

FALKIRK COUNCIL

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
MEETING: FALKIRK COUNCIL
DATE: 7 OCTOBER 2015
AUTHOR: HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This annual report, which was prepared by the outgoing Chief Social Work Officer, Margaret Anderson, provides Members with an overview of how the statutory duties of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) have been fulfilled over the year 2014/2015. The report, which is attached, is written in a format which complies with a request made by the Chief Social Work Advisor (Scottish Government) that CSWOs adopt a common framework for their reports. It is intended to make this report available to the Chief Social Work Advisor for Scotland, following consideration by Members.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 requires the local authority to appoint a professionally qualified CSWO and the qualifications which apply to the post are covered by the qualification of Chief Social Work Officers (Scotland) Regulations 1996. In addition to this, national guidance on the role of the CSWO was published in 2009.
- 2.2. The responsibility of the CSWO is to:-
- promote values and standards of professional practice and provide a clear statement of expectation of Social Services workers and employers.
 - ensure that these values and standards are communicated on a regular basis, adhered to and reviewed periodically.
 - work with Human Resources to ensure that all Social Services workers meet the requirements of the SSSC Code of Practice and that all registered workers meet the requirements of their regulatory body.
 - support and advise Managers in maintaining and developing high standards of practice and supervision.
 - ensure that only registered social workers undertake those functions reserved in legislation or are accountable for those functions described in Guidance.
 - ensure that there are effective governance arrangements for the management of the complex balance of need, risk and civil liberties, in accordance with

professional standards. Where the Council's corporate policy on risk does not reflect this balance, the CSWO is required to bring this to the attention of the Chief Executive and to contribute to the development of appropriate governance arrangements.

- ensure appropriate advice is provided on corporate workforce and planning and quality assurance, including safe recruitment practice, probation/mentoring arrangements, managing poor performance and promoting continuous learning and development for staff.
- actively promote continuous improvement, raising standards and evidence-informed good practice, including the development of person-centred services that are focussed on the needs of the service user.
- oversee the quality of practice learning experiences of social work students and effective workplace assessment arrangements, in accordance with SSSC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service workers.
- ensure that appropriate systems are in place both to promote good practice and to identify and address weak and poor practice.

The CSWO should work with Managers to ensure these systems are effective and, where this is not the case, the CSWO has the responsibility for bringing this to the attention of the Chief Executive and contributing to the development or improvement of such systems.

- ensure that significant case reviews are undertaken into all critical incidents either resulting in – or which may have resulted in – death or serious harm.
- take final decisions on behalf of the local authority in relation to a range of Social Work matters, including adoption, secure accommodation, guardianship and other statutory decisions required from time to time.
- contribute to reports to the Chief Executive and Elected Members – providing independent comment where necessary – on the findings of relevant performance reports setting out:
 - implications for the local authority, for services, for service users and carers, for individual teams/members of staff/Partners as appropriate implications for delivery of national and local outcomes;
 - proposals for remedial action;
 - means for sharing good practice and learning;
 - monitoring and reporting arrangements for identified improvement activity.
- report to the local authority on any other Social Work related issues.
- prepare an annual report to the local authority on all of the statutory, governance and leadership functions of the role.

3. **THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014/2015**

3.1. The Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and provides an overview of:-

- the local authority Governance & Partnership arrangements
- context of Social Work Services
- finance
- performance
- statutory functions
- continuous improvement
- planning for change
- user & carer involvement and empowerment
- workforce planning & development
- key challenges for the year ahead

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

Members of the Council are asked to:-

- 4.1. note the contents of the attached report;
- 4.2. acknowledge the commitment, skills and experience of staff in continuing to deliver high quality Social Work Services for the benefit of Falkirk citizens.

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Kathy McCarroll
Head of Social Work

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER

ANNUAL REPORT

2014/2015

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of how the statutory responsibilities of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) have been fulfilled over the period 2014/2015. The local authority is required by Section 3 of the Social Work Scotland act to appoint a professionally qualified CSWO and the responsibilities attached to this role are outlined in national guidance which was published in February 2009.

2. THE COUNCIL AREA

The population of the Falkirk Council area is growing. With a population currently of 157,640, it is the eleventh largest Council area in Scotland.

The number of births each year peaked at 1,913 in 2008, which was the highest figure for over 15 years, then falling, but only marginally, since. This peak is now resulting in an increase in the number of primary school age children and will affect school rolls for several years to come.

