

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10am, Tuesday, 11 March 2025

Chief Social Work Officer Report

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Policy and Sustainability Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO) Annual Report for 2023/24 attached at Appendix 1.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Rose Howley, Chief Social Work Officer, and Service Director Quality Regulation, and Improvement

E-mail: rose.howley@edinburgh.gov.uk

Report

Chief Social Work Officer Report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The reason for this report is to present Elected Members with the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for year 2023/24. The report is to inform Members of the role and responsibilities exercised by the Chief Social Work Officer; to provide information on the delivery of statutory social work services and decision making in the period; and to give a progress report on key areas of social work provision.

3. Background

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is a statutory post in accordance with the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. This requires Local Authorities to appoint a CSWO for the purposes of listed social work functions.
- 3.2 The CSWO provides advice to the Council on social work matters; undertakes decision making in respect of statutory functions and provides professional governance, leadership, and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether they are provided by the Council or on behalf of the Council by another agency or partnership.

4. Main report

- 4.1 This report is consistent with the content and formal guidance laid down by the Chief Social Work Adviser for 2023-2024 reporting period.
- 4.2 The delivery of social work and social care services is aligned to the Integrated Joint Board's strategic plan and the Partnerships Children's Services Plan/ Child Protection Improvement Plan.
- 4.3 This report provides an overview of the range of services and initiatives in social work and social care and to highlight key achievements and challenges. On receipt of reports from all CSWO's, the Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a national overview.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 This report has been requested by the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor to assist with ensuring that, on a national basis key issues are highlighted, and information and learning is shared.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 This report is an overview of strategic and operational social work matters covering the areas of Children's, Justice and adults social work. There is no financial impact from this report, which will not have already been considered through existing Council Committees or the Integrated Joint Board.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Both equality and poverty impact are fundamental to social work. As this report does not propose a change in policy/strategy/plan/project, it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 All social work services have the expectation to engage the participation of those citizens who require the support and assistance of those services within local communities.
- 9.2 This report provides assurance on the quality of social work services delivered to those who meet the threshold for social work support and intervention. It also documents challenges and areas of improvement being undertaken.
- 9.3 The delivery of effective social work and social care services is critical to the protection and care of vulnerable children and adults.
- 9.4 Failure to discharge our statutory duties can have detrimental adverse effects on children and adults which can also bring significant media interest and scrutiny.
- 9.5 Actions to mitigate the risk to an acceptable level are included in improvements plans which have elected member scrutiny. The risks are monitored on a divisional, directorate and on the corporate risk register,

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 There are no required background papers.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 - Chief Social Worker Officer's Report 2023-2024

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER REPORT

2023 to 2024



Contents

Contents..... 1

Introduction2

Governance arrangements, accountability, and statutory functions2

Service Quality and Performance 16

Children and families challenges and improvements..... 19

Adult Services challenges and improvement23

Justice challenges and improvements29

Resources.....32

Workforce34

Looking ahead40

Introduction



Rose Howley, Chief Social Work Officer

The Scottish Government has put in place statutory guidance relating to the role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO).

All CSWO's produce an annual report, based on a template agreed with the Government Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser, for relevant Committees and / or the full Council and Integration Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is to ensure professional oversight of social work practice and service delivery. This includes professional governance, leadership, and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether provided by the local authority, or health and social care partnership.

The CSWO retains professional accountabilities for all social work and social care provision and has a contribution to make in supporting overall performance improvement and management of corporate risk.

As a leader in the social work profession, I continue to recognise the privilege inherent in this position, setting direction for the profession along with a national CSWO group and acting as an enabler for other leaders. Engendering aspirations for the sector in understanding the direct link between robust and effective leadership and outstanding performance in services.

The purpose of this report is to analyse activity and provide a concise overview both locally and nationally, that can be used and cross-referenced, with experiences, challenges, learning, and good practice shared with the intention of improving outcomes.

Over the past year, the national context for social work and social care has been one of continued uncertainty regarding the proposals in development for a National Care Service including a National Social Worker Agency.

There have been consultation and engagement relating to individuals and

significant pieces of legislation and reform of key national systems and processes regarding the delivery of social work and social care. During this period, we have maintained a focus on delivery of services and improvement whilst contributing in full to thematic reviews such as care experienced children, through care and after care.

The Care Inspectorate notified all local authorities and health and social care partnerships across Scotland that they are undertaking a national review of Social Work Governance and Assurance arrangements.

The review is being carried out between July and December 2024 with a national report to be published in March 2025. The Review will assess how well social work governance and assurance arrangements support leaders to:

- Ensure statutory duties are carried out safely and effectively
- Enable social work staff to be supported, accountable and effective in their practice.
- Assist social work staff to uphold core social work values

The review has included a review of documents, a national staff survey, interviews with key leaders from across Scotland and a

range of focus groups with middle and senior managers.

I have also been working in a small working group with other Chief Social Workers and Social Work Scotland to look at a more standardised approach and best practice model across Scotland and to ensure in Edinburgh there is continuous recognition of the profession and assurance regarding practice.

Significant work has been progressed to support and strengthen service delivery and continued improvement.

Both Children and Justice and the Health and Social Care Partnership have started the process of service review and redesign to promote better outcomes for children, young people and adults. Within HSCP the first phase of the service redesign has included a new restructure which has strengthened senior manager accountability and also strengthened the social work presence within senior leadership and integrated decision making.

During this period there has been focus on more joined up working and collaboration within the council and HSCP, Edinburgh partnership including the Children's Partnership and Health and Social Care partnership with improved integration and joint working.

This has included laying the foundations for transformation in the form of improving whole family support, and our response to early help, prevention, poverty, and housing. With joint policy and procedures, and work on improving self-directed support and transitions between services.

We have also been moving forward in participation and improving our ability to ensure children, young people and adults voices run through all our services to ensure empowerment, choice, evaluation and learning from feedback are our cornerstones for practice.

In discharging my role as Chief Social Work Officer, I am supported by the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice and the Director of Children's Services, Within the Health and Social Care Partnership, I am supported by the Chief Officer, Strategic Director and Service Director, Principle Social Worker and also welcome a newly created post of Head of Service for Care management /Deputy Chief Social Work Officer which has now been filled by the current Principle Social Worker.

I want to acknowledge their support and impact in improving the delivery of social work and care services in Edinburgh. I also want to take the opportunity to express my thanks to all colleagues for their ongoing commitment to those who required support

and protection over the past year and supporting our continued journey of continuous improvement.

Thank you to the Champions Board who have supported the workforce in participating to enable children's, young people's voices to be at the center of practice.

I also want to commend the incredible collaboration between our partnership stakeholders and teams within the council and HSCP. The ability to communicate openly and share resources makes a significant difference in our success and continuous improvement. Open and transparent communication has become a real strength of partnership working in Edinburgh enabling us to address challenges promptly and collaboratively.

Governance arrangements, accountability, and statutory functions

The Chief Officers Group

For all areas of Public Protection, the Chief Officers' Group provides oversight, assurance, and governance to the range of committees and partnerships addressing public protection issues.

The Chief Officers' group is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive who is new in post this year and has representations from all the key partners as well as the chairs of the public protection groups, Child Protection Committee, Adult Protection Committee, Offender Management Group, Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

In addition, the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Strategic Oversight Group (SOG), for Edinburgh, the Lothians, and Borders Local Authority areas provides governance and oversight for the management of high-risk offenders across the five local authority areas.

Children's Services Partnership

Children's social work services have no formalised inclusion into the health and social

care partnership. The governance and reporting arrangements for children's services is through the Children's Services Partnership, through the Community Planning Partnership and wider Edinburgh Partnership as well as the Education, Children and Families Committee.

Edinburgh Children's Partnership is a governance arrangement linking; Council, NHS, Police and third sector agencies.

The Children's Partnership has four plans in place that support service delivery and improvement for children:

- Edinburgh Children's Partnership Children's Services Plan
- Edinburgh's Corporate Parenting Plan
- Edinburgh Child Protection Improvement Plan
- Edinburgh's Promise Plan

Edinburgh Children's Partnership is multi-agency and directs the strategic planning, development and delivery of children and young people's services on behalf of the Edinburgh Partnership.

The Edinburgh Children's Partnership Plan sets out a shared vision and strategic direction

to guide the work of the Edinburgh Children's Partnership.

Edinburgh's Promise is governed through the Edinburgh Children's Partnership, and Corporate Parenting Board.

The current priorities for the plan are included in Edinburgh's corporate parenting plan and whole family support plans. The revised National Plan 24-30 is now published, and work has begun this year to progress the plan and meet the required timescales. Edinburgh remains committed to fully keeping the promise by the target of 2030.



The aim of Edinburgh's Promise is as follows:

'Edinburgh will have realised the Promise when children and their families receive the help and support that they need from their community and services that support those communities at the time they need it. Where families cannot stay together children will stay together with their brothers and sisters in their own community, attending their own schools.'

All of Edinburgh's services will approach support in the same way, sharing values and approaches to working with children and their families that are trauma informed and are life enhancing. Edinburgh citizens will be very aware of corporate parenting and the need to support children who were unable to live at home and their circumstances and situations will have clear public understanding and support.

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee is a multi-agency strategic partnership which is responsible for the design, development, publication, distribution, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and wider third sectors in the City of Edinburgh area.

Through its local structures and membership, Edinburgh's Child Protection Committee provides individual and collective leadership

and direction for the management of child protection services.

The Committee is made up of senior representatives from across all key areas and partners concerned with the care and protection of children.

The first independent Chair to the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee was appointed in June 2023, along with a new Lead Officer joining in August 2023. This led to a review of Committee structures and functions. The full committee and all Sub-Committees have had their Terms of Reference and membership reviewed and refreshed. These can be found on the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee webpage. Membership of the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee has been re-strengthened by renewed invitations to colleagues in Housing & Homelessness and Justice, for example.

The Committee has also re-developed closer links with other key strategic planning forums such as Edinburgh Children's Partnership, Edinburgh Drug & Alcohol Partnership, Equally Safe Edinburgh and Edinburgh Adult Protection Committee. This allows us to ensure joined-up approaches to intersecting issues.

The Child Protection Committee launched the Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures for Edinburgh and the Lothians in January 2024,

running a series of multi-agency briefing events. The Procedures are now operating well and work is underway to review other multi-agency protocols, procedure and guidance to ensure they are aligned to the [current National Guidance for Child Protection \(updated 2023\)](#).

A series of Multi-Agency Child Protection learning opportunities has continued to take place, including the publication of several new 7 Minute Briefings. This work will be further strengthened in 2024-25 by further assurance in the capacity of local Learning & Development teams to ensure regular child protection learning and skills development is offered to the whole workforce.

The Child Protection Committee has also dedicated further resource to establishing a robust Learning Review process. Edinburgh's [Public Protection Learning Review Protocol](#) was reviewed in November 2023, in order to establish a new Learning Review Panel process that considers any new Learning Review Notifications and considers both the Learning Review criteria (as detailed in the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee's undertaking a Learning Review \(updated 2024\)](#) along with other cross-cutting processes. The new approach commenced in December 2023, with three meetings taking place to March 2024.

The Child Protection Committee carried out the first full Learning Review, under the new process, between October 2023-March 2024. A Learning Review Sub-Committee has now been constituted to support the Action Planning associated with the learning points and strategic outcomes that resulted from this Learning Review. A further two circumstances occurred towards the end of 2023 that have led to positive Learning Review notifications and these children are now subject to further Learning Reviews that will report in 2024-25. The Child Protection Committee has committed to continuing to develop a learning culture in line with the intended national principles.

