

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services Committee / IJB
DATE	25 November 2025 / 2 December 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2024/25
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/264 / HSCP.25.083
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Shepherd
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Elected Members with the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for year 2024/25 (up to 31/3/25). The report is to inform Members of the role and responsibilities exercised by the Chief Social Work Officer; to provide information on the delivery of statutory social work services and decision making in the period; and to give a progress report on key areas of social work activity within Aberdeen City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the content of the Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is a statutory post in accordance with the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. This requires Local Authorities to appoint a CSWO for the purposes of listed social work functions.
- 3.2 The required qualifications of the CSWO are set out in regulations and the post holder must be able to demonstrate senior strategic and operational experience. National Guidance on the role was published by the Scottish Government in 2009, revised in May 2017. It provides an overview of position, outlining the responsibility for values and standards, complex decision making, particularly in relation to deprivation of liberty decisions and professional leadership. The guidance also covers accountability and reporting arrangements.
- 3.3 The CSWO provides advice to the Council on social work matters; undertakes decision making in respect of statutory functions and provides professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether they are provided by the Council or on behalf of the Council by another agency.

3.4 In its 2016 report on Social Work in Scotland, Audit Scotland outlined the increased complexity of the role: *“With integration and other changes over recent years, the key role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) has become more complex and challenging. Councils need to ensure that CSWOs have the status and capacity to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively”*.

3.5 This report has been requested by the Scottish Government’s Chief Social Work Advisor to assist with ensuring that, on a national basis key issues are highlighted, and information and learning is shared. This report is consistent with the content and formal guidance laid down by the Chief Social Work Advisor. The annual report cannot provide a complete account of social work activity over the year. It provides an overview of the range of services and initiatives in social work and social care and to highlight key achievements and challenges. On receipt of reports from all 32 CSWO’s, the Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a national overview.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	No significant risks identified			
Operational	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	This report provides assurance on the quality of social work services delivered to those who meet the threshold for social work support and intervention.	L	Yes

		Service users have the opportunity to complain about the quality of social work services directly or via the SPSO. A learning approach is actively taken to all complaints. Service users also contribute to inspections via various feedback opportunities enabling them to know that their views are listened to and considered.		
Financial	No risks identified			
Reputational	Organisational failings in relation to the provision of social work services can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	The delivery of effective social work and social care services is critical to the protection and care of vulnerable children and adults. Failure to discharge our statutory duties effectively can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The delivery of social work and social care services is aligned to the Integrated Joint Board's strategic plan and the Partnership's Children's Services Plan/ Child Protection Improvement Plan. There is clear and direct alignment with the Council Delivery Plan and the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Policy Statement.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Aberdeen City Council's social work and social care services are central to supporting and assuring that the multi-agency Children's and Adult Services partnerships deliver on the LOIP – Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcomes 3 to 8 and to Prosperous People (Adults) Stretch Outcomes 9 – 12.

	In addition, the work of the Adult & Child Protection Committees is highly relevant to ensure our children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm. Children, young people and adults' families who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.
Regional and City Strategies	The work of Aberdeen City Council's regulatory care services is relevant to Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the IJB Strategic Plan.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	• National Care Service Bill • Delivery of The Promise/Plan 21 -24/Plan 24 - 30 • Whole Family Wellbeing Support

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	As Chief Officer, I confirm that an impact assessment is not required for this report.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required for this report.
Other	Not required for this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report -  [2024 2025 CSWO Annual Report.docx](#)

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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