

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**23rd October 2024****Report by Chief Social Work Officer****Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2023/24****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presented to elected members is the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2023/24. The report is attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

BACKGROUND

3. In compliance with Chief Social Work Officers statutory functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, they are required to produce an Annual Report. This is based on a template agreed with the Office of the Chief Social Work Adviser. This report was presented to the Integration Joint Board on 25th September 2024.
4. The report provides a narrative of statutory social work and social care activity. The template outlines the current pressures being experienced across the service and describes:
 - Governance and Accountability arrangements
 - Service Quality and Performance
 - Challenges and Improvements
 - Resources
 - Workforce
 - Looking ahead
5. Performance data and analysis is set throughout the report and reflects the operational delivery of services for childrens services, criminal justice, mental health and adult services including social care.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

6. The Chief Social Work Officer role is key in a number of partnership arrangements including the Health and Social Care Partnership, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), East Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee, East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection Committee as well as being the professional advisor to the Council.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

Finance

7. There are no financial implications arising from this report, however the report does refer to the significant financial challenges facing the delivery of social work and social care services for the Health and Social Care Partnership.

CONCLUSIONS

8. This report provides an overview of the professional activity for social work and social care within East Renfrewshire for 2023/24 through the delivery of the statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer.
9. The report highlights the high standard of work undertaken across the reporting period but recognises there continues to be a number of significant challenges and risks facing social work and social care within East Renfrewshire, financial instability and uncertainty being core pressures. We are unable to meet these challenges without the continued commitment and dedication of our social work and social care staff.
10. The experience of many in our communities continues to be challenging with added complications and pressures. This has involved responding to higher demands for support and increased complexity in continued unpredictable times.
11. At the heart of the social work profession lies a commitment to enabling and supporting vulnerable individuals to make positive, sustainable changes to their lives to achieve the best outcomes for them, their families and communities as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. The Council is asked to comment and approve the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report attached as Appendix 1 for submission to the Office of The Chief Social Work Advisor, Scottish Government.

REPORT AUTHOR

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October 2024

BACKGROUND PAPERS

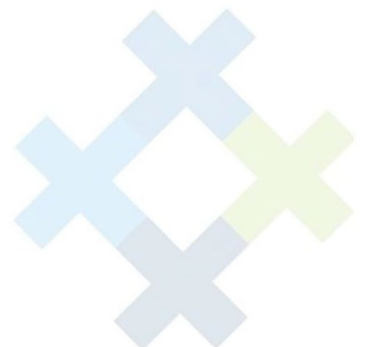
[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022-23](#)
[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22](#)



**EAST RENFREWSHIRE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

**CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S
ANNUAL REPORT**

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024



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Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year

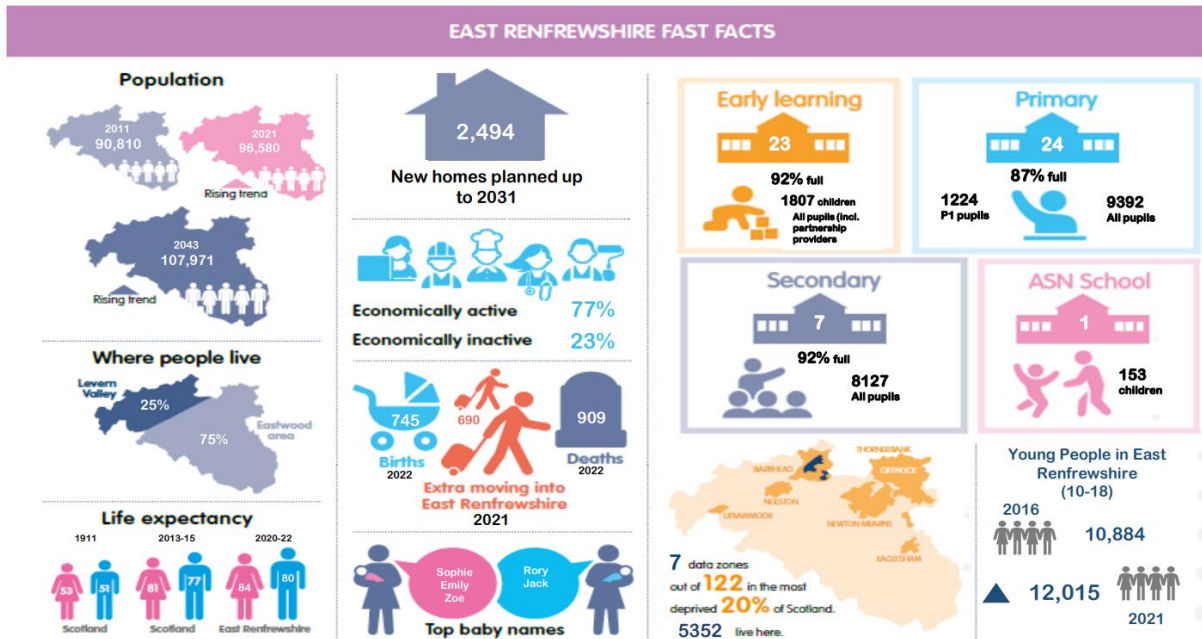
The role of social work professionals is to support, care for and protect children and adults across the whole of the life course and to enhance wellbeing and improve their outcomes. Our staff crucially assess, respond to and manage risk and play a key role in managing public protection.

