

To: Council

On: 24 September 2020

Report by: Chief Social Work Officer

Heading: Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer 2019/20

1. Summary

- 1.1. All local authorities in Scotland are required under Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO). The CSWO is one of a number of statutory positions which local authorities must ensure is in place. In Renfrewshire Council the role of the CSWO is held by the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice. The CSWO is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team.
- 1.2. The CSWO provides an annual update report to Council in Autumn each year on the social work activities across adult, children and criminal justice social work. The CSWO's report is then submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor at the Scottish Government in order that a national overview report can be produced.
- 1.3. The CSWO report attached at appendix 1 provides a summary of activity relating to the role of the Chief Social Work Officer during 2019/20.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council notes:
 - the key activities outlined in the CSWO Annual Report; and
 - that the CSWO Annual Report will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor at the Scottish Government

3. The Chief Social Work Officer

- 3.1 The principal role and purpose of the Social Work service is contained within the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, which gave local authorities the responsibility of “promoting social welfare”. The Social Work Service has a statutory duty to provide care and protection to the most vulnerable people across Renfrewshire, often meaning that many of our service users do not engage with us on a voluntary basis. The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is critical in terms of achieving this purpose.
- 3.2 The CSWO is a ‘proper officer’ in relation to the social work function: an officer given particular responsibility on behalf of a local authority, where the law requires the function to be discharged by a specified post holder. The qualifications of the CSWO are set down in regulations and stipulate that the postholder must be a qualified social worker registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. The CSWO must be able to demonstrate extensive experience of operational and strategic management at a senior level within social work and social care services.
- 3.3 The CSWO provides professional advice on the provision of social work and social care services to elected members and other officers within the local authority to assist authorities in understanding and discharging their responsibilities to ensure there are adequate social work services in the area. The CSWO provides support to elected members, the Corporate Management Team and partner organisation in understanding the key role that social work plays in contributing to the achievement of national and local outcomes, to improving local performance and in terms of the management of corporate risk.
- 3.4 The scope of the CSWO role covers all social work and social care services, whether provided directly by the local authority, or in partnership with others, including the health and social care partnership. Where these services are purchased or commissioned from external providers, the CSWO has responsibility to advise on the specification, quality and standards of services commissioned. The environment in which social work services operate is much more complex than when the Act established the role, and current guidance reflects the increased strategic nature of the role, and the particular functions in relation to Integration Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.
- 3.5 The CSWO has a range of responsibilities relating to the promotion of values, standards, and leadership across the full range of social work and care services. Social work services have a statutory duty to provide care and protection to the most vulnerable people across their local authority area. A significant proportion of those requiring social work services do not engage on a voluntary basis and a range of statutory powers are available to ensure the provision of support to them. Access to the majority of services is assessed on the basis of need, and social work staff work in partnership with individuals, carers, families and communities to meet this need within the resources available to the service and partner agencies.

4. **Local Governance Arrangements**

4.1 Within Renfrewshire Council the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice is the designated CSWO. As well as the responsibilities associated with the Children's Services directorate the CSWO retains professional leadership for adult social work and social care services delivered by the HSCP.

4.2 The CSWO has a number of general and specific duties, including:

- (i) providing an annual report to elected members on the key activities and role of the CSWO;
- (ii) being the leading for social work services on the RHSCP Executive Governance Group and the Integration Joint Board;
- (iii) reporting directly to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board and Renfrewshire Council on children and justice social work;
- (iv) being a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team and reporting directly to the Chief Executive and senior elected members on all social work matters;
- (v) representing services and the council more widely, at a local, regional and national level on social work matter;
- (vi) chairing twice-yearly meetings of all senior social work managers from Children's Services and Renfrewshire HSCP;
- (vii) providing advice on social work issues to the Public Protection Chief Officers' Group;
- (viii) being the Agency Decision maker for the Adoption and Fostering decisions and for secure care applications in relation to those under the age of 18; and
- (ix) is the holder of all Mental Health and Adults with Incapacity Orders, and Guardianship cases in the area.

