

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest includes a crown at the top with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a grizzly bear), and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'CITY OF VANCOUVER'.

Agenda Item 13

Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2022/23

Falkirk Council

Title: Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2022/23
Meeting: Falkirk Council
Date: 6 December 2023
Submitted By: Chief Social Work Officer

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Chief Social Work Officers (CSWOs) are required to submit an annual report in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. This report provides an overview of how the statutory responsibilities of the CSWO have been fulfilled during 2022/23, as well as an overview of the work undertaken by social work services and the achievements recognised during this period.

The Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2022/23 is attached (Appendix 1).

- 1.2 The report assists the Council in meeting its Council Plan priorities: -

- Supporting stronger and healthier communities
- Promoting opportunities and reducing inequalities

2. Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to:-

- (1) **note the contents of the CSWO's Annual Report;**
- (2) **agree to its onward submission to Scottish Government and the Integration Joint Board;**
- (3) **acknowledge the commitment, skills and experience of social work staff in continuing to deliver services in challenging circumstances.**

3. Climate Change Implications

- 3.1 There are no climate change implications from recommendations in this report.

4. Background

- 4.1 Every local authority must appoint a professionally qualified CSWO as set out in Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994.

The CSWO provides professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether directly provided or delivered by the private or voluntary sector on behalf of the local authority.

The role assists the Council and Integration Joint Board to understand the responsibilities and the complexities involved in the delivery of social work services. The CSWO has key responsibility for performance management and the identification and management of corporate risk, as it relates to the delivery of social work services. The CSWO is required to ensure that all social services workers meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice.

The role of the CSWO is to provide professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services. This applies whether these are provided by the local authority, Health and Social Care Partnership, or purchased from the private or voluntary sectors.

The social work services workforce is diverse and includes social workers; occupational therapists; residential and day care staff; home care staff; mental health officers; and people working with children, adults and justice services. Services are delivered by a skilled, dedicated workforce who require support, training and effective leadership to undertake complex and often challenging work.

5. Considerations

5.1 The annual report is presented to comply with the new template issued by the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser to the Scottish Government. On receipt of annual reports from all CSWOs, the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a report which provides a national overview of the key challenges and developments across all local authorities in Scotland. This new format will assist with compilation and analysis.

5.2 The template provided for this year's report has the following sections:-

1. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions
2. Service Quality and Performance
3. Challenges and Improvements
4. Resources
5. Workforce
6. Training, Learning and Development
7. Looking Ahead

5.3 Local authority CSWOs must publish a Duty of Candour report annually and notify the Care Inspectorate this has been done. In Falkirk, the report is published within the CSWO Annual Report (section 8) and it is also presented to the IJB Clinical Care Governance Committee. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there were no incidences in Falkirk where the Duty of Candour applied.

- 5.4 The performance summary of services for the purpose of this Annual Report principally focusses on those areas which relate directly to those conferred to the CSWO. The CSWO report is not intended to provide full coverage of the performance and activity of the entire social work function. Throughout the year, there are detailed performance reports presented to the Education, Children and Young People Executive; Integration Joint Board; Public Protection Chief Officers Group, Scrutiny and other governance groups.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation with stakeholders has taken place as part of the development of this report and a number of areas covered within the Annual Report highlight work undertaken with service users, providers and partners to co-design and improve services.

7. Implications

Financial

- 7.1 An overview of the financial challenges is reflected within the CSWO Annual Report as are many of the transformational strategies which are in place to support our determination to ensure services are sustainable, good quality and improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children, families and adults.

Resources

- 7.2 There is no resource implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 7.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk

- 7.4 None arising from the provision of this report.

Equalities

- 7.5 There is no requirement for an EPIA as this report is for noting.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. With approval from Falkirk Council, it is submitted to the Scottish Government as part of the statutory responsibilities of the Chief Social Work Officer.

The report provides an overview of key aspects of social work provision in Falkirk including the role and range of functions covered by the CSWO including social work and social care services provided by the Council and HSCP.

This Annual Report thanks and commends the outstanding commitment from our social care workforce, partners, carers and colleagues.

Chief Social Work Officer

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Date: 16 November 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022-23

List of Background Papers

None



Falkirk Council



CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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Foreword

1. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions
2. Service Quality and Performance
3. Challenges and Improvements
4. Resources
5. Workforce
6. Training, Learning and Development
7. Looking Ahead
8. Falkirk Council's Duty of Candour Report 2022/2023

Foreword

I have pleasure in presenting the Falkirk Council Chief Social Work Officer report for 2022/23.

The Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is required to complete an annual report in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. This report provides an overview of how the statutory responsibilities of the CSWO have been fulfilled during 2022/23, as well as an overview of the work undertaken by social work services and the achievements recognised during this period. This year's report looks a little different from my previous annual reports as the template received from Scottish Government has changed. On receipt of annual reports from all CSWOs, the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a report which provides a national overview of the key challenges and developments across all local authorities in Scotland. This new format will assist with compilation and analysis.

As we support our communities to recover from the overwhelming impact of the pandemic, we continue to experience high demand for services and support. The impact of poverty, trauma and the changing landscape of service delivery is disproportionately impacting on those who need and benefit most from social work and social care services. Collectively, Falkirk Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership strive to work alongside our partners and key stakeholders to improve lives and outcomes.

Demand for health and care services and rising complexity of needs puts pressure on a system that was already stretched. High vacancy levels in social work services exacerbate high pressure workplaces. Like other parts of the country, we are finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff, particularly experienced staff. Suitable staffing levels and management arrangements are a critical aspect of the enabling context and culture which is needed to safeguard and protect people in our communities. A supported, confident, skilled workforce is essential to the provision of support to people that shifts the balance of power to the people who rely on social work and social care services to live healthy, happy lives. It is for these reasons, over the course of this reporting year, direct action to improve staffing levels has been a priority.

Over the course of 2022/23, Council and HSCP staff worked together with colleagues from HR to analyse the developing staffing crisis and identify the right approach to ease the pressures being faced which we knew would not improve without direct action being taken. Alongside other colleagues, we listened to our workforce, asking their views of the high turnover in social work services and what we needed to pay attention to.

Social workers tell me of the importance they place on the right working conditions where they can make the difference to people's lives they want to make and develop their skills. To do this, we must provide effective and reliable leadership and management, regular and quality supervision, opportunities for learning and development, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and, of huge importance but in reducing supply, time to spend with individuals and families.

[Setting the Bar for Social Work in Scotland](#) published by Social Work Scotland in June 2022 identifies 3 main challenges faced by social workers:-

1. Reduction of administrative support has decreased by a third.
2. Policy landscape has increased by volume and complexity.
3. Unprecedented financial pressures and costs of implementing several new pieces of legislation.

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The national report findings reflect our local position and the need to mitigate risks in Falkirk has been a priority action for me and colleagues over the course of the reporting period. The issues we identified and what we have done about them is explored in more detail at section 5.

The social work services workforce is diverse and includes social workers; occupational therapists; residential and day care staff; home care staff; mental health officers; and a range of other professionals working alongside children, adults, families, and groups. Services are delivered by a skilled, dedicated workforce who require support, training and effective leadership to undertake complex and challenging work. The third and independent sectors are key partners in service delivery and service user experience.

I take this opportunity to commend, appreciate and thank our workforce for the commitment and dedication they bring to work every day and the difference they make in people's lives. I am immensely grateful to our colleagues, carers and partners whom we work alongside who strengthen the provision of services and support to the people in our communities.

Sara Lacey
Chief Social Work Officer



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1. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

Social work services in Falkirk are provided in partnership with a range of stakeholders, very much including people who need or benefit from them. Social work protects and supports people from pre-birth to end of life, working with families, individuals and groups. It does so by providing or purchasing services designed to promote the dignity, safety and independence of people who need or use services, and to contribute to community safety by reducing re-offending.

The overall role of the CSWO is focused on the provision of effective professional advice and guidance to Local Authorities, Integration Joint Boards, Elected Members and officers in the provision of social work services, whether directly provided or commissioned. There is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to appoint a professionally qualified CSWO who is registered with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC). This regulation is set out in Section 45 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994.

The CSWO undertakes the role across the full range of social work functions for professional leadership and governance. The role assists the Council and the Integration Joint Board to understand the responsibilities and the complexities involved in the delivery of social work services. The CSWO has key responsibility for performance management and the identification and management of corporate risk, as it relates to the delivery of social work services. The CSWO is required to ensure that all social services workers meet the requirements of the [SSSC Codes of Practice - Scottish Social Services Council](#).

The CSWO has responsibilities in respect of statutory decision making. This includes statutory decision making in relation to public protection and/or the restriction of individual liberty and requires consideration of individual circumstances regarding rights, risks, needs and capacity. It also includes decision making related to the placement of children in secure accommodation, transfers of children and young people in cases of urgent necessity who are subject to compulsory supervision orders, adoption, fostering, community payback orders, statutory interventions linked to the mental health officer role, adults with incapacity measures, and the protection of children and adults at risk. These considerations are often complex in nature and encompass a range of issues, including the risks to the wider community. The CSWO also has oversight of practice standards relating to services delivered by registered social workers.

In Falkirk, the role is undertaken by the head of children's services social work. To support the role of CSWO and to ensure that statutory responsibilities and decision making are undertaken at all times, the senior service manager undertakes a delegated function as the depute CSWO. Other CSWO statutory functions that relate to social work adult services are supported by one of the heads of integration in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) who is a suitably qualified social work leader.

As a statutory officer of the Council, the CSWO reports to the Council's Chief Executive Officer. The CSWO and the Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) have strong links and meet frequently.

The CSWO is a non-voting member of the IJB and a member of the Health & Social Care Partnership senior leadership team and has regular meetings with both heads of integration.

The CSWO is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team and the HSCP Leadership Team.

The CSWO is a non-voting member of the Integration Board and a member of the following Committees, Boards and Groups:-



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- Adult Protection Committee (APC)
- Child Protection Committee (CPC)
- IJB Clinical and Care Governance Committee (CCGC)
- Public Protection Chief Officers Group (COG)
- IJB Audit Committee
- MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group
- Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP)
- Community Justice Partnership
- Children's Partnership Leadership Group
- Champions Board

As a consequence of the governance arrangements in place, the CSWO considers the arrangements to be proportionate and appropriate for the effectiveness of the statutory officer role.



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2. Service, Quality and Performance

2.1 Children and Families

Review of Partnership Governance Structures

During the reporting period, work was undertaken on the development of the new Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023 – 2026. Consideration of the data associated with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Quality Indicator 1.1 - Key Performance Outcomes, resulted in a review of the sub group structure of the Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) which acts as the leadership group for the Children's Services Planning Partnership to drive forward improvement. In tandem, it was felt opportune to review the governance arrangements for the Child Protection Committee (CPC) sub groups too.