In autumn 2023 all Child Protection Committees nationally were asked to undertake a self-evaluation into the implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2 years after the initial publication. This came at a valuable time for the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee and has allowed the Performance, Quality, and Improvement (PQI) Sub-Committee to re-develop the Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Framework and case auditing structures. We are therefore gaining a better, more well-rounded understanding of our child in need and child protection processes using quantitative and qualitative measures to make sense of children and their

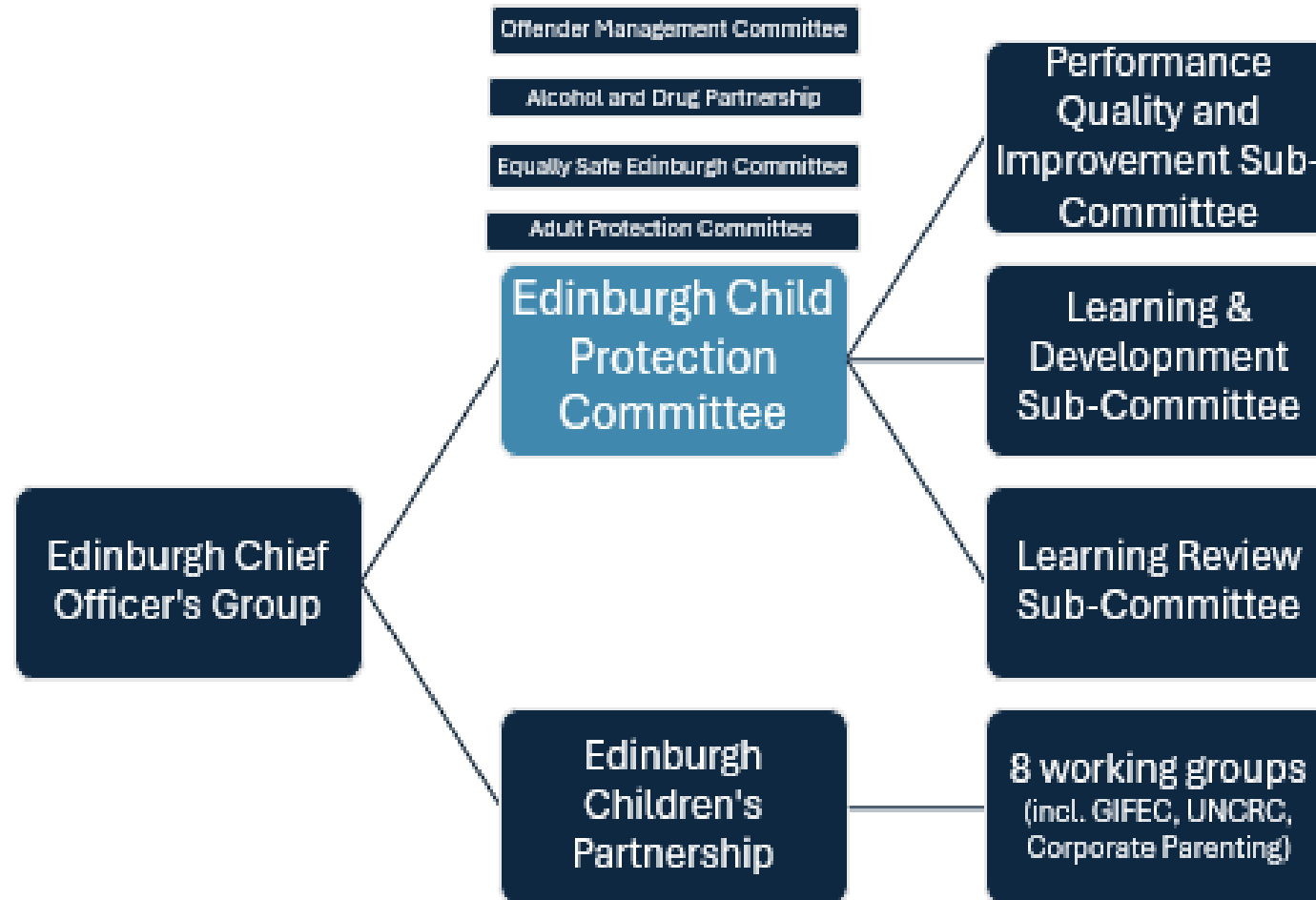
family's lived experiences. This work is ongoing through 2024-25.

We continue to review the multi-agency Child Protection budget and multi-agency training requirements, in preparation of the [National Framework for Child Protection Learning & Development in Scotland](#) (launched 1 March 2024). It is intended that the Learning & Development Sub-Committee will develop a robust 3-year Child Protection Learning & Development Strategy around this.

Work is also ongoing within the Committee and Sub-Committee structures to understand thematic concerns and develop practice in child exploitation; online wellbeing & safety; domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls.

The key aims and intentions of the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee were agreed by a current Child Protection Improvement plan in March 2024, which can also be found on the [Edinburgh Child Protection Committee](#) webpage.

Current Child Protection Committee Structure



Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board provides strategic direction and leadership to ensure Edinburgh's Care Experienced Children and Young People grow up feeling loved, safe, and respected. The Corporate Parenting Board works alongside Edinburgh young people's Champions Board and Ambassadors to improve the outcomes of our Care Experienced community. Joined up working between the City of Edinburgh Council and Corporate Parenting Partner agencies, is overseen by this board, and ensures a consistent and considered approach to supporting Edinburgh's Care Experienced Community.

The Corporate Parenting Board is accountable for: monitoring the current Corporate Parenting Plan; Identifying areas for joined up working across Corporate Parenting Partner Agencies; Supporting the work of Edinburgh Champions Board; amplifying the voices of Care Experienced Children and Young People and ensuring that their rights are upheld.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board can expect: an update regarding Corporate Parenting activity at each meeting from the Champions Board via the Corporate Parenting Lead Officer; an update re Promise activity at every meeting; and support from fellow board members to discuss and problem solve areas

of work around Corporate Parenting that are proving challenging.

In 2024 delivery of the Promise was aligned with Corporate Parenting in The City of Edinburgh. Work has begun to amalgamate our current Corporate Parenting Plan for 23-26 with the Promise Plan 24-30.

The Champions Board

A Champions Board was established to listen to the voice of children who have care experience and ensure children and young people's voices are centre and front in decision making. This has been successful and is also looking at ways to promote wider participation and ensure equality diversity and inclusion.

Links are also being established between the Champions Board, Child Protection Committee, and the Children's Partnership to ensure joined up working and improved outcomes for children and young people. The Seniors champs have been awarded CORRA/Promise Partnership funding to deliver a Youth Led Grant Programme between September 2024 and September 2025.

Children's Improvement oversight

An Improvement Board with an independent chair was replaced by a regular Senior Management Team Performance Meeting which has integrated performance data, audit and other quality assurance activity and self – evaluation.

The improvement plan has been overseen by regular reports to elected members and has been progressing well with the practice teams.

In reflection of the work that has been undertaken we are now undertaking an end to end self -evaluation review starting with the front door and Social Care direct to sense check the progress in terms of the impact and outcome for children. This will then lead onto a revised improvement plan for the year ahead.

Work continues to progress to strengthen front door arrangements in Social Care Direct (SCD) early intervention and child protection processes at first point of contact.

The new Child Protection procedure in line with national policy and procedure further supports the work already started on reviewing Inter-agency referral discussions and subsequent actions within 28 days.

Practice standards were implemented and reviewed in June to ensure children are at the centre and are a fundamental part of reporting

on performance measures and will continue to be reviewed with frontline colleagues to ensure children are at the forefront of practice.

Work is progressing on developing and understanding data and making sure this is meaningful for children and young people.

Significant improvements have been made in delivering and sustaining Residential Services. Edinburgh no longer has a secure service and is instead directing resources to support children on the edge of care to remain within their families.

Progress across the services provided for children and young people in the past year has improved and at the time of writing care home inspections now show significant improvements and a consistent theme of the inspections is that children in our care state they feel safe loved and respected. Edinburgh has contributed to the national care inspectorate thematic review of care experienced children and we await feedback regarding children's views and any further areas of continuous improvement.

We continue to work on co-production with young people to ensure meaningful care planning. Risk assessment and mitigation is an area of focus and as we move towards a new operating model will further improve this area.

The Quality Assurance Group that sits under the residential improvement plan has

continued to meet and quality assurance officers have provided support to ensure its effectiveness in driving required change against the residential improvement plan.

The Fostering service although deemed good or very good in areas inspected continues with the improvement plan ratified by the care inspectorate. The Adoption Service was deemed adequate and good in area's inspected which demonstrates that although improvement work in these areas is ongoing, improvements in services are being seen and experienced by children and young people. Inspectors talked about seeing excellent life story work and this is an area we continue to work on to ensure life story is reflected in children's records and started early in a child's life with up to date, rights based and personalised recording.

Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership

Adult social work services are provided as part of the integrated Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) which is governed through the Integration Joint Board (IJB). The IJB in Edinburgh has re-organised its reporting structure, and now has five sub-committees also providing governance. The CSWO in Edinburgh sits as a non-voting member and professional advisor to the IJB, as well as a

member of the Clinical and Care Governance Committee.

Adult Support and Protection across Scotland is subject to a Joint Inspection process, and Edinburgh was inspected in relation to its multi-agency Adult Support and Protection work between November 2022 and February 2023. The inspection was undertaken by the Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. A report on this inspection was published on 14 February 2023.

There was also an Inspection of adult social work and social care services Initiated October 2022, reporting in March 2023.

On the 5 August 2024, notification was received from the Care Inspectorate that they, along with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland, will undertake a joint review of adult support and protection progress in the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP) area. This is following the initial inspection of Adult Support and Protection in Edinburgh which was carried out in the latter part of 2022 and the associated report published in February 2023. The focus of the review will be to assess the progress of improvement plans in the partnerships from a phase where weaknesses

outweighed strengths as was the case in Edinburgh.

Preparation for the progress review is complete and was delivered through a weekly inter-agency operational group chaired by Head of Service (Assessment and Care Management)/Deputy Chief Social Worker. In accordance with the requisite timescales, a position statement has been submitted along with relevant documentary evidence. The joint inspection team carried out file-reading and staff focus groups through the week of Monday 30 September 2024. This included a session with the strategic leaders from across police, health and social work.

An inter-agency Oversight Group has also been stood up and chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer to provide governance of the response to the progress review.

A draft report will be made available on Monday 4 November and a final report will be published on Tuesday 26 November.

There has been a review of the progress by the care inspectorate and although progress is being made it is important to recognise the low bar of the starting point at the time of the inspections. I am assured progress has been made and mindful of the significant journey ahead.

Although steps have been taken to mitigate risk to adults requiring services for support and

protection. Change on this scale takes time and inspections can produce a complex range of impacts that go beyond direct response to recommendations.

Improvement work has included strategies to increase focus on strengths based working and early intervention with greater demand management and a commissioning strategy that forensically looks at spend to ensure a cost-effective service provision.

There is confidence that the Chief Officer and Service Director are sighted on the improvements required with progress at pace and it is anticipated that the new Chief Officer will appreciate the significant amount of work required to continue the improvement journey.

Clinical and Care Governance Committee

The Clinical and Care Governance Committee is established by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to monitor, review and report to the IJB on the standard and quality of care delivered across delegated services.