4.3 The CSWO has direct access to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council in relation to all statutory social work functions. The CSWO is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team and provides advice to the Chief Officers' Group which manages public protection risks on a partnership basis and is a non-voting member of the Renfrewshire Integrated Joint Board. Individual Heads of Service have responsibility for the management of risk within their respective service areas and have regular access to the CSWO for advice, guidance and support.

5. Activities of the Chief Social Work Officer 2019/20

- 5.1 The report attached as Appendix 1 summarises the key activities of the CSWO for Renfrewshire during 2019/20. It does not provide an exhaustive description of the full range of duties and responsibilities undertaken but seeks to provide a broad overview of the CSWO role and social work activity delivered by the local authority and the health and social care partnership. The report will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to inform a national overview report.
- 5.2 The next report on the activities of the CSWO will be submitted to the Council in Autumn 2021.

6. Overview of activities within social work services

- 6.1 Services continue to experience high demand in a number of areas, which are being managed in a financially prudent manner both within the Council and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. The management of significant levels of risk to vulnerable children and adults continues to be a priority for the adult, children and justice services and for partner agencies. Many of those pressures continue to be related to deprivation and to alcohol and drug misuse in Renfrewshire. Social work, as part of the local multi-agency partnership coordinate the provision of services which aim to protect vulnerable people locally and continues to deliver high-quality services to vulnerable people in Renfrewshire and to innovate and improve through a programme of continuous development and improvement.
- 6.2 The CSWO has a range of statutory duties which are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report; that appendix also includes more detail of demand and provision in those areas.
- 6.3 Statutory functions in respect of children encompass looked after and accommodated children, child protection, work with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and work with young people who offend and are subject to secure orders. In recent years, the service, in partnership with others, has developed a strong focus on early intervention and prevention, on the use of evidence-based programmes to support families, on the use of intensive support in complex cases, and on focusing on permanence including looked after and accommodated children who are not able to return to the care of their parent(s). The council has also invested in an additional children's house which can provide intensive support to a small group of young people. A specialist team supports children and young people who are unaccompanied refugees or asylum seekers.
- 6.4 Day to day management of adult social work services is delegated to Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. The CSWO retains a professional advisory role in relation to these services and continues to have statutory duties within adult social work. The Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the strategic approach to the management of the protection of vulnerable adults in

Renfrewshire in terms of the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. There continues to be increasing demand for work related to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. More detail is included in Appendix 1.

- 6.5 The Criminal Justice Service supervises a range of community-based requirements on offenders, provides reports to Courts and the Parole Board, manages a service for sexual offenders, and operates a range of statutory and voluntary services to support female offenders. A number of services which previously operated on a shared basis with neighbouring authorities have now been brought in-house. Multi-agency arrangements are in place to manage high-risk offenders, violent and sexual offenders and to tackle domestic abuse. The service is also working closely with community planning partners to deliver on community justice responsibilities.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning** – The report details the progress made by the service to protect vulnerable children and adults, reduce offending behaviour, increase community safety, and promote early intervention, independent living and wider health improvement. It highlights partnership working, details the measures which ensure the workforce is skilled and effective and highlights achievements in relation to support to communities, customer service and consultation.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** –
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the

Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** –None
10. **Risk** - Risks related to the management and delivery of social work services are closely monitored and are included within both the Children's Services Risk Register and, where appropriate, the Corporate Risk Register.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **COSLA Policy Position** - None

List of Background Papers

"The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer – Guidance Issued by Scottish Ministers"
Paper to Education and Children Policy Board, 18 August 2016

Author: John Trainer, Chief Social Work Officer
john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk
0141 618 6860



Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer

2019/20

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

Definition of social work agreed by the International Federation of Social Workers, 2014

Chief Social Work Officer – Renfrewshire

Introduction

I'm pleased to present the annual Chief Social Work Officer report for Renfrewshire.