A review of the sub groups helped define their drivers, i.e. national or local and consider whether there was an opportunity to align priorities to avoid duplication. The Family Support and Corporate Parenting sub groups of the SLG were brought together under a Promise Implementation sub group in recognition that our commitment to keeping the Promise extends to our corporate parenting responsibilities and Whole Family Wellbeing firmly embedded as part of the Promise. The Children's Rights and UNCRC sub group was redefined in line with national reporting.

Our CPC sub group structure was revised to ensure direct reporting to the CPC and clear governance accountability. The opportunity was taken to rationalise several shared Forth Valley working groups by combining themed groups together, this was undertaken in agreement with the Stirling and Clackmannanshire CPC.

Child Protection Quality Assurance and Improvement Sub Group

The Child Protection Quality Assurance and Improvement sub group continues to scrutinise data sets and identify trends or anomalies within the data that may indicate a change in the levels or types of risks experienced by Falkirk's children. Scrutiny activity has been able to identify where there has been improvement and good practice as well as areas that require to be strengthened further.

In August 2022, a multi-agency audit was undertaken of child protection referrals to examine their quality; whether processes were robust; and how many resulted in child protection investigations. The audit findings were that 75% of referral information was assessed as good, 20% of referrals did not follow process and 5% of referrals led to a child protection planning meeting. The findings were shared with the Forth Valley GIRFEC group to inform training and strengthen practice.

In January 2023, a multi-agency child protection case file audit using the Care Inspectorate Audit Tool was undertaken. A comparison was made against a similar audit undertaken in 2019.

Key findings:

% rated good or above	2019	2023
Assessment	No data	94%
Chronology	43%	72%
Child's Plans	70%	85%

Members of the group also share the outcomes of smaller single service audits, to aid learning across the partnership.

The quality assurance and improvement group is responsible for the Child Protection Improvement Plan, which includes measuring the progress on implementing the recommendations from quality assurance activity and learning reviews.

Staff Survey

To help inform the continuous improvement of our Children's Services Planning Partnership, a staff survey was developed, using a condensed version of the Care Inspectorate staff survey tool. This was issued to staff in the partnership in September 2022 and closed in October 2022. There were 349 respondents to the survey from across social work, police, health, education, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the third sector. Strengths identified in the survey were that 92% of the workforce who took part, agreed or strongly agreed that they had the knowledge, skills and confidence to assess the risks and needs of the children and young people they work with, and 89% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that the contribution they were making was positive and improving the lives of children and young people at risk of harm. 69% of staff across the partnership agreed that there was a clear vision from leaders.

The survey findings were shared with leaders from the partnership and disseminated and discussed in detail within individual agencies, so that feedback could be used to inform future practice improvements and in order that good practice and strengths could be celebrated and built upon.

As this was the first partnership staff survey, the findings will be used as a benchmark for future activity.

Qualitative data in the survey showed that staff across the partnership struggled to understand how all the different parts of the partnership connected. To help address this, a staff handbook was developed. The handbook covered the drivers to work as set out in the National Performance Framework and the Promise. The local Children's Services Planning Partnership arrangements were described, including the Chief Officers Group, Child Protection Committee and the Children & Young People's Strategic Leadership Group and associated sub groups, paying particular attention to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was formally launched by senior officers to staff across the partnership workforce. [Falkirk Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)

Inspection of Regulated Services

The fostering, adoption and supported care service was not inspected in 2022/23.

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In Falkirk we have two residential care houses: Tremanna and Wallace Crescent. Both were inspected against the new Framework for the first time between January and March 2023. They were both rated as Good and there were no requirements or recommendations.

Some of the key messages within the inspection reports were:-

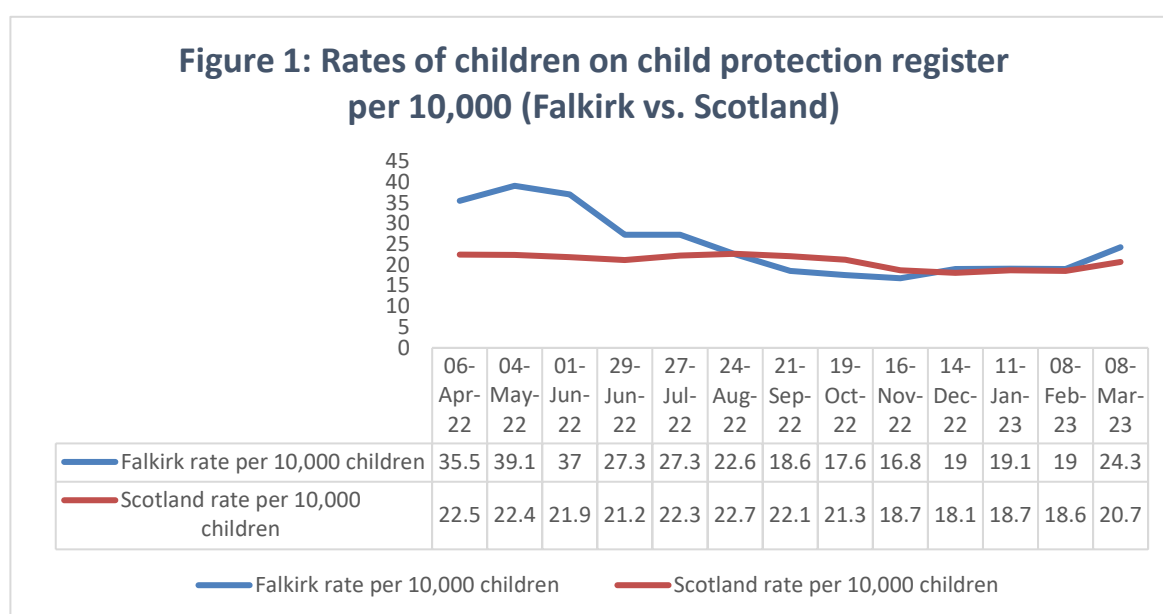
- Young people benefited from warm, loving and respectful relationships with staff team that knew them well and were trauma informed in their care.
- The young people and staff felt listened to and were able to influence the development of the service.
- Continuing Care was promoted and supported.

With young people commenting:-

“The team was “sound” and “understanding” and “that staff genuinely cared and worried” [about them]; and “it is clear that they do care for me, and I care for the staff just as much”.

Performance Data

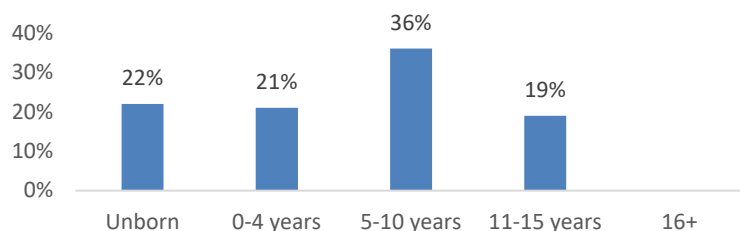
During the 2022/23 financial year, the number of children on the child protection register in Falkirk fell from 99 to 69. It reached a low of 54 on 31st October 2022, which was below the national average. This correlated to 17.8 per 10,000 children in Falkirk and 21.5 across Scotland (Figure 1). This was the first time in recent records that Falkirk had a local figure below the national rate for child protection.



On 31st March 2023, there were 15 unborn children on child protection register (22%), 14 children who were aged 0-4 years (21%), 25 were aged 5-10 years (36%) and 13 were aged 11-15 years (19%). There were no children on the child protection register who were over the age of 16 (Figure 2).

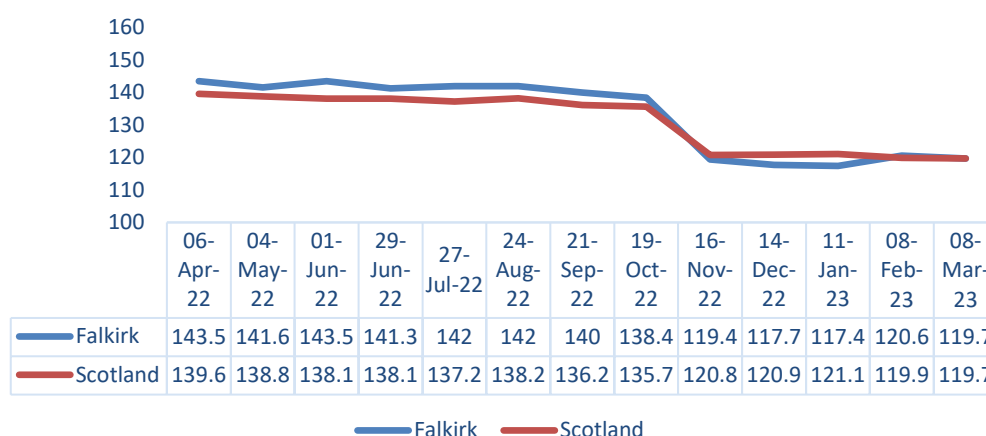
During the 2022/23, there were 143 child protection planning meetings that involved a total of 178 children. Of this, 112 children were placed on the child protection register (leading to a conversion rate of 63%).

Figure 2: % of child's age on child protection register on 31st March 2023



During the same period, Falkirk saw a fall in looked after children (LAC) from 397 to 356. Whilst Falkirk's rate of LAC was initially higher than the national average, that changed in November 2022, when the rate fell to 119.4 per 10,000 children. In comparison, the national average was 120.8. Since then, Falkirk's rate has largely remained below the national average (except for February 2023) and by the end of the March 2023 Falkirk had a rate of 119.7 compared to the Scottish average of 120.6 (figure 3).

Figure 3: Rates of LAC per 10,000 children (Falkirk vs. Scotland)



The reduction in LAC has been across a number of placement types. For example, on 1st April 2022, there were 117 children “at home” and 338 children in community placements (85%). On 31st March 2023, there were 105 children being looked after “at home” and a total of 302 being looked after in the community (84.8%). Kinship care reduced from 88 to 79 children. In the same period, there were 55 children in external residential care on 1st April 2022, which then decreased to 48 on 31st March 2023. Despite a reduction in the number of residential placements, our balance of care has widened between community and residential due to a decrease in our looked after at home and kinship placements in the community.

2.2 Adults

Inspection of Regulated Services

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services for people of all ages in Scotland. Its work includes registering services, inspecting and grading them, dealing with complaints, carrying out enforcement action where necessary and helping services improve. All inspection reports are public documents and are available to read on the Care Inspectorate website. Care services are registered and inspected to make sure they conform to the law as set out in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

Services must meet the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should expect. If a service is not meeting these standards, the Act gives the Care Inspectorate powers to make the service improve. Inspection grades and relevant progress against action plans are scrutinised within the appropriate governance structures throughout the course of the year. Regular reports detailing inspection activity are presented routinely to the Clinical and Care Governance Committee and IJB Audit Committee.