Our workforce in East Renfrewshire continue to support our residents and we are fortunate to have staff that are stable, passionate and committed. It is important however, to consider the context in which services operate. We are both nationally and locally living in difficult times. The stress and strain of the Covid-19 pandemic is still evident in individuals and communities as is the ongoing cost of living crisis. Public services such as local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships face increased demand and complexity with reduced resource and finances.

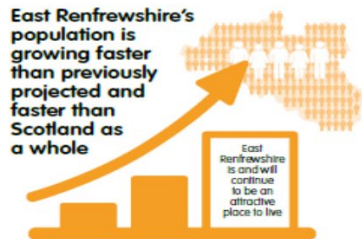
East Renfrewshire's Health and Social Care Partnership has faced the most difficult year since its inception. Our financial situation and requirement to make substantial savings led to a voluntary redundancy scheme. Many posts and roles have been removed from our structure. Another significant first was the introduction of the Supporting People Framework to assess need. In April 2023 only those with moderate, substantial or critical need would receive support. Given the depth of savings required, by November 2023 this was changed to only substantial or critical need would be met. I offer these examples to provide an understanding of the climate and pressure our workforce operates in.

As Chief Social Work Officer I am immensely proud of our staff and I hope this report provides a helpful insight into their work over the past year. We are committed to continue to provide the best service we can to our residents and to do so with trust, kindness, compassion and understanding.

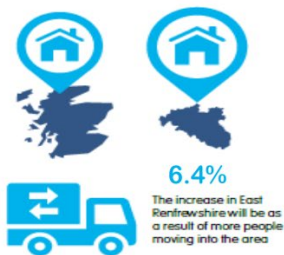
East Renfrewshire Population Facts



EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S POPULATION – WHAT TO EXPECT



The number of people living in east Renfrewshire is projected to increase by 6.4% by the year 2028. This is higher than the Scottish rate of 1.8%



The two age groups that will grow the most



East Renfrewshire currently has the highest average household size in Scotland, but this is projected to shrink as more people live alone



More houses are being built for three reasons



Demand will increase for services



East Renfrewshire has the second highest life expectancy at birth for females and the fourth highest for males



Section 1: Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

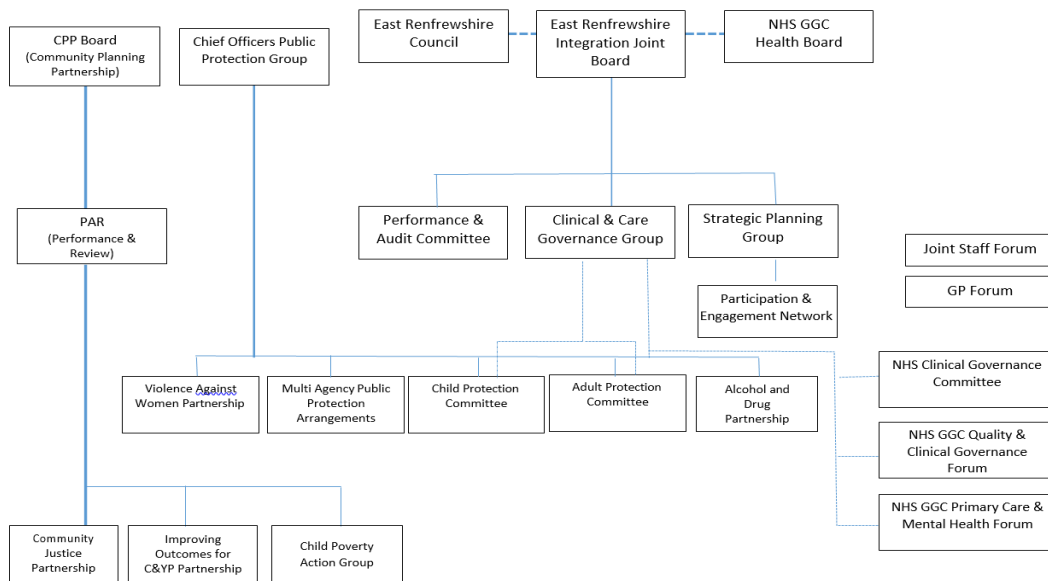
East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in 2015 under the direction of East Renfrewshire’s Integration Joint Board (IJB) and it has built on the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP), which NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and East Renfrewshire Council established in 2006.

