

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Adults Scrutiny Panel

17 October 2023

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny

Venue Committee Room 3 - 3rd Floor - Civic Centre

Membership

Chair Cllr Val Evans (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Christopher Haynes (Con)

Labour

Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Jenny Cockayne
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Rohit Mistry
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Iqra Tahir

Conservative

Cllr Bob Maddox
Cllr Udey Singh

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Scrutiny Team:

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Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/>
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Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions**
[The Chair to welcome everyone to the meeting.]

- 2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**
[The Chair will explain how the meeting will proceed.]

BUSINESS ITEMS

- 3 **Apologies**

- 4 **Declarations of Interest**

- 5 **Minutes of previous meeting (21 March 2023)** (Pages 3 - 6)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 6 **Post Covid Position – update briefing** (Pages 7 - 12)
[Becky Wilkinson, Director of Adult Services, to present briefing]

- 7 **Adult Social Care Winter Planning 2023-24** (Pages 13 - 44)
[Becky Wilkinson, Director of Adults Social Care, to jointly present report with Paul Tulley, Wolverhampton Managing Director Integrated Care Board , Sian Thomas, DCOO at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and Partnership Director, OneWolverhampton, and Rachel Murphy, Head of Adult Services]

- 8 **Principal Social Worker Annual Report** (Pages 45 - 64)
[Jennifer Rogers, Principal Social Worker, to present report]

- 9 **Adults Scrutiny Panel Draft Work Programme 2023 2024** (Pages 65 - 68)
[Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, to present report]

Attendance

Members of the Adults Scrutiny Panel

CLlr Qaiser Azeem
CLlr Val Evans (Chair)
CLlr Christopher Haynes
CLlr Stephanie Haynes (Vice-Chair)
CLlr Sohail Khan
CLlr Louise Miles
CLlr Lynne Moran
CLlr Anwen Muston

Employees

Martin Stevens DL (Scrutiny Team Leader)
Becky Wilkinson (Director of Adult Services)
Jennifer Rogers (Principle Social Worker)
Courtney Abbott (Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner)

CLlr Jacqueline Sweetman

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Welcome and Introductions**
CLlr Val Evans, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised it was being live streamed to the press and public. A recording of the meeting would be available for viewing on the Council's website at a future date.
- 2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**
CLlr Evans explained the protocol to be followed during the meeting for asking questions.
- 3 **Apologies**
No apologies
- 4 **Declarations of Interest**
No declarations of interest
- 5 **Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023**
Minutes of Meeting 17 January 2023 approved as correct.

6 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023

Minutes of the meeting 8 February 2023 approved as correct.

7 2022 Social Work and Workforce Health Checks – Adult Services

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner began the presentation titled 2022 Social Work and Workforce Healthcare Checks – Adult Services (A copy of the presentation is attached to the signed minutes). A background and progress report was given, the Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner informed the Panel that response rates had been lower in 2022 than 2021 despite efforts to address this; the feedback received however displayed positive improvements in all areas, these included Improvement in quality and frequency of supervision in 2022 since 2021, significantly improved satisfaction with learning and development opportunities, more feel that they are / would be consulted and involved in proposed changes and are happy with communication between senior managers and frontline workers. Workforce feedback statistics showed low levels of stress, supportive management, good communication, a desire to tackle discrimination and satisfaction with working practices.

The Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner listed key actions for continuing improvement, these were:

- Improving response rates – e.g. consultation, exploring incentives, Teams channel, protected time, “you said...we did” and regular updates
- Adults redesign and identifying “quick wins” and immediate actions to support workloads, reduce stress levels and better manage demand
 - Recruitment and retention activity – rebranding, benchmarking pay/incentives, progression opportunities, supporting routes into social work
 - Develop research circles with University of Wolverhampton to support research mindedness
 - Explore the impact and use regionally of clinical supervision and/or consider the use of trauma informed supervision training to support wellbeing.

The Quality and Improvement Practitioner read out some qualitative research statements from employees who expressed positive views in line with the feedback presented.

A Councillor raised concerns around the learning and development culture policies within the service, citing the data during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. The Councillor wanted to know what the Council wanted from employees when it offered high calibre educational opportunities, as it was difficult for them to monitor and report the value of it.

The Principle Social Worker answered that the forms of research that occurred within the workplace would help with improving services and managing resources. Working in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton meant that colleagues would have access to research journals and other costly resources which they otherwise wouldn't. This enabled working colleagues to practice research on the job and bring the relationship between research and practice together closer within the service.

The Councillor asked if employees were legally required to prove their skills and knowledge were up to date. The Principle Social Worker replied explaining this was a requirement and that the Council care sector had to provide data evidence that

continuous colleague training was being undertaken and that results were adequate. The Councillor felt this further highlighted the importance of the partnership with the University of Wolverhampton.

The Vice-Chair praised the theme that colleagues said they were proud to work for the service. She then asked what was being done to address the lower levels of participation in the survey and also highlighted the 83% of staff who said they would recommend people take a job for the City of Wolverhampton Council in Social Care work but asked if the 17% who said they would not recommend the role had provoked any desire to look further into that area of data.

The Principle Social Care Worker agreed with the Vice-Chair and stated that the low turnout on the survey provided a challenge. They had recognised that Adult Social Care Workers had a higher turn out and this was believed to have been due to an all-colleague briefing informing them of the survey, which was not done with Child Social Care Workers, the Principle Social Care Worker said this would be done for both groups next time. Paper Survey options were also being considered due to the variety of roles in the sector, meaning not all had computer access. The Principle Social Care Worker referred to the second question and stated that the 17% answers were made up mostly of people answering “unsure” as opposed to “no” and that work was being done with management to engage colleagues more to improve communications and messaging.

Discussion occurred around in person workplace training days and the benefits of that. A Councillor raised workforce trauma impact training.

The Principle Social Care Worker agreed and explained that more work was being done to improve workforce trauma training to enable managers to better support colleagues working in care and the emotional burdens they may take on from the role.

A Panel member asked for clarity as to why percentages were being used when he had previously asked if they could list the actual numbers next to the percentages. He also asked if it was possible for them to understand whether the feedback being provided was the same enthusiastic employees or whether they were gaining feedback from newer recruits, which would be more beneficial to inform retention strategies.

The Principle Social Care Worker apologised for the numbers not being as the Panel had requested and said they would rectify this in the future. She explained the length of time for the survey to be filled in was open for 6 weeks, this length was the product of needing to extend this as participation levels were so low. Colleagues did not always wish to indicate their length of time working in the service, which was a challenge, but they would look to find out in the future better information which would enable them to see the colleagues answering in terms of length of time worked for the care sector.

8 **Care and Support Provider Review - update (report to follow)**

The Director of Adult Care Services informed the Panel that the option the Scrutiny Panel recommended was adopted by the Cabinet subsequently and was well received.



City of Wolverhampton Adult Services

Covid-19 Update for Scrutiny

Last updated October 2023

Agenda Item No: 5

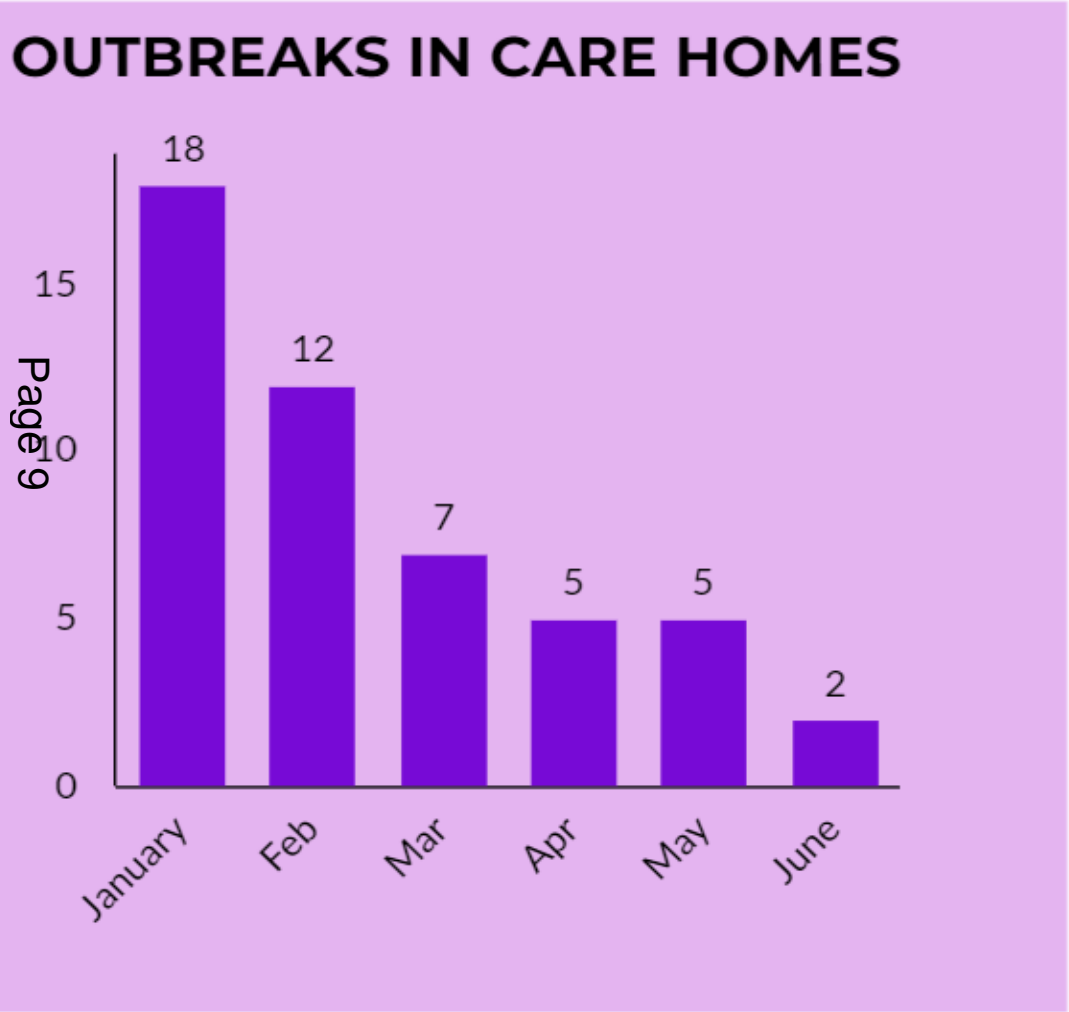
Headlines / Background – Adult Services

- Overall service users are now above pre-pandemic numbers with over 4000 people in an active service
- Care home numbers are beginning to show an upward trend (significantly dropped during Covid)
- Day care (and people opting for day care) remains low
- Short term demand is increasing which could begin to have an impact on longer term funding if people transition from short term into a long term assessed need for care