The purpose and function of the Clinical and Care Governance Committee is to gain assurance, on behalf of the Integration Joint Board, on the systems for delivery of safe, effective, person-centered care in line with the IJB's statutory duty for the quality of delegated health and social care services. To ensure that

there are effective structures, processes, and systems of control for the achievement of the IJB's priorities, where these relate to regulatory compliance, service user experience, safety, and quality-of-service outcomes.

It is good practice to review the functions of the Clinical Care Governance Committee and the group that sits under it on an annual basis to ensure this committee is fully appraised on the quality of delegated health and social care services.

Significant Work has taken place and continues to improve regular quality assurance mechanisms and systems such as accurate workforce and business data, service user feedback and learning from complaints to ensure the CCGC is able to be assured of practice improvements. Now that phase 1 of management restructuring has been completed and managers are now in post I anticipate that managers now have more tools to be able to provide manager oversight of services and every confidence that continued improvements will be made.

Social Work Governance

A key message from the inspection of adult social work and social care was that there had been insufficient strategic leadership and management oversight of key processes, meeting legislative requirements, policies,

procedures, and guidance and to ensure sufficient capacity and capability to deliver safe and effective services for vulnerable people.

Another key message was the partnership did not have effective social work governance arrangements in place. Clear lines of accountability and that Strategic decisions were not always well informed by a social work perspective.'

There has been considerable progress made to ensure governance arrangements are in place with more integrated working in an integrated health and social care partnership. We are continuously improving our governance arrangement, and adults governance group and Children and Justice manager development sessions have been successful in driving change.

We plan to introduce a Social Work Governance board chaired by CSWO that covers children, justice, and adult social work to ensure that the profession continues to have the prominence it deserves and links with the regional CSWO officer group.

The establishment of a social work governance board in Edinburgh will serve important purposes.

- Oversight and accountability
- Quality assurance
- Policy development

- Stakeholder engagement
- Overview of resources
- Risk management
- Learning and development
- Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) requirements
- Advocacy for social work within broader structures.
- Community Trust and enhancing confidence in social work services by demonstrating a commitment to transparency accountability and responsiveness to community needs.

Executive Management Board

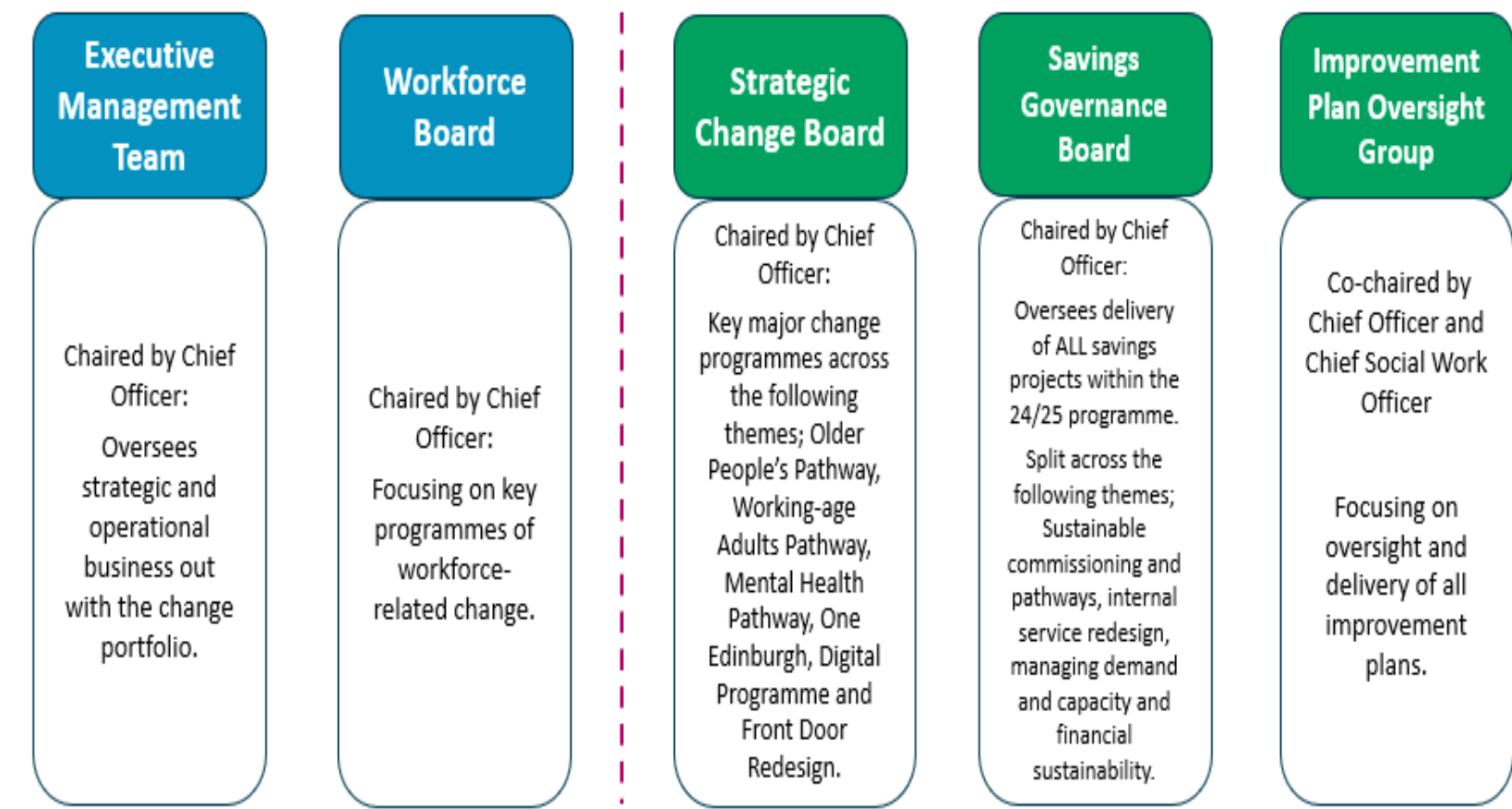
There is improved Senior leadership within the HSCP with the Chief Officer, Chief Nurse, Chief Allied Health Professional and Chief Social Worker and Principle Social Worker meeting on a regular basis with other key professionals to provide oversight and progress improvements.

The appointed Chief Officer who was appointed in November 2023 has had a significant impact on improvement progress and leaves Edinburgh at the end of the year.

The post is out for advert and interim arrangements are being discussed at the time of writing this report.

Improvement Oversight Group and Change Board

Over the last year the board has been co-chaired by the Chief Officer and Chief Social Work Officer with other Chief Officers in attendance and has been providing oversight of the inspection plans currently in place.



Adult Protection Committee

The Adult Protection Committee (APC) has responsibility for adult protection and is overseen by the multi-agency Chief Officers Group for Public Protection that is responsible for all areas of public protection across Edinburgh.

The partnership recently appointed Edinburgh APC's first Independent Chair, taking up post on 1st May 2024. This was followed in June by the appointment of a new ASP Lead Officer (ASPLO) from a Social Work position in June 2024. Whilst this is evidence of further change in key leadership roles, as experienced elsewhere in the partnership, it is anticipated that it will herald a period of welcome stability. The new Chair and ASPLO have quickly settled in, embracing post inspection improvement and development work, echoing the sentiment of APC members in terms of being accountable and responsible for delivery.

As well as helping to finalise some key pieces of inspection related work, such as the Inter-Agency ASP Procedures and the QA End to End Process, listening to the outcomes of the multi-agency development day from February 2024 and instigating a Sub-Committee refresh, the Chair has also quickly set about addressing a longstanding critique of the

Committee - the visibility of the APC and aims of its work. A new APC Mission Statement was approved at COG on 31st July and will assist with this.

To allow the APC to best deliver its statutory function, the Chair has reviewed the APC's Sub-Committee structures, instigating a complete refresh harnessing the experience of key Third Sector leaders to chair two new Sub-Committees.

The new APC Communications Sub-Committee will work on both internal and external messaging and communications around ASP and will collaborate with the other Public Protection Committees particularly on development of better online resource and visibility. The new APC Practitioners' Forum for Lived Experience will allow the APC to harness the views, opinions and experiences of adults (and their families and carers where relevant) who become involved in ASP procedures.

The existing APC Quality Assurance Sub-Committee will remain, alongside a reinvigorated APC Learning and Development Sub-Committee and a refreshed APC Learning Review Sub-Committee (supported by a decision-making body, the AP Learning Review Panel). The Independent Chair is already chairing the APC Learning Review Sub-Committee and Learning Review Panel to

extend the benefit of true independence into the critical Learning Review function and structures. It should be noted that as well as the two new Sub-Committees and their new chairs from the 3rd Sector, given changes in managerial post-holders in police and local authority, the QA and the L&D Sub-Committees will both also have new chairs. Consequently, whilst the Independent Chair has created this framework to allow the APC to best deliver its statutory function, the work of the Sub-Committees is only just starting in earnest. Their functions and work will be inevitably intertwined progress continues to be made with the improvement plan with continuous improvement a priority for the adult Protection Committee.

Adult Protection Committee restructure



Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP)

Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (ADP) were established at local authority level to develop responses to alcohol and drug related problems. Membership of Edinburgh ADP (EADP) includes lead officers from Police Scotland, NHS Lothian, the Third Sector, Scottish Prison Service, and the City of Edinburgh Council.

EADP is required to submit a strategy and delivery plan to the Scottish Government. In 2020/21, the ADP developed a 3 year strategic plan (2021-24) in response to the new national strategy, "Rights, Respect and Recovery".

EADP Key Achievements in 2023-24

- Implemented a program dedicated to ensuring that the voice of lived and living experience is central to all of its future activity.
- Increased lived experience in service delivery and coproduction including the draft Alcohol and Drugs Strategy
- EADP's implementation of the MAT Standards was graded, by the specialist monitoring team at Scottish Government, as "green" for 1 through to 5 and provisionally green for 6, 7, 8, and 10. We

were graded as Amber for MAT 9, Mental Health.

- EdMAC, a service which starts people on Opioid Replacement Treatment on the same day that they present, is now functioning fully. All those seeking ORT can (if appropriate) start a prescription on any weekday at either EdMAC or the Edinburgh Access Place.
- Assertive outreach to people in crisis improved greatly and most people were contacted within 2 days.
- The proportion of Opiate Replacement Treatment patients receiving Long-Acting Injectable Buprenorphine (LAIB) increased again; 14% of people on ORT are now prescribed LAIB
- NHS Lothian Public health led a health needs assessment of alcohol harm for the city which will support future service development.

Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee

The Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee (ESEC) is a multi-agency partnership working to ensure the implementation of Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls

(VAWG). The four key priorities of Equally Safe for Edinburgh are the following:

- Edinburgh embraces equality and mutual respect and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Women and girls in Edinburgh thrive as equal citizens: socially culturally, economically, and politically.
- Interventions in Edinburgh are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children, and young people.
- Men in Edinburgh desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

Key developments

In December 2023, the [Equally Safe strategy](#) was reviewed. The latest iteration of the strategy includes a broader definition of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and sets out expectations for increased partnership work between public protection arrangements to protect women and children from violence and abuse.

ESEC updates

In 2023-2024, the ESEC drove forward a number of activities through its membership and subgroups:

- DCI Adam Brown completed his second year as Chair of the ESEC. As he will be moving on to a new national post within Police Scotland, a new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected to lead the Committee during the spring/summer of 2024.
- Following its first 12 months of operation, the Domestic Abuse Local Action Group (DALAG) has had the opportunity to review its performance. Unfortunately, the DALAG was disrupted when organisational changes risked leaving the process without a business support function that is key to its operation. This issue was resolved as of April 2024 and the DALAG is now resuming normal function.
- During the 16 Days 2023, the Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership (WSPP CIP) led by the ESEC, delivered the [#RespectHerSpace](#) campaign. This was Edinburgh's first ever campaign addressing women's safety by challenging the attitudes and behaviours of men

towards women and girls in public spaces in Edinburgh. Following the end of the campaign, the evaluation and materials were shared with partners in the [Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership](#), Scottish Government, [Transport Scotland](#), the [Executive Office of Northern Ireland](#) and the [Strategic Investment Board of Northern Ireland](#).

