Service
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
NTS	Home Office National Transfer Scheme for UASC
OPG	Office of the Public Guardian
SCR	Significant Case Review
SDS	Self-Directed Support
SPSO	Scottish Public Service Ombudsman
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
YOI	Young Offenders Institute