Service Type Numbers (Snapshot at the end of the Month)	April	12 Month Comparison (April 2022)	Pre Covid Comparison (March 2020)	Previous Month Comparison (March 2023)	Last 3 years of data
All People with an Active Service Agreement (Snapshot end of Month)	4073	↑ 6%	→ 3%	→ 1%	
Short Term Services (not including Reablement)	569	→ 2%	↑ 33%	→ 2%	
Reablement	379	→ 2%	↑ 80%	↓ -7%	
Long Term Services	3568	→ 5%	→ -2%	→ 1%	
Long Term - Home Care (not including reablement Home Care)	1281	↑ 11%	↑ 5%	→ 1%	
Reablement Home Care (incl in the overall reablement number)	307	→ 2%	↑ 106%	↓ -8%	
Residential Permanent	625	→ 3%	↓ -9%	→ 1%	
Direct Payment	538	→ 4%	↑ 14%	→ 1%	
Nursing Permanent	342	→ 2%	↓ -10%	→ 3%	
Supported Living	333	→ 2%	↑ 18%	→ 3%	
Sheltered Housing	220	→ -4%	↓ -16%	→ 0%	
Day Care	185	↓ -6%	↓ -43%	→ -2%	
Carer Services - Home Care	79	↓ -14%	↓ -32%	→ -1%	
Professional Support	57	↓ -12%	↓ -53%	→ 2%	
Residential Short Stay	129	↑ 15%	↑ 24%	↑ 13%	
Health Funded Care	372	↑ 6%	↑ 26%	→ -1%	
Carer Services - Direct Payment	40	↑ 29%	↓ -23%	↓ -7%	
Nursing Short Stay	39	↑ 15%	↑ 26%	→ -5%	
Shared Lives	23	↓ -18%	↑ 28%	→ 0%	
Residential Respite	56	→ -2%	↓ -19%	→ 2%	
Nursing Respite	0	↓ -100%	↓ -100%	↓ -100%	
Individual Service Fund	101	→ 1%	↑ 17%	→ 2%	
ISF Extra Care (included in Sheltered Housing Total)	129				
Total	220				

Adults Social Care Covid Update

June 2023



- There is a consistent downward trend of care home outbreaks across the city
- Week beginning 12 June 2023 0 outbreaks were recorded
- Provider support calls are still taking place to continue support from Adult Services, Public Health, Infection prevention and Health but the frequency has reduced

Adults Social Care Covid Update

June 2023

INFECTION PREVENTION CONTROL

- New contract commenced April 2023
- Training, surveillance, auditing and outbreak management
- Covering care homes, supported living, day care centres, hostels and emergency accommodation
- Enhanced offer for care homes (two audits per annum, in person training, 24 hour response to outbreaks)

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- Infection prevention in Care Homes has become business as usual following Covid
- Public Health have renewed the infection prevention contract

Adults Social Care Covid Update

June 2023

SPRING BOOSTER VACCINE

- Low uptake across care home residents reported in capacity tracker
- Working with NHS partners to ensure data is accurate
- Reassurance from Clinical Directors all care homes have been covered

- Ongoing work underway to understand the low uptake of boosters

Covid update for Adult Social Care 04.10.23

- Since the previous update (June 2023), there have been a further nine outbreaks in care homes of infectious disease, of which six were Covid-19 related. Two outbreaks are currently ongoing.
 - The eligibility for the current Autumn Covid-19 booster includes care home residents and frontline health and social care workers. Comms has gone out to all care homes encouraging them to take advantage of the vaccine offer. NHSE lead on the delivery of the booster.
- Page 12
- We have been informed by NHSE that all of our Primary Care Networks have opted-in to deliver vaccine to care home residents which is reassuring.
- The Autumn booster for care homes commenced 09 Sept and is due to complete by 22 October.
 - The Infection Prevention and Control Service continue to support care homes and has recently offered a range of training to all care settings ahead of winter months.

Adults Scrutiny Panel

17 October 2023

Report title	Adult Social Care Winter Planning 2023-24
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Jasbir Jaspal
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	Becky Wilkinson - DASS
Originating service	Adult Social Care
Accountable employee(s)	Rachael Murphy Rachael.Murphy@Wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	09.10.23 Cabinet Member Briefing 21.09.23 OneWolverhampton Board Meeting 18.07.23 Strategic Executive Board

Recommendation for action:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the Adult Social planned activity and preparedness for winter 2023/24 as outlined in the PowerPoint Presentation.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note:

1. The lessons learned from Winter 2022/23
2. The wider system preparedness for Winter 2023

Background

- 1.0 Winter period is defined by National Health Service England (NHSE) from October to March. Winter is recognised as the one of the biggest pressures for the Health and Care System nationally, last winter 98% of adult social care discharges took place within 48hours. Learning from the successes of last year, we have built on the strength of our partnership working, this has included a full evaluation of schemes that were implemented in the previous winter to inform decision-making. Schemes that proven successful in the previous year have been prioritised for implementation for 23/24 through ASCDF.
- 2.0 Additional short-term money has been made available for Winter 2023/4 nationally Wolverhampton Place was allocated £3,453,504 from the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund for 2023/24. This was allocated as follows:

£2,069,492 for the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
£1,384,012 for the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Wolverhampton Place

This funding is used to support:

- Increasing Social Care capacity; providing more care packages to more people, in ways that have the greatest possible impact in reducing delayed discharge from hospitals.
- Ensuring local partners can plan services sufficiently far in advance and for providers to develop long-term workforce capacity plans.
- Being used in ways that build on learning from evaluation of the impact of previous discharge funding.
- Allowing Local Authorities, the NHS and the Social Care sector to streamline discharge, assessment and placement processes and help to free up greater Social Worker time and capacity.

Winter Plan

- 3.0 The winter plan is presented in full on the attached PowerPoint presentation, this is a joint system plan developed by system health and care partners in Wolverhampton and sits within the Integrated Care System Governance.
- 4.0 The key points to note for Adults Scrutiny Panel is the Adult Social Care contribution outlined overleaf:

Scheme / Initiative	Brief Description of Scheme / Initiative	Year 1 (23/24)
Hospital Enhanced Social Work	Additional social worker capacity to support timely assessment and discharge of patients to include out of area hospital discharges.	£440,375
Enhanced PST	Additional brokerage staff capacity to support timely assessment and discharge of patients to include out of area hospital discharges.	£41,000
Home Assisted Reablement Programme	Additional hours of HARP assistance provided for reablement to support discharge and make sure people identified as benefiting from reablement were able to be supported on the correct pathway.	£40,638
Additional OT Capacity	Recruitment of additional OTs to support timely discharge for pathways 1-3.	£300,000
Bariatric Reablement Service	Dedicated service to enable people that are identified as bariatric to access a bed based reablement service as part of their planned return home when it is identified that a home discharge is not possible.	£179,780
Pathway 1 Seasonal Reablement	Contingency funding to support additional winter demand / capacity pressures for Pathway 1 seasonal reablement at home.	£125,000
Pathway 2 Seasonal Spot Beds	Contingency funding to support additional winter demand / capacity pressures.	£400,000
BCHT Mental Health Social Worker	A designated, locality-based, named, mental health social worker to oversee or undertake assessments of patients requiring adult social care support.	£50,473
Community Equipment Stores	Contingency stock of equipment to ensure capacity can meet demand and minimise the chances of delays occurring because community equipment is not available	£52,500
TOTAL		£1,629,766

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OneWolverhampton

Working together for better health and care

Draft Winter Plan

2023-2024

Our aims

- Ensure Homefirst remains the default and preferred option across all partners
- Enhance support to those who are the most vulnerable and with the most challenging needs (including those with mental ill-health, the homeless, and those with drug and alcohol issues)
- Deliver a place-based response to winter by working closely with partners
- Reduce conveyancing to hospital and ambulance handover delays
- Expedite flow and discharge from the acute setting



Learning from last year

- Learning from the successes of last year, we have built on the strength of our partnership working
 - This has included a full evaluation of schemes that were implemented in the previous winter to inform decision-making
- Page 19 Schemes that proven successful in the previous year have been prioritised for implementation for 23/24 through ASCDF