By 2016 there will be an 8% increase in the number of people aged 75 and over compared to 2012; by 2022 this increase will be 33%. These increases are greater than for Scotland as a whole and are having a growing impact on the demand for social work services for older people.

In recent years the natural population increase has also been bolstered by net migration; during 2011/12 this amounted to 601, a decrease from 1,021 in 2010/11. The average annual net migration since 2000 has been 850.

Life expectancy for men in Falkirk for 2010-2012 was 76.9, marginally higher than the Scottish average, and 80.6 for women, marginally below the Scottish average, but both continue to show small increases over time. Life expectancy at 65 for males in Falkirk is half a year less than the national average, for females just one fifth of a year less.

Across the Council Wards there are variations in the proportions of the population in different age groups. Grangemouth (19.4%) and Falkirk North (18.2%) have the largest proportions of older people population; Upper Braes (14.4%) and Larbert & Bonnybridge (13.5%) the lowest.

Larbert & Bonnybridge (21.7%) and Upper Braes (20.5%) have the highest percentage of the population who are children aged 0-15; Grangemouth (17.0%) and Lower Braes (16.6%) the smallest.

With the economic downturn, unemployment has risen since 2008 when the number of unemployed in the Council area was 2,088. It rose to peak at 4,792 in 2011, but has declined slightly since, with the latest reported figure for March 2014 being 3,623. Unemployment rates for all ages and among young people are slightly higher in Falkirk than Scotland as a whole.

Falkirk Council has 18 data zones in the most deprived 15% in Scotland according to The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012. This is an increase of one compared to the previous Index published in 2009.

However, components of deprivation are not evenly spread across the Council area. Falkirk has 24 data zones in the most deprived 15% for income deprivation, 25 data zones for employment deprivation, 27 for education deprivation, 20 for crime, 16 for access, but just 5 for health deprivation and 2 for housing.

3. **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

- 3.1. Over the period covered by this report, Falkirk Council Social Work Services had been managed by a Director of Social Work Services who was supported by two Heads of Service.
- 3.2. The role of the CSWO has been fulfilled by the Director of Social Work Services, who was a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) and who reported directly to the Council's Chief Executive. In her absence, Heads of Service act as deputies. As a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team, the CSWO has contributed to policy development and ensured that senior managers received advice on social work matters.
- 3.3. The CSWO has also been directly involved in developing and managing the Social Work budget and has been able to offer advice on how budget decisions can impact positively and negatively on service delivery.
- 3.4. As a member of the Corporate Management Team, the CSWO has been consulted on a range of reports which are considered by the Council and has also been able to present reports to Members on Social Work matters.

Over the course of 2014/15 reports have been presented on:-

- Social Work Performance
 - Health & Social Care Integration
 - Biennial Report for Child Protection and Adult Support & Protection
 - Review of Kinship Care Policy & Procedure
 - External Review of Open Secret
 - Children & Young People (Sc) Act 2014
- 3.5. The CSWO has also met formally and informally with Elected Members on a regular basis, and on request, to offer advice and information on social work matters.
 - 3.6. In preparation for the revised structural arrangements relating to Social Work Services and coming into effect this year, the Council has agreed a new set of governance arrangements, as set out in the report considered by Council.

4. **PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES**

- 4.1. Partnership working is crucial to the effective delivery of Social Work Services and the CSWO has an important role to play in supporting partnership working. This has been achieved over the last year by:-

- membership of the Community Planning Partnership Leadership Group and presentation of reports as requested;
- attendance at the Community Health Partnership Board and presentation of reports as required;
- co-chairing of the CHP Joint Management Team;
- co-chairing of the Children's Commission (part year);
- chairing of the Child Protection Committee;
- contributing to the Adult Support & Protection Committee.

4.2. In general, partnership arrangements are considered to be strong and there has been a strong emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of partnership arrangements and bringing about improvements where required. This is particularly important in the light of organisational changes which impact on partners e.g. the shift from local Police Forces to Police Scotland. Over the last year there has been a particular focus on the effectiveness of partnership governance arrangements for public protection. Senior management oversight of public protection has historically been achieved by the Chief Executives of the three Forth Valley local authorities, the NHS Chief Executive and the Chief Constable meeting on a regular basis to monitor performance. This group, known as G5, agreed in December 2013 to focus governance arrangements for public protection within the Community Planning Partnerships governance framework and the CSWO led the work associated with the development of the new arrangements which were approved by members when they considered the Biennial reports of the Child Protection Committee and Adult Support & Protection Committee.