Our Partnership has always managed a wider range of services than is required by the relevant legislation. Along with adult community health and care services, we provide health and social care services for children and their families and justice social work.

During the last eighteen years our integrated health and social care management and staff teams have developed strong relationships with many different partner organisations. Our scale and continuity of approach have enabled these relationships to flourish. We have a history of co-production with our third sector partners and we are willing to test new and innovative approaches.

This Chief Social Work Officer report reflects the ninth year of the move to a Health and Social Care Partnership and whilst it outlines the key statutory social work functions, it also explains how they are delivered within the spirit of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation. The Chief Social Work Officer provides the Health and Social Care Partnership and East Renfrewshire Council with professional advice, leadership and oversight of all social work and social care functions. The Chief Social Work Officer is responsible for the scrutiny and quality assurance of all public protection services in East Renfrewshire and reports to the Chief Executive for East Renfrewshire Council in his role. East Renfrewshire Council’s Chief Executive chairs the Chief Officer Public Protection Group. The group meets twice a year and the Chief Social Work Officer acts as their professional advisor.

The chart below shows the governance, relationships and links with partners.



Our Strategic Vision and Priorities



Our vision statement, “*Working together with the people of East Renfrewshire to improve lives*”, was developed in partnership with our workforce and wider partners, carers and members of the community. This vision sets our overarching direction through our Strategic Plan. At the heart of this are the values and behaviours of our staff and the pivotal role individuals, families, carers, communities and wider partners play in supporting the citizens of East Renfrewshire.

Strategic Planning and Commissioning

Our strategic plan is the third iteration since our initial plan in 2015. The plan was developed in consultation with stakeholders and East Renfrewshire residents, despite the continuing challenges we faced from the pandemic. This included a highly participative engagement process coproduced with wider partners through our Participation and Engagement Network and a comprehensive strategic needs assessment. The consultation found that people were supportive of our strategic priorities and the key areas of focus set out in the plan. Many people emphasised the crucial importance of partnership and collaborative working and there was a focus on ensuring the necessary support is in place for our staff and for local unpaid carers.

Our headline planning priorities build on those set out in our previous strategic plans. We extended our priority for mental health to include mental health and wellbeing across our communities. We changed the emphasis of our priorities relating to health inequalities and primary and community-based healthcare and we introduced a new strategic priority focusing on the crucial role of the workforce across the partnership. For the 2022-25 plan, we also added a distinct priority focusing on protecting people from harm, reflecting the cross-cutting and multi-agency nature of this activity.

Health and social care services are delivered alongside our third and independent support and care providers and partners. Through our service reviews, current market assessment and conversations with providers and engagement with people and communities we have identified key areas we want to address through market shaping that will support the delivery of our [Strategic Commissioning Plan 2023-25](#).

Annual Performance Report

Our [Annual Performance Report 2023-24](#) has given us an opportunity to demonstrate how we have delivered on our vision and commitments over 2023/24. It provides information about the progress we are making towards delivering our strategic

priorities and achieving the national outcomes for children, the national health and wellbeing outcomes and criminal justice outcomes.

Clinical and Care Governance Group

The Clinical and Care Governance Group focuses on governance, risk management, continuous improvement, inspection activity, learning, service and workforce development, service user feedback and complaints. It continues to provide regular scrutiny on the areas requiring development and improvement to the Integration Joint Board.

Section 2: Service Quality and Performance

2.1 Children's Services

Early Identification and Intervention

The Request for Assistance team ensures that children and their families receive a thorough and prompt response to any referrals and / or enquiries for a child or young person. We support our partner agencies at the earliest opportunity by sharing information and offering advice that strengthens our preventative approach to children, young people and their families.

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Request for Assistance team completed a total of 2,560 enquiries, a 47% increase from the previous year and 351 initial assessments, a decrease of 21% than previously. Of these 351 initial assessments, 24% required targeted intervention, highlighting ongoing and increased complexities evident in our communities post pandemic.