Working in Partnership and Governance



- The Place-based Winter Plan continues to be overseen by the Urgent and Emergency Care Strategic Working Group
- This meeting is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) and membership includes the Managing Director for Wolverhampton (ICB) and the Head of Adult Social Care and Health Partnerships (City of Wolverhampton Council)
- Support has been identified from within OneWolverhampton to support the monitoring and delivery of the Wolverhampton Winter Plan using a project management approach

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OneWolverhampton UEC Priorities

- **Helping people with urgent needs access the right care, first time**
 - Ensuring Care Coordination becomes the first option for WMAS, GPs and Care Homes when navigating same-day needs for individuals
 - Delivering a range of community services that meet same-day urgent needs as an alternative to hospital
- **Ensuring a timely experience when accessing ED**
 - Maximising the use of same-day emergency care (SDEC) and Urgent Treatment Centres
- **Ensuring effective discharge from hospital (push)**
 - Improving discharge processes by ensuring planning for discharge starts at admission
 - Scaling up social care services with a focus on domiciliary care
- **Delivering an integrated approach to demand and capacity planning**
 - Reviewing impact of previous initiatives to ensure effectiveness and value for money of commissioned services
 - Gaining a holistic understanding of needs and services across the city
- **Expanding new services in the community that provide alternatives to bed-based care**
 - Support the expansion of Virtual Ward services to ensure the right number of beds is available to support Wolverhampton's needs



Current position

- The modelling predicts a worst-case deficit of between 37 and 53 general and acute beds, which will peak in January 2024. This is without any mitigation or additional capacity.
- The following assumptions have been made with the modelling:
 - This modelling is based on August 22 to March 23 actuals
 - 3.5% growth across the Trust
 - Elective and Cancer activity continues throughout the winter
 - Forecast rate of beds that could not be available for use due to infection prevention (Covid, Norovirus, Flu)
 - Modelling dependent on occupancy rates between 92% and 95%
- The schemes detailed here work to address this deficit and the position will be updated as schemes are mobilised
- There are no plans to mobilise additional general and acute beds at present due to estates and workforce capacity challenges
- While these proposals relate to Wolverhampton residents and are not inclusive of wider local authorities, we will endeavour to work collectively to support the flow of patients across local government boundaries



Funding available

- Wolverhampton Place was allocated £3,453,504 from the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund for 2023/24. This was allocated as follows:
 - £2,069,492 for the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC)
 - £1,384,012 for the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Wolverhampton Place
- This funding is used to support:
 - Increasing Social Care capacity; providing more care packages to more people, in ways that have the greatest possible impact in reducing delayed discharge from hospitals
 - Ensuring local partners can plan services sufficiently far in advance and for providers to develop long-term workforce capacity plans
 - Being used in ways that build on learning from evaluation of the impact of previous discharge funding
 - Allowing Local Authorities, the NHS and the Social Care sector to streamline discharge, assessment and placement processes and help to free up greater Social Worker time and capacity



Funding approach

- A multi-agency task and finish group has been established to determine priority areas for spend – including areas prioritised from last year
- Membership was drawn from the ICB; City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC); OneWolverhampton; RWT; and Black Country Healthcare Trust
- Proposals were received from City of Wolverhampton Council; the Care Homes Team at the ICB; RWT; Compton Care; Black Country Healthcare; and Wolverhampton Voluntary and Community Action
- These were assessed against alignment with BCF or ASCDF metrics; duplication; ability to deliver in required timeframe; scalability; cost; sustainability; and clarity of metrics



Agreed schemes – CWC Funded

Scheme / Initiative	Brief Description of Scheme / Initiative	Year 1 (23/24)
Hospital Enhanced Social Work	Additional social worker capacity to support timely assessment and discharge of patients to include out of area hospital discharges.	£440,375
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TOTAL		£1,629,766



Agreed schemes – ICB Funded

Scheme / Initiative	Brief Description of Scheme / Initiative	
Pathway 3 Block Booked Contingency	Funding to enable additional block-booked beds to be commissioned (e.g. complex beds) and / or to support increased costs in Care Homes above existing commissioned activity.	£100,000
BCHT Structured IP Day Support	In-reach work on wards to help patients and staff identify support to achieve discharge and connection with outreach services.	£34,956
BCHT Additional Step-Down	Accommodation and support for people MFFD and waiting for additional support packages, (24-hour ongoing support prior to discharge home or to onward package of support).	£50,000
BCHT Welfare Rights Workers	Supporting patients with a successful discharge from a mental health ward (e.g. financial advice, information and solutions around benefit entitlement).	£55,000
RWT Enhancing Care Co-ordination	Improving the digital and staffing infrastructure of Care-Co to enable increased and wider support for hospital discharge..	£119,664
RWT Intermediate Care	Supporting early facilitated discharge for patients waiting for start dates of social care funded packages of care, reducing deconditioning for patients and improving flow.	£650,000
RWT Virtual Wards	Supporting the delivery of Virtual Wards in conjunction with Community Infrastructure funding. In line with the 2022/23 commitments made and the operating plan 22/23 and 23/24.	£221,519
TOTAL		£1,231,139



Agreed Schemes – Funded in Partnership between CWC and ICB

Scheme / Initiative	Brief Description of Scheme / Initiative	Year 1 (23/24)
Care Homes	To provide increased support to Care Homes (e.g. education, training, networking opportunities), linking in to the OW Care Homes Workshop / Steering Group	£5,000
Delirium Patients	Develop delirium pathways and test out different pathways out to establish future approach.	£50,000
Non-Weight Bearing Patients	Trial / test out alternative placement arrangements for NWB patients to determine future ongoing approaches / arrangements.	£50,000
Community / Voluntary Sector	Increase in social prescribing support capacity to meet additional demand.	£72,000
(Split equally 50/50) TOTAL		£177,500



Reducing the bed gap

Initiative theme	Delivery Partner	Proposed impact on bed gap
Enhanced social care services (including additional social worker capacity, and ring-fenced mental health hospital social worker, and increased Personalised Support Team Hours)	CWC	Reduction in time to assessment reducing length of stay
Increased reablement services (including HARP, CICT, additional Community OT and bariatric)	CWC and RWT	Increasing reablement and intermediate care capacity to reduce length of stay
Contingency funding to enable reablement and/or additional beds across pathways 1, 2 and 3	ICB and CWC	Reduction in length of stay by reducing discharge delays
Additional equipment	RWT and CWC	Reduction in length of stay due to equipment delays
Investment in additional mental health services (including inpatient day support, step-down and welfare rights workers)	ICB	Reduction in length of stay
Enhancing Care Coordination, intermediate care and virtual wards	RWT	Reduction in length of stay through additional intermediate care capacity and VW capacity; reducing unnecessary admissions through appropriate care navigation
Targeted working with care homes to increase education and work on some of the more challenged pathways (delirium and non-weight bearing) reducing demand on other pathways	Partnership	Reducing unnecessary admissions and expediting discharge for patients awaiting delirium of NWB
Increase in social prescribing support – including dedicated member of staff in the discharge lounge	WVCA	This will include a holistic assessment to understand both barriers to discharge and supporting a reduction in readmission by taking a whole-person approach
A range of initiatives within RWT including specialty physician input in ED, development of an enhanced same-day discharge centre and mobilisation of a paediatric SDEC	RWT	Minimising unnecessary admissions through senior decision making and supporting the capacity of the discharge lounge to expedite discharge

Adult Social Care

- **Enhancing the hospital Social Work team** to reduce the allocation of NCTR patients with one additional Social Work Manager; four additional Social Workers; and three Social Care Workers
- Additional capacity within the **Personalised Support Team (PST)** to support timely assessment and discharge
- An additional 50 hours of reablement per week offered through the **Home Assisted Reablement Programme (HARP)**
- Expanding the **Community Occupational Therapy Team (COTT)** to support the review of discharges patients
- Establishing a **dedicated bariatric reablement service**
- Piloting a test and learn **Community TOC pathway** for health professionals to refer a person living at home and without an existing package of care to adult social care for community reablement for up to 4 weeks to avoid unnecessary admissions



RWT Acute Services

- A number of initiatives have continued from last winter, including:
 - The **Ambulance Receiving Centre (ARC)** providing an additional 17 ambulance offload spacing, increasing the total to 28
 - The **10 additional surge beds** have remained open
 - Utilisation of the **North Bristol 'push' model** continues and has developed into the RWT 'priority patient' model
- **No Criteria to Reside (NCTR)** patients are discussed three times per week – attended by partners across the City to support escalation
- A bespoke huddle tool is in use at the **twice-daily huddles** that escalates any blocks in patient flow
- Medical, surgical, frailty, and head and neck **SDECs** are in place – direct access remains in place from both WMAS and Care-Coordination



RWT Acute Services

- In addition to schemes that have continued, a number of new initiatives are being implemented:
 - Learning from the periods of industrial action, a **Specialty physician** role is being implemented at the front door to work alongside the existing medical complement. They will work in ED and SDEC to facilitate moves to virtual wards, HOT clinics and support admission avoidance.
 - A **Same-day Discharge Centre** is being established from the beginning of November to provide an enhanced discharge lounge where patients will receive the final elements of their care to support a return to the place they call home. This will include an increased MDT approach and will remain open until 22:00. Patients will be onboarded to the virtual ward from the Same-day Discharge Centre.
 - A **Paediatric SDEC** is planned to go-live in October to support an increase in same-day treatment and reduction in unnecessary admissions.