My operational post is the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice in Children's Services and I have the day to day management responsibility for children and justice social work. As Chief Social Work Officer I have additional professional leadership responsibility for the wider social work and social care services within Renfrewshire Health and Social Care.

The role of the Chief Social Work Officer was established to ensure the provision of appropriate strategic and professional advice to the local authority in relation to how it discharges its statutory social work functions. There are also some functions conferred by legislation directly on the Chief Social Work Officer by name

The Scottish Office explicitly recognised that the need for the Chief Social Work Officer role due to "*the particular responsibilities which fall on social work services in that they affect personal lives, individual rights and liberties to an extent that other local authority services do not.*" (Circular: SWSG2/1995 May 1995).

As Chief Social Work Officer, I am a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team, ensuring that the Chief Executive and Directors have the professional social work advice when considering issues and making decisions for our residents. In addition, I have regular and unfettered access to the Chief Executive.

I have regular access to the Leader of the Council and other senior elected members, again to provide professional advice and leadership on matters affecting the citizens of Renfrewshire.

Adult social work and care services are delegated to the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. I have regular and unfettered access to the Chief Officer and Heads of Service within Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

In addition to those detailed above I'm supported to discharge the Chief Social Work Officer role by my service Director and the Social Work Children's Services Manager and the Criminal Justice Services Manager.

This report doesn't detail all of the work of social work within Renfrewshire and rather serves to provide an overview of services.

John Trainer
Chief Social Work Officer

Summary of performance in 2019/20

Over the past year social work services across Scotland have continued to face the challenges of increasing levels of demand for services coupled with tight financial constraints. Services in Renfrewshire are no different to those elsewhere in the country. Our area continues to have areas with significant multiple deprivation and relative poverty, high levels of alcohol and drug misuse and high demands for services in adult, children and justice social work services. Our area has had historically high rates of looked after children, compared to the national average and whilst the rates remain higher than we would wish for they are reducing. Children's social work continues to work on an approach where early intervention and preventative interventions are critical to improving outcomes for children and families whilst at the same time reducing the number of children who require statutory intervention. In the past twelve months the service has continued to develop approaches which are critical to sustainable service delivery and still promoting innovation and continuous improvement.

Last year I highlighted that adult protection and the management of financial and welfare guardianships were an area of work within adult social work which had seen increased demand. This pattern has continued in the current year. As Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership promotes independent and supported living for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health challenges there have been further developments of the self-directed support scheme which continues to grow in popularity. The increase in self-directed support, whilst welcome as it gives more control to the individual is presenting challenges for the more traditional services such as day care which are facing a reduction in the number of people choosing to use them. As the number of older adults in our population has increased there is a further demand being placed on community-based services, principally care at home.

Within criminal justice services there continues to be increases in the number of people being placed on community payback orders and in the number of new unpaid work orders. The pressure on the criminal justice service continues to be significant however the teams are managing the demand and continue to meet the overall standard of services.

Partnership Working

The role of Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) was established in legislation to ensure that professional advice on social work services was available to elected members and council officers. The CSWO assists local authorities in understanding and delivering the complexities inherent in social work and social care services. As the number of strategic partnerships across the public sector increased, whether legislated for or developed through good local joint working, has added a level of complexity to the role of Chief Social Work Officer.

In Renfrewshire Council, social work services for children and families and criminal justice social work services are delivered by Children's Services whilst social care and social work services for adults are delegated to Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (RHSCP). As such, the CSWO fulfils the role for both the Council and RHSCP. Regular meetings take place with Heads of Service from Children's Services and RHSCP to ensure that areas such as transition for young people moving to adult services and the role of parents with mental health issues are jointly addressed.