5. **THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN FALKIRK**

5.1. A range of factors impact on our communities and on the demand for Social Work Services. These include:-

- Demographic changes which in this area means that the population of both younger people and older people is increasing with consequent increases in demand for both children's services and adult services.
- The economic downturn and impact of welfare reform resulting in concerns about levels of poverty and vulnerability. Services are encountering people on a daily basis who are struggling to meet their basic needs and who are dependent on the support of the local foodbanks and the voluntary sector.
- The ongoing impact of substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health on family life and on the wellbeing of children.
- The growing awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation.
- The volatility of the market of social care providers in the area with some providers now struggling to recruit and retain staff.
- The pressure on local hospital provision arising from emergency admissions.

- The limited capacity of care homes for older people in this area which can contribute to delayed hospital discharges.

6. **FINANCE**

- 6.1. As a Council Service, Social Work Services are affected by the wider financial constraints affecting the Council as a whole. During the financial year 2014/15 the Council faced a funding gap of £10.5m. This was met by a combination of budget rebasing, corporate initiatives, service savings and the application of reserves. Against this backcloth, the Social Work budget increased by £2.140m to £89.715m.

Although in a more favourable position than other services, Social Work Services nevertheless required to make some savings through procurement; vacancy management, staff reductions, review of transport and increases to non-residential charges.

The outturn at the end of March 2015 was an overspend of 3.7% (£3.343m). This was attributable to budget pressures on 24 hour care and home care in adult services, children's residential care and significant pressures across children's services relating to demand for placements.

- 6.2. There is a clear upward trajectory of demand for services across both adult and children's services. This creates significant financial pressures and resultant pressures on staff to balance a sound approach to financial management with robust and defensible decision making about service provision and responding to the needs of services users.
- 6.3. Against this challenging backdrop, consideration also requires to be given to how financial constraints can be managed in future years and the CSWO has been actively involved in the consideration of potential savings options, including any risks or equality issues associated with these.
- 6.4. The arrangements adopted by the Council to date in budget setting and the development of savings options has enabled the CSWO to offer clear advice on these matters and this has been a strength of current arrangements.

7. **PERFORMANCE**

- 7.1. Social Work Services have clear and robust arrangements for monitoring performance.
- The Social Work Service Plan sets out the priorities for the year ahead and also contains an Annual Performance Statement for the previous year. The Service Plan for 2014/15 was considered by members of the Council's Performance Panel on 19 June 2014.
 - Performance throughout the year is now monitored through the Council's Performance Panel which gives in-depth consideration to the performance of the service in contributing to the Council's corporate plan and single outcome agreement as well as to local outcomes.

- The Council's Corporate Management Team has developed a system of peer reviews which provides peer scrutiny of service performance on a bi-annual basis.
- In the last year the Service has also developed a performance outcomes framework which consolidates the improvements we have been making in performance management.

7.2. The Annual Performance Statement for 2014/2015 indicated that performance targets were achieved or exceeded for 77% of our indicators. Another 13% were slightly below target, and 10% were significantly below target performance.

Target performance was achieved or exceeded in 30 indicators (77% of total indicators):-

Children's Services – 3

- The proportion of children requiring home supervision seen by a supervising officer within 15 days.
- The number and proportion of young people who are looked after who have a plan.
- Percentage of looked after school leavers in a positive and sustained destination after 9 months (HE, FE, Employment, Training, Voluntary Work).

Criminal Justice – 4

- Community Payback: The average number of hours per week taken to complete orders.
- The number of Criminal Justice Social Work Reports submitted to courts and the proportion submitted by the due date.
- Community Payback: The number of individuals on new orders and the proportion seen by a supervising officer within 1 week.
- Number and percentage of offenders who successfully complete community disposals.

Social Work Adult Services – 21

- The number of people aged 65+ receiving Home Care & rate per 1,000 population.
- The number of Home Care hours per 1000 population aged 65+.