RWT Community Services



- RWT will be maintaining the capacity and scope of the **Virtual Ward** offering, allowing patients to receive the care they need in the place they call home, support expedited discharge and reduce unnecessary hospital admissions
- The Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) has extended operating hours to provide a **24/7 Urgent Community Response**
- The **Care-Coordination** offer is being enhanced through ASCDF to include pharmacy and social care support, as well as strengthened infrastructure to support greater call-handling capacity
- **Intermediate Care** is continuing to deliver an 08:00 – 20:00, 7-day service through the Rapid Access to Social Care (RASC) and Community Intermediate Care Team (CICT)



RWT Children and Young People's Services

- Mobilisation of **Paediatric SDEC** in October 2023 to support same-day treatment and reduce unnecessary admissions
- Delivery of a **paediatric virtual ward** to support expedited discharge and allow children to be cared for in the place they call home
- Deployment of a paediatric **respiratory clinical nurse specialist service** – this includes active care planning to reduce the risk of escalation for respiratory conditions; undertaking home visits; delivering Hot clinics; education to schools and nurseries; and supporting parents and carers with telephone queries
- Commissioned to operate **2 Level 2 acute** beds for Winter 23/24



Primary Care

- The development and implementation of a new Primary Care Framework for Primary Care; a local incentive based scheme to support continued improvement and development of Primary Care and build on the benefits of the national Quality Outcomes Framework Scheme (QOF). The Framework focuses on 6 key thematic areas:
 - **Increasing Primary Care access**; through initiatives such as capacity and demand modelling, additional appointments and effective care navigation
 - **Supporting the prevention agenda** on obesity, smoking, alcohol, cardiovascular disease and falls
 - **Supporting vulnerable cohorts** through identification, care planning and signposting of those with Severe Mental Health, Unpaid Carers and those people living with Dementia
 - **Supporting those people with a long-term condition**; such a diabetes and cardiovascular disease
 - **Earlier identification of people with cancer**; to include learning from National Cancer Diagnosis Audits and timely completion of Cancer Care Reviews
 - **Early identification, management, support, personalisation and advance care planning** for people in the last 12 months of life
- While this work will become business as usual and is not funded through winter monies, it is anticipated that these actions will support access to primary care and a reduction in escalations to secondary care and thus support the increased demand seen in the winter period



Primary Care

- Working with wider teams across the system to review the **Enhanced Health in Care Homes** approach to minimise avoidable conveyances to hospital;
- Pro-active care planning around **frailty**, in particular, identifying patients with mild frailty, over 65 years at risk of a fall and revisiting information around prevention, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of delirium;
- Maximising the use of **MDT Co-ordinators**;
- Expanding the **Healthy Ageing Co-ordinators (HACs)** roles in to ALL PCNs across Wolverhampton;
- Increasing referrals to the **Community Pharmacist Consultation Services (CPCS)** and other, alternative services;
- **Increasing access to routine appointments** and releasing clinical time through alternative delivery of the Covid-19 vaccination programme (e.g. community pharmacies) and additional roles and reimbursement scheme (ARRS) roles.



Primary Care-led Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Hubs



- An ARI hub is being commissioned during the winter months to provide access to **same-day urgent assessment** for both adults and children, preventing unnecessary hospital attendances and ambulance conveyances
- The service will operate Monday to Friday, between 13:00 and 20:00 with a minimum of **42 appointments provided per day**
- Appropriate estate has been identified and the service will be delivered from the Phoenix Centre
- The expected go-live date is the **4th of December 2023**



Compton Care

- Delivery of personalised care and support through the completion of **Advanced Care Plans and ReSPECT** documents to support unnecessary and unwated hospital admissions
- Compton's palliative and end of life care **Urgent Community Response** will be operational over the winter months, with a 4-hour daytime response and a 2 hour night-time response
- Palliative and end of life care **virtual ward** will be caring for complex patients in a step up/step down model
- Delivery of consultant-led, **integrated MDT with RWT**



Pharmacy

- Pharmacies are being encouraged to sign-up to deliver **flu and covid vaccinations** to support primary care
- From December, pharmacies will be delivering the **common conditions service** for seven common conditions, including earache, sore throat, or UTI
- This means that patients will be able to **access medication without the need for a GP appointment**
- During the Christmas period, pharmacies across Wolverhampton will be participating in a rota to ensure there are **4-6 pharmacies open across the city during the Bank Holidays**



Care Homes

- **Place-based Care Homes** programme of work being established to include Quality Framework; reduce duplication; and a Care Academy
- **Personalised Care Plan** training continues to be rolled-out
- Compton Care supporting **Advance Care Plans and ReSPECT** to reduce unnecessary conveyances
- Place-based **CQC information-sharing** meetings are held by partners to share relevant information, concerns, and best practice
- **Frailty, recognising End of Life and Escalating Deterioration (FREED)** training is being offered to all bed-based services
- **Falls response pilot** in place which includes strength and balance classes and nutrition and dietetic support
- **24/7 UCR** model in place which is achieving the national target for response times
- Docobo continues to be rolled out to support **remote monitoring** – currently in place across 2,647 beds



Infection Prevention and Control

- From September, an infection prevention focus will be delivered across RWT based on winter preparedness, including education, communications and support with outbreaks in inpatient areas
- Vaccinations are on offer to all staff – both Covid booster and flu
- The Public Health team commission RWT's Infection Prevention Team to support care homes with outbreak management, surveillance, education and audits
- Community infection and vaccination rates are routinely monitored by the system and within the Trust



Supporting Staff

- A wellbeing offer is in place for both RWT and CWC to provide support for physical, emotional, mental and financial wellbeing
 - This includes access to a 24/7 counselling helpline for RWT staff as well as staff physiotherapy
- Page 41 Both CWC and RWT have local Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders available to support staff at challenging times



Risks to delivery

- These include:
 - Lack of funding to support preventative initiatives
 - This includes funding in previous years which supporting additional opening for GPs, including 7-day working and Bank Holidays and is not available in 23/24
 - Recruitment of appropriate workforce
 - Many schemes have continued at risk, now funded through ASCDF, which reduces risks around recruitment
 - When schemes require additional staffing, recruitment has started in the summer to ensure start dates prior to Winter
 - Workforce illness and absence – including potential Covid and Flu spikes
 - Covid and Flu vaccines are available to all RWT; and Flu vaccines available to CWC staff
 - RWT has set safe-staffing levels across wards to allow managers to cater for planned absence
 - Staffing is monitored and reviewed at multiple times daily to ensure front-line services are prioritised
 - Availability of residential care beds in the city
 - We have historically always had sufficient residential care capacity over the winter period in the city and have block-booked beds based on previous levels of demand



Further opportunities

- If additional funding were made available, priority would be given to:
 - Admission avoidance schemes
 - Exploring opportunities for enhanced extended access in primary to support 7-day and bank-holiday working
 - Further focus on known vulnerable cohorts
 - Greater focus on care homes to support individuals staying in the place they call home
 - Support services that have continued at risk
 - Greater engagement and financial support with the charity, voluntary and community sector to support known vulnerable groups
 - Further enhancing those services which delivered successfully in the previous year



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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 26 July 2023
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Report title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2022-2023	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Chris Burden Children and Young People	Councillor Jasbir Jaspal Adult Services
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families Becky Wilkinson, Director of Adult Services	
Originating service	Children and Young People's Service / Adult Services	
Accountable employee	Jenny Rogers Tel Email	Principal Social Worker 01902 555704 Jennifer.rogers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Scrutiny Board	8 June 2023 20 June 2023 4 and 5 July 2023

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the work of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and the continued impact it has on social work practice across Children's and Adult's Services.
2. Approve the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2023-2024.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The work carried out in respect of quality assurance activity, the commitment to supporting the continual professional development of social workers and the actions taken to support the recruitment and retention of social workers which is helping the Council meet demand and supply needs now and for the future.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the work of the Principal Social Worker in promoting and improving the quality of social work practice and outline the key priorities for 2023-2024.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Designated Principal Social Workers (PSW) were first proposed by Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection in 2011, which identified the importance of better communication and understanding between social workers and senior management. Munro stated that Principal Social Workers should:
- A. Create a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management
 - B. Champion best practice
 - C. Encourage a “reflective approach” to social work
 - D. Support social workers to use their core skills and interventions which make a real difference to people
- 2.2 The role of a PSW is a statutory requirement in adults and Care Act guidance states that the PSW should be visible across the organisation, from elected members and senior management, through to frontline social workers, people with care and support needs and carers. Local authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to lead and oversee social work practice, support effective decision making and develop excellent social workers. This also includes overseeing quality assurance and improvement of social work practice as well as advising on areas of complex or controversial practice and on social work-related legislation, as well as ensuring the quality and consistency of safeguarding practice.
- 2.3 Social work is a unique profession and social workers are responsible for making potentially life changing decisions about individuals, often during very difficult and distressing circumstances. The role is extremely rewarding and the potential for making a positive difference for children, adults and families is immense. However, it is also emotionally demanding and can be subject to at times intense, often public, scrutiny and criticism. Austerity, increased demand, a culture of blame fuelled by the media and public figures as well as a national shortage of social workers resulting in increased workloads and stress, are all having a significant impact on the profession and outcomes for children, young people and adults. Research suggests that social workers and students see the profession as the worst ranked in society, well behind the respect other professions receive such as for doctors, nurses and lawyers¹. The average working life of a frontline social worker is just over seven years, compared to 25 years for doctors and 15 for nurses². The Principal Social Worker role is critical to help raise the profile of the

¹ Social Work England, A Report on the Social Work Profession, June 2020

² Curtis et al, 2010, British Journal of Social Work

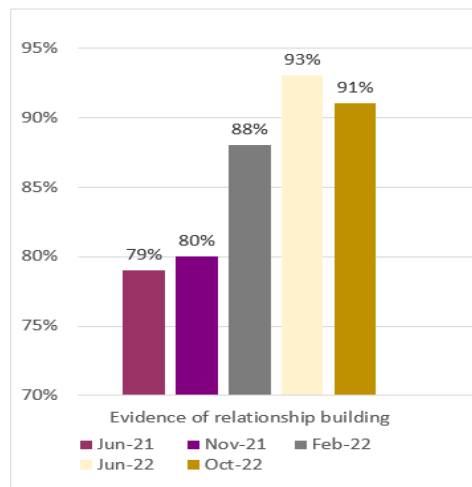
profession, creating a strong professional identity and challenge the blame narrative. PSWs call for change at a national, regional and local level, are key to transforming public perception, advocating for the wellbeing of social workers and attracting more into the profession. PSWs provide a strong collective voice on behalf of all social workers and strive to make a positive difference for the workforce and the people social workers support.