- Together with Public Protection Lead Officers and colleagues in Learning and Development, the ESEC contributed to the revision and internal publication of Level 1 Public Protection Training for Council Employees.

Local Policy

- The ESEC carried out the annual review of [Edinburgh's Forced Marriage Policy](#) and the [Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Policy](#). Going forward, the policies will be routinely reviewed every 3 years or more frequently if required.
- The ESEC participated in consultations on the [Sexual Entertainment Venue \(SEV\) Licensing Policy](#)
- The ESEC has also created a Position Statement on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, which has been approved by the Child Protection Committee, the Adult Protection Committee, the Alcohol and

Drugs Partnership and the Chief Officers' Group. This is a requirement based on the Equally Safe Performance Standards to demonstrate the local implementation of the strategy, and it is hoped that the Statement will be approved by the Policy and Sustainability Committee during 2024-2025.

National Policy

- The ESEC contributed to the National Consultation on the [Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform Bill](#) in partnership with the Council's Justice Services. The joint response to the consultation can be found on the [Scottish Parliament website](#).

Justice Governance

Within Edinburgh, Justice Services are managed and governed by The City of Edinburgh Council, sitting within the directorate alongside Children's and Education Services.

The City of Edinburgh Offender Management Committee (the Committee) is a multi-agency body established to ensure that the statutory duties placed on local partner agencies (under the Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005) for the assessment and management of risk posed by high-risk offenders are discharged effectively. The

Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of risk assessment and risk management procedures and for promoting the highest standards of inter-agency practice in responding to the presentation of risk and in preventing harm.

The functions of the Committee are to:

- keep under review the procedures and practices of member agencies that relate to the assessment, supervision and management of offenders who pose a serious risk in the City of Edinburgh.
- provide information and advice or make proposals to any member agency or relevant body on the exercise of functions that relate to the assessment and management of risk
- promote the improvement of skills and knowledge of staff providing public protection services
- respond to the requirements of Scottish Ministers as necessary

The Chair of the QA Subcommittee will ensure the preparation of an annual report setting out the functions and activity of the Committee. The report will be approved by the Committee before submission to the Edinburgh Chief Officers' Group and thereafter to their respective bodies as determined by the Chief Officers Group. Copies of the approved report will also be provided to member agencies and to: Scottish Ministers, as required. Any other public body or officeholder as required.

Service Quality and Performance

Quality Assurance and Performance Children and HSCP

Over 2023-2024 there has been continued focus on quality assurance of social work practice which now also includes multi-agency audits within the child protection and adult protection sub-committees as a partnership audit of practice.

All audits now have an action plan for social work or multi-agency audits.

Self-evaluation is a valuable tool for improvement, and we are implementing our self-evaluation process along with:

- our performance data across both services.
- how we capture the views of children and adults experiencing care and services.
- views of stakeholders and professionals that interact with services.
- reviewing documentation and processes that evidence how decisions are made.

Edinburgh took part in supporting the development of the Care Inspectorate self-evaluation tool for Justice which was used to evaluate practice and consider areas of improvement.

We are planning further reflective self-evaluation activity starting at the front door to services.

Audit of case files, multi-agency audit and self-evaluation of services are now part of social work practice and improvement activity to ensure we are putting children, young people and adults at the center of practice by a program of quality assurance that considers impact and outcome and continuous improvement.

The City of Edinburgh Council is making progress in moving to a new operating system in Children's, Justice and HSCP which is on track and significant progress has been made to data cleanse our current system in preparation for the transition to a new Mosaic system, and work has started on assessment and plan templates and other vital process.

Work continues to address and update the considerable number of Policies and Procedures across Children's Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership which were out of date, didn't exist or not in line with government directives. Integrated impact assessments are completed for any new Policy that is created.

A spread sheet across services is in place to ensure monitoring and ensure regular updates are actioned.

The Child and Adult Protection Learning Review Process

Learning reviews are not investigations. They are an opportunity for in-depth analysis and critical reflection to gain greater understanding of inevitably complex situations and to develop strategies to support practice and improve systems across agencies in response to the circumstances of death, serious harm, or multi-agency learning.

The Learning Review Process for children and young people and adults is now in place and multi-agency learning reviews are taking place.

Complements and Complaints

Work continues on how we respond to complaints and a need to review the process and how we learn from complaints to improve practice. The resource to respond to complaints for children is in review as part of service reviews and moving to child friendly complaint process and responses. Improved feedback and learning from complaints is also an area for HSCP in relation to social work

complaints. As is learning from what advocacy services are telling us.

Children's rights and Participation

A Children's Rights self-evaluation has been completed within the partnership and we progressing the statutory requirements to comply with the UNCRC and Scottish Government requirements. A report on progress will be submitted to Scottish Government on a three yearly cycle.

There has been a real focus on advocacy across children, justice and HSCP to ensure access and ensure we learn from any themes.

We continue to strengthen the role of the Reviewing Officer further and an escalation process is now in place to raise any issues regarding a child's plan that can't be resolved at a locality level with Social Worker and Team Leader. This now also expands to an escalation process to ensure children have the required health assessments and the education plan is considered to ensure this is being appropriately progressed. We are looking at the role of the Reviewing officer and contributing to national guidance. Recognising the independence they provide and valuing their role in participation to ensure the promise is kept and children's rights are upheld, especially in relation to child friendly complaints.

Meaningful Participation Event

On Friday 14th June, around 100 people attended an event hosted at the City Chambers called "Meaningful Participation". Attendees came from across Edinburgh and alongside practitioners and professionals, parents and young adults with lived experience were supported to exchange views, being seen as "allies" and partners to help shape the future of Children's Services in the City. It was a unique day of learning, full of challenging and inspirational conversations focussing on key areas of participation and parental advocacy. Attendees heard about the positive ways engagement is happening across the city, with examples of participation being shared from the work of our Champions Board, as well as the engagement work already being undertaken by the whole family wellbeing team.

Attendees listened to presentations delivered by global speakers, including David Tobis, one of the world leaders in supporting and promoting parental advocacy in child welfare. David shared his experiences of transforming the Child Welfare System in New York by galvanising a parent-led movement which saw a drastic reduction in the number of children and young people being placed into foster care. Dr Clive Diaz from the University of Cardiff presented an evidence base for peer advocacy within Child Protection Systems,

drawing upon his 18 years in academia alongside reflections from his own experiences as a social worker, a child protection conference chair in England and his own lived experience as a parent to children receiving social work support.

In the afternoon, round table discussion took place where themes emerged about the importance of doing more, and ensuring that participation and engagement are meaningful, enabling the voices of parents, children and families to be given equal status at all levels.

Parent Panel Progress

The first meeting of the parent panel will be in November anticipated to include 10 to 12 people with lived experience of SW service. The first phase of the panel will include a period of induction and training for Panel members and from this it would be envisaged that panel will support our practice/service development directly from those with lived experience. This is however a time limited funded post through the Promise (Sep 26)

We have just made an application for PHD studentship to be part of the evaluation of the Parent Panel (outcome in Dec)

Family Group Decision Making

Family group decision Making continues to be used to involve families in decision making

process as well as clearly outlined in procedures such as when a child or young person are at risk of accommodation. Since January this year we have offered a family meeting prior to Child Protection Planning Meeting, this has been a test of change and to date we have had very positive results from workers in relation to risk planning. (this informing other LA's across Scotland)

We would like to see the use of FGDM linked to SCRA and the Children Hearing and something we are exploring.

FGDM will be part of two Whole Family Wellbeing Funded partnerships both it is hoped will develop the use of FGDM at an earlier stage, allowing families to look to their own strengths and prevent moving into statutory service .

Edinburgh has pioneered the use of Lifelong links over the past 5 years. The Scottish evaluation on Lifelong links was published last week which Edinburgh was part of. We continue to offer the service to all children and young people. There is continuing demand for the service. We have a significant number of referrals which relate to sibling reconnection.

We offer family trees (information gained from register house) to help young people understand their heritage, this supports life story work.

FGDM and Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership (EDAP)

In November 2023, the Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership (EDAP) funded a 3-year post to trial FGDM 's, with an emphasis on a whole family approach, specific to drug and alcohol use. The funding for the post covers a full-time co-ordinator (Grade 8).

The EDAP funding was derived from the Scottish Government's Transformational Change Fund with expectation that evaluation is reported back to Scottish Government to inform policy and practice.

Children and families challenges and improvements

Children's Services key successes

- Introduction of an Edinburgh is my home strategy
- We now have a Bairns Hoose and Scottish Child Interview Model up and running
- Continued practice improvement with continued review of practice standards to ensure children are at the centre of practice. Evidenced in audit.
- Continued improvement in fostering, adoption, continuing care and residential care which are evidenced in inspection and the feedback from young people and independent advocates.
- Children subject to child protection registration continues to remain stable after it was felt it may increase under scrutiny and centralised child protection resource.
- The number of children looked after away from home continues to decrease. The rate per 1,000 population in Edinburgh continues to be slightly below the national rate.
- Quality assurance audit programme now more embedded in practice which is

demonstrating evidence of continued practice improvement.

- Multi-agency auditing of Child Protection now in place.
- We have continued to improve our data reporting ability and data cleansing. objective with Head of Service oversight which is showing improved practice and also identifying any areas to focus resources

Key challenges/priorities

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

Edinburgh has experienced a significant increase in the number of people presenting as UASC. To respond to this increase in requests for assessment and support we trained additional staff in specific age assessment tools and created a support team to ensure day-day welfare support is undertaken. We have increased our range of accommodation for this group of young people. As part of our Childrens Service Review we will review how we resource and

manage support for this cohort of young people.

We are proud of our ability to offer sanctuary, and we have continued to support children and families from Ukraine and have continued to support a number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, young people who have presented in the city and this has been a challenge. An increase in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs), through spontaneous arrivals and the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) has created unprecedented demand on social work, accommodation, and support services. City of Edinburgh Council has seen a year-on-year increase in the number of UASCs, mainly through spontaneous presentations. We continue to work with multi-agency partners to ensure needs are met and support is in place.

However, it is expected that the number will continue to rise which has a significant impact on resources.

Children Affected by Disability

Resources in place do not currently meet the increasing number of children affected by disability. Children's Services are going to be subject to a service review in 2024/25 which will support a realignment of resource. The

next CSWO report will be able to report on progress in this area.

Self-Directed Support (SDS)

Significant work was undertaken in 2023/24 to develop local policies and procedures to support consistent practice when implementing self-direct support. An e-learning module has been developed to support practitioners to be aware of this important resource and the criteria for it being used.

Young People's Service

The Young Peoples service that provides support to children in conflict with the law is functioning well with learning from pilots improving the service provision. The young people service is included in the quality assurance activity for children's services audits and Data Quality reports.

Promise Funding and Disproportionate Criminalisation

2-year funding was received via Promise funding from the Corra Foundation to help end the disproportionate criminalisation of care experienced children and young people. Year 1 has focussed on data analysis to identify which children and young people are being criminalised, understand the circumstances contributing to this, and explore opportunities

to prevent incidents leading to police involvement, where possible. The year ahead will focus on development and delivery of multi-agency training based on the findings and maximise opportunities to share the learning from the contextual safeguarding in the north of the city pilot which was highlighted in last year's CSWO report.