- The proportion of Home Care service users aged 65+ receiving personal care.
- The proportion of Home Care service users aged 65+ receiving a service during evenings/overnight.
- The proportion of Home Care service users aged 65+ receiving a service at weekends.
- The percentage of calls to the social work contact centre answered at 1st attempt.
- The number of people whose community care assessment was completed during the year.
- The number of carers' assessments carried out during the year.
- Staff qualification – the percentage of care staff who are qualified working in care homes for older people (65+).
- The total overnight respite weeks provided to older people aged 65+.
- The total overnight respite weeks provided to adults aged 18-64.
- The total daytime respite weeks provided to adults aged 18-64.
- Number of patients waiting more than four weeks for discharge to appropriate setting.
- Percentage of community care service users feeling safe.
- Percentage of service users satisfied with their involvement in the design of their care package.
- Percentage of carers satisfied with their involvement in the design of care package.
- Percentage of service users satisfied with opportunities for social interaction.
- Percentage of carers who feel supported and capable to continue in their role as a carer OR feel able to continue with additional support.
- The total number of calls to MECS during the year and the proportion of mobile warden responses involved.
- The number and percentage of priority 1 cases who received MECS alarms within target (48hrs).

- Total number of people with community alarms at end of year.

All Social Work – 2

- Staff turnover - % staff who have left.
- The number of complaints received; the proportion completed within the response time of 28 days, and the number referred to the Ombudsman.

Performance did not improve on previous year, but within 5% of achieving target, for 5 indicators (13%):-

Children's Services – 2

- The total overnight respite weeks provided to children with a disability.
- The total daytime respite weeks provided to children with a disability.

Social Work Adult Services – 3

- The number of service users receiving a Rapid Response service during the year.
- The number of "OT" equipment items provided by the Joint Loan Equipment Scheme during the year.
- The total daytime respite weeks provided to older people aged 65+.

Performance last year did not improve on the previous year, and we failed to meet our target performance by more than 5%, in 4 indicators (10%):-

Children's Services – 1

- The number and proportion of looked after children in community placements.

Social Work Adult Services – 2

- The number of months during the reporting year that the target was achieved of no delayed discharge patients waiting 4 weeks or more.
- The number of 'OT' pending assessments at the end of the year.

All Social Work – 1

- Sickness absence - % days lost

7.3. The above areas are a focus for improvement in the current year.

7.4. Registered services are subject to regular inspections by the Care Inspectorate. Over the last year the performance of our 31 registered services continues to improve.

8. **STATUTORY FUNCTIONS**

8.1. **Statutory Decision Making**

The CSWO is responsible for taking final decisions on behalf of the Council in certain circumstances involving high levels of risk and vulnerability for service users.

8.1.1. **Interim Placement/Moves to Secure Accommodation**

In terms of the Children (Scotland) Act, the CSWO is the decision maker who requires to determine whether a child subject to a supervision requirement with a secure authorisation is placed in secure accommodation. In addition, the CSWO has significant powers under the Secure Accommodation (Scotland) Regulations 1996, including the power to place children in secure accommodation on an interim basis pending consideration by a children's hearing, and moving children committed to the care of the Local Authority by the criminal courts to secure accommodation. Because of the significance of the decisions to be taken, Parliament has required that the decision be taken by the CSWO.

Nine young people required to be accommodated in Secure Accommodation over the period April 2014 – March 2015.

8.1.2. **Temporary Placement Changes**

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 the CSWO may decide that a child requires to be moved to a new placement, notwithstanding that the child requires to reside there by virtue of a condition on a supervision requirement made by the Children's Hearing.

Decisions are usually linked to moves from one residential care or foster care placement or to another, and can be triggered by concerns within the care setting.

In making the decision the CSWO has to be satisfied that these powers require to be used, rather than requesting a review children's hearing. It usually relates to situations where it is clear that the current placement has broken down irretrievably. Over the period April 2014 – March 2015, 3 such transfers were authorised by the CSWO.

8.1.3. **Statutory Functions (Adults With Incapacity)**

The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act ascribes a number of significant roles to the CSWO. These roles emphasise the importance of the exercise of social work professional skills in relation to Falkirk Council's functions in respect of the guardianship of adults with incapacity. The statutory framework does not, however, require the CSWO to exercise a personal decision making function.

The roles of the CSWO under the 2000 Act are:-

- to act as guardian to an adult with incapacity where the guardian's powers relate to the welfare of the adult;

- to act as the recipient of notices that applications for guardianship or intervention orders are to be made, and to ensure that appropriate reports are provided for the court process; and
- to provide reports to court on the appropriateness of a guardianship or intervention order where the incapacity relied upon is not a mental disorder.