We continue to embed self-evaluation within organisational culture. Self-evaluation approaches need to continue to be embedded within our meeting structures and supervision of staff to influence and improve practice and learning. Evaluative mechanisms, reflective activity and improvement groups are a feature of all social work services and are the bedrock of key planning groups and committees.

Hospital at Home

More than 750 patients across the Forth Valley area have benefited from the Hospital at Home service since it was established in May 2021. A further 3,000 people were supported by the Home from Hospital partnership, a third sector collaboration that helps people home and to connect with community based supports.

Co-creating Services

HSCP services are actively engaging with their service users, their carers and families, and staff to redesign their services – e.g., Learning Disability Day Support service and Joint Dementia Initiative service. A total of 198 responses received across 5 consultations published on Citizen Space, Falkirk Council's online consultation platform, to support strategic policy development.

The Falkirk collaborative team used a collaborative person-centred planning process, known as The Big Plan, to support adults with a learning disability in transition from child to adult services to plan for their future.

We also delivered pilot training for staff in collaboration with the community empowerment team to support and allow meaningful participation for people with lived experience in HSCP meetings.

A project proposal was presented to staff, families, and residents on the future use of Cunningham House to create a new rehabilitation care facility, offering a support option currently unavailable in the Falkirk area.

Technology Developments

Over the reporting period there have been many accomplishments around the use of technology to improve experiences of care. For example:-

- Falkirk's MECS service's membership is approximately 4,000 with an average of 60 new service users every month.
- A Living Well Falkirk online course was developed and made available to the workforce via Falkirk Council's OLLE platform.
- Work continues to embed Near Me video consultancy in social work to offer service users a choice of in-person and video appointments.
- The Liquid Logic system launched in June 2022 for adult social work services.
- CM2000 system schedules 8,000-9,000 visits for the in-house Care at Home service every week and ensures over 250 staff have the information they need to deliver a high standard of care.
- A programme of weekly Tech Tea Parties hosted by Falkirk HSCP and AbilityNet over the summer allowed care home residents to learn more about their digital devices and be supported to use digital technology to support their health and wellbeing.

Falkirk Carers

A total of 368 carers and people they care for attended trips and activities organised and supported by the Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre. Regular Care with Confidence sessions provide information to carers to help them in their caring role and improve their health and wellbeing. The Carers Centre has supported 363 carers living in Falkirk to apply for and receive a short break grant; 112 of these grants were thanks to Partnership funding. 438 carers were offered or requested an ACSP (Adult Carer Support Plan) and 416 ACSPs were completed with carers.

Falkirk Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP)

The Falkirk Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Delivery Plan was developed in consultation with significant input from social work services and other key partners. A requirement from Scottish Government was that Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADP) develop a 3-year delivery plan for 2020-2023. This plan superseded the previous Falkirk ADP plan.

The plan carries forward key action points from the previous ADP delivery plan which were pertinent to our priorities. The plan included the action points for key areas such as:

- key findings from the strategic service review.
- key findings from local research into Non-Fatal Overdose.
- priority areas for development that relate to prevention of substance use in young people.
- a continued focus on prevention of all substance related deaths.

The ADP has made significant progress as a partnership during 2022/23. Some of the key points to note include:-

- **Delivering the MAT Standards** Work to implement the MAT Standards across Forth Valley is ongoing. Falkirk ADP and Clackmannanshire & Stirling ADP jointly submitted a report to MIST (MAT Implementation Support Team) in April 2023 on the work to date.



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This was accompanied by a range of data collected from systems and people with lived experience to evidence the MAT work to date. ADP areas were assessed against the 10 MAT standards using three streams of evidence: process, numerical and experiential. The evidence required to demonstrate implementation of each MAT standard was based on the criteria and indicators in the MAT standards document. The evidence submitted for each standard was analysed and scored by MAT Implementation Support Team (MIST) on the extent to which it complied with the agreed criteria and thresholds for each evidence stream. Progress is noted below:

MAT Standard		RAG Status 2023
MAT 1	All people accessing services have the option to start MAT from the same day of presentation.	Amber
MAT 2	All people are supported to make an informed choice on what medication to use for MAT and the appropriate dose.	Provisional Green
MAT 3	All people at high risk of drug-related harm are proactively identified and offered support to commence or continue MAT.	Amber
MAT 4	All people are offered evidence-based harm reduction at the point of MAT delivery.	Provisional Amber
MAT 5	All people will receive support to remain in treatment for as long as requested.	Amber
MAT 6	The system that provides MAT is psychologically informed (tier 1); routinely delivers evidence-based low intensity psychosocial interventions (tier 2); and supports individuals to grow social networks.	Amber
MAT 7	All people have the option of MAT shared with Primary Care.	Amber
MAT 8	All people have access to independent advocacy and support for housing, welfare and income needs.	Provisional Amber
MAT 9	All people with co-occurring drug use and mental health difficulties can receive mental health care at the point of MAT delivery.	Provisional Amber
MAT 10	All people receive trauma informed care.	Provisional Amber

The implementation of the MAT Standards requires significant changes in the system of care for substance use services and the two ADPs are working closely with third sector, NHS partners and MIST to ensure compliance.

- The multi-agency Forth Valley Overdose Outreach Team has been developed to respond to those who experience a Near-Fatal Overdose.
- Forth Valley Recovery Community and the Forth Valley Family Support Service continued to offer their online services whilst gradually increasing face-to-face contact safely.
- The Recovery Cafes, SMART Recovery Groups, and Family Support Groups are operational.

People affected by substance use issues can be referred to the Falkirk multi-agency Escalating Concerns group, where appropriate interventions can be considered by the multi-agency team.

2.3 Justice Services

Justice Services in Falkirk comprises of 5 community-based teams and the prison-based social work team in HMP & YOI Polmont. Services are delivered under national outcomes and standards for justice social work, and in line with the relevant guidance for each specific order or licence.

Assessment & Case Management Team (ACM)

The ACM Team is where the majority of our social workers are located. The team provide a full range of statutory social work services including writing of Justice Social Work Reports (JSWR) for courts, supervision of those subject to community sentences or throughcare licences, risk assessments and risk management of high-risk offenders including registered sex offenders (RSO) and those convicted of domestic abuse offences.

Court & Early Intervention Team (CEI)

The team provide court-based social work services to Falkirk Sheriff Court including Bail Supervision Service and undertake a range of statutory social work tasks including preparation of JSWRs, supervision of individuals subject to community-based orders including Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs), throughcare licences and Diversion from Prosecution Scheme. Social workers and Justice officers are located at court across the week to provide support to the court and individuals appearing there.

Performance Information

Order/Report	2022/23	2021/22
Justice Social Work Reports prepared	958	824
Community Payback Orders Imposed	375	532
Diversion from Prosecution Cases	67	77
Bail Supervision Orders	42	17
Drug Treatment Testing Orders imposed	4	
Voluntary Throughcare Cases	85	43
Licences supervised in community (on 31 st March)	36	45

Unpaid Work Team (UWT)

The team deliver a range of unpaid work projects and other activity opportunities to individuals subject to community payback orders. Unpaid work projects during 2022/23 included:-

- Over 50 fly tipping sites cleared throughout Falkirk area.
- 246 gardens completed for people and families who needed help, work involved grass/hedge cutting, repair/replace fencing and paths and fence painting.
- Supplying local food banks from the warehouse in Edinburgh and delivering food parcels for Falkirk Food Bank.
- Pick up, delivery and dug in over 50 tonnes of topsoil for local groups who look after flower beds across Falkirk area.
- Working in various primary schools and nurseries - dismantling old wooden sheds and outbuildings, cutting back trees/shrubs, creating sand pits.

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- Work team support at Muiravonside Country Park, Bo`ness Railway and the Walled Garden at Dollar Park to maintain the garden and plant up the Floral Clock.

During the reporting period, work continued to raise community awareness and understanding of unpaid work. The team worked closely with Falkirk Council's communication team to raise awareness of projects of particular interest to the community such as restoration of the Bainsford War Memorial, which received positive media coverage from several local news outlets.

The collaboration with the communications team helped to raise awareness of the ways in which community groups could request unpaid work support, enabling communities to contribute to the types of unpaid work projects delivered. The unpaid work team also reached out to local third sector organisations via the third sector Safe and Empowered Communities Forum to source additional unpaid work placements for individuals.

Justice services' UPW team works collaboratively with a range of service areas within Falkirk Council, external partners and third sector organisations to deliver high quality options that can be carried out as part of the "Other Activity" requirement of their CPO. In 2022/23 this included:-

- Drug and Alcohol Counselling (if this was not already part of a requirement).
- Working with Change Grow Live (Drug and Alcohol Counselling, Mental health Support).
- Work with the Tackling Inequalities Improving Outcomes Projects.
- Work with Justice Women's Service.
- Skills to Employment - a 4-day course over 4 weeks that focuses on self-awareness exercises, personal development, goal setting, CV writing, Job applications and Interview Skills.
- 'Cost of Living' course designed to help service users manage household finances and identify ways to make savings, money management, budgeting, meal planning and purchasing.
- Identified training opportunities with Partner agencies such as Falkirk Council Employment Training Unit.
- First Aid course - a one-day Emergency First Aid Course is delivered monthly; the course is certificated and has an excellent uptake.

Justice service users completing 'Other Activity' have been provided with the opportunity to improve their employability, skills, and self-confidence, and have also been offered the opportunity to reflect upon their behaviour and their life choices within a group or on a 1:1 basis. Having a selection of delivery methods/options available has allowed the 'Other Activity' requirement to cater for a range of needs and learning styles.

Caledonian & Groupwork Team (CGT)

The Groupwork Team is a small team who are trained programmes facilitators, overseen by a team manager. The team delivers 2 accredited programmes; the Caledonian System and Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF:MC).

The Caledonian System is an integrated approach to address men's domestic abuse and to improve the lives of women, children and men. It does this by working with men convicted of domestic abuse related offences on a programme to reduce their re-offending while offering integrated support services to women and children. Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF:MC) is a treatment and intervention programme for individuals convicted of sexual offences. Key areas of work for the team include, but are not limited to:-

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- Preparation of Reports for Court (both JSWRs and specialised Programme Assessment Reports).
- Completing Risk Assessments including LSCMI, SARA v3, Stable and Acute 2007, RM2K.
- Delivering Caledonian Domestic Abuse Groupwork Programme.
- Delivering Caledonian Domestic Abuse Individual Programme.
- Delivering Moving Forward: Making Changes Groupwork Programme.
- Providing Post-programme Reports and recommendations for maintenance.
- Contribute towards all risk management processes such as MAPPA, risk management meetings, child protection etc.

