

Integration Joint Board

Date of Meeting: 27th September 2023

Title of Report: Chief Social Work Officer Report 2022/2023

Presented by: David Gibson

The IJB is asked to:

- Note the content of the CSWO Report 2022/2023

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) for each of Scotland's 32 local authorities provides an annual report for Scottish Government. It is due in the autumn and relates to the previous financial year.

The full CSWO report is attached.

2. INTRODUCTION

The requirement for every local authority in Scotland to appoint a professionally qualified CSWO is set out in Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

In Argyll & Bute the role of CSWO is held by the Head of Children, Families & Justice.

There is a requirement to send a CSWO Report to Scottish Government each autumn covering the previous financial year.

Attached in the CSWO Report for the financial year 2022/2023. It is acknowledged that there have been significant changes since the period relevant to the report, most saliently the volatile economic background resulting in a 'cost of living crisis'.

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

The full CSWO Report 2022/2023 is attached.

4. RELEVANT DATA AND INDICATORS

Contained within the attached report.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Social Work is key to a significant number of strategic priorities. Reference to these are contained in the attached report

6. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Impact

It is clear from the attached report that maintaining social work services during a period of stretched and constricting finances is becoming increasingly more difficult. The full impact of the 'cost of living crisis' and higher inflationary pressures is predicted to increase these difficulties however is out with the timescales of this report. There are on going discussions between Scottish Government and COSLA on the formation of a National Social Work Agency which could lead to national pay and conditions for the profession.

It could be argued that finances are now not the main hurdle in maintaining and developing services. Staff recruitment and retention is perhaps now of greater note.

6.2 Staff Governance

The full report sets out significant staffing challenges. This is beyond problems with recruitment and retention. For example in the case of social workers it is recognised there are simply not enough qualified social workers nationally and all local authorities are vying to recruit from an insufficient pool of potential employees. One or two authorities are dealing with this by increasing wages which can worsen the situation for other areas.

As mentioned above staff recruitment and retention is now perhaps the biggest restrictive factor in the maintenance and development of services

6.3 Clinical and Care Governance

The CSWO Report is a key element of Clinical and Care Governance at both local and national level.

7. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY

The CSWO is the main professional advisor to the local authority on all social work matters. Through the scheme of delegation, is also the main social work advisor to the IJB.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

9. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES COMPLIANCE

None

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

None

11. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

There is no public or user involvement as such in the compilation of the CSWO, however the report does evidence significant involvement and engagement activity throughout social work and social care.

12. CONCLUSIONS

The IJB is asked to:

- Note the key activities outlined in the CSWO Report.
- Acknowledge the commitment of social work and social care staff throughout the period of the pandemic.
- Note the report will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor

13. DIRECTIONS

Directions required to Council, NHS Board or both.	Directions to:	tick
	No Directions required	x
	Argyll & Bute Council	
	NHS Highland Health Board	
	Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board	

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT

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