The CSWO is the appointed guardian for Falkirk Council Welfare Guardianship orders and as such has responsibility to ensure that the welfare powers granted under the order are exercised within the principles of the Adult with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. This responsibility is completed through delegation to a supervising Mental Health Officer and/or the case manager and the Order is reviewed every 12 months, unless identified as required earlier, to ensure the Order is still required and that it continues to be relevant to the adult's needs.

The CSWO is required to allocate an MHO to complete a suitability report for a Private Welfare Guardianship Order application. The CSWO also has a responsibility to ensure the supervision of all Private Welfare Guardianship Orders within the Falkirk Council area. Within Falkirk Council this supervision is carried out by the full-time MHO team. This supervision involves an initial 3 month review followed by 12 monthly review of the continued need for the powers granted by the Guardianship Order and the continued fitness of the named guardian/guardians to exercise those powers in keeping with the principles of the Act.

Falkirk Council currently has 216 Local Authority Welfare Guardianship Orders for which the CSWO is the appointed guardian. There are 2 Welfare Guardianship Orders where the CSWO is joint Welfare Guardian with private individuals. There are a further 112 Private Welfare Guardianship Orders, 47 of which the guardian holds both welfare and financial powers. There are approximately 60 Private and Local Authority AWI Welfare Guardianship Order applications currently in progress, an increase from the previous year. The Local Authority has a duty to supervise the appointed private guardians and review the continued need for the powers granted under the order. This area of work has seen a substantial year on year increase. In addition to the increase in requests for the provision of the required statutory MHO report this has a consequential increase in the duty to supervise the private guardians of the Adult. From January to March 2014 the MHO service supervised 76 proxies of the Adults subject to a Guardianship Order.

It should also be noted that in addition to the work in relation to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 the MHO service has a specific duty in relation to statutory detentions under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003 and the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995.

Under Section 32 of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 the Local Authority has a responsibility to appoint a sufficient number of approved (as detailed within the Act) Mental Health Officers to discharge the duties and responsibilities under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, the Criminal procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

In March 2015, the service had 11 accredited MHOs employed and working for Falkirk Council. One of the dedicated MHO posts remained vacant following 2 rounds of unsuccessful recruitment. This vacancy was covered in the short term by an agency worker but has now been filled. As such, Falkirk Council was nationally one of the lowest pro-rata positions of MHO to population. The service has taken a pro-active approach to improve the situation through a spend to save exercise. Through this approach, 4 social workers have been supported through the MHO training course. An exceptional number for our service and a challenge to provide the required number of practice assessors to support the trainees. However, 7 of the 11 MHOs are not full time and carry full social work caseloads in addition to taking work arising from MHO duty rota. The year on year increase in statutory MHO work has placed the service under pressure.

8.1.4. **Assessment and Management of Risk**

The CSWO has specific responsibilities for ensuring effective governance arrangements for the management of risk. Risk Assessment and Risk Management is a particularly complex area of Social Work practice which involves balancing needs, risk and civil liberties in accordance with professional standards. The exercise of such responsibilities is fundamental to work with children on the Child Protection Register, Looked after Children, vulnerable adults who may be in need of support and protection and work with high risk offenders, including registered sex offenders.

Over the course of the last year we have updated a range of policies and procedures to take account of national guidance relating to Adult Protection, Child Protection and Public Protection. We have also provided a range of training in respect of risk assessment and risk management to front line staff.

As of 31st March 2015 there were 71 children on the Child Protection Register and 366 children looked after, 252 of whom were looked after away from home.

9. **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

- 9.1. The service has embedded continuous activity into management arrangements for the service and has a Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement calendar which is monitored through continuous improvement groups chaired by each Head of Service.
- 9.2. In addition to this service specific activity the service contributes to a range of multi-agency continuous improvement activities and has undertaken regular audits of child protection activity. The findings from these audits demonstrated a range of strengths as well as areas for improvement which are monitored on a multi-agency basis.
- 9.3. Social Work Services are required to operate a complaints procedure for the handling of complaints which conforms to national guidance. The Social Work Complaints procedure differs from the Council's corporate procedure in that there is a final stage which may involve a complaint being heard by a Complaints Review Committee consisting of Elected Members and an independent Chairperson. Over the course of 2014/2015 a total of 274 complaints were received in relation to Social Work Services, a decrease of 60 from the previous year. It should be noted that 93% of complaints

were resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process, with 7% resolved at stage 2 of the complaints process.