The team also contributed towards the introduction, development, and chairing of National Groupwork delivery forums. This provided opportunity to connect with groupwork and programme facilitators across the country, to share practice experience, to gain support and to continue to develop practice delivery both locally and nationally. This was a pilot project and will be reviewed however initial feedback has been positive.

Performance Information

- Over the course of this reporting year, 83 Criminal Justice Social Work Reports (CJSWR) of a domestic nature were requested by Court. Of these, approximately 50% were converted into a further Caledonian Assessment report. This is a vast improvement on the previous year when only 6% of the 116 CJSWR's of a domestic nature were converted into a further, fuller assessment.
- The number of Composite Caledonian Assessment Reports have remained somewhat consistent with 28 recorded in this financial year, in comparison to 32 in the previous.
- The number of CPO orders in the community with Caledonian Programme Requirements increased by nearly 50%, going from 50 open and active orders at the end of 2021/2022 to 73 open and active orders at the end of this reporting period. This could easily be equated to the increase in screening, assessment, and training in the Caledonian programme.
- Additionally, the completion rate increased in this reporting period by approximately 8%.

Caledonian Women's Service

The Caledonian Women's Service helps women understand the impact of domestic abuse and how it affects them. It is the role of the women's service to convey to a woman that, no matter her vulnerabilities or choices, she is not to blame for her partner's violence or abuse. This is achieved through the ethos of the service and the clear messages that all Caledonian workers give about domestic abuse.

The role of the women's service worker is complex and multi-faceted. It encourages a process of change on an individual level whereby women become informed, self-empowered and able to take more control of their lives. On a broader level, the women's service works with agencies and organisations that have similar goals and aims to influence public and political opinions about domestic abuse.

Performance Information

- From April 2022 to March 2023, the Caledonian Women's Service received 70 court requests and support was offered to 100 women during that time.

- Face to face visits with women were reinstated as COVID-19 rules were reviewed. Safe and appropriate spaces to meet were identified and utilised allowing workers to take support from phone based back to in person.
- Securing permanent tenancies for several women and their children known to the service.
- Non-Harassment Orders (NHOs) granted for all women who requested the order for their long-term safety.
- Recruitment and investment in a permanent team leader post and recruitment of 2 additional temporary Women's Service workers.
- All Women's Service workers completed National Caledonian training in the reporting time period including Sara V3 training.
- All women are provided with an evaluation form 12 – 16 weeks prior to closure as part of the exit strategy to allow women to evaluate the service they received.

Prison-Based Social Work Team (PBSW)

HMP & YOI Polmont is Scotland's national holding facility for male and female children and young offenders aged between 16 - 21 years of age, and adult female prisoners. People in custody at HMP & YOI Polmont can either be convicted and serving a sentence or held on remand. The prison-based social work service is delivered by Falkirk Council through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Scottish Prison Service. As Polmont is a national prison, the social work service there is delivered to individuals from all of Scotland's local authorities, and occasionally from further afield.

Monthly data returns are submitted to SPS HQ for contract monitoring purposes and there are monthly on-site meetings with the establishment's head of offender outcomes to discuss and monitor aspects of service delivery and support in more detail. Feedback from the prison governor to the service manager has informed that PBSW deliver a high-quality service and are viewed as an essential partner agency within Polmont. PBSW had statutory case responsibility for an average of 140 individuals each month during this reporting period.

Performance Information

- Provision of 63 reports to the Parole Board.
- Preparation of 199 assessments relating to risk, need and re-conviction/re-offending.
- Provision of professional social work advice to relevant multi-disciplinary, risk management planning groups/meetings, and MAPPA.
- Provision of a duty service, which during 2022/23 amounted to approximately 18 hours of duty work each month, with a total of 201 duty service deliveries across the year.

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3. Challenges and Improvements

3.1 Children and Families

Closer to Home Strategy

Our Closer to Home Strategy has continued to provide the underlying guiding principles to deliver sustainable services that are rooted in child centred practice, in our work across the service with children, young people and families.

Our ambition to shift the balance of care away from residential care to community based family placements struggled to achieve the desired objective of recruiting more foster carers. During the reporting period both locally and nationally, there has been vastly reduced interest from potential new foster carers, despite extensive traditional and social media recruitment campaigns. This has required greater flexibility from current foster carers and their link social workers when placing children. On occasion, the absence of any foster carer availability has led to the use of residential placements. Locality social work teams have continued to focus on family finding when children cannot be cared for by their parent(s), with children being placed with kinship carers.

Our 'commissioning for the future' project has safeguarded the service from inflationary pressures by agreeing fixed contracts, albeit these are due to be renegotiated which will result in the service potentially experiencing above inflationary increases, which will exacerbate budget pressures.

National Transfer Scheme

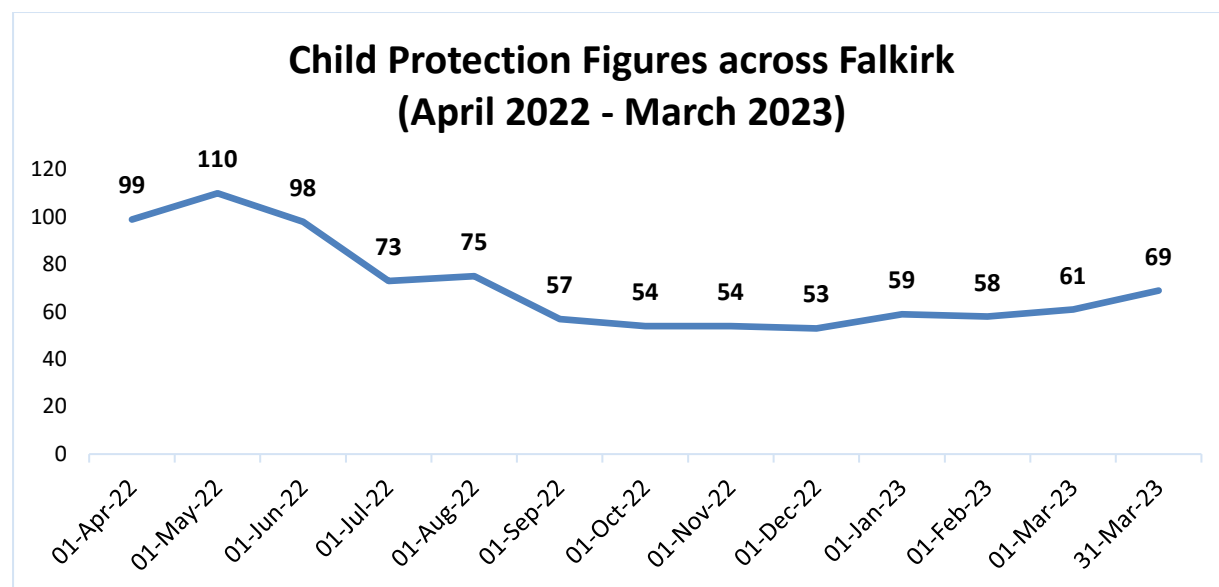
We have continued to welcome children into our care who have been referred through the National Transfer Scheme. Unfortunately, as noted above, due to the shortage of suitable care placements some have had to be placed out with the Falkirk area in foster and residential care. We have been successful in ensuring the children who have been transferred to us have done so within the mandated timescale on all occasions. We have also accommodated children who made themselves known to be under 18, after being placed by the Home Office in adult accommodation for those seeking asylum.

We are aware that sourcing appropriate accommodation for young people seeking asylum will become more challenging as placements become scarce; over the coming year, we will establish a dedicated Closer to Home project that will take the time to examine alternative accommodation options for young people aged 16 – 18 that offer the level of support commensurate with their assessed need.

Number of Children on the Child Protection Register

We have been closely monitoring the number of children on the child protection register within Falkirk, and routinely reporting this to our Child Protection Committee. There was concern that the number of children on the register locally was much higher than the national average between 2019 and mid-2022. Scrutiny work was undertaken to understand the reasons why register numbers were so high, and several improvement actions were progressed to address this as reported in last year's report.

In addition to this, work was undertaken with reviewing officers chairing child protection planning meetings to consider evidence required to meet the threshold of 'significant risk of harm' and to explore static and dynamic risk factors in child protection. All these improvement actions have accumulatively impacted on the reduction of register numbers over time, so we are now much more closely aligned to national data. Of note, between August 2019 and July 2021 the child protection register numbers were consistently sitting above 100 children with a peak of 143 children in mid-2020.



Implementation of National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)

Falkirk's Child Protection Committee (CPC) has worked with strategic partners across Forth Valley to progress the implementation of the national guidance at a local level; a collaborative approach with Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils, Forth Valley health board, Police Scotland and third sector to ensure a joined up approach to the care and protection of children in our area.

A Forth Valley Implementation Group was established and successfully led a review and update of our local Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidance, ensuring alignment with national practice and procedures; it will be presented to Falkirk's CPC late in the year for approval. In line with the national guidance, Falkirk's CPC has driven forward continuous improvement in child protection policy, processes and practice in key areas, over this reporting period we have been working on:-

- improving inter-agency responses to child protection concerns through a review and update to Forth Valley's guidance on Inter-Agency Referral Discussions (IRD).
- leading on the establishing the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) in Forth Valley; a trauma informed and children's rights approach to child victims and witnesses.
- analysis of the requirements of Bairns' Hoose national standards and delivery of trauma-informed support, justice and recovery for children who have experienced trauma.

Falkirk's CPC will continue to review, monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of implementation in our area through quality assurance and improvement work and the use of self-evaluation tools. This will remain subject to external scrutiny by Scottish Government, Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and the Care Inspectorate.



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Electronic Inter-Agency Referral Discussions (eIRD)

To streamline processes and improve the quality of Interagency Referral Discussion (IRDs), the Forth Valley IRD Steering Group agreed to implement the eIRD system in child and adult protection. The eIRD system is a shared electronic recording platform hosted by the NHS.

The eIRD system was introduced in children and adult social work services across Forth Valley in June 2022, to strengthen the multi-agency assessment of those at risk of significant harm. The recording templates encourage evidence-based practice and risk assessment by asking participants to outline the rationale for decision making, the assessed strengths and risk factors any interim plans made to keep the child/adult safe pending further investigation and assessment.

The 3 core agencies of health, police and social work can input direct into the system and there is an internal process where education colleagues provide their information which is added by the social work manager involved in the IRD.