The Chief Social Work Officer is accountable to elected members via the Education and Children's Services Policy Board (for Children & Families Social Work) and the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board (for Criminal Justice Social Work). The CSWO is a non-voting member of the Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board (for Adult Social Work). Elected members hold the CSWO to account for public protection issues through a Public Protection Member Officer Group.

Public protection arrangements are managed through three partnership committees comprised of senior officers from Renfrewshire Council and other public and third sector agencies. The Renfrewshire Public Protection Chief Officers Group (COG) is chaired by the Chief Executive and is responsible for the overall strategic and delivery of public protection services and the CSWO attends to provide professional advice. The other two public protection committees are the Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee (RAPC) and the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC). RAPC and RCPC are chaired by an Independent Chair and the CSWO is a member of both committees.

The local authority has responsibility for ensuring that there are multi-agency plans in place for the strategic direction of services for children across the parentship area. Within our locality the multi-agency planning group is the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership (RCSP). RCSP ensures that Renfrewshire's corporate parents agree joint plans for services ranging from those delivering universal services to those delivering targeted services for those children with high needs. The CSWO plays a significant leadership role in RCSP.

The CSWO continues to co-chair the Renfrewshire's Gender-Based Violence Strategy Group.

The CSWO is required to ensure that the voice of those who use services inform the planning and delivery of services. The CSWO supports service users to make their views known in a number of ways including through regular meetings with the Renfrewshire Children's Champions Board, the use of Viewpoint, and through advocacy services provided by Barnardo's and Who Cares Scotland.

In adult services RHSCP's Strategic Planning Group (SPG) brings together key stakeholders such as service user and carer representatives, partners in council and health services, third sector organisations, and care providers. The SPG is an opportunity for adult service users and carers to make their views known, and service users and carers are also represented on the Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board. The HSCP also has strong links with various service user and carer groups across Renfrewshire. The embedding of self-directed support is contributing to the delivery of more individualised care packages and a consequent shift to service users having greater control over their care is beginning to emerge. The CSWO is a member of the Strategic Planning Group.

Social Services Delivery Landscape

Renfrewshire has a population of 177,790 in mainly urban settlements, but with a sizeable minority living in smaller towns and villages. There are areas of severe multiple deprivation across Renfrewshire, with higher than average levels of drug and alcohol hospital admissions and rates of looked after children. The proportion of adults with a disability or long-term condition is 31.1%, according to the last census. Several large-scale new housing development and growth in specialist manufacturing are expected to generate population growth.

Renfrewshire Council retains a significant proportion of the local market in social care and social work provision, with 21 registered services including 3 care homes and 5 day centres for older adults, 4 children's houses, 4 centres providing day opportunities and 1 residential respite centre for adults with learning disabilities, 1 day centre for adults with physical disabilities, and a Care at Home service. At their most recent inspections, 14 of these services were graded Very Good or Excellent for Quality of Care and Support or the equivalent in the new inspection model. The newest children's house has yet to be inspected and the remaining services were graded as Good.