Criminal exploitation of children continues to be an area of concern. The Young People's Service and Serious Organised Crime Early Intervention Service continue to raise concerns regarding the increasing use of weapons and serious violence. This will be responded to strategically and an oversight group is being created.

Throughcare and Aftercare

Our planned review of City of Edinburgh Throughcare Aftercare (TCAC) services is now included in the wider organisational Review of Children's Services Social Work. Throughout 2023-24 we have reviewed the delivery model for TCAC in Edinburgh and have consolidated our delivery model. This is in response to the consistent feedback from our young people that service delivery was complex and not focussed on meeting their needs. As part of our overall review of the service, we have

engaged with our Champions Board to assist in the co-design of a new TCAC service.

The work of the Housing Support and Accommodation staff continues to deliver a streamlined approach to meeting the needs of young people leaving our care. Whilst Edinburgh is experiencing a Housing Crisis, our Care Leavers Housing Award continues to prioritise good quality accommodation for our care leavers.

A core aspect of this work will be the timely undertaking of Pathway Assessments and Plans for our young people, and our Champions Board have identified that building relationships with newly allocated TCAC workers requires time and should occur from age 14. The Service Review and implementation of MOSAIC as our new client index database will assist in the monitoring and evaluation of this area of work. As part of the Review of Children's Services, we will be focussing on the shared responsibility of all social service staff working with our children to make sure that there are good quality assessment and plans in place for our care leavers well in advance of them leaving our care.

Childrens Residential Care Homes

Over the past 12 months we have continued actions to ensure our children in care are loved safe, and respected. We have reacted to recommendations contained in previous Care Inspection Reports by:

Separated our care registrations that were previously linked to Edinburgh Secure Services. This now enables each of our care homes to be inspected and evaluated individually by the Care Inspectorate.

Every Care Inspectorate report focusses specifically on the question are Edinburgh's children loved, safe and respected. Every Care Inspection in 2023-24 includes the views of our children confirming they do feel loved, safe and respected.

Each of our Children's Houses now has its own Registered Manager rather than a centralised approach to registration. This gives stronger autonomy and responsibility to our managers in relation to recruitment, matching of children to houses, overall wellbeing of children and staff, and core responsibility to ensure our quality of care

strives to excel, and as a minimum meets the care standards of the Care Inspectorate.

We have implemented fully Care Inspectorate guidance regarding assessing and matching children to care homes. This enhances our ability to identify what resource best meets a child's needs, and what might be required to meet those needs.

We have introduced the GIRFEC Wellbeing Wheel to all houses to assist with day-to-day care planning for our young people. It has been identified that our Care Plans need to be SMARTER (Specific Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) in their approach and we are rolling out training to address this.

As a result of the above actions, all children's care houses currently have a Care Inspection grade of Good or above. Some of our houses have achieved the "Keeping the Promise Award" in recognition of completing professional learning to deliver the Promise. The Award was devised by Education Scotland, Celsis and North Lanarkshire Council.

A continued challenge in residential care is recruitment. We have designated recruitment to each house allowing for immediate

recruitment as required as opposed to our previous model of annual recruitment.

Edge of Care Service

Since the closure of Edinburgh Secure Services, we have refocussed resource to a new Edge of Care Service. Our priority for the next 12 months is to address emergency receptions into care. In 2023 we analysed how our young people came into residential care. 75% were emergency placements at night/weekends, and very few returned for care. For those that remained in care, they effectively remained where initially placed, which negated having the child's needs as the primary focus for matching into a placement.

Edge of Care has two dimensions to its approach – community-based support to families in crisis and short-term emergency residential house. A short-term stand-alone emergency reception house is vital to ensure full wrap-around following a family breakdown, and as importantly minimising the impact of an emergency placement on children already in our care. Our community-based approach of supporting children and their families is developing, and we have recruited some staff to this service who are engaged now with

families. Our next step is to identify a site suitable for the short-term emergency house.

Adoption, Fostering and Kinship Care

Adoption Services were inspected by the Care Inspectorate in 2023 and received a grading of Adequate and Good for the two areas inspected. Key messages from the Inspection identified “children consistently experienced positive outcomes and were claimed as part of adoptive families”; and “adopters overwhelmingly felt well supported by the service”. However, areas for improvement included more audit, monitoring and analysis and stronger overview of key processes.

Fostering services were inspected by the Care Inspectorate in 2023 and received a grading of Good and Very Good for the two areas inspected. Key messages identified “Children and young people had meaningful and affectionate relationships with their foster carers”. Recruitment of new foster carers remains a significant challenge and despite an ongoing multimedia recruitment strategy and a

dedicated team in place we have not been able to attract the requisite number of new foster carers to replace the foster carers who are retiring.

We reviewed our approach to Kinship Care in 2023. Children subject to Kinship placements were allocated differently dependent on their legal status. This resulted in a significant burden on Practice Team colleagues who otherwise had little contact or involvement with the children involved. To enhance the quality of service offered, we have increased the capacity with the Kinship Service and allocated all Kinship cases to the one team. This provides standardisation of approach and practice.

We implemented the Scottish Recommended Allowance for all foster and kinship carers. Additionally, we applied a similar increase to our continuing care rates to ensure that finance was not a barrier to young people accessing continuing care.

Adoption, Fostering and Kinship services will benefit from the implementation of MOSAIC as

our service user database. MOSAIC will assist in highlighting when core processes are required or overdue and are linked to the individual and to siblings if required. This will enhance the standardisation of practices and allow effective management information to be provided quickly.

Corporate Parenting Hub

In 2023 we opened our Corporate Parenting Hub. This is a building in the City Centre that is available to our care experienced young people and their families. The building is operated by our Corporate Parenting Lead and Participation Officers and facilitates our Champions Board meetings and engagement events. The building is developing and can be used by our care experienced community to engage, relax and maintain family relationships in a building that is designed to meet their needs and away from the stigma of formal settings.

Adult Services challenges and improvement

Health and Social Care Partnership key successes

- Creation and implementation of a prevention strategy: ***Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, by focusing on people, places and pathways will support and enable people living in Edinburgh to have more good days.***
- Improved access for people at the point of contact through a focus on Social Care Direct. Ensure people at risk of harm are identified with the right action taken quickly
- Increase capacity through initially an agency Social Work team to undertake reviews of people in receipt of services to ensure needs are being met which is now longer required and progress continues to be made.
- Improved recruitment and retention of social workers and community care assistant with increased work on advert and recruitment through more innovative routes. Progressed incentives and recruitment on a higher salary scale with HR for experienced Social Workers
- Greater understanding and reduction in waiting lists. Developed a trajectory to demonstrate tangible and quantifiable improvement for waiting lists to be brought in line with national averages as priority.
- Undertook strategic commissioning exercise to ensure that the IJB has a clear understanding of bed-based services (including dementia, nursing, intermediate care) to meet people's needs.
- Undertook strategic commissioning exercise to ensure that the IJB has a clear understanding of service need for people with mental health problems
- Continued progress with One Edinburgh programme, increasing capacity for people requiring a package of care to live at home independently.
- Implemented a revised, strengthened professional line management structure that achieves more benefit from integration and ensures resources are directed at the priorities being identified in response to the inspection findings.
- Introduced new ASP Investigation processes with specific chronologies and risk assessment
- Roll out one assessment tool that ensures consistent approach across the city.
- Improved data cleansing and commenced SWIFT system replacement improves processes and creates service capacity, efficiency and safety.
- Induction of Principal Social Work Officer post together with Head of assessment and deputy CSWO post further strengthening social work presence in senior management.
- Implementation of Quality Assurance audit for effective manager oversight and supervision recording.
- Launch of Quality Assurance Practice framework with bi-monthly learning from practice audits.
- Multi-agency auditing of Adult Support and Protection now in place.

One Edinburgh: Home-Based Care

'One Edinburgh' is part of our Home-Based Care and Support project within the Innovation and Sustainability Portfolio and is our collaborative approach to the delivery of internal and external home-based support. It aims to deliver a vision of preventative approaches and support solutions that enable more people to remain independent at home, or in a homely setting, for as long as possible.

There has been a wide-ranging program of activities undertaken in 2022/23, many of

which will continue to be built upon and developed further into 2023/24 and beyond:

We have undertaken a phased approach to the implementation of a mobile workforce scheduling and care management solution for our internal Reablement and Care at Home services.

We have progressed with the redesign, planning, and modelling of our internal homecare services to shift from long-term care support services to a focus on prevention and reablement, though some long-term care at home will still be delivered internally. This will support our approaches to prevention and early intervention, supporting individuals to live independently for longer.

data-led dashboards to support monitoring and improvement.

Reducing the time people wait, after assessment and referral in hospital or the community, for care at home arrangements to be put in place.

Implementation of a continual monitoring and risk prioritisation process. Dedicated team established to undertake this activity and take appropriate escalation actions if monitoring indicates increasing urgency for support or changes to needs.

Implementation of a dedicated care at home review team who regularly review existing care

at home arrangements, ensuring support continues to meet the needs and outcomes of the people supported (and their carers), and that quality of support delivered is of a high standard. Collaborating with the people being supported and their carers to take the necessary actions, and where required facilitate the move to alternative support arrangements that better meet the person's outcomes.

Supporting Carers

Amid ongoing recovery from the pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis, our focus was on the continuation and embedding of the contracted provision of support to carers provided through our voluntary sector partners. Work was also progressed on the Edinburgh Joint Carers Strategy 2023 -2026 refresh, taking account of the national carer strategy developments. The refreshed strategy was developed by a short life working group who reported to the Edinburgh Carer Strategic Partnership Group, (CSPG), whose membership includes carer organisations, EHSCP and CEC managers, and the EIJB Carer representative. The refreshed strategy is the result of collaboration and wide engagement with carers, supported people and other key stakeholders. It is based on a set of Key Principles:

- Maintain the six key priority areas and associated local outcomes.

- Align Edinburgh's priorities with the five national themes, outcomes, and proposed actions.
- Maintain the Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) approach.
- Develop a carer outcome measuring framework.
- Indicate achievable actions/commitments to continue to enhance carers' supports and national commitments.
- Maintain the Human Rights-based approach to commissioning.

Learning Disabilities Service

The innovation and sustainability review of our Learning Disabilities services continued through 2023/24, with five of the thirteen proposals identified as priorities for additional development. Strategic developments have seen increased focus on savings and efficiencies, due to an ongoing significant gap in the budget for 2024/25.

From our existing programme, some elements will be implemented under business as usual, whilst the remaining elements have been built into a wider new programme

Working-age pathways

Working-age pathways includes people with life-long conditions of any age who have a condition which limits their ability to live independently (except those who have a main diagnosis of a functional mental illness). This programme will focus on place-based care, accommodation with support, and support at home for people needing the most intensive services.

Health and Social Care Partnership challenges and improvements

Continued progress is being made regarding two very in-depth inspections of social work within the HSCP in Edinburgh together with the mental welfare review of an individual has provided detailed improvement requirements in relation to its multi-agency Adult Support and Protection work and adult social work and social care services within the HSCP.

The improvement actions for the Adult Support and Protection inspection are being progressed within the Adult Protection Committee and the plan has also been embedded within the wider improvement Plan for adult social work and social care services.

The wider improvement plan provides fundamental changes to how the Health and Social Care partnership functions and supports

adults using a strengths-based approach with increased focus on early intervention and getting it right for everyone. With greater demand management and commissioning strategy to ensure a cost-effective service provision.