- 2.4 There has been a PSW with joint responsibility for Adult and Children's Services since March 2016. The decision to appoint one PSW across both service areas was informed by a commitment to promote a "think whole family approach", support better joined up working and inspire greater aspirations for children, families and adults with care and support needs.
- 2.5 The PSW role links to several of the Our Council Plan priority areas including strong families where children grow up well and achieve their potential and fulfilled lives for all with quality care for those that need it most. Strengths based approaches in social work also encourage a focus on community resources and building on the assets available locally to support families and people who need us, so there is also a role for the PSW in the healthy and inclusive communities priority.
- 2.6 The PSW reports directly to a Deputy Director responsible for commissioning and transformation with a dotted line to the Deputy Director in Children's Services and the Director of Adults Services (DASS). The work of the PSW is overseen and prioritised by the local Social Work Development Board. A degree of independence is required of the role in order to provide challenge within the organisation.
- 2.7 It is important that the role has a presence at, and is able to contribute to, national and regional PSW forums. These meetings are learning and development opportunities and also enables the Chief Social Workers for Adults and Children to share the direction of travel, answer questions and receive feedback from PSW's which can influence national policy and guidance. These events also provide opportunity for the sharing of good practice.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The PSW in Wolverhampton has responsibility for policies and procedures, the recruitment and retention of social workers and quality of practice, which includes leading on implementing and further developing the quality assurance frameworks for Adult and Children's Services. The remit of the PSW's team also includes support for inspection and CQC assurance activity. Although not directly leading on all projects involving social workers across the service, the PSW has a key role in promoting and supporting innovation in social work, such as the Social Workers in Schools project.

- 3.2 This year priorities have included building on the training and development offer for social workers that that enables them to continue to develop their practice, as well as further developing the quality assurance frameworks and associated quality assurance activity for Adults, Children's Services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The PSW and her team have continued to support excellence in social work practice and taken a lead role with Adults Services in preparing for the CQC regulatory framework from 2023-2024. There has also been significant activity once again this year to counter the challenges being faced in the recruitment and retention of social workers and also an ongoing focus on challenging inequality.
- 3.3 Highlights of the work undertaken by the PSW in the last 12 months since April 2022 is outlined below.
- 3.4 Quality of Practice – Children's Service**
- 3.5 Restorative Practice (RP) has been the overarching practice framework for the Children and Young People's Service since November 2016. It is a strengths-based approach that is about building, maintaining and repairing relationships. It is a way of being that supports working "with" children and families and not doing "to" them, identifying strengths but also being able to effectively challenge where necessary.
- 3.6 In June 2020 a Senior Restorative Practice (SRP) Lead was appointed to support the PSW in further embedding RP across the service. This year the main priority has been to re-establish face to face RP training which is now being delivered by champions from across various partners including police, health, education and the voluntary sector. This will provide a consistent and joined up approach to improving outcomes for children and families. Twelve champions have now been trained and the workshops resumed in November 2022, arranged via Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together (WST). Internal RP refresher training is also offered, with 211 practitioners across Children's Services completing it over the last twelve months. A 'building and maintaining relationships with children and families who are reluctant to social care support' workshop was also developed in 2022, providing staff with tools to help develop effective restorative relationships where circumstances are challenging. A priority this coming year will be changing language to support the restorative practice approach.
- 3.7 In this year's social work health check survey, 98.7% of social workers agreed that "Wolverhampton has a clear model of social work practice that promotes relationship working and strengths-based approach to achieve best outcomes for individuals and families". This is an increase from 93% in 2021. Respondents referred to the Restorative Practice approach with its emphasis on relationship based practice and the positive impact this has had, which was echoed by Ofsted during its inspection of CWC in 2022.
- 3.8 The impact of RP can also be seen in the outcomes from practice conversations (audits) where relationship-based practice is now a consistent area of strength and the number of files rated good or outstanding have been generally improving over the year:



3.9 A key part of quality assurance in Children’s Services continues to be practice weeks, which is a more restorative approach to undertaking traditional file audits. The Executive Director of Families, Deputy Director along with all Heads of Service, the PSW, Service Managers and Team Managers spend time over a week having conversations on a one-to-one basis with practitioners looking at a child’s file and reflecting on practice. The advantages include being able to hear about practice rather than just reading about it, being able to see and feel how teams are functioning and being able to offer social workers immediate feedback. Practice weeks are well received with 87% of social workers reporting that they are a positive experience and some comments have included:

- A. “It’s good to see what you are doing well and where you need to improve...good experience to gain feedback and develop my skills”
- B. “It made me feel like I was doing a good job...provides a safe space for reflection”

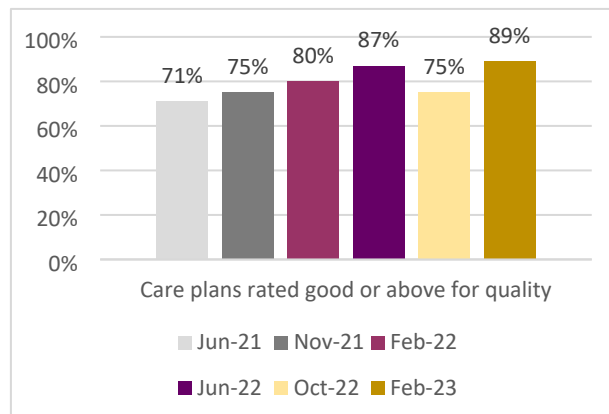
3.10 This year the PSW and her team have continued to embed the revised quality assurance framework for Children’s Services which, in addition to practice weeks and observations of practice, includes moderation workshops to check the consistency of auditing against the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) descriptors. There is also a process for triangulating intelligence from across the wider system, such as complaints, data, child safeguarding practice reviews, feedback from children and families etc, to help better inform the service’s understanding of social work practice and identify where further quality assurance may be needed. The PSW plans to develop quality assurance activity further in 2023-2024 by introducing a 360 approach during practice conversations where more direct feedback will be sought from young people / parents / families to better understand the impact of specific practice being audited.

- 3.11 A few of the key areas of strength, as identified through practice weeks during 2022-2023 include:
- A. Practitioners know the children and families they work with well.
 - B. Direct work through the establishment of relationships is linked to sustained changes.
 - C. Risk is identified, children are safe, and services are making a positive difference
 - D. Evidence of strengths-based approaches and collaborative working
 - E. Assessments have made things better for the child / young people and are timely, comprehensive, and are leading to appropriately focused help and effective interventions
- 3.12 There has been a steady improvement in the quality of social work practice and this year's practice conversations (audits) are showing an increase in the number of files rated good or outstanding and a reduction in those rated requires improvement or inadequate:

Audit Period	Total rated Good or Outstanding	Total rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate
2019-2020	57%	43%
2020- 2021	72%	28%
2021-2022	82%	18%
2022-2023	91%	9%

- 3.13 The PSW is the lead for the Aiming for Excellence Plan, the service's practice improvement plan, which is supporting excellent social work practice by focusing on six key areas where intelligence is indicating that practice can be inconsistent. A team of Advanced Practitioners (APs), line managed by the newly appointed Deputy Principal Social Worker, play a key role in leading on the areas for excellence and improving practice. The APs also provide practical support to newly qualified social workers, students and social work teams, carrying out dips and embedding a reflective and learning culture across the service.
- 3.14 A review of the Aiming for Excellence Plan took place this year to assess the impact of actions taken and to identify where areas needed to be revised or removed from the plan if practice has improved. A number of areas are now considered consistent and as such have become areas of strengths, including practice in relation to care planning that can evidence progress and is supporting high expectations and aspirations for the child.

Actions that have supported this progress have included refresher workshops led by the APs and the sharing of good examples within teams and as part of reflective sessions.