In Forth Valley, a multi-agency discussion takes place via MS Teams and details of this are recorded on the eIRD record. Agencies then input information following agreed actions being taken forward and, once complete, the 3 core agencies involved in the IRD can sign this off. The new system has strengthened the quality assurance process, as a dip sample of IRDs are selected from the system and reviewed at the multi-agency IRD review group monthly. If the review group is satisfied with the assessment and actions taken, the IRD can be closed off.

Mainstreaming the Initial Referral Team (IRT)

The IRT was introduced in children and families social work as a pilot in mid-2021. The aim of the pilot was to have a single point of contact for all new referrals to social work, promoting a more consistent and streamlined response to referrals. As part of the pilot, regular data has been gathered to help understand demand, performance of the team and the impact on service users and partner agencies.

In September 2022, the Education, Children and Young People's Executive reviewed an evaluation report for the pilot and agreed that the pilot should be extended further, but ultimately agreed that the team should be mainstreamed as part of the new model of service delivery. The pilot has since continued with various tests of change around processes and a recent interim change of manager. Temporary funding has been secured for 2023/24.

Whilst the aim is to have the team as part of the permanent structure, offering greater stability to the temporary and seconded staff currently working in the team, there is a challenge due to the significant budget pressures experienced by children's services and the wider Council, a wider service review will take place to help inform future plans.

The Promise

Our commitment to Keeping the Promise remains strong and we continue work towards making incremental changes across services, to sustain a culture change. We now view all service redesign through the lens of the Promise. Some examples of work over the past year include:-

- Developing a dedicated, safe and comfortable space for family time to take place. We were acutely aware of our responsibilities to brothers and sisters to meet and build lasting relationships.



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Our new hub is known as the Lodge and was furnished with direct input from young people themselves.

- In 2022, a communication strategy was developed promoting 'Falkirk's Promise Roadshow'. The roadshow acted as the vehicle by which staff would learn about Keeping the Promise and corporate parenting and what this means to our care experienced young people and our workforce. The delivery of learning sessions by the keeping the Promise training officer to almost 500 multi-agency staff included sharing examples of children and young people's voices and lived experiences.
- Life-Long Links – Barnardo's work with individual young people helps them establish or re-establish connections and relationships with people. This includes supporting the young person to consider the nature of different relationships and may lead to connections with people who can offer emotional and practical support. Some may hold the young person in mind for special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas. This could involve family members, friends, neighbours, social workers, staff from other disciplines, etc.
- Falkirk Champs (Champions Board) have shared their 'Language in Care,' 'The Promise film' and 'What it means to be a Council Family and Friends Member' presentations to over 400 new staff from across the Council during mandatory induction training. They have also delivered training to the school nurses, and elected members. These resources have been developed by the Champs into an online module that all employees can access.

Whole Family Wellbeing

During spring 2022, children's services sought approval from the Strategic Leadership Group (CSPP) to establish a team to drive forward the ambitions of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) locally. This was approved by the leadership group and, in October 2022, an initial report was sent to Scottish Government outlining Falkirk's plan to implement WFWF. A lead officer was appointed in December 2022 and the structure and remit of a WFWF funded team was developed and further recruitment process initiated.

In February 2023, the Strategic Leadership Group confirmed a new reporting and governance structure, combining the 'Promise and Corporate Parenting' subgroup and the 'Family Support' subgroup under a 'Promise Implementation' workstream, to be chaired by the Partnership Service Manager (WFWF).

The Promise implementation team, working alongside an inter-agency training co-ordinator and comprising of a lead officer, Promise co-ordinator, programme manager, and participation lead was recruited and in place by mid-April 2023. New staff training and inductions were progressed with introduction to the partnership workforce to understand the "As Is" status.

Swedish Visit

There has been growing international interest in the Scottish Government's GIRFEC approach which is now firmly rooted in practice. In March 2022, Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership hosted a visit of 25 Swedish delegates, comprising of senior social work managers, education, health, and agency leaders who showed a keen interest in adopting the "Scottish Model" of GIRFEC.

This one-day event provided the Partnership with an opportunity to demonstrate the good practice examples that are currently taking place operationally across our services and to offer an insight into the challenges of delivering early help and intervention in the current climate, post pandemic.

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Delegates were able to visit provisions within early years, primary school and the voluntary sector along with members of the Team Around the Child present to provide an overview and insight into early intervention, and to hear first-hand about the experience of translating policy into practice. The initial verbal feedback from the visit highlighted the following:-

- The importance of relationship-based practice which was viewed as a real strength within Falkirk and is key to keeping children safe.
- The importance of sharing information in an appropriate, proportionate, and timely manner.
- That GIRFEC implementation requires strong leadership to promote a culture of change and challenge existing systems and processes.
- That whilst Falkirk does not have all the answers, they valued our openness and honesty about our journey through implementing GRIFEC policy and practice.
- The key role that the third sector plays in being responsive and flexible in meeting and supporting the local demands.

Information Rights Service

In response to national and local drivers, including expectations set out in the Promise, the Redress Scheme for people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect in the care system in the past, findings from the national Child Abuse Inquiry and poor performance locally in meeting timescales for completing Subject Access Requests, funding was secured in late 2021 to develop an information rights service.

In August 2022, the information rights team became operational and consists of 2 full-time permanent information rights officers. The role of the team is to act as a single point of contact for all Subject Access Requests received by children's social work. On receipt of these, the team take a proactive role in the processing of requests, retrieving and preparing requested information and redacting any third-party information that cannot be shared. The officers work in partnership with social work colleagues to discuss and plan any support that may be required for the person receiving the information, in recognition of the sensitive information that may be shared. The team are timeously processing all new requests that are coming in for historic social work files.

3.2 Adults

Transformation

In March 2021, the programme management office (PMO) co-ordinator outlined the approach to build the Falkirk HSCP project management office and to develop a project management approach to govern its projects and programmes of transformation. The PMO co-ordinator developed a project register to provide a clear overview of all the projects and programmes of change taking place at that time within their portfolio.

This register is regularly updated and has continued to evolve over time to reflect project completions, project status and additional projects have been added as approval has been agreed.

The project register enabled prioritisation of the HSCP's portfolio of transformation projects which were linked to HSCP strategic priorities. This identified a number of transformation themes and provided greater insight into the team structure that will be required to meet the partnerships ambitious transformation programme.

Restructure

The social work restructure proposed the creation of an Access Team, the establishment of a principal social worker role for adult services and the mainstreaming of the care home assessment and review team (CHART), which was originally set up as a pilot during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Access Team will enable the service to improve the quality and consistency of response to initial enquiries while freeing up capacity in the locality social work teams to focus on longer term pieces of work. A co-production approach to the development of the access team will draw on the experience of similar initiatives, such as the initial response team in children and families services, to produce a model tailored to local circumstances.

The principal social worker role will strengthen leadership for social work practice development within the Health and Social Care Partnership while the establishment of **CHART** will help to consolidate the expertise developed in supporting the care home sector during the pandemic.

In the course of the past year, social work adult services (SWAS) have, in conjunction with justice and children and families services, introduced the role of advanced practitioner and assistant team manager to team establishments. The advanced practitioner role aims to improve both retention and recruitment of experienced social work and occupational therapy staff by create a position which rewards suitably qualified, experienced and motivated staff, through career progression, without having to take on formal supervisory roles.

The assistant team manager role strengthens management support and oversight within the SWAS assessment and care management teams. When fully implemented, it will also contribute to a reduction in the number of social workers and occupational therapists each manager will supervise.

Home First

Other SWAS developments include a review of the home first service, which was set up as a test of change in late 2019. Since that time, in response to systems pressures, the team has become firmly embedded in providing support to service users in hospital and expediting their discharge back into the community. The review will ensure that the team remains effective in terms of its core role and contribute further to the reduction in unnecessary hospital delays.

Trends have seen Falkirk residents delayed in hospital reduce over 2023, with increases over holiday periods – predominantly summer 2023. Package of care delays remain low, however residents waiting for a permanent care home vacancy have remained consistently high. The team, in partnership with mental health officers, support adults within the adults with incapacity pathways and ensure that there are clear lines of escalation to avoid unnecessary delays.

The home first team continues to develop and develop key performance indicators in relation to supporting people to the right place, at the right time. There is greater oversight of intermediate care resources, and further assessment locations underpinning the home first ethos.

The home first team review has seen the approval and creation of new posts to support in areas such as care home vacancies and a senior role to support and supervise the home first practitioners. Several tests of change are ongoing to support the “tracking” of Falkirk residents within the acute hospital site.



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There is an emphasis on multidisciplinary decision making, predicted dates of discharge, supporting residents to be home for lunch/pre-noon discharges, as well as streamlining process and operational procedure. Recruitment for home first is ongoing, and it is hoped will be fully established by January 2024.

Learning Disability Services

This year, within Falkirk learning disability team a change champion team has been established; this team will assess people who live out of area with the intention of assisting those who would like to reside closer to home to do so. They have also developed a dynamic risk register detailing the names of people living out of area who would like to live closer to home, people delayed in their discharge from hospital with a learning disability and people who are transitioning from school education to adult life requiring the team's support. This team has been funded from Scottish Government for a period of 2 years.

Falkirk learning disability team has also developed a small team to assist with transitions of young people from school to adult life, including exploring work options and college placements which give young adults opportunities, skills and alternative connections as required within the local area.

Mental Health Officers

Locally, we have serious challenges in recruitment and retention of mental health officers (MHO). We know this also affects many other parts of Scotland and is evidenced by vacancies elsewhere and the fact that social work agencies have been unable to source agency MHOs to assist us to cover the shortfall. The issue is more than relevant now given the extreme pressures in terms of vacancies across the service. We are competing with a greater number of other authorities for the same pool of people. To provide some extra capacity we are utilising managers with MHO qualifications to carry out MHO duties.

Given the shortage of MHO capacity to respond to core business, it is always challenging to identify mentors for those undertaking the training. Locally, we are encouraging experienced practitioners to undertake MHO training but backfill of the mentoring time (financially and in terms of the scarcity of the MHO resource) is challenging.

All Councils have received some additional Scottish Government funding to support MHO capacity over the last 3 financial years, with many Councils also receiving funding specifically to support the training of MHOs in the 2019-22 period. All additional funding is currently set to end this coming March but we have contributed to questions about the continuing issues and are hopeful of further national support.

Adult Support and Protection

During the reporting period, SWAS have implemented a new recording system with a standalone adult support and protection (ASP) module and large-scale investigation (LSI) module. In addition to this, a new shared inter-agency referral discussion electronic database (eIRD) has been implemented jointly with Police Scotland, NHS Forth Valley and the Council.