Recognising the interface between the Adult Support and Protection Inspection and the Social Work and Social Care Inspection, work has been undertaken to map improvement requirements and activity across both inspections with a priority focus on the adult support and protection areas of improvement. The Improvement Plan for the Social Work and Social Care Inspection was approved by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board on 13 June 2023.

This is all within a backdrop of rising demand, increasing costs and ambition to improve performance

Structural deficit since inception, exacerbated by mismatch between funding increases and unavoidable cost increases

We are now at the point where delivering savings to balance the plan requires review of community services with consequent impact on outcomes and performance

The Mid-term financial plan is focussed on protecting the most vulnerable and meeting statutory duties.

Priority areas for continuous improvement

We continue to make progress in the areas below and we are seeing and evidencing positive improvements in the below areas. we appreciate that we are still on an improvement journey

- Effective adult support and protection practice that keeps adults at risk of harm, safe and delivers improvements to their health and wellbeing.
- Multi-agency key processes for Adult Protection, including duty to Inquire and investigate, assessment of capacity, Initial referral discussion and adult protection conference procedure.
- Work on Chronologies and risk assessments for adults at risk of harm
- Workforce capacity, supervision, and manager oversight
- Quality assurance and multi-agency audits.

Progress continues to be made with the Improvement Plan and a sub-group of the Adult Support and Protection Committee has been established to ensure that pace continues to be made with the improvement plan and continuous improvement is priority for Edinburgh.

NHS colleagues are now involved in the interagency referral discussion rota across all localities. This is being monitored to be able to report on progress. Further work is now required on engagement between partners to inform IRD and ensure a multiagency discussion is always a requirement to improve outcomes and decisions, with the IRD system documenting these. Contribution to this rota from nursing colleagues will continue to be reviewed to ensure that resources are used to best effect.

Health Colleagues are aware of the importance of attending Case Conferences and Social Workers have also been made aware of the importance of inviting Health and Police to Case Conferences. A template is being used to record attendance and a report submitted to APC.

Regulation Inspection Improvement and Quality Assurance in Care Homes

Edinburgh delivers 35 registered adult care services that are subject to inspection by the

Care Inspectorate. registered adult care services that are subject to inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

Inspection results are graded on a scale from 1 'unsatisfactory' (urgent remedial action required) to 6 'excellent' (outstanding or sector

leading), with the grades 3, 4 and 5 being assessed as 'adequate', 'good' and 'very good' respectively.

During 2023/24 20 inspections took place during inspection gradings where on the whole 4s and 5s with three inspections having some grading of 3 and 2 with improvements plans now in place.

Assessment and service provision

Reducing wait times for assessment, service provision after assessment and review has been a priority which is now evidencing significant improvements and continues to be a priority as a response to high levels of demand, and complexity of need.

All Adult Support and Protection referrals continue to be allocated and prioritised

Everyone continues to work hard to balance demands through rigorous management of risk and prioritisation of need, and safety both within current systems and models of care while also looking to develop new approaches that may relieve the position.

Strengthening the front door to services within Social Care Direct and ensuing early intervention continues to be a priority to help manage demand and ensure people can

access services within their local community when required.

Delayed discharge patterns remain a concern both nationally and within Edinburgh. There is a close relationship between unmet need across the system in terms of the availability of care at home and care home placements and the level of delayed discharges.

Pressure on hospital beds remains acute in terms of delayed discharge and the Home Accessibility Referral Team (HART) continues to support colleagues in NHS Lothian and the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership in trying to alleviate this. We continue to see substantial improvement in delay levels and our 2023/24 rate is

the lowest level we have seen, excluding the pandemic year of 2021/22. We have seen a 17% reduction over 2023/24 compared to a 2% decrease nationally and our delays bed days rate is now lower than it was before the pandemic.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Thrive Edinburgh

Since May 2023 there has been prototyping of open access to mental health and well-being support across the city through our Thrive Welcome Teams. Initial data suggests the new open access approach is reducing some

pressure on Primary Care Services as well reaching harder to reach groups, such as males.

Over the last year the Connect Partnership, who are part of our Thrive Collective, have engaged with 1,693 people across Edinburgh with a range of emotional, psychological and social interventions. In terms of Thriving Spaces, this partnership worked with 8,481 individuals, delivering social support, creative opportunities and horticultural activities. Finally, the Physical and Green Space group engaged with 2,657 people. Most of the activities being delivered within this partnership focused on getting people active (e.g. walking groups) and gardening.

The Place to Live framework agreement places strong emphasis on linking people into their local communities, building up a local network of support and accessing community activities. The New Era Programme was established to accelerate

community developments and housing with support to enable more people to be discharged from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. As part of improving our pathway for unscheduled out of hours, we have commissioned Penumbra to host Crisis Navigators who work closely with the Mental

Health Assessment Service to help link people to support in the community.

In 2023 we continued with our Thrive Arts program, which hosts a calendar of events throughout the year, some which coincide with national days, or months, and which target specific communities of interest or identity. Some of our highlights included Thrive Fest, The Future is Unwritten, Strange Town Touring Company, Bits and Pieces by Saltire Sky Theatre Company, Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival,

Pride Youth Space, and Out of Sight, Out of Mind. All these reached out to different communities and invited people to participate, connect, and learn through the arts whilst helping to break down the stigma around mental health in our society.

Early in 2023 we hosted an event with over 80 local stakeholders to discuss how we should take forward local delivery of the national suicide prevention strategy

‘Creating Hope Together’ and what our local priority areas should be. From these discussions we established a Steering Group supported by four subgroups with themes of data and insight; space/time and compassion; supporting people and supporting our communities.

Through our collaborative Thrive Students initiative, we have been developing and creating ways to build better pathways for students and now have a data sharing agreement in place to allow for easier referral and transfer of information between universities and NHS Lothian, streamlining a student’s journey into services.

ithrive is now fully up to date with information on support for students and we have created a link between rehelp and ithrive to help GPs refer more easily.

We continue to support service user research through our partners CAPS Advocacy and Media Education. There are four well-established, and two newer active user led research programs, which help to ensure that service users voices are at the heart of redesigning and informing our services and support people experiencing first episode psychosis, people who have experienced trauma, people who have attracted a diagnosis of personality disorders and people with eating disorders. The two newer groups are funded through our Thrive Collective and have a focus on LGBTQIA+ and ethnic minorities. CAPS and Media Education are constantly looking at intersectionality in terms of all these themes.

Since May 2023 we have been prototyping open access to mental health and wellbeing

support across the city through our Thrive Welcome Teams. Initial data suggests the new open access approach is reducing some pressure on Primary Care Services as well reaching harder to reach groups, such as males.

Mental Health Services

As a result of a review regarding an individual undertaken by the Mental Welfare Commission and during due diligence, significant issues in terms of systems and service delivery which was not identified during the two inspections required service review and additional capacity was required to ensure we are able to meet fundamental statutory obligations and ensure full allocation when required.

An additional manager post was urgently put in place and the MHO service has now been strengthened as part of the redesign and restructure. Although we recognise the continuous improvement, we need to make there has been significant progress in this area which is evidenced in improvement plans performance reporting.

There is a need to improve integrated multidisciplinary working across health and social work services to assess and deliver individual outcomes, consideration is being given to a care program approach or other framework to support multidisciplinary working.

Justice challenges and improvements

Service Quality and Performance

Edinburgh's Community Safety and Justice Partnership, on behalf of the Edinburgh Community Planning Partnership, is responsible for the development and implementation of Edinburgh's Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP) 2023-28. The CJOIP sets out the priority areas for community justice work locally and fully aligns with the National Strategy for Community Justice and complements the Edinburgh Partnership's Community Plan 2018-28. A report on community justice activity under the National Strategy's aims and CJOIP priorities is submitted annually to the Edinburgh Partnership for approval before onward submission to Community Justice Scotland and the Scottish Government. The latest annual report highlighting key local community justice activity in 2022/23 is published on the Council's website.

Key improvements

Some key highlights include:

Colleagues in Justice Services were invited to contribute to a 'Working for Us' video which

will be used in all our recruitment adverts. Comments by those colleagues who agreed to participate, demonstrate their commitment and passion to delivering Justice services in Edinburgh. We have also welcomed a number of new colleagues to Justice Services during 2023/24, which is really positive given the recruitment challenges we had experienced previously.

A review of justice services took place in 2023 with a new structure implemented in 2024 which provides improved co-ordination of people in the justice system and greater service integration; maximising access into trauma enhanced, gender specific groupwork and other supports.

Dedicated provision for all women has been a vision for justice services for many years and a newly refurbished Women's Centre provides a central hub where women accessing Willow may also access a range of partner services to meet their needs. The Centre has been designed utilising trauma informed principles, creating an environment which is welcoming, respectful, and safe.

Crossroads has expanded its remit to include supporting men who have received a

Structured Deferred Sentence, those who are diverted from prosecution, and those subject to bail supervision thus creating a 'one stop shop' for men in the justice system. A full range of supports and interventions is delivered at Crossroads in partnership with other organisations for example, men may access nutrition, and healthy eating supports from Edinburgh Community Food and can attend groupwork to address alcohol/ drug dependency delivered by EMORSS.

Our Community Intervention Service for Sexual Offending has been delivering Survive and Thrive for men with interpersonal trauma; this psychoeducational intervention, looks to increase understanding of how past interpersonal trauma can impact on current functioning, and practical strategies to help people to manage this impact more effectively.

Development of an aide memoire and briefings delivered to both Justice Services and Sexual Offending Policing Unit colleagues to support the completion of Risk Management Plans.

Partnership Working

In 2023/24 we have commissioned a number of Third Sector organisations, using the additional Covid recovery funding:

Edinburgh Food Co-operative

Edinburgh Community Food (ECF) works with Willow to support women to increase their awareness of a healthy balanced diet, to access affordable food, and to gain confidence in food preparation and cooking. ECF provides both 1:1 and group support to women at Willow. They are also working with Crossroads to provide men with the same service and are also intending to develop a specific program aimed at fathers who have contact with their children.

Edinburgh and Midlothian Offending Recovery and Support Service (EMORSS)

This service delivered by Change Grow Live (CGL) provides a full-time Assertive Outreach/Recovery Coordinator based within the Edinburgh community focusing on proactively providing an outreach service for individuals who have been arrested at St Leonards Police Station and/or appeared at Edinburgh Sherriff Court (ESC). The service employs a harm reduction approach focusing on individuals who are hardest to reach, most at risk particularly in relation to drug related harm/overdose, and in greatest need, to

encourage them to engage with support. Relationships have been developed with both the NHS Court Liaison and Diversion Service and court social work staff at ESC, to ensure that people released from a court appearance without supports are aware of the weekly drop-in service available at the CGL premises in Broughton Street, central Edinburgh.

Change, Grow, Live

Supporting vulnerable people to rehabilitate into their community following a period in custody. Many people leaving prison lack basic essentials to help them adjust to life outside prison so to address this, justice services provide winter liberation packs for CGL colleagues to distribute to those in greatest need during the colder months of the year. Items available for the backpacks include mobile phone, hat, gloves, torch, diary, notebook, useful telephone numbers for supports, wipes, deodorant, and water bottle/flask. Additionally, some of the most vulnerable who have no means of making contact with friends, family, or services, have been issued with a basic mobile phone to keep them connected with support networks to help them live crime free lives, and advance digital inclusion.