- 3.15 This commitment to quality assurance and continual improvement and learning was recognised by Ofsted in their inspection in March 2022, commenting that “quality assurance arrangements are strong, with a comprehensive approach to learning from audits.” As a result, they concluded that “senior leaders know themselves very well and endeavour to meet the needs of children and families through high-quality effective services...This has led to a high level of consistent, strong social work practice.”
- 3.16 The PSW’s team will continue to support the service in preparing for future inspections, updating action plans and co-ordinating any improvement actions where appropriate.
- 3.17 Quality of Practice – Adult Services**
- 3.18 A refresh of the quality assurance framework for Adult Services was one of the key priorities in 2022-2023. This was in readiness for the new duty introduced through the Health and Care Act 2022 whereby the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will conduct reviews of local authorities adult social care performance. This will specifically look at its regulated functions under part one of the 2014 Care Act.
- 3.19 As part of this, the PSW and her team have successfully introduced a practice week model to Adult Services this year which is aligned to the 3 Conversations© approach and supports a culture of learning and reflection. Feedback from practitioners and managers has been positive with many reporting that it brings the person to life and is more strengths based compared to traditional auditing. Almost 80% of those who have had a practice conversation this year felt it was a beneficial experience, with comments such as:
- A. “The learning experience was very positive – I was able to identify areas of development as well as strengths. Having the time to talk through practice was incredibly beneficial as well as having an experienced practitioner to critically challenge me in a supportive way”
- B. “Good space to reflect, discuss and learn”

C. “Some really reflective conversations”

- 3.20 Quality assurance activity in Adult Services during 2022-2023 has evidenced that overall social work practice is of a high quality and shows adherence to statutory duties with 90% of files rated good or outstanding during practice weeks:

Audit Period	Total rated Good or Outstanding	Total rated Requires Improvement or inadequate
2019 - 2020	83%	17%
2020 - 2021	78%	22%
2021 - 2022	92%	8%
2022 - 2023	90%	10%

- 3.21 Consistently good practice has also been evidenced over the year in many specific areas, such as in use of advocacy, Care Act eligibility, Making Safeguarding Personal, managing safeguarding risk, effective management oversight and involving the person in decision making as well as promoting dignity and demonstrating respect. Good outcomes have been evidenced for people with care and support needs over the year, with an average of 97% of files rated good or above for demonstrating that social work intervention has made a positive difference to the person.
- 3.22 There has also been improvement in practice. For instance, professional curiosity was an area which had improved to some extent by the start of 2022-2023 but was not a consistent strength. A session was arranged with noted academic Professor David Shemmings in June 2022 on professional curiosity, and the learning was reinforced at subsequent social work briefings, which also provided time for social workers to reflect and apply their learning to practice. By the end of the year there has been a steady increase in the number of files rated good or outstanding, with an average of 76% of files evidencing professional curiosity compared to just under 65% in 2021-2022. There has also been some improvement in the use of the Mental Capacity Act and the quality of mental capacity conversations with a number of actions having been taken to improve practice, including refresher training. However, this remains an area for further focus in 2023-2024.
- 3.23 Three Conversations©, the strengths-based approach introduced in 2018, is well embedded in practice. Three Conversations© is a way of working which replaces the traditional “assessment for services” mindset with a meaningful conversation about what matters to them, making connections to people and places that will help them and better support their wellbeing. Practice conversations evidence that use of strengths-based approaches continue to be applied consistently, with an average of 84% of social work

files rated good or outstanding in this area in 2022-2023. Over 80% of social workers in this year's social work health check survey also agreed that Wolverhampton has a clear model of social work practice that promotes relationship working and a strengths-based approach to achieve the best outcomes for individuals and families.

- 3.24 The redesign of adult social care in Wolverhampton, which is now underway, will build on this and consider what more is needed to enable this approach to work even more effectively. It will review demand, workflow, systems as well as workloads and skill mix across the service to explore how adult social care in the city could work more effectively and efficiently without losing the person at the centre.
- 3.25 Another key priority for the PSW this year was to promote a culture of co-production and personalisation in Adult Services. An example of this was the collaboration with Think Local Act Personal (TLAP), a national partnership committed to transforming health and care through personalisation and the voice of people with lived experience. The PSW submitted a proposal to TLAP, setting out the commitment to using their [Making It Real](#) "I/we" statements in Adult Service's 2021-2022 annual report (the Local Account). Making it Real is a framework of best practice for personalised care and support. It is an easy to read set of principles that focus on what matters to people. This year's [Local Account](#) has been shaped by a number of people with lived experience, and the Making It Real statements frame the report and have informed the service's priorities. The learning from this will now be taken forward by Adult Services as part of the redesign work and the commitment to further developing co-production and more personalised approaches.
- 3.26 The PSW has also continued to be part of regional practice reviews to support the peer challenge process and prepare CWC for future CQC assurance.

3.27 Workforce

- 3.28 The recruitment and retention of high-quality social workers is a key function that supports the delivery of good and safe social work practice. Effective recruitment and retention enables the development of a stable workforce, which in turn can improve the quality of work undertaken with children, young people, adults with care and support needs and families. However social work nationally is challenged by high turnover and vacancy rates, which can leave social workers trying to work with too many individuals. There is ongoing and increasing pressure on local authorities not only to recruit but also to retain experienced social workers and social work is on the national occupational shortage list.
- 3.29 The PSW continues to lead on the development and delivery of a robust and proactive recruitment and retention plan with colleagues from human resources, organisational development and the communications team. Some key activity this year has included attendance at recruitment fairs, piloting weekly interviews, delivering welcome events, as well as a continued investment in "grow your own" initiatives and other social work recruitment programmes.

- 3.30 There are many routes into social work, and it is important that that CWC takes a mixed economy approach to investing in the training of new social workers to not only meet its own sufficiency needs but also contribute to the needs of the region. Some of the programmes and initiatives that supports this include the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP), Step up to Social Work, the Frontline Programme and social work degree apprenticeships.
- 3.31 The new level six degree apprenticeship in social work was agreed in December 2018. It provides an exciting opportunity for existing social care employees to undertake a social work degree whilst remaining in full time employment. There are 13 social work apprentices currently on the social work degree apprenticeship programme in CWC and four who have completed their social work degree this year, three of whom have now moved into newly qualified social work (NQSW) positions. This year the PSW has formalised the social work degree apprenticeship as a career pathway to ensure that once apprentices have qualified, they will automatically be offered a social work position with CWC. This has encouraged more to apply for the programme this year and as a result five apprentices are being taken on instead of the usual three. However, a priority for next year is to promote this opportunity more in Adult Services.
- 3.32 Step up to Social Work and Frontline Programmes are post graduate fast track social work programmes for people interested in the profession who have a 2.2 Honours Degree or above. Step up to Social Work is co-ordinated regionally and is delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham as a 14-month condensed course. The first cohort qualified in June 2021 and are now all employed as newly qualified social workers in Children's Services. This year CWC has supported a second cohort of Step-Up students and two of the three students have now been appointed into newly qualified posts. CWC plan to take on a third cohort in 2024.
- 3.33 Frontline is a fast-track training scheme for social workers in child protection, which aims to attract outstanding graduates who may not previously have considered a career in social work. Participants complete most of their theoretical training whilst in social work placements, this allows them to transfer their learning into practice immediately. Since starting in 2017, 29 participants have been through the programme or are currently on it. A further cohort has been agreed for next year.
- 3.34 The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership (WMSWTP) is in its fifth year of delivery and is the largest in the country consisting of 27 partners. Social work teaching partnerships are designed to enhance partnership arrangements between higher education institutions and employers; attract more able students; embed the knowledge and skills (post qualifying standards) into academic curricula; support continuing professional development (CPD) for existing social workers and overall raise the quality of social work practice. This year CWC have benefitted from participating in the WMSWTP in a number of ways, for instance by being able to access over 20 training sessions including trauma informed selfcare, domestic abuse and coercive control, and the lived experience of young people in residential care, as well as being able to access

conferences about co-production and practice education. CWC booked 90 places on courses offered by the WMSWTP this year and feedback has been positive.

- 3.35 This year a revised Practice Educator strategy was launched locally by the PSW which sets out the commitment to incrementally increase the number of statutory placements offered to social work students over the next three years. This is crucial to better prepare students for practising as social workers and also increases the number of students who are likely to consider applying for newly qualified positions with CWC, which supports recruitment. This year the number of statutory placements being offered has increased slightly (26 compared to 25 in 2021-2022), but it is forecasted that this can increase further to around 29 next year. Actions such as welcome events and an interview skills workshops led by the PSW has encouraged more final year students to apply for NQSW position with CWC. To date seven of the ten NQSWs posts that have been appointed to from a recent campaign were final year students with CWC.
- 3.36 To increase the number of students placements also requires existing, experienced social workers to act as practice educators. The role of a practice educator (PE) is a key part of Wolverhampton's social work development and career progression pathway and as such supports retention. This year practice education has been well promoted by the PSW's team and specific sessions delivered to encourage social workers to consider this opportunity to help progress in their career and develop their skills and knowledge. This has resulted in significantly more social workers expressing an interest in becoming a PE this year than in previous years and so 22 social workers will be undertaking the course in September 2023 (stage 1 and stage 2) compared to 16 in 2022.
- 3.37 Other actions taken to support recruitment and retention has included creating and launching a new campaign, co-produced with local social workers, to better promote vacancies and help CWC stand out in a highly competitive arena as a social work employer of choice. The "be the social worker you want to be" brand was launched at Compass Recruitment fair on 20 March 2023 with positive feedback. Promotional materials include quotes from and photos of social workers from across Adults and Children's Services. The local social work [microsite](#), which sets out the benefits of working for CWC and hosts social work vacancies has also been refreshed and now includes the new branding. This will be developed further to include photos of young people and people with lived experience to promote specific campaigns and use of videos from social workers explaining why they choose to work in Wolverhampton.
- 3.38 To further support recruitment and retention, particularly in the Strengthening Families service where turnover can be most challenging, the PSW has been instrumental in supporting the creation of a new progression opportunity. This is aimed at experienced social workers who want to be recognised for their expertise, but do not necessarily want to progress to other senior social worker roles. This new role would not have supervisory responsibilities but would enable the social worker to remain in a social work team and carry out complex child protection work. It links to the recommendation made by the National Independent Review of Children's Social Care to create a new Expert Child

Protection Practitioner role, which has been since been supported by the Government's response "Stable Homes Built on Love" (February 2023). The PSW has also introduced Advanced Practitioner roles for adult social workers, which are also progression and development opportunities.