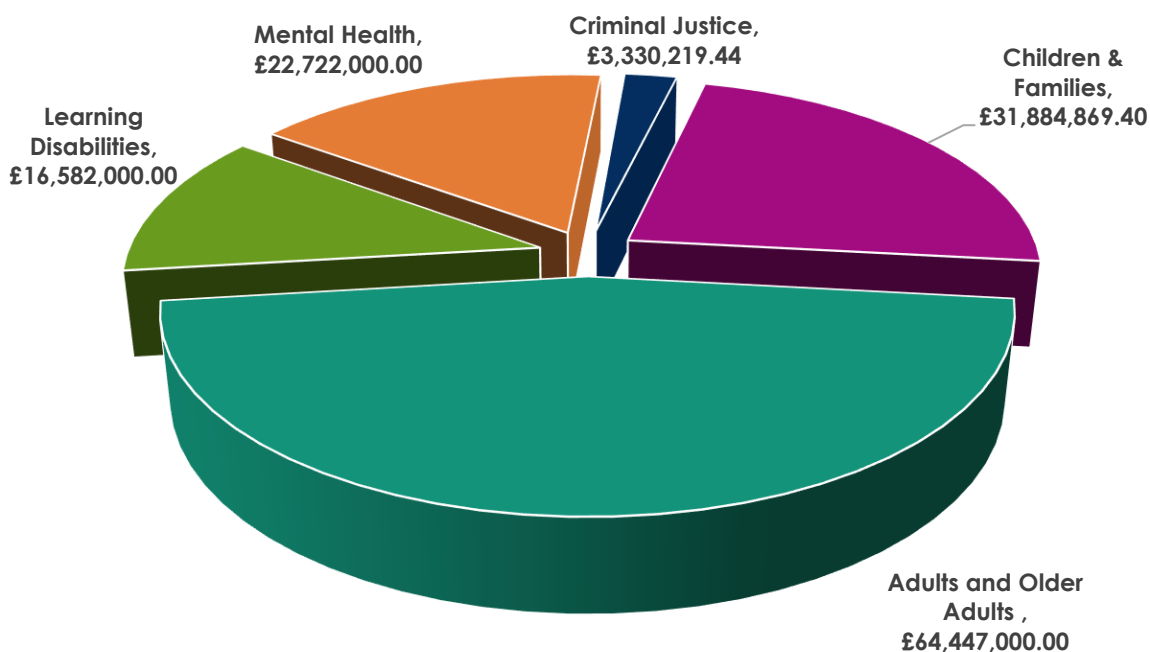
The Renfrewshire local authority area also has a well-developed independent and third sector social care market. This includes 22 nursing and residential care homes for older people, specialist daycare provision run by Alzheimer's Scotland, national resources including the Erskine Home and the Royal Blind care home and day centre, ROAR Connections for Life, a range of supported accommodation, two secure units, and independent educational provision for those whose needs do not fit with mainstream education. The CSWO has a role in providing support and guidance to independent providers.

The development of the self-directed support agenda has increased the number of smaller providers meeting tailored local needs, and the local authority also continues to work with larger framework care at home providers. As part of the strategic commissioning process required as part of the legislation on integrated health and social care, RHSCP has developed a market facilitation statement.

Resources

Renfrewshire Council's expenditure on social work in 2019/20 was almost £138 million. Services for adults and older people make up the largest share at 46% and services for children and families account for a further 23%. The chart below shows expenditure by service area in 2019/20. Criminal Justice Social Work services are directly funded by Scottish Government grant with the local authority making an additional contribution to address pressures in this area if service delivery. In common with other Scottish local authorities, Renfrewshire Council is trying to meet growing demand at a time of financial austerity. In its risk management plan, the Council considers financial challenges to be the greatest risk to the ongoing delivery of local services. Whilst the current budget for social work services is being managed it is under significant pressure from increased demand is an area of risk for the local authority and RHSCP in future years.

Expenditure on social work services, 2019/20



The continued demand for social work services across the care groups remains a significant pressure and continues to generate financial challenges for both the local authority and RHSCP. The historical high numbers of children who were accommodated by the local authority (related to levels of deprivation, parental neglect, gender based violence and drug and alcohol misuse) will be a pressure for some years as the right to continuing care has extended the period of support to be provided to these young people. The number of children being accommodated is reducing as more are supported within their own family or in kinship care but there are still financial pressures on providing this support. Courts continue to make increasing use of community sentences as an alternative to short prison sentences is the most significant pressure in justice services. As our older people

live longer with a greater proportion of the population being aged 65 and over demands on adult services particularly care at home is significant. The council continues to meet the needs of the increasing diversity of our communities and the need to provide specialised support to, for example, refugees and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children remains an area of pressure. Throughcare (that is, the support offered to care experienced young people) is an area where we will continue to see rising demand due to the ongoing implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 over the next three years before there is a stabilisation and potential reduction in this area.