Cyrenians

We have collaborated with Cyrenians to launch the Royal Edinburgh Hospital community garden project. Those carrying out unpaid work as part of a Community Payback Order (CPO) in the community maintain the community garden woodland, orchard, and garden, through landscaping, planting, pruning, clear ups, and other key garden activities. Over winter, work is carried out preparing for the spring and summer months of full bloom. The project offers weekend sessions to accommodate as many participants as possible and to allow those working standard weekday hours to complete their CPO with minimum disruption to their employment. The garden is open to the public providing an opportunity for people to see the work carried out by the team.

We have also commissioned Cyrenians to establish and operate two food pantries in areas of need where people can access quality food items in return for a small membership charge, in order to address food poverty.

Edinburgh Women's Aid (EWA)

Peer Support program - for women who have used EWA and Justice services who would benefit from receiving peer support or wish to

provide support to others as they move forward. Recognising the vital importance of lived experience and knowing that many of past service users have expressed a desire to give back to other women going through what they went through, EWA goal is to build a peer support programme that will allow women who have experienced domestic abuse to support each other towards building lives free from abuse within a safe and supporting community. The programme employs one full-time staff worker, who has been recruited from former women with lived experience and have expressed their wish to support others. The Peer Support Facilitator plans, develops and leads group sessions; offer one-to-one support where needed, including signposting to EWA and external services; and monitors and evaluates the progress of the programme. The Peer Support Facilitator is supervised and supported by an experienced EWA staff member and works collaboratively with the Women's Justice Service team.

Wise Group

Connect helps people develop their life skills through online learning and we are currently using this for the "other activity" element of a Community Payback Order as it is a practical

and accessible way to reduce Unpaid Work Hours with the added benefit of learning key life-skills. It can also be accessed by others in receipt of Justice Services, and this is something that we are exploring. The programme covers employability, physical health and mental wellbeing, relationships and developing positive social networks.

Key challenges

The City of Edinburgh is currently experiencing a housing crisis which is significantly impacting on people seeking accommodation in the city, including people being released from custody. Justice Services have positive relationships with our colleagues in homelessness services and work closely with them, but there are occasions when people find themselves homeless or being released from custody on statutory justice supervision, where no accommodation is available.

The Scottish Prison Service made changes to the population at HMP Edinburgh. This had a significant impact on female prisoners and our ability to maintain current levels of service both via psychology, women's justice services and CGL. The impact of these changes was also felt by the prison-based social work team, as

the changing profile increased their workload, with no increase to staffing resource.

Justice Services Performance

Edinburgh Justice Social Work Services continues to be committed to preventative work and to a service model that offers a continuity of service regardless of where the person is in the community justice pathway.

The service workload continued to increase, primarily as a result of Scottish Courts and Tribunal Services dealing with their backlog, following Covid-19 restrictions ending. This generated an increase in the number of people we supported and the number of assessments we completed:

2,489 people were supported through new community orders by Justice Social Work Services. This represents a 13.3% increase from support given during 2022-23.

Justice Services staff completed 1,466 social work reports to support decision making by the courts, representing a 7.9% increase in comparison to 2022-23.

More detailed performance information is reported in the annual Community Payback Order Report (submitted annually in October).

Resources

The City of Edinburgh Council is facing a £29.9m forecast budget gap for 2025/26 and £109.1m by 2028/29. These gaps are subject to a number of further risks, particularly around the on-going financial impacts of increased demand for homelessness services and delivery of approved savings within the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB)

The council has developed a Medium-Term Financial Plan to strengthen future modelling and decision making. The MTFP is a crucial vehicle for the Council encompassing a strategic approach to financial management that examines the resources available over a multi-year timeframe, aiming to create a sustainable and resilient fiscal framework. This approach not only facilitates the alignment of financial resources with long-term goals but also enhances transparency, accountability and the efficient allocation of resources. With effective medium-term financial planning, the Council can better anticipate financial challenges, make informed decisions and ensure that public funds are utilised effectively to address the evolving needs and aspirations of our communities.

As part of the MTFP Officers have been working to develop proposals to address the forecast £29.9m gap in 2025/26. These savings are part of a wider programme of

actions geared towards securing the Council's longer-term financial sustainability, including:

- (i) management of in-year pressures (particularly within Early Years and Home to School Transport in the Children, Education and Justice Services Directorate and Homelessness, Repairs and Maintenance and Culture and Wellbeing within the Place Directorate); and
- (ii) delivery of pre-approved savings already assumed within the 2025/26 baseline, including but not limited to Homelessness voids (£3.5m) and Best Value reviews in Waste and Cleansing (£2.5m), Homelessness (£2.5m) and Corporate Services (£2.5m).
- (iii) following the identification of one-off funding in 2024/25, corresponding recurring savings are also assumed in schools (£5.2m, with a full-year effect of £8.2m) and Edinburgh Leisure (£4.2m) in 2025/26. These sums are, in the majority of cases, in addition to the £47.8m of approved savings within the EIJB and £28.5m within the Council approved for delivery in 2024/25.

A savings and recovery programme (SRP) has been developed as part of the EIJB's Medium-

Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and similar to the council's Medium Term Financial Plan aims to provide a structured approach to reaching financial balance and sustainability through delivery of a multi-year programme of change and efficiency. Across the EIJB the 2024/25 programme has an ambitious in-year target of £47.85 million to be delivered across 25 projects. While, as of the end of the June 2024, 13 of these 25 projects were on track and expected to deliver associated savings in 2024/25 totalling almost £21m, there was (and continues to be) a shortfall on the level of savings across the remainder of the programme.

Given this position, the Chief Officer of the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is projecting an overall in-year funding gap for Council delegated social care services of £17.2m. Work is underway to rescope alternative savings where appropriate.

If all the savings proposals are approved and delivered in full, this will address the residual current estimated savings requirement in 2025/26. Attainment of this position is, however, subject to active management of risks and pressures, as well as delivery of all previously approved savings. In addition, adverse changes in the Council's key income

and expenditure drivers may give rise to an increased overall savings requirement.

Justice Social Work is provided by the Scottish Government through a ring-fenced grant under Section 27 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The funding is provided to allow the Council to discharge its statutory duties and to work towards preventing and reducing further offending in line with the Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan (CJOIP).

The City of Edinburgh Council received Section 27 flexible funding of £8,116,636 for the year 2023/24 which remains unchanged on the prior year's allocation plus specifically targeted s27 funding of £2,196,629. In addition, separate allocations for Pandemic Recovery were made totalling £1,284,570 of this £193,465 was funding specifically targeted at Strengthening bail supervision. Additional funding was made available for Structured Deferred Sentences and the Council received £37,5000. There have been financial pressures in recent years due to the unfunded pay award for public service staff, particularly in 2022/23 and 2023/24, it is estimated this equated to approximately £400,000 - £500,000 per annum (excludes vacancies). To address the unfunded pay award a service review has been undertaken, with full consultation with staff and Trade Unions and we are currently working to implement the new structure. In addition to delivering the service within the

allocated budget, the service review will also increase both leadership and front-line capacity, reduced duplication, strengthen services, support wellbeing and recovery and improve outcomes for people using our services.

Additional funding has again been allocated by the Scottish Government, and while most welcome, there continue to be barriers to using this funding, including the date this funding has to be used by and national recruitment issues of social worker staff. Both our recruitment and procurement processes take a considerable amount of time and impacted on our ability to use the additional funding immediately. Because of the fixed term nature of the funding, coupled with national recruitment challenges, there have been significant delays in getting people started. Also contracts to the end of 31 March 2024 were not attractive to people, which has impacted on the pool of staff applying to these temporary posts.

Workforce

National shortages of qualified social workers are well evidenced through Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) data.

Recruitment and Retention Development Work Practice Educators and Student placement data shows students who have a successful learning experience are more likely to apply for a post on qualification.

This financial year (April 24-mar. 25) Edinburgh has placed 56 social work students and will continue to be creative around placement design and support. Practice Educator qualification is offered to social workers who wish to progress in the area of practice education after 2 or more years post qualification and are offered a placement fee in recognition of the added responsibilities and time afforded. This qualification can also serve to develop practitioners into more senior positions. Students receive a high quality and variety of placements and good support.

The Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) supported year is now being fully implemented with new paperwork and mandatory learning activities (portfolio of evidence) introduced on the 3rd June to be in line with the introduction of the new CPL requirements. NQSWs can now access the learning tasks on My Learning Hub, and this will include core learning and

training. Managers will have access to this new portfolio of evidence, so that they can encourage or support the NQSW. Edinburgh has continued to be committed to providing NQSW's with relevant training, protected learning time, protected caseload, mentoring, weekly reducing to fortnightly supervision as the NQSW advances through the year and overall support to complete their first year in practice. This is subject to evaluation including feedback and analysis of retention data and will be further reported next year.

'Grow your own' traineeship – staff who train 'on the job' have a high rate of retention. Currently Edinburgh is supporting 7 through the Post Graduate Route with the OU, soon to embark on their second placement. There are currently an additional 4 employees being supported to access Social Work training from their current post. After a successful round of interviews, a further 6 employees have secured sponsorship for Robert Gordon Distance Learning Course due to start in the new year. An important aspect of this is paying staff at their current grade ensures affordability and equity of access.

A further aspect to retention is the investment in post qualifying /advanced learning. The interest remains in high demand for post qualifying courses which provide social

workers with the necessary ongoing professional development and professional learning opportunities. This ensures Edinburgh maintains its commitment to the SSSC Codes of Practice for Employers through providing learning and development opportunities to enable workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge and this includes contributing to the provision of social care and social work education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning.

In 2023-2024 eight members from children services were successful in their application for the post qualifying child welfare and protection certificate. This year sees double the annual candidates sponsored to undertake the PQ Qualification in Child Welfare and Protection delivered by Stirling University. On completion of their studies, they will be supported to take on more complex tasks within their areas of practice. In 2023 eight members of Health and Social Care and Place staff were successful in being selected to carry out the Post Qualifying Award in Adult Support and Protection delivered by Stirling University. This year sees another eight candidates being sponsored.

In 2024 nine members were selected to undertake the practice learning course,

through both the Napier University Practice Learning Qualification and the Robert Gordon University Practice Learning Qualification. In 2025 we look to sponsor twelve candidates across children and justice services and HSCP. In 2023-2024 only 2 social workers were recruited and sponsored into the MHO (Mental Health Officer) program which was less than previous years. The deficit in Mental Health Officers saw a recruitment drive this year across Edinburgh resulting in successfully obtaining the maximum quota of 6 candidates. All 6 candidates were from H&SC Partnership. On successful completion of the MHO Award the Chief Social Work Officer appoints newly qualified Mental Health Officers to the duty Rota to provide MHO cover across the City of Edinburgh.

In terms of non-social work qualified staff, a number of developments are taking place for paraprofessionals which will be established to increase job mobility and transfer of skills. HSCP have delivered a range of targeted actions aimed at attracting people into social care and retaining existing staff which has resulted in an increase of Care at Home staff now in post. More creative advertising methods including promotional videos linked to job advertisements and wider use of social media has resulted in a significant increase in numbers applying for posts.

Learning and development.

Over the last year we have increased our Learning and Development capacity and learning, and development continues to be an area for improvement. Improving learning and development for social workers- and other paraprofessionals is essential to ensure they are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and support needed to provide effective services. Work is progressing to enhance the learning and development process for social workers:

We are currently conducting a Learning Needs Analysis, considering priorities and identifying skill gaps. There is a need to regularly assess the training needs of social workers through surveys, interviews, and focus groups to identify specific areas where additional training is required.

We are in the process of collecting input from social workers about the types of training they find most beneficial and relevant to their roles.