- 3.39 The PSW has led on proposals to reimburse social workers locally for the costs involved in renewing their annual professional registration with Social Work England (SWE) if they are required to do this as part of their job description. Proposals also included reimbursing costs of membership to the Blue Light card discount scheme to any eligible employees across social care. This will not only help to ensure CWC stands out in a highly competitive recruitment market along with other actions being taken but will also help promote CWC as a social work employer of choice.
- 3.40 At the end of March 2023 the local social work turnover rate in Children's Services was lower than national and regional averages at 12.9% (compared to 17.1% nationally; 16.4% regionally) however recruiting experienced social workers into vacancies remains a challenge.
- 3.41 In Adult's Services the turnover rate of social workers was also lower than the national average, with a rate of 10.1% by the end of March 2023, compared to 17.1% reported nationally.
- 3.42 The annual social work health check survey asks social workers for their views on working conditions and there is a strong sense of pride with on average 83% saying they would recommend CWC as an employer to family and friends. Some comments included:
- A. "CWC are proactive and forward thinking"
 - B. "Having been given the opportunity to progress in my career I have been more than happy over the last 12 months. I have gained a new pride and positivity in my role."
 - C. "A great organisational culture...Fantastic colleagues with vast skills and experience."
 - D. "Positive culture and learning opportunities"
 - E. "CWC actively promotes cultural competence and diversity. It promotes an all-encompassing workforce which is excellent in its consideration of minority groups and making all members of the community feel included"
- 3.43 Positively the majority of social workers said they plan to continue working for the council for at least the next 12 months and fewer said they definitely intend to leave compared to 2021. More manageable workloads would influence those who are unsure about staying. The adults redesign as well as other actions that are being taken to fill vacancies across both adults and children's services, will be key in ensuring workloads are manageable and will further support the retention of social workers. Recruiting and retaining social workers across Adult and Children's Services remains an ongoing priority for 2023-2024.

- 3.44 One of the key tasks of PSWs is to carry out an annual social work health check survey and ensure the Local Government Association (LGA) Standards for Employers of social workers are being upheld. The local social work health check was carried out between September and November 2022 and identified a number of key themes:
- A. Social work is a notoriously demanding profession, and, by its very nature, the role carries a certain level of stress. The number of those always or often feeling stress due to work has reduced or stayed the same this year except for children's social workers and feelings around manageability of workloads has had an impact on this
 - B. Quality of supervision is high with around 90% or above this year reporting satisfaction rates
 - C. Satisfaction with learning and development opportunities has increased significantly – actions from last year's Health Check to improve this has had a positive impact
 - D. There is effective and appropriate communication between senior management and staff with a notable year on year improvement
 - E. Most know where to go in the council to support their wellbeing and said CWC makes them feel encouraged and empowered to make time for self-care - they can discuss stressful situations / wellbeing with managers
 - F. Social workers are spending more time working directly with people
- 3.45 Action plans have been developed for both Children's and Adult Services to address areas for improvement.

3.46 Professional Standards and Practice Development

- 3.47 One of the PSW's priorities this year has been the training and development of social workers, ensuring that there is a good development offer that enables them to continue to develop their practice. All social workers are required to record evidence of continuing professional development (CPD) each year with the social work regulator Social Work England (SWE) in order to continue to practice as a social worker. It is imperative that social workers are highly skilled as it is known that good social work intervention can reduce the risk of children needing to be received into care and can enable adults with care and support needs to remain, or become, as independent as possible. It also ensures that council resources are being used appropriately and effectively and supports retention.
- 3.48 The PSW has continued to lead on social work development plans for adult and children's social workers and ensured that training opportunities have been offered in line with service priorities, as well as keeping practitioners up to date with changes in legislation and / or supporting with the challenges and complexities being faced in practice. Some examples of commissioned training offered in 2022-2023 has included: child on parent violence, working with perpetrators of domestic abuse/sexual abuse, assessing and supporting parents with learning difficulties, motivational interviewing, advocacy, trauma informed practice, supervision for managers, cultural competence, mental capacity act, supporting autistic people during care act conversations and s42

safeguarding enquiries. Training is also accessed through the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together partnership and webinars and articles are available through the subscription with Research in Practice and Research in Practice for Adults.

- 3.49 The PSW arranges three separate children's and adult's social work briefings a year. The sessions have a learning and development focus often chosen by social workers themselves but are also opportunities for senior leaders to share key updates. This year's briefings have featured sessions on learning from local Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews; Liberty Protection Safeguards; supporting people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; using language restoratively and supporting people who hoard. Social workers have also shared examples from their own practice and talked about approaches that have made a positive difference.
- 3.50 The annual joint adults and children's social work conference took place face to face in November 2022 with the theme of "For the love of social work: celebrating professional identity and contemporary practice". 308 social workers attended, which was the highest attended joint conference in the last five years. Leading social work professionals and authors of the book "Out of the Shadows: the role of social workers in disasters" Angie Bartoli and Maris Stratulis delivered a key note speech reflecting on the valuable role social workers play at times of crisis and tragedy. Lori Goossen, Principal Social Worker for Medway Council, also shared her expertise on secondary trauma and compassion fatigue within social work and the importance of self-care and professional support. There was also a workshop on virginity testing, honour based abuse and female genital mutilation and a session on social work with refugees and those affected by any type of border.
- 3.51 Feedback about the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Some comments included:
- A. "Inspirational and inspiring"
 - B. "Proud to work for Wolves"
 - C. "Thought provoking, empowering and very relevant"
- 3.52 This year's Social Work Health Check surveys showed that significantly more social workers across Children's and Adult Services feel satisfied with the learning opportunities available to them with over 90% reporting this compared to around 70% last year.
- 3.53 The PSW has also continued to act as the single point of contact between SWE and CWC for any local fitness to practice referrals. The role is critical in supporting SWE progress their investigations in a timely way, ensuring that the public is protected and reducing the impact on the wellbeing and productivity of all involved.
- 3.54 Raising the profile of social work and connecting with practice**
- 3.55 This year the PSW and her team have continued to celebrate good practice in monthly newsletters and raised the profile of the profession by recognising key events such as

World Social Work Day, which took place in March 2023. In response to the theme of the day “respecting diversity through joint social action,” the PSW invited noted academic Dr Neil Thompson to speak about anti-discriminatory practice. This was followed by a collaborative session with the University of Wolverhampton and a guest speaker from India which helped attendees reflect on international social work and the Social Graces tool. Over 200 attended and comments included how this year’s local World Social Work Day events were “powerful” and impactful”.

- 3.56 The PSW has promoted the British Association of Social Work’s (BASW) national Amazing Social Work Awards this year, encouraging nominations across Adult and Children’s Services in Wolverhampton. Three social workers from CWC have been recognised and awarded the title of “Amazing Social Worker” for 2023 and been featured on BASW’s social media as well as on CWC’s City People.
- 3.57 The PSW has also continued to maintain a connection to social workers and frontline practice, with more face to face visits to social work teams carried out this year and more planned in 2023-2024. The PSW is also connected to social workers during practice weeks, at workshops as well as other forums such as the quarterly “It’s Your Life” meetings in Adult Services. In this year’s social work health check, the majority of social workers across Adult and Children’s Services said they have access to advice and support from senior social work leaders, including the PSW, with less than 7% saying this isn’t the case.
- 3.58 The PSW also attends PSW regional and national network meetings for adults and children’s and contributes to work plans and workstream activity. From November 2022 the PSW became the co-chair of the Regional Children’s PSW Network and has been connecting with co-chairs nationally.
- 3.59 This year the PSW has also raised the profile of social work by working with the University of Wolverhampton to promote the PhD research being carried out by two social workers in Wolverhampton in a national webinar hosted by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). The webinar series, developed on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care, highlighted local authorities who are demonstrating innovative and transformative practices. The webinar focussed on the importance of research-mindedness in social work practice and featured two senior social workers who are a year into their PhD research, having been sponsored by the Council to do this on a part-time basis. The research will explore honour based abuse and the use of physical chastisement as a way of disciplining children focussing on parents of African heritage.

3.60 Challenging inequality

- 3.61 Equalities has continued to be a priority this year with the PSW taking an active role in the Rainbow Staff Equality forum as lead ally. The PSW has also been leading on some academic research which will support the rainbow retirement workstream and is supporting the delivery of the Rainbow Families action plan to enable the whole Families

Directorate to improve the support it offers to individuals who identify as LGBT+. This will include identifying relevant resources and training for practitioners.