These changes have allowed us to work towards our improvement goals reported in February 2022 following our [Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection](#)

Our areas for improvement linked to our recording of ASP key processes included:-

- Recording at each stage of the ASP process needed to be clearer, including the delineation of ASP key processes and the application of the three-point criteria.
- Risk assessment and risk management was less evident in investigations and inquiries that did not include an IRD. Risk management plans should be in place for all adults at risk of harm.
- The use and quality of chronologies required improvement. A comprehensive chronology should inform decision making in ASP. This should be done in consultation with the adult at risk of harm.

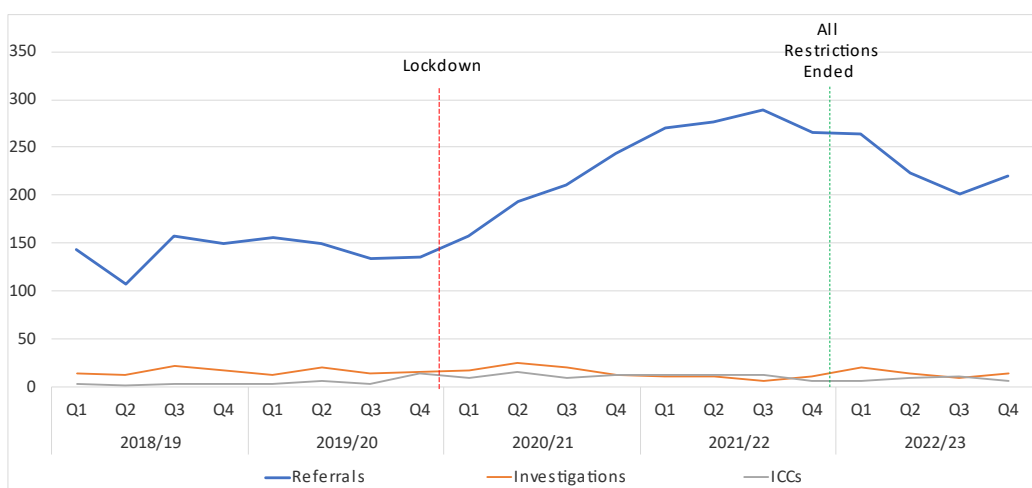
Our new social work recording system has an ASP pathway which has dedicated screens and templates which need to be completed by the Council officer to progress the ASP episode. This is further strengthened by the requirement to assign these to their manager for approval of their recommendations about next steps. Our templates provide fields for risk assessment and management at all stages of the ASP episode. Similarly, eIRD provides screens and fields covering these important areas to assist with further progress towards our improvement in these priority areas. Implementation of these 2 new systems has been an achievement for us and we are working on linked learning and development and quality assurance activity to test out the impact of these changes. The multi-agency learning and audit are overseen by sub groups that feed into the Adult Protection Committee. Statutory partners build collaborative relationships through our multiagency strategic activities. This allows us to learn together and notice opportunities to shape and influence practice for the benefit of adults at risk of harm.

During the reporting period, we have welcomed and benefited from the publication of new guidance in ASP. This has included revised guidance for [Adult Protection Committees](#), [Code of Practice](#) and new guidance for [General Practice](#) and [learning review](#). We were early adopters of the learning review guidance and have developed a timetable for activities supported by the review team which has been shared nationally and adopted by several other areas. This covers timescales for the learning review process, covering the stages between the first meeting of the review team and the beginning of dissemination. We have learned a lot through using the guidance and to improve our future performance plan to further review our local guidance.

A specific example of learning review improvement activity which has been recognised nationally is our joint work on increasing awareness of the key information summary in partnership with NHS 24 colleagues. We developed a [‘7 minute briefing’](#) which includes a link to the easy read ‘My Key Information Summary’ for those who need this. This was jointly presented with NHS 24 at our ASP forum and shared nationally.

Our practitioners fed back to us in the staff survey conducted during inspection that they would like to be involved more in developmental and change activities. We continue to support and promote this by inviting operational staff to our committees and providing forums and communities of practice to share and discuss improvement activities. This is challenging with a workforce under pressure, however we are committed to take this forward. This includes offering a variety of opportunities face to face and the use of technology. Our quarterly electronic ASP newsletter is building momentum is valued by our workforce.

ASP Referrals, Investigations & Initial CCs since 2018/19

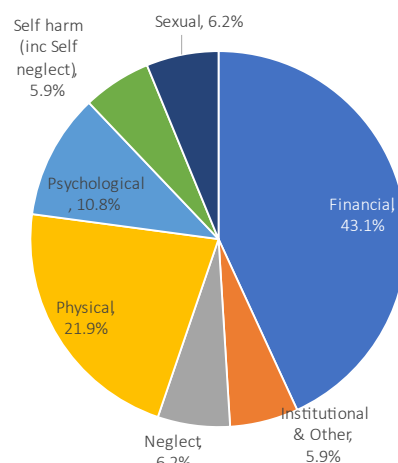


Investigation Characteristics over 5 Years

Type of Harm Trend

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Financial	35	30	34	15	18
Institutional & Other	1	1	4	11	1
Neglect	3	3	3	1	9
Physical	18	12	19	3	15
Psychological	5	12	9	4	3
Self harm (inc. Self neglect)	1	3	3	2	9
Sexual	5	3	4	4	3
Total	68	64	76	40	58

Type of Harm over 5 Years



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3.3 Justice Services

Throughcare Arrangements for Release on Licence (TARL)

TARL is a report framework and guidance developed in response to an identified need for an integrated approach to social work submissions to the parole board for long term prisoners. It was introduced during this reporting period. Social workers across the community and prison-based teams attended the Community Justice Scotland delivered training for this significant change to how the Parole Board receives information from social workers. The use of the template is now established practice across the service teams.

Co-located Services

Justice services work in partnership with our third sector and NHS colleagues to deliver a co-located model of support services to individuals subject to community supervision, with workers embedded within justice services.

Cyrenians – deliver employment and training support, Cost of Living course, partnership working with Unpaid Work Team to maintain the Walled Garden in Dollar Park and the Floral Clock and provide an outreach worker to support individuals with social inclusion and integration.

Change, Grow, Live (CGL) – provide 2 justice recovery co-ordinators who provide early and effective intervention and a range of support to individuals who have substance misuse difficulties. Since the recovery co-ordinators took up post in 2021, we have had positive feedback from the service users evidenced by higher retention and engagement rates, higher planned discharges from service, and better outcomes in terms of a reduced likelihood of further substance related offending behaviour.

4. Resources

Social work services budget for the reporting period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Children and Families – Budget £29.087 million (Actual £31.385 million)

In children's social work services, the main area of cost pressure continues to be in meeting the costs of the demand for residential care and external foster care for children unable to remain living at home. Limited capacity across our local resources has led to need for continued reliance on external resources which are high costs placements. Our duty to offer Continuing Care is significantly impacting on capacity and budget. Extending placements supports young people through a period of transition into independence, 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.

Financial pressure and uncertainty has been increased via the National Transfer Scheme and in line with other areas across the country we are looking after and accommodating an increasing number of young people who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum.

Adults - Budget £122.664 million (Actual £114.074 million)

Additional funding was provided by Scottish Government in 2021/22 and again in 2022/23 to allow care at home providers to increase wages for direct care staff to increase care at home capacity and make the service more sustainable. Despite increased hourly rates, capacity remains a concern, with demand for care at home outstripping capacity. Underspends were reflected across many areas of social care due to recruitment challenges, vacancies and lower activity across a number of services while we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are ongoing demand pressures within home care combined with staff shortages across both internal and externally provided services. The number of people currently waiting for care packages remains high, although there has been a recent positive impact from new providers and a new recruitment campaign to recruit staff and increase capacity. COVID-19 funds have been used to cover bank and agency staff costs in 2022/23.

Justice Services – Budget £3.286 million

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 Falkirk 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 and inflationary pressures. This, in conjunction with other increasing costs in respect of third sector commissioning, equipment and property, accounts for a real time cut in the available Justice budget. Temporary COVID-19 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.



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5. Workforce

The recruitment and retention of social workers and occupational therapists in Falkirk has been challenging prior to, but exacerbated since, the pandemic across all service areas. During the reporting period the situation in Falkirk was considered as an emerging crisis and we recognised we faced the risk of being unable to undertake statutory activities and failing to protect vulnerable children and adults.

The Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government reported in April 2023 that some CSWO's were reporting 40% social worker vacancies in their areas. This was the case for children and families social work in Falkirk. There was an increasing number of vacancies in adult services and a similar picture starting to emerge in Justice.

To respond to the challenges, a Social Work Recruitment and Retention Working Group was established. This group remains operational and is chaired by the social work workforce development service manager and meets monthly with representation from human resources, adult services, justice services and children and families services. A reference group was established for consultation on key issues and to seek feedback from frontline staff.

The group undertook a number of activities to respond to our local challenges, some are noted here:-

- Improvements have been made to the social work exit interview process, ensuring the gathering of data from employees leaving the service is an important element of us being a learning organisation. Managers are expected to promote and support gaining employee feedback at or before leaving the service. The next stage is to develop a process of gathering data from employees at entry level into the service to help inform system and service improvement.
- In spring 2022 the Social Work Sponsorship Programme was re-launched with Open University. Open to social work assistants and social care officers, they are able to obtain an Undergraduate or Post-graduate social work qualification. Course fees are met, and work placements are provided with a guaranteed interview upon completion of the course. Currently, 2 employees are sponsored, and another 4 opportunities will be offered this year.
- The working group is currently considering how the "Grow our own approach" can be applied to building capacity in our occupational therapists (OTs) establishment. This will be supported through consultation with OTs and with higher education who deliver OT degree courses.
- Career development pathways have been considered and consultation with staff groups have influenced discussions to shape thinking around advanced practitioner roles. Discussions with higher education (HEIs) are ongoing around flexible approaches to gaining postgraduate qualifications, such as a mental health officer certificate.

Even with a rolling recruitment drive during 2022, vacancies remained unfilled. The group embarked on a salary benchmarking exercise with neighbouring and comparator local authorities. Benchmarking evidenced that Falkirk was not a Council/HSCP of choice for prospective employees in comparison to other areas that offer a higher annualised salary taking account of hours worked. Even where Falkirk Council/HSCP was offering a higher starting salary, our hourly top point of the salary scale was the lowest in Scotland, making retention of staff difficult.

Whilst it is expected that there will be a turnover of staff, the higher-than-average turnover rate of experienced staff is leading to a significant skill shortage of managing complex cases, placing additional burdens on less experienced social workers, senior workers, and team managers.



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Identified Challenges and Risks

Service leads were clear that the most pressing issue is one of experienced staff leaving and being replaced by newly qualified staff. This is leading to a significant skill shortage for managing complex cases, placing additional burdens on less experienced social workers and consequently their senior workers and team managers. It is recognised that cases which require to be allocated are said to be exclusively complex in nature, which require a level of expertise and experience to work through the multifaceted issues.