Over the coming year we will be reviewing orientation and induction programs. To ensure structured onboarding we are developing an orientation program for new social workers that covers organizational policies, procedures, available resources, and the specific challenges they may face in their roles.

We are currently working on our learning and development offer, providing ongoing training

and development opportunities including workshops and seminars, organising regular training sessions on relevant topics such as trauma-informed practice, cultural competence, mental health, substance use and other areas in social work practice.

We are reviewing our online Learning Platform mylearning and enabling an add on to the platform that ensures we can organise more multi-agency training via the Child protection and adult protection committee. Utilising online training modules and webinars to provide flexible learning opportunities that can be accessed at the convenience of the social workers and other professionals.

We are encouraging reflective Practice-Supervision and Coaching that encourages reflective practice, where social workers can discuss their experiences, challenges, and learnings.

We are driving forward with Interdisciplinary Learning with other professionals (e.g., healthcare providers, educators) to foster interdisciplinary understanding and collaboration, enhancing the holistic approach to service delivery.

Edinburgh is creating a culture of continuous improvement

Feedback Loops: Establishing mechanisms for social workers to provide feedback on training programs and suggest improvements.

Celebrating Learning: recognising and celebrating achievements in learning and development, such as completing training programs or implementing new practices based on learned skills.

We are looking to utilize technology and E-learning tools, bite size training and 7-minute briefings so busy professionals feel able to access learning and development.

Now we have additional capacity we are looking to create peer learning groups where social workers can come together to discuss challenges, share experiences, and learn from one another.

We continue to foster networking opportunities: for social workers to connect with professionals in other organisations to share best practices and innovative approaches.

Corporately we are investing in Leadership Training opportunities specifically for those in supervisory or leadership roles to enhance their skills in guiding and supporting their teams.

Succession Planning: we are developing a succession planning strategy to ensure that future leaders are identified and prepared to take on leadership roles within the organization.

Edinburgh is working towards being a Trauma-informed city

We continue to drive forward with the [National Trauma Transformation Programme \(NTTP\)](#), led by [NHS Education for Scotland \(NES\)](#), was developed to meet the [Scottish Government](#) and [COSLA's](#) ambition for a trauma informed and responsive workforce and services. This means that we universally recognise where people are affected by trauma and adversity, respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery.

The Scottish Government has provided recurring £50,000 in additional funding to all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland since 2021/22 to support us to embed a trauma-informed and responsive approach across services, systems and workforces. Local Authorities/Health and Social Care Partnerships have used this funding to meet local priorities and context for this work. This funding was used to create a Trauma Lead Officer role, to embed and sustain a Trauma Informed Culture within CEC & HSCP.

We know that people with protected characteristics and our care experienced population are likely to experience trauma at higher rates than the general population. Based on Scottish Government estimates of trauma in the general population.

What action have we undertaken to tackle the issue of racism and discrimination?

The City of Edinburgh Council (council) including the delegated HSCP is committed to tackling racism, discrimination, and hate crime – as an employer but also as an education authority and service delivery body. As a member of The Edinburgh Partnership, the Council is committed to ensuring Edinburgh is a safe and welcoming place to live, work and visit.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategies and Governance

As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the Council has 3 existing EDI strategies as follows:

- The Equality and Diversity Framework that sets out the Council's Equality Outcomes over 4 years,
- The existing Colleague Diversity and Inclusion strategy that will be developed into a new Workforce EDI Strategy as featured in the People Strategy (2024-2027) and,
- The Education and Children's Services Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-24 which ensures the Council fulfils its obligation of equity and

excellence for all learners and young people.

This multi-strategy approach ensures that the Council fully complies with PSED as an employer, service delivery body, and education authority.

The Officer Equality Working Group (OEWG) has senior representatives from all Directorates and provides governance across the EDI Framework and Workforce EDI Strategy. The group is responsible for providing strategic leadership, direction, and oversight to strengthen the development and delivery of EDI practice, and capacity building across the organisation.

The OEWG consults with the Member Equality Working Group (MEWG) quarterly to ensure an open dialogue on the Council's internal EDI workstreams and Elected Members who represent our communities across the city. This includes the development of the new EDI Framework and Workforce EDI Strategy, and the Council's progress on equality-related motions (including work to tackle hate crime and racism), ahead of formal reporting to the Policy and Sustainability Committee.

The Edinburgh Learns Board governs the Education and Children's Services EDI Strategy and ensures alignment with other young people-specific statutory requirements

and strategies. An officer from Children, Education, and Justice Services sits on the OEWG.

The following sets out the related anti-racism and discrimination work that the Council is currently undertaking under the above strategies:

As an Employer:

- As of October 2023, colleagues across the organisation have undertaken training programmes to help them both understand and effectively tackle racism and discrimination in the workplace:
 - Active Bystander – 1,828 additional colleagues
 - Anti-racist Practice – 433 additional colleagues
 - Islamophobia playlist – additional 3,613
- Colleague Networks determine several awareness events that the Council celebrates annually including ones specific to race and religion:
 - Race Equality Week - 5 February to 11 February 2024
 - Ramadan - 10 March to 9 April 2024
 - Black History Month – October 2024
 - Diwali 31 - October 2024

- Islamophobia Awareness Month - November 2024
- Hanukkah 25 December 2024 to 2 January 2025

- An example of the approach to these awareness days/months is as follows:
 - Officers have met with [MEND](#) to plan Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM) in November this year. The events and activities listed below build on last year's programme to raise awareness and celebrate the diversity of cultures and religions in the Council and city. Like last year, there will be an event each week during November for Council colleagues:
 - Two Changing the Narrative: Challenging Islamophobia in the Classroom workshops to support teaching colleagues and educators to address issues of discrimination against students on grounds of faith or identity.
 - Edinburgh University will host an [interactive walking tour](#) highlighting the many historical and contemporary connections

between Edinburgh and the Muslim world.

- The new interfaith colleague network, SHINE was established this year, and officers have invited leaders from faith communities to participate in the colleague network in October.
- Officers in HR are currently working with colleagues in the Council's Health and Safety Team to make improvements to the way in which racist incidents are reported on the Council's portal. This will enable Council colleagues to report an incident themselves which will refine how incidents are reported and improve reporting rates and data.

As an Education Authority:

- Young people who experience racism and discrimination in schools receive support through the Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice Procedure that sits under the Included Engaged Involved (IEI) policy. This includes guidance and support for parents and carers.
- There is a range of high-quality training opportunities to support teachers and wider education staff to deal effectively with

racism and discrimination, underpinned by procedures and [supplementary guidance](#) on tackling racist incidents and creating an anti-racist culture. Further information about training can be found in the most recent [report](#) to Education Children and Families Committee. This builds on previous work to strengthen how we tackle racist incidents and create an anti-racist culture reported at [Education Children and Families Committee](#). We continue to review our offer and the impact of training and other initiatives to create an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory culture.

As a service delivery body/partnership approach:

- An example of the Edinburgh Partnership's collaborative approach was recently exercised due to the terrible events in Southport which prompted the Council to call an urgent partnership meeting, followed by a [statement of support](#) from the Council Leader and the creation of a [Support for our Communities](#) webpage.
- The Council's current [Integrated Impact Assessment \(IIA\)](#) process and guidance has been developed by the four local Lothian authorities and NHS Lothian and

looks to address inequality through an intersectional lens, in all relevant decision making. The IIA process is relevant for proposals for policies, strategies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices, budget setting and the assessment of potential savings and activities.

- The Council has continued to foster good relations with key local community organisations: [Edinburgh Lothians and Regional Equality Council](#) (ELREC) and [The Edinburgh Interfaith Association](#), to:
 - fully understand the impact of recent events, racist incidents and discrimination on diverse communities and those affected
 - coordinate a collaborative response from the Edinburgh Partnership should such incidents of hate crime escalate - reaffirming the Council's commitment to tackling hate crime, racism and discrimination
 - build on the Council's holistic community safety approach – by facilitating ongoing engagement with Police Scotland and communities through the council's Family and Household Support services as outlined in the [Supporting LGBT+ Communities paper](#).

- As set out in the Scottish Government's Hate Crime strategy (2023), it is important that everyone lives free from hatred and prejudice. The Scottish Government want to ensure that there is adequate support for victims of hate crime, improved data and evidence on hate crime and that there are effective approaches to dealing with it.
- The Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership is currently reviewing the [Joint Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Strategy](#), and it is anticipated that a multi-agency approach to tackling hate crime will be embedded throughout. This includes improvements to the ways in which we collect data on hate crime.

Looking ahead

Last year was taking stock and looking at the priorities for improvement. This year has been about transforming and laying the foundations to improve systems, culture and practice.

Both Children, HSCP and the Justice service including Drug treatment and testing have been progressing full scale review, redesign and restructure.

There has been a significant focus on recruitment activities, and there is a need to now improve initiatives regarding health and wellbeing of colleagues to promote retention and support social workers and social care staff and their managers within their continuous professional development ensuring learning and development is a priority.

Improvements need to be made to develop our workforce learning and development offer with a learning and development needs analysis and strategic plan.

We will continue improving our performance data in line with government requirements, practice standards and providing greater scrutiny of outcomes for children, young people, and adults.

Assessment of need and care planning continues to be a focus in terms of co-production participation and more user-friendly

documents that make sense to children, young people and adults reading them across children's and HSCP.

Within HSCP a review of the Three conversations model of assessment will be undertaken - is it embedded? are people on board with it? and is it strengths based enough? are the questions posed at this time.

Data cleansing has been undertaken at pace and we are moving to a new system at pace. This is an exciting time and will bring improved recording for children, young people and adults, and provide an improved workflow for social work and other professionals. The new system will also provide more focus on outcomes and performance reporting. This will be a significant transformation which will inevitably bring its challenges. This is now progressing at pace.

We are continuing to refocus our early intervention strategy across children and HSCP and developing whole family support with partners which effectively supports early intervention to ensure we are getting it right for children (GIRFEC) and getting it right for everyone (GIRFE).

As a partnership we are keen to ensure that GIRFEC, GIRFE and The Promise are evidenced in all the work of the partners and

leads to improved outcomes for children and young people and adults. With more children, young people and adults remaining within their own homes and communities, with the offer of effective preventative and early support, and strengths-based approaches to ensure we can implement and evidence effective work in this area to ensure the longer-term wellbeing and protection of children, young people, and adults.

We are continuing to Strengthen our front door to services and developing a more integrated approach to chronologies and assessment of need and risk across Childrens and HSCP. Improving systemic practice, which includes increased visiting and relationship building and person centered, strengths-based practice.

Improving our corporate parenting response to include promise plan priorities regarding education, homelessness and brothers and sisters staying connected. Making sure that Edinburgh's children are supported within local communities and not in out of placements.

We are continuing to improve our transition requirements for young people services – with a refreshed policy and now procedure in the early stages of implementation.

We continue to ensure good quality assessment of need, more scrutiny of budgets

and spend in relation to transition across both services and ensuring the funding within budgets is allocated within Childrens and HSCP appropriately.

Self-directed support (SDS) is being developed in Edinburgh to be the central approach to delivering Care. We see embracing the SDS ethos of building on people's strengths and finding creative solutions and implementing the practice standards as the key to putting the principles of person centred, independent living into practice to enable people to be active citizens in their communities.

We are committed to becoming more trauma informed. Our vision is of compassionate, nurturing, relational, rights-based response and support for all- within workplaces, families, schools, and communities.

We are developing a strategic multi-agency group to provide oversight, governance, and support for implementation of trauma responsive, and recovery focused practice across Edinburgh.