- 3.62 As well as the sessions offered on World Social Work Day, the PSW has also supported the regional PSW network to progress its ant-racist/ anti-discriminatory practice workstream and has been instrumental in the creation of an equalities statement. This is underpinned by a number of actions now being taken forward by both Adults and Children's PSW networks and supported by the WMSWTP. Actions include establishing a regional forum of social work practitioners, students, universities and Adults and Children's PSW networks to share experiences, reflect on the statement and identify best practice. This will result in a best practice guide to be shared across the region. Training will also be identified and commissioned regionally.
- 3.63 The PSW has also been supporting the regional West Midlands Association of Directors for Children's Services (WMADCS) to procure a training programme aimed at supporting women of colour into leadership roles. The LeadHERship in Colour programme is for women of colour whose next steps are progression to a Head of Service role (or equivalent seniority) in the next few years. It recognises that women of colour are underrepresented in management and senior leadership positions and reflects the regional commitment to address this inequality. Two employees from Children's Services have been successful at obtaining places on this programme, fully funded by the regional ADCS network. Those who were unsuccessful have been supported by the PSW onto local development programmes or other regional leadership courses and been offered mentoring and coaching.
- 3.64 As a result of the strong approach that has been taken to equality and diversity by the PSW, the Children's and Adult's leadership teams and their service areas, as well as the Council as a whole, the vast majority of social workers in this year's health check survey said that CWC is actively committed to tackling inequality and discrimination.

4.0 Key priorities for the PSW's work plan 2023-2024

- 4.1 In 2023-2024 the PSW will continue to ensure that social work development plans incorporate a good development offer for social workers that enables them to develop their practice. The PSW will work collaboratively with organisational development colleagues to ensure feedback is obtained and analysed following all training attended, which will better inform the social work development plans for 2024-2025.
- 4.2 The PSW will lead the delivery of the revised Aiming for Excellence plan and Adult's Best Practice Plan, to ensure high quality, consistent social work practice with the support of the Deputy Principal Social Worker and Advanced Practitioners.
- 4.3 There is more to do to further embed Restorative Practice (RP) across Children's Services, with a particular focus on language and on re-establishing a steering group to bring partners together to ensure RP remains a key priority across the system.

- 4.4 The PSW will ensure that anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice continues to be prioritised in training. As lead ally the PSW will, alongside actions already mentioned within this report, promote the leadership equality pledges, support EDI strategy (including being visible and active in forums and EDI events), and actively challenge where needed.
- 4.5 The PSW will continue to take lead responsibility, along with human resources and organisational development, for the implementation of the recruitment and retention plan to support a mixed economy of routes into social work and strengthen current recruitment activity, ensuring the council is able to meet demand and supply needs now and for the future. The plan will also build on existing strategies and explore new ways to retain social workers to ensure social workers see the council as a place where they can develop their practice and career and feel valued, trusted and proud.
- 4.6 A key priority is the annual social work health check and the PSW's team will also continue to support a range of engagement activities between the Directors for Adult and Children's Services and social workers.
- 4.7 The PSW and her team will further develop the quality assurance frameworks and associated quality assurance activity for Adults, SEND and Children's Services. This will particularly focus on exploring how to better utilise feedback from children, young people, adults and families and introduce a 360 approach to practice weeks.
- 4.8 There will be continued preparation for future inspections and also ongoing support for Adult Services in readiness for the CQC regulatory framework.
- 4.9 There is a need for the PSW to continue to play a key role in the ongoing redesign of Adult's Social Care in 2023-2024, offering independent challenge and also advice about regional/national best practice specifically in relation to social work. The PSW will also work with the Director of Adult Services and Heads of Service to collaborate with the national group [SocialCareFuture](#) to learn and share from people with lived experience and other organisations to change the narratives around social care and drive forward co-production and personalisation.
- 4.10 Another key priority for this coming year will be to build on the existing partnership with the University of Wolverhampton and support the link between research and practice particularly with the creation of research circles.
- 4.11 The PSW will also lead on further supporting the wellbeing of social workers, specifically exploring trauma informed approaches to supervision in helping to reduce secondary trauma.
- 4.12 It is important that the PSW continues to maintain a presence in national PSW forums. These meetings are learning and development opportunities and provides opportunity for the Chief Social Workers for Adults and Children to share the direction of travel, answer questions and receive feedback from PSW's. These events also provide opportunity for the sharing of good practice.

- 4.13 The PSW will continue to be the local lead for the regional West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership, co-chair for the regional Children's PSW network and the single point of contact for SWE.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 This report highlights the impact on the service, city and residents that the PSW role can bring, including ensuring the quality of social work practice and improved outcomes for people. There is evidence that this role has a positive impact on the profession and consequently the people being supported across Adult and Children's Services.
- 5.2 There is an option of not having a PSW, but it needs to be noted that the PSW role in adults is set out in statutory guidance. Without a PSW there could be a decline in quality of practice which would affect the lives of those children, young people and adults who seek social care support.

6.0 Reasons for decision

- 6.1 The role of the PSW contributes to a number of key priorities across Children's and Adult Services including Restorative Practice and strengths based practice which are approaches and models that enable social workers to build professional relationships with people who need services that help and promote an asset based approach to their practice. These approaches enable the workforce to strengthen families where children are at risk, promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities as well as safeguarding people in vulnerable situations.
- 6.2 The PSW provides dedicated resource to the recruitment and retention strategy which in turn should help the Council reduce the spend on agency staffing. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of social work in the city which also contributes to making the City of Wolverhampton a social work employer of choice.
- 6.3 The role provides the professional knowledge required to drive local and regional workforce development plans that will contribute to high quality, excellent practice.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs arising from the actions in the workplan, and priorities set by the PSW will be met from existing budgets.

[JC/12052023/J]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

[TC/05052023/A]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 Social workers provide support to the whole community covering all protected characteristics. This annual report highlights the actions being taken to ensure that social workers are supported to consider and tackle inequalities for all groups. The PSW will continue to ensure that issues relating to inequality for all groups of people with protected characteristics is incorporated into social work development plans.
- 9.2 From a gender perspective there are more female social workers across the children's and adults social work workforce (over 80%). In terms of ethnicity there is generally a slight over representation of social workers from a dual heritage, asian and black background compared to the local population. The Council's approach to fair recruitment is followed robustly for the recruitment of all posts within the Adults and Children and Young People's Directorate. This includes anonymous application forms, progression of people with disabilities to interview and diverse recruitment panels.

10.0 All other implications

- 10.1 There are no human resources implications. However, it is noted that close collaborative working has taken place over the last year on the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy and action plan. This includes back-office support and attendance at social worker interviews and as part of recruitment campaigns.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

- 11.1 There are no background papers for this report.

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Adults Scrutiny Panel - Draft work programme 2023 - 2024

Chair: Councillor Val Evans

Vice Chair: Councillor Christopher Haynes

Scrutiny Support: Earl Piggott-Smith

Remit, Function and Measures

- Support the Health and Social Care system to respond to and recover from Covid-19
- Maximise independence for people with care and support needs
- Work as a system to make sure that people get the right support at the right time
- % of older people (aged 65 and older) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services
- % of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment
- % of social care users supported to remain in their own homes
- % of adults who use services who say social care services help them to feel safe and secure
- % of adults in receipt of long-term services who are in control of their own lives

Item	Description	SEB Lead	Officer Report/Author Lead	Date of Meeting	Publication Date	Status
4 July Meeting Postponed	N/A	N/A	N/A	4 July 2023	26 June 2023	Agenda Sent Postponed
Post Covid Position – update briefing	Update on current position	Becky Wilkinson	Becky Wilkinson	17 October 2023	9 October 2023	Programmed
Principal Social Worker Annual Report	This is an annual report that is presented to the	Becky Wilkinson	Jennifer Rogers	17 October 2023	9 October 2023	Programmed

Agenda Item No: 9

	panel for discussion and comment on the work of the Principal Social Worker in promoting and improving the quality of social work practice and outline the key priorities for 2023-2024.					
Adult Social Care Winter Planning 2023-24	Request from Director to add this item to the agenda.	Becky Wilkinson and Health Partners	Becky Wilkinson and Sian Thomas, Paul Tulley and Rachel Murphy	17 October 2023	9 October 2023	Programmed
CQC Assurance Preparation	Presentation on CQC readiness and assurance for comment	Becky Wilkinson	Meena Dulai/Becky Wilkinson	20 November 2023	12 November 2023	Programmed
Our Commitment to All Age Carers 2022	Request from the panel to provide an update on progress. Carers to be invited to present	Becky Wilkinson	Sandra Ashton Jones	20 November 2023	12 November 2023	Programmed
2022 Adult Social Work and Wider Workforce Health Check Actions	This is an annual report that presented to the panel for discussion and comment.	Becky Wilkinson	Courtney Abbott	20 November 2023	12 November 2023	Programmed

Budget and Performance Update	Request from Director to add this item to the agenda.	Becky Wilkinson	James Amphlet, James Barlow	5 December 2023	27 November 2023	Programmed
Care and Support Provider Fee Review 2023/24	This is an annual report that presented to the panel for discussion and comment.	Becky Wilkinson	Andrew Wolverson	20 February 2024	12 February 2024	Programmed
Adult Social Care Position Statement – Review of the Year	CQC Quality Transformation	Becky Wilkinson	Becky Wilkinson	19 March 2024	11 March 2024	Programmed
2023 Children’s Services Social Work and Wider Workforce Health Check Survey	This is an annual report that presented to the panel for discussion and comment.	Becky Wilkinson	Courtney Abbott	19 March 2024	11 March 2024	Programmed

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