Experience bars that had been established to ensure that social workers had an opportunity to gain the exposure of casework before taking on more complex work were being compromised due to the lack of experienced staff, and less experienced staff are now required to take this sooner than their resilience has been built up.

There has been a year-on-year increase in the costs of agency staff over the past 3 years. These have been offset against COVID-19 monies from Scottish Government. However, with the cessation of those monies, this has become a budget pressure in 2022/23. The cost of an agency member of staff is almost double that of an internally recruited social worker.

Several issues were identified by the working group needing to be addressed:-

- Recruitment of social workers and occupational therapists to fill vacancies.
- Retention of experienced social workers and occupational therapists.
- Developing a pathway for career advancement.
- Addressing the marginal salary difference between a social worker Grade I (£34,957 - £38,256) and senior worker grade J (£38,769 - £42,037), an initial difference of £540.00.

A report detailing the challenges noted in this annual report, along with comparative data and scoping, was prepared with an options appraisal. The report examined several different models together with financial modelling to address both the recruitment and retention of social workers and occupational therapist. The report was shared with the Director of Children's Services and Chief Officer of the IJB/Director of the Health and Social Care Partnership, with a consensus emerging for a preferred model.

To take forward the new agreed model, the role of senior worker was deleted from the establishment and replaced with 2 new roles of advanced practitioner and assistant team manager, providing a clear delineation of roles.

To support the retention of experienced staff, the creation of the advanced practitioner role will provide services with greater flexibility in utilising their skillset and address other shortages across service areas, for example in mental health officers and practice educators.

Guidance on defining the role of an advanced practitioner has been completed and a corresponding job profile created, focusing on the key characteristics as defined by the British Association of Social Workers, Scottish Social Services Council and Royal College of Occupational Therapist. This provides a clear framework to assess competence using the good conversations framework as promoted by the Council. The new approach is intended to ensure that staffing levels, experience and skills mix are optimised to ensure children and adults in Falkirk are supported and protected. It assists the service in meeting the Council Plan priority “Supporting stronger and healthier communities”, “Promoting opportunities and reducing inequalities”; and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Strategic Plan priorities delivered through its Workforce and Workforce Plan 2022 - 2025.

Our new structure has been welcomed by social work managers, staff and trade union colleagues. We have recruited to assistant team manager roles and advanced practitioner roles have proven to be attractive for both retention of experienced staff already in Falkirk and experienced practitioners joining us from other areas. Our use of agency staff has reduced. We continue to focus attention on recruitment and retention and the impact of the new structure remains subject to review.

Workforce has become a supporting workstream within the Falkirk HSCP Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022-2026. The aim of the workstream is to underpin the 4 strategic priorities and promote the recruitment, retention, and celebration of staff across all services.

The 3-year integrated Workforce Plan 2022-2025 has been published. The development of the plan involved workshops with managers and staff within the partnership along with trade unions and the third sector. The key aim of the plan is to ensure a robust and aligned approach across workforce, operational service and financial planning. The plan aligns with the priorities in Board Medium-term Operational and Financial Plans and HSCP Strategic Commissioning Plans. [HSCP publications](#)

The HSCP has launched a new recruitment campaign – “A Career that Cares.” At the heart of the campaign is the message that health and social care is an accessible and rewarding career with opportunity to develop skills at all levels. The career that cares campaign has been supported by colleagues in HR and home care to undertake its initial activity. This has included the creation of new promotional materials, flyers, social media assets, web page and the hosting of recruitment events in the local area.

Staff Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing across the workforce has always been a high priority for us. Our frontline social work staff teams experienced a lot of change in personnel and it was important to offer them the opportunity to connect and build relationships both within their team and across children’s services. In December 2022, we held a joint Children’s and Justice service Reconnect Event. This afforded staff the opportunity for extended team building and space for networking space and to attend workshops of their choice. This included a strong focus on wellbeing. Our business support staff are recognised for the important role they play in ensuring effective service delivery. We supported opportunities for team building which included a wellbeing focused session.

6. Training, Learning and Development

Learning Organisation

Actions arising from Learning Reviews and local quality assurance exercises sit at the heart of our learning and development programme and activities. A significant development area post-pandemic is nurturing cross-service relational based practice through locality focused learning and 'in-person' activities. We require to achieve a better understanding of practitioner and service roles which will support improved communication amongst our multi-agency partners: a 'joint learning leads to effective joint working' approach.

The focus of our attention within the reporting period was on creating conditions for frontline teams to plan and deliver team development sessions. This has been an outstanding priority impacted by workforce pressures, limited resources, and competing priorities. Coaching and facilitated workshops were made available to team managers in preparation for these sessions. For some teams, there has been considerable delay whilst steps have been taken to build capacity facilitated by the recent changes to structure and introduction of new positions - advanced practitioner and assistant team manager.

Strategic Planning

Our Child Protection Committee and Community Planning Partnership Learning and Development Strategy and Framework was launched in June 2023. This was informed by engagement with the workforce, evaluation of training, local strategic priorities, and findings from local learning reviews. This strategy will influence single agency learning and development plans and other partnership strategic plans.

The Strategy is supported by pillars of leadership, culture, collaboration, and reflective practice. We aim to create and sustain a learning culture providing conditions that demonstrate our workforce are valued and supported to apply their learning.

Falkirk's Learning and Development [Framework](#) outlines how learning and development activities are planned, delivered, and reviewed. We have agreed practice levels aligned to those adopted by NHS Education for Scotland (NES): "Informed," "Skilled," "Enhanced," or "Specialist."

Priorities and Outcomes

In the past year, we have taken steps to address local learning review actions outlined below:-

- Raising awareness of the prevalence of substance use in the Falkirk area.
- Addressing the challenges of assessing the risk of parental substance use- the impact of substance use on parenting and decision making.
- Recognising the complexity of mental health and substance use.
- Increasing knowledge and skills in collating and presenting evidence, making referrals to, and engaging with the Children's Reporter.
- Increasing knowledge about legal processes, focusing on assessments rather than thresholds and improved decision making.
- Raising awareness about the National Trauma Training programme and taking a Trauma Informed Approach.
- Improved understanding of trauma and support for parents who have experienced trauma in their lives.

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Our initial planning of a seminar series approach to addressing learning actions required to be revised due to the significant challenges facing the multi-agency workforce post COVID-19, including the impact of cross-service recruitment and retention issues, budget constraints and increased and sustained sickness absence. This impacted on operational presenters as well as intended training participants. This led to a different approach being taken.

In February 2023, the newly appointed trauma informed policy officer commenced work alongside local trauma champions and workforce development leads to develop a Falkirk trauma informed strategy and tiered training framework. The postholder is currently working with a wide range of services across Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership. This work includes:-

- conducting tests of change, including a focus on workforce wellbeing.
- engaging with people who wish to inform local culture, systems, and practice change through sharing their lived experience.
- supporting teams to walk through their service delivery using the trauma informed lens tool to identify improvement actions and training needs.
- informing the delivery of learning and development activities using all the above.

It is early days for us to be able to report on outcomes in relation to impact of training, learning and development on people who access services. How we plan to achieve this is reflected in our strategy. We are currently gathering data that will enable us to report on outcomes in relation to workforce confidence and competence across a range of learning and development activity.

We committed to rolling out the [Safe and Together Model](#) across Falkirk Community Planning Partnership services with a launch of the approach in November 2017. Roll out was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Access to training continued online on a limited basis.

Equally Safe funding was subsequently secured to step up the delivery of multi-agency training via a partnership bid with Aberlour and Barnardo's. This included funding to build trainer capacity to deliver 4-day CORE training and 2-day supervisors training. Whilst we have built trainer capacity, we continue to experience challenges in practitioners and managers being released to attend training.

We have also committed to supporting our workforce to access national trauma training resources and learning opportunities at informed, skilled, and enhanced level. We planned to deliver cross service 2-day trauma enhanced training commencing in autumn 2022 having identified 4 members of our workforce to engage in an assessed training for trainer's programme. This was postponed for 10 months due to competing demands on practitioner trainers and significant challenges for services to prioritise training amid a recruitment and retention crisis. During this period, the focus shifted to the provision of coaching and supporting workforce wellbeing, including self-care.

Our strategic approach reflects our commitment to providing opportunities to share learning following applying training and theory into practice. We began with a Safe and Together Community of Practice and plan to extend this to a range of themed learning and development. We have an Initial Referral Discussion Community of Practice and will soon have Trauma Informed and Responsive Community of Practice up and running.

The challenge remains, however, to be able to release frontline practitioners and managers to attend these opportunities whilst faced with so many competing demands. Even through shifting culture towards recognising reflective practice as a priority, it can be an impossible task to ring-fence this time when faced with so many priorities and limited resources.

Resources

We have retained our social work training and workforce development team as part of our ambition to be recognised as a learning organisation. This position is appreciated by our workforce and benefits our service users.

In the past year there has been investment made in multi-agency learning and development to support the approach outlined in our learning and development strategy. We wanted to strike the right balance between self-directed and online learning with a range of opportunities for the workforce to develop good working relationships through 'in person' attendance at skilled level training. We aspire to roll out widespread opportunities in locality areas and provide some flexibility to meet service needs.

From business case to recruitment of 2 inter-agency training posts was a lengthy process as partner agencies navigated their way through various processes to secure funding. Both the inter-agency training co-ordinator and training officer positions are temporary.

The recently appointed trauma informed policy officer has a remit to support training and has a significant remit with temporary funding.

Financial investment in learning and development that enables us to build capacity is short-term, however, and Scottish Government ambitions for workforce development and transforming culture, systems and practice are longer term.

Our SVQ centre is experiencing challenges in recruitment to the SVQ team. This is an issue reflected across the training and assessment centre sector. There is a lack of suitably qualified candidates to meet post requirements. The centre has explored different options to recruit including 'Grow our own' development from within the centre/Council. Despite this, the centre continues to maintain the high standards of assessment and quality assurance expected of the qualifications delivered.

Social Work Students

Between May 2022 and September 2023, we have had 10 students on placement with Falkirk across all services. This is within the parameters of our usual numbers. Our students have been very capable and intend to apply for jobs within Falkirk when they qualify. The practice assessor/co-ordinator has been and will continue to follow this up over the next few months. It is hoped that our practice educator numbers will increase next year as we have 3 - 4 members of staff undertaking the practice educator course at both the University of Stirling and Napier University. We have facilitated link working training, which has increased our numbers with the hope that they too will go on to complete the practice educator course next year.