The Service remains committed to using learning from complaints more generally to improve practice.

10. PLANNING

- 10.1. Our Service Performance Plan sets out the priorities for Social Work Services for 2014–2017. This plan sets out our objectives for this period under the Corporate Goals and Values of the Council. Our Service Performance Plan takes account of the Council's Strategic Community Plan and the Corporate Plan and the priorities they contain. We have also ensured our Plan links to the latest Single Outcome Agreement that has been developed by the Council and our Community Planning Partners.
- 10.2. Our Service Performance Plan looks at the context within which we work. By reviewing this we can take account of challenges and opportunities, and make sure we plan for changes in our environment. The plan then sets out how we will continue to improve the services we deliver over the coming year and beyond. Our priorities are clearly linked to and developed to support our Community Planning Partners vision for our area as 'the Place to be'. We recognise we have a particular role in Social Work in ensuring this vision includes all citizens, including the most vulnerable and the most challenging.
- 10.3. Our objectives, tasks and performance measures are aligned to the Council's goals. As indicated in previous sections of this report, Social Work Services works closely with other services and other partners to deliver the commitments articulated in the Council's Single Outcome Agreement and have developed a range of partnership plans.
- 10.4. The last year has seen a considerable amount of partnership activity in relation to reshaping care for older people which has been influenced by the Joint Commissioning Plan for Older People. Related to this, the Council and partners have also been recently involved in working closely in preparing for the implementation of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014.
- 10.5. The changes relating to the integration of Adult Health & Social Care Integration are extensive and have had an impact on all Council services leading to a restructuring of Social Work Services into an integrated Children's Service which will complement the parallel move towards Health & Social Care Partnerships involving Adult Services. The changes arising from this restructuring begins to take effect from 1 August 2015.

11. PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT WITH SERVICE USERS

- 11.1. In the last year the Service has continued to update action plans relating to how service users and carers can be involved in the development of services. Some examples are provided below.

Service users (both young people and adults) have been involved in the recruitment and selection of staff in residential childcare, homes for older people and appointment of staff in the Children with Disability team and the Criminal Justice Caledonian Project.

In Tremanna residential unit the young people have developed their own model of therapeutic intervention and have been selected by IRISS to pilot “Relationship Matters”.

A focus group was held with young people who had been looked after away from home to determine their experiences of the Children’s Hearing system. Following this, a training session was held jointly with young people and Children’s Panel members, and the Children’s Panel have now committed to making changes to the process in light of the young people’s views.

In Criminal Justice a peer mentoring programme has been developed. Women who have completed their statutory criminal justice order are then provided with formal training as peer mentors to enable them to work with and support women offenders who are still completing their statutory orders.

In Community Care there are regular user participation meetings in Day Services. There has also been a recent review of the Learning Disability team involving service users, with a variety of communication methods being used.

12. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**

- 12.1. The Service has continued to update and implement the training and workforce development plan and has maintained a good track record in providing training and support for staff development.
- 12.2. A significant and growing proportion of the Service’s workforce is subject to registration with the SSSC and this requires an ongoing commitment to workforce development and support to staff to be given the qualifications required for their posts.
- 12.3. The following range of staff have been required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and have done so successfully;
 - Social Workers
 - Social Work students
 - Managers of Residential Child Care Services
 - Supervisors in Residential child Care Services
 - Residential Child Care workers
 - Managers of Adult Day Care services
 - Managers of Care Home Services for Adults
 - Supervisors in Care Home Services for Adults
 - Practitioners in Care Home Services for Adults
- 12.4. In 2014/15 the Social Services SVQ Assessment Centre has increased access to awards for Home Care Managers who require to complete 2 awards in the first period of registration with SSSC. These are at level 4 in Health and Social Care and a Leadership

and Management award (level 4). The Senior Workers Home Care are undertaking SVQ level 3 awards and 2 units at level 4 in management.

All main grade Home Care workers are being offered the SVQ level 2 award as this will be required for their SSSC registration. The service needs to recruit to replace the 2 Home Care SVQ Assessors to sustain this work to meet the statutory requirements for registration of the workforce.