Whilst the number of looked after children in Renfrewshire remains high, Children's Services is working to ensure that the principles of minimum necessary intervention is taken forward. This has meant the number of looked after children is reducing and social work will continue to make further reductions in this area when it is safe to do so. It has been identified that children in Renfrewshire remain on compulsory measure of care longer than in other areas and this is an area being explored by the CSWO and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration.

As reported in the CSWO report for 2018/19 there are significant pressures in criminal justice social work arising from increasing demand and the issues associated with the new national funding formula agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government. The change in funding model over the past few years has led to Renfrewshire now delivering services on a single authority basis where they were previously provided on a shared basis with neighbouring authorities. This new model has added some pressure to the overall justice service however is being managed appropriately. The extension of Presumption Against Short Sentences is now resulting in more community payback orders and remains likely to have further impact on resources and the performance of the justice services in future years.

To address pressures in the service both Children's Services and HSCP continue to develop early intervention and preventative work to support improved outcomes for the people of Renfrewshire but also to support a sustainable financial position. Children's Services continues to work with a range of partners to embed the early permanency planning for looked after children, the three-year Early Action System Change programme and the Just Learning programme for people with convictions, which addresses some of the barriers to employment and contributes to a reduction in reoffending.

Statutory Service Provision

Adult Services

The delivery of adult social work and social care services has been delegated to RHSCP. The CSWO provides professional leadership and advice to senior officers in RHSCP and to the wider social work and social care staff in adult services.

Adult social work operates a locality model for access to social work and social care services. The locality model reflects the model used in health with two localities in the area. The demand on locality services remains high.

Adult protection continues to be an area of high demand within Adult Services. During 2019/20, social work received 1898 adult welfare concerns and 1209 adult protection concerns. A total of 97 adult protection investigations were carried out in the year resulting in 43 initial case conferences. There were also 78 review case conferences for adults were held in the year.

As was the case in recent years there was a further rise in the number of applications for Compulsory Treatment Orders made by the MHO team. In 2019/20 there were 64 applications. Other duties falling under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 included MHO consent for 34 emergency detentions (72-hour detention for assessment), 150 short-term detentions (28 days for assessment and treatment) and 184 Mental Health Tribunals. In total, the service dealt with 710 individual pieces of work falling within that legislation during 2019/20. The service also manages 'Restricted Patients' who come under the control of Scottish Ministers.

As of 31 March 2020, the CSWO had responsibility for 117 welfare guardianships (including 22 new orders granted during the year). The welfare guardianships are managed on a day-to-day by a nominated officer within the MHO team on behalf of the CSWO. The MHO team also supervises 485 private welfare guardianships in line with statutory requirements and can apply for Intervention Orders where they consider a financial guardian should be appointed. The local authority applied for 28 Intervention Orders in 2019/20. The team manager is authorised to act as an Intervener for matters relating to signing for or terminating tenancies. The number of time-limited orders now being granted has created an additional pressure on MHO services due to the requirement for reports in respect of order renewals.

Renfrewshire continues to experience higher than average levels of substance use which is reflected in service usage. Renfrewshire Drugs Service had 743 open cases at the end of 2019/20 and the Integrated Alcohol Team had 128 open cases. Last year the Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership established an Alcohol and Drugs Commission to provide in-depth consideration of the challenges facing Renfrewshire in relation to alcohol and drugs, and the ways in which these challenges might be addressed. The Commission is made up of senior officers from across health and social care, housing, criminal and community justice, and the third sector, as well as academic experts in the field and is expected to publish its findings in the near future. The CSWO contributed to the work of the Commission.

Statutory Service Provision

Children and Families Social Work

Children's social work services in Renfrewshire are provided from 4 locality teams, specialist teams and registered care services. The specialist teams include the Fostering and Adoption Team, the Kinship Care Team, the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Team, the Children with Disabilities Team and the Whole Systems Team. Children's Services has 6 children's houses and the throughcare housing support service registered with the Care Inspectorate.