We continue with our link worker programme which offers staff the opportunity to do work with students prior to undertaking the practice educator course. This usually is offered once per year with our last cohort being January 2023. The numbers wishing to undertake this training are usually between 5 - 10 people. Link working with a student requires a practice educator so the opportunity for having a student has been limited by this, but hopefully this will change as the number of practice educators increases.

Some of the challenges that have been present have included the issue of capacity with our teams experiencing staffing issues making it a bit problematic to facilitate student learning. However, most have been open to the idea understanding that students bring with them a wealth of experience as most have been working in the care sector prior to their studies and in some cases during their studies. Along with this is confidence, making their tasks and learning easier within the teams. Team managers and staff have been grateful for the knowledge and skills that they bring with some wishing to keep them as qualified workers. The biggest challenge was during COVID-19 but students have now been in University full time so enabling them to be more successful on placement.

The occupational therapy staff group has also been looking at re-starting their commitment to occupational therapy students, but this is a slow process as people find it difficult to commit to this. However, with the introduction of the advanced practitioner it is hoped that this will change and offer renewed interest and an increase of students. Work has taken place with universities to work in partnership with them to achieve this. This is ongoing.

Adult Support and Protection and Mental Health Officer Training

Essential adult/public protection training continues to be delivered across the social work service and to our partners and other stakeholders. We are gradually looking at moving more of this training back into an “in person” mode of delivery. We also deliver the versions that were adapted for digital delivery using the Microsoft Teams platform. Flexibility and innovation remain key in developing a growing raft of adult and child protection related training and making this accessible to staff across the Council and Health and Social Care Partnership. New e-learning packages have been and are being developed with ongoing work to make the Council’s e-learning platform accessible to partner agencies, particularly within the third sector.

Compendium of Adults with Incapacity (AWI) Guidance

Work on updating guidance on the use of Section 13Za of the Social Work Scotland Act 1968 has been completed. A multi-agency stakeholder’s reference group has worked closely with an external consultant in drafting a Compendium of Guidance around the use of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and developing an updated 13Za proforma. The value and quality of the work carried out by this reference group has been acknowledged by the external consultant and the senior management team.

Mental Health Officer (MHO) Sponsorship

During Spring 2023, we commenced our annual recruitment campaign for trainee MHOs. This year, we have been able to recruit 3 mental health officer trainees who will commence training at Edinburgh University in October 2023. In previous years we have struggled to recruit and support trainee MHOs due to lack of capacity. Our new structure, including the role of advanced practitioner, has created the conditions within teams to support students and trainees. Planning is underway for the MHO recruitment campaign in 2024.

Promise Partnership Funded Training Post- Keeping the Promise Training Officer

Falkirk received investment from ‘The Promise Partnership’ which funded a keeping the Promise training officer 12-month post (February 2022 – January 2023).

This post allowed us to build capacity and momentum in awareness raising and information sharing to our multi-agency workforce. Falkirk's 'Promise Roadshow' learning sessions informed members of our multi-agency workforce to better understand their corporate parenting roles and responsibilities, while also understanding what promises they can keep for our care experienced children and young people. During this time period, the sessions were attended by 498 multi-agency staff.

SVQ Vocational Qualifications

Falkirk Council Social Services Assessment Centre has continued to perform well. With a move to hybrid working, the centre has found initial support meetings with candidates face-to-face beneficial in establishing relationships between candidates and assessor.

The team has used VQfolio system since 2020. This is a web application that provides e-portfolios for SVQ centre candidates along with tools for assessors, internal verifiers, external verifiers and SVQ administrators. The workflow with SVQ has been designed around the paper-based system that SVQ centres are familiar with.

The SVQ team support staff to meet registration as stipulated by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The centre has successfully supported sensory support workers to achieve their awards and has commenced another cohort of staff from the sensory support service.

7. Looking Ahead

This report provides a summary of improvements, key developments and challenges across social work and social care services in Falkirk during the reporting period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report is retrospective and not intended to provide detailed performance reporting of all social work and social care activity. Specific reports and updates are reported throughout the year to relevant Committees, Integration Joint Board and Groups for members' interest, scrutiny and direction.

Looking forward, I anticipate continued challenges of increased pressure on services and the workforce. The current economic pressure will place further challenges on individuals' health and wellbeing and the widening health and social inequalities in our community. These challenges will be continually monitored and managed on an ongoing basis.

This year, all social work service areas are focussed on implementing the new approach to recruitment and retention. We have refreshed our recruitment strategy which includes new style adverts, video messages from our own staff highlighting why people should join Falkirk; what we offer and how they can develop their careers here with us.

Amongst a focus on reducing vacancies and building our capacity, we are considering how we adapt to our new circumstances in order to ensure we reduce pressure on the staff we have and meet the high priority needs of our communities. Changes to how we operate and how we are structured are at varying stages, but in progress.

Children's and justice social work services have synergies and links with services delivered by the adult social work services team who sit within the Health and Social Care Partnership. These services are essential to those in our communities who most need them and in the delivery of our priorities. Given the financial challenges we face and the implications of the National Care Service on children and families and justice social work services, consideration is currently being given to how children's social work services are delivered and managed at a local level and whether these correctly sit within Children's Services or whether, in due course, these services should be integrated into the Health and Social Care Partnership.

We will stay abreast of developments for a National Care Service noting that further consideration of the National Care Service Bill by Parliament is expected in early 2024 following the publication of evidence reviews relating to the reform of children and justice services.

Social work and social care services are essential services for the care and protection of the young and old in our communities. More than ever, we need to work together in innovative ways to adapt and thrive in a very challenging and uncertain context.

8. Falkirk Council's Duty of Candour Annual Report 2022/2023

The organisational Duty of Candour provisions 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). Organisations are required to apologise and to meaningfully involve them in a review of what happened. Organisations should have procedures to support notification, meetings, review, training and support requirements in a manner that is tailored to the particular services they provide.

An important part of this duty is the requirement for organisations to provide an annual report detailing how the duty of candour is implemented across services.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, there were no incidences in Falkirk where the duty of candour applied.

Annual Duty of Candour Report 22/23

Name and Address of Service	Falkirk Council, The Foundry, 4 Central Park Avenue, Central Blvd, Larbert, FK5 4RU
Date of Report	1 st April 2022 – 31 st March 2023
How have you made sure that you (and your staff) understand your responsibilities relating to the Duty of Candour and have systems in place to respond effectively?	Falkirk Council developed a seven-minute briefing for staff which brings together key information, fact sheets and guidance available locally and nationally. The seven-minute briefing and organisational guidance is located on the Practitioner's Pages. Whenever an opportunity arises, steps are taken to direct staff to the Practitioner Pages to access key information, guidance, and resources.
How have you done this?	<p>The briefing includes hyperlinks. One of which is the Duty of Candour E-learning resource produced by NHS Education for Scotland, The Scottish Social Services Council, The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. A trainer resource is included and available to staff. This comprises a facilitator pack to run a Duty of Candour workshop in an interactive and engaging way relevant to staff.</p> <p>Seven-minute briefings have been designed to assist busy managers to share and discuss key and essential information during team meetings. Staff are thereafter expected to ring-fence time to access the hyperlinked resources as part of their continuous professional development and to ensure they understand their responsibilities relating to duties.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for follow up discussion in team meetings providing staff with time to reflect and consider practice implications and any further training/learning needs.</p> <p>Social work workforce development service, in collaboration with a group of cross service frontline representatives, produced an interactive induction tracking record.</p>

	<p>This ensures that all relevant introductory learning and development is captured, signed off and held as part of employee records.</p> <p>The Duty of Candour e-learning resource is included in the induction of new staff, where appropriate. Newly qualified social workers are asked to complete this e-Learning as one of the priorities when they take up post.</p> <p>Our learning review process and guidance and our complaints procedure reference Organisational Duty of Candour.</p> <p>Duty of Candour is referenced where relevant, during our training programmes. There is specific reference made in adult support and protection (ASP) training in the context of section 5 of ASP (Scotland) Act 2007 duty of co-operation and in section 5(3) “duty to report”.</p> <p>A brief overview of the Heath (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Act 2016 is provided within the legislative handout provided as part of the Council officer training and some other Level 3 courses, for example, Decision Making, Three Act training etc. Availability of Duty of Candour training on NHS Education for Scotland website TURAS is also signposted during training delivery.</p> <p>Development sessions also reference Organisational Duty of Candour, responsibilities and support available to meet those responsibilities. The Scottish Government guide for staff and providers of health, social care and social work services, Annex A Checklist is specifically highlighted as a helpful resource.</p>
Do you have a Duty of Candour Policy or written Duty of Candour? procedure?	<p>Organisational Duty of Candour is referenced in complaints procedures.</p> <p>A reporting template has been created to ensure the consistency of reporting across services.</p>
How many times have you/your service implemented the Duty of Candour procedure this financial year?	
Zero	
A person died	0
A person incurred permanent lessening of bodily, sensory, motor, physiologic or intellectual functions.	0
A person’s treatment increased	0
The structure of a person’s body changed	0
A person’s life expectancy shortened	0
A person’s sensory, motor or intellectual functions was impaired for 28 days or more	0
A person experienced pain or psychological harm for 28 days or more	0
A person needed health treatment in order to prevent them dying	0
A person needing health treatment in order to prevent other injuries as listed above	0
Total	0
Did the responsible person for triggering Duty of Candour appropriately follow the procedure? If not, did this result is any under or over reporting of Duty of Candour?	Not applicable due to zero incidences.
What lessons did you learn?	

What learning & improvements have been put in place as a result?	
Did this result in a change / update to your Duty of Candour policy / procedure?	
How did you share lessons learned and with whom?	
Could any further improvements be made?	
What systems do you have in place to support staff to provide an apology in a person-centred way and how do you support staff to enable them to do this?	<p>Duty of Candour is part of our overall approach to managing incidents and complaints and is integral to our approach regarding transparent and open practice.</p> <p>Staff would be supported by a senior manager and all apologies would be offered verbally and in-person. Support would also be offered to provide a written apology if the service team required it.</p>
What support do you have available for people involved in invoking the procedure and those who might be affected?	<p>We know that adverse events can be distressing for staff as well as people who receive a service from the Council. Support is available for all staff through line management structures as well as through Occupational Health and Workforce and Organisational Development.</p> <p>A tiered framework of trauma training is under development for all social work service staff covering Informed, Skilled and Enhanced level training. The National Trauma Training programme is well publicised and used regularly by staff to access resource materials. Our in-house 'in person' skilled and enhanced trauma (safety and stabilisation) training includes a focus on workforce self-care. They also recognise the impact of secondary trauma on the workforce and consider what steps can be taken to avoid/reduce/address issues.</p>