SVQ Training Activity 2014/15	
Award Level- Health and Social Care	Number of Active Candidates
SVQ Level 2	57
SVQ Level 3	36
SVQ Level 4	23
SVQ Level 4 Leadership & Management	15
Total	131

The Centre supported and assessed 22 Modern Apprentices and Falkirk Job's programme trainees in Social Care settings within the Council in 2014/15. In addition, there were 6 Modern Apprentices in Catering based across the Adult Care Homes.

- 12.5 Managers of Care at Home Services and Housing with Care Services were required to register by 31st January 2014. Supervisors of Care at Home Services and workers in Care at Home Services will be required to register by 2017 and 2020 respectively.

The Service has made provision to assess and support the large number of staff in Home Care to enable them to complete the required SVQ awards in preparation for registration by these deadlines.

As Registered Workers, these staff members are required to comply with the SSSC's 'Code of Practice'. Falkirk Council, as an employer, is also required to comply with 'The Code of Practice for Employers'.

Scottish Government and SSSC have worked with CELCIS to develop standards for residential childcare and have advised employers of the introduction of degree level (SCQF level 9) qualifications for all residential childcare staff.

Our services have started planning for the implementation of the Standard and expect the implementation dates to be revised beyond the original start date of April 2016.

- Programmes will enable learners to demonstrate that they have the appropriate professional values, knowledge and skills to meet the Standard.
- The degree level award includes 360 SCQF credit points, typically at SCQF levels 7, 8 and 9 and each of 120 credits.
- It builds on existing qualifications such as HNC, SVQ.

The implications for our workforce development planning include providing the additional qualifications for all the residential childcare staff including Managers.

- 12.6 The Council runs a very successful ILM Managers programme and managers across the Service are able to take part in this programme which provides qualifications up to Diploma level.
- 12.7 In response to shortages in approved and trained mental health officers, the service has supported 4 social workers through the MHO training course provided by Edinburgh University. This is an exceptional number for Falkirk Council and is in recognition of the increase in demand on the service and attrition to date in the number of practising MHOs within the service. Market forces are such that recruitment of qualified MHOs to posts is a challenge; as such there is recognition of the need to capacity build within the service. Releasing 4 social workers to complete this training has been a challenge but necessary.

13. **KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD**

- 13.1. The year ahead brings with it an unprecedented level of challenge and change as well as opportunities.

13.1.1. **Health & Social Care Integration**

During this period Adult Services will move towards full integration with Health Services with the new arrangements expected to be in place by April 2016. This is a time of considerable change and anxiety for staff as well as a time of opportunity.

It will be critical that staff continue to be well supported under the new arrangements which will separate out line management arrangements/responsibilities from the care governance arrangements/responsibilities of the CSWO.

13.1.2. **Redesign of Community Justice**

During this period it is expected that progress will be made in shaping proposals for how Community Justice Services can become more fully integrated with the community Planning Partnership. This will be in preparation for the dissolution of Community Justice Authorities in 2016. It will be important to ensure a coherent approach to any redesign which takes account of the wider landscape of change and which continues to ensure connections with other Social Work Services.

13.1.3. **Developments in Children's Services**

The impact of the Children's & Young People's (Scotland) Act will be experienced over the course of the coming year and beyond with the Council acquiring additional responsibility in relation to the implementation of GIRFEC and in relation to looked after children. Over the course of this year, the Council's new Children's Service will begin to take shape. The Council and its partners will also face a joint Inspection of Children's Services in November of this year.

13.1.4. Rising Demand & Budget Pressures

Social Work Services are experiencing rising demand across all service areas, with consequent budget pressures, combined with the prospect of more severe financial constraints in the years that lie ahead.

13.1.5. Supporting Frontline Staff and Service Delivery

All of the above factors have the potential to impact significantly on front line staff and service delivery and a key management priority will be to continue to deliver services through effective support to the staff who provide those.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work they do in very difficult and demanding circumstances.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1. This has been a very demanding period for Social Work Services. The work which Social Work Services staff undertake on behalf of Falkirk Council is life changing work. Our work enables vulnerable citizens to gain independence, to be safe and to be cared for and it contributes to the overall safety and well being of our communities. Although not often publicly recognised, our staff are skilled, experienced and highly committed to delivering the best possible services to the people in Falkirk, and as such, are our greatest asset in facing the challenges which lie ahead. I have been proud to lead the service over my period in post and as outgoing Chief Social Work Officer I wish my successor every success in her new role.

Margaret Anderson.

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Margaret Anderson
Chief Social Work Officer