Renfrewshire continues to have high numbers of looked after children but has had considerable success over the last decade in reducing both the total number of looked after children and the number placed in residential settings. The reduction in the latter was achieved as part of a planned decommissioning of in-house residential places and investment to grow the number of foster placements available.

Renfrewshire Council had 639 looked after children at 31 March 2020; 413 looked after at home and 227 looked after and accommodated. This represents a slight increase on the previous year but still reflects a long-term reduction in overall numbers and a continuing reduction in the number of accommodated children. Over the last decade, the service has shifted the balance of provision substantially and most foster placements are now with local authority carers rather than independent providers. This is a positive development and remains an area of continued focus. Placing children with our own carers allows them to retain many of their family and community links and therefore supports better outcomes. The foster placements in the independent sector are meeting the needs of the children placed with them and are a positive resource for these children.

The Fostering and Adoption team continues to focus on permanency where appropriate and during 2019/20, 13 adoptions were completed.

Secure orders are used only when necessary, with community-based support packages considered a better approach with complex cases. During 2019/20, 9 young people spent time in a secure placement.

During 2019/20, 17 children were the subject of a Child Protection Order under Section 57 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This compares to 20 in the previous year and 15 in 2017/18.

The number of children on the Child Protection Register at any one time varies depending on the circumstances and nature of risk attending to the children and families that are being supported. As at 31 March 2020, there were 82 children on the Child Protection Register. As a snapshot, the number is subject to considerable variation. The main areas which result in children being placed on the child protection register are neglect, parental substance misuse and parental mental health.

Statutory Service Provision

Criminal Justice Social Work

The Criminal Justice Service comprises of a locality team which operates across the Renfrewshire area, the Unpaid Work Service, the Women's Service, Drug Treatment and Testing Service, Pathways Project and the Court Service.

There were 557 new Community Payback Orders assigned to justice social work staff in 2019/20. Of these, 356 included an unpaid work element totalling over 59,000 hours, and 305 include a supervision element. The increase in hours reflects to an extent the change to the presumption against short sentences, with higher tariff community orders being used in lieu of prison sentences of up to 12 months.

At the end of March 2020, Criminal Justice Social Work was supervising 80 licences in the community, including 3 new life licences and 5 new Section 15 orders. A further 173 Throughcare cases were in custody at that date; 38 of these will have life licences on release and 4 will have an Order for Lifelong Restriction.

There were 20 individuals subject to new Drug Treatment and Testing Orders in 2019/20, and 8 subject to new Fiscal Work Orders. From 127 referrals, 43 people were successfully diverted from prosecution.

Criminal Justice Social Work continues to be a key partner in Community Justice Renfrewshire, which is taking forward initiatives on employment, education and housing, key factors which can reduce reoffending.

Workforce

Within Renfrewshire Council, each service produces a workforce plan which details actions to be taken to tackle the council's workforce challenges. Within Children's Services, current priorities including tackling retention and succession planning within the children's residential workforce and identifying ways to increase opportunities for staff to undertake reflective practice. Positive progress is being achieved in each of the priority areas with staff turnover at a low level. There are no areas of pressure in relation to staffing within Children's Social Work. The level of vacancies remains low and when there are vacancies to be filled there are usually a good range of candidates to choose from.

In RHSCP, the development of new roles within the council's Care at Home service creates opportunities for career progression through the creation of the role of Senior Home Support Worker and the implementation of a revised management structure. There are some future challenges in terms of the adult service workforce particularly in the care at home service and in the locality teams where there is an aging workforce. Work on addressing this challenge will be taken forward to ensure no interruption of service delivery.

Social work services staff continue to have access to a broad range of training and development opportunities provided by the Social Work Professional Training Team. The team also delivers multi-agency training in child and adult protection. A dedicated post provides training and support for foster carers, and Renfrewshire Council offers foster carers a wide range of training on issues such as child protection, attachment and trauma, Theraplay, internet safety, the impact of parental substance misuse, and managing transitions.

The Social Work Training Team continues to support Care at Home staff to meet the deadline for registration with SSSC.

COVID-19

As the reporting year for 2019/20 was ending the country was placed in lockdown due to the threat from COVID-19. This meant that most offices closed and whilst the general population was expected to remain at home and only leave for a short period of exercise each day, social work and social care services required to continue.

Renfrewshire's residential homes for older adults and our children's houses continued to operate and provide care to the residents and young people we are charged with looking after. In older adult residential care there were challenges as a number of members of staff were required to shield due to pre-existing health conditions and staff were transferred from other areas of service such as day care to ensure that care for our older adults continued. There were periods of pressure in the residential homes however staffing levels were always maintained. The commitment of staff to ensuring that residents in our internal older adults' residential homes continued to receive safe care is commendable.

Care at home staff continued to deliver services to the most vulnerable living at home. Like the residential services for older adults, care at home experienced significant numbers of staff were required to shield or were unable to work as a result of pre-existing health conditions. The workforce who were able to continue working did so in a flexible manner to ensure the continued delivery of service to the most vulnerable in our community. As in periods of extreme weather the care at home staff have demonstrated a high degree of commitment to those they work with and again this should be recognised.

As a result of lockdown day care services in both adult and older adult services required to close. The staff from those services operated in an outreach basis or supported other areas including residential care to continue to meet the needs of services. The flexibility of staff in these services is noted.

In criminal justice most of the services closed on a temporary basis as a result of COVID-19. Most staff from the justice service operated from home maintaining the supervision of those on community orders who were deemed to be highest risk or highest level of vulnerability. Some staff from the unpaid work scheme were deployed to assist the council's humanitarian response as they were unable to work from home.

In children's services most staff worked from home and staff absence levels were low. Whilst staff worked from home, they continued to undertake planned and unplanned visits to children on the child protection register and those identified as at high risk. New technology was also used to maintain contact with other children known to social work and where visits weren't possible. In most cases the visits weren't possible because the family were showing symptoms of COVID-19.

The most significant decision in children's services was that to temporarily suspend the face to face contact between children in care and their parents. This decision was made based on protecting public health and was reviewed regularly during lockdown. The service provided parents with smartphones to ensure that they were able to have video calls with their child during the initial period of lockdown.

As most social work services continued during lockdown as the country relaxed the restrictions on the community the service stepped up the range and delivery of services.

The priority was to open a range of social work offices to allow staff to be based in the area, to allow increased contact with those who use our services and to allow the face to face contact between children in care and their families to be restarted.

The support of staff from other services in the council to ensure that social work accommodation and services could continue to operate, and recover is acknowledged. It wouldn't have been possible to open our offices without that support. This cross-service working demonstrates the commitment of staff from all areas of the council and RHSCP to providing services and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

In closing this report I would want to thank all social work and social care staff and staff from elsewhere in the council and RHSCP for their response to the COVID-19 crisis and their commitment to the most vulnerable people in Renfrewshire. As CSWO, I'm extremely proud of the efforts of staff and I need to state that I'm not surprised. Their commitment to social justice and their positive response has been evident over many years and previous crisis the community has faced.

“It was heard all right; that was not the argument.

Day or night it echoed from wall to wall,

A voice, never incomprehensible,

But a question many found intolerable:

'Am I my brother's keeper?' Some with scorn,

Some with anger, some with quick dismissal,

Some with the half-uneasy consciousness

Of being put on the spot, some blustering,

Some brazen, some bound to macho boasts,

Kicking the can of pity out of play,

'Each to his own, let them get on with it!'

From *Brothers and Keepers* by Edwin Morgan