Children 1st Family Group Decision Making

The Children 1st Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) service is based alongside our Request for Assistance team in an effort to increase and improve families' access to early help and reduce unnecessary social work involvement. The FGDM Coordinator supports families² to formulate their own plan to improve family functioning negating the need for more formal supports.

There was a total of 57 families supported by the Family Group Decision Making Service during this reporting period. Twenty families were already being supported by the team moving into this period, 37 new families were introduced, and 35 families moved on.

Children and Young People's Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

East Renfrewshire has recognised the extent of mental health concerns among the children and young people's population. In response to this a multi-stakeholder Healthier Minds Service aligned to school communities, continues to identify and ensure delivery of mental wellbeing support to promote children and families' recovery. This Healthier Minds service works alongside our existing Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service to support children and families in need. With reduced resource in this reporting period, Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service received 121 referrals with 75% of families showing improvement.

Healthier Minds Team

The Healthier Minds service is East Renfrewshire's framework for supporting and nurturing the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and families. It is also a resource for staff across the children services partnership.

The Healthier Minds hub has representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Work, Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), Youth Counselling, Educational Psychology, Community Learning & Development and the

Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service. Hub members meet weekly to consider referrals and the needs of the child or young person to determine the route for provision of the optimal support.

The three key elements of the service are:

1. Strategic mapping and support to maximise school community capacity to be trauma responsive.
2. Provision of direct services to children and families to build on strengths.
3. Emotional and mental wellbeing and strengthening of the existing school counselling model.

Within this reporting period 385 children & young people have been referred to the Healthier Mind service, with 21% diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) at point of referral (with a further proportion who are awaiting diagnosis or displaying neuro-divergent traits).

In this reporting period we have also seen:

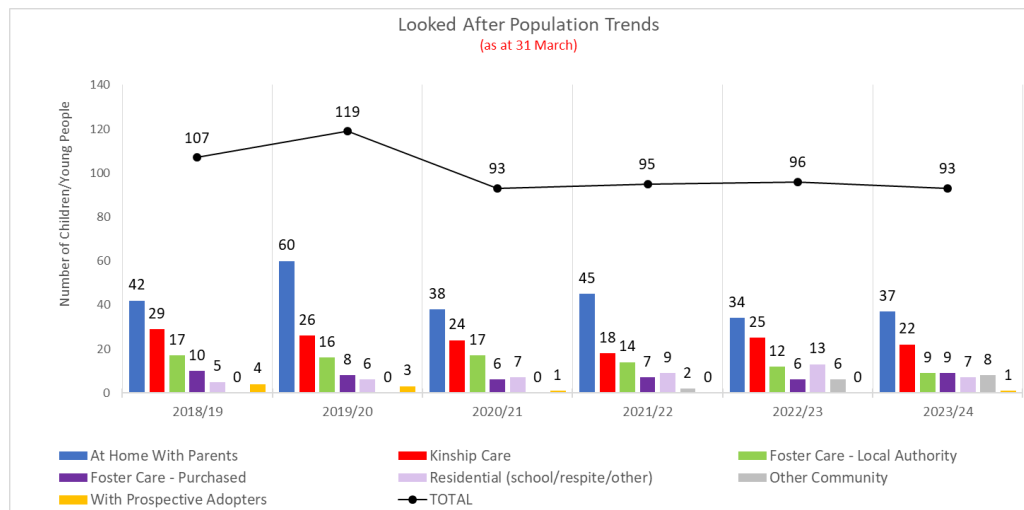
- Increased level of distress reflected in the main reasons for referral: Anxiety / stress, suicidal ideation, emotional regulation & trauma (top four reasons for referral).
- Significant proportion of referrals are higher than ~~at~~ Tier 2 in complexity and need.
- 97% of children and young people supported by Healthier Minds Team report improved mental and emotional wellbeing.
- All parents who completed the post support evaluation noted they would recommend the service to others.
- 15 sessions were delivered with 164 multi-disciplinary staff exploring topics such as Emotional Based School Absence; Supporting Boys with their Emotional Wellbeing; Supporting Self-Harm; Social Media and Emotional Wellbeing; Relational Practice; Neurodiversity, Masking and Emotional Wellbeing.
- A cohort of eighteen staff across Education and Health and Social Care Partnership completed the Cross Reach Counselling skills course to support their work with children and young people.

East Renfrewshire's Looked after Children and Young People's Population - A Profile of our Children

On 31 March 2024, 93 children and young people in East Renfrewshire were looked after in a range of settings. This constitutes approximately 0.4% of the total children's population of the area and remains one of the smallest proportions in Scotland. This

aligns with our continued commitment to The Promise and keeping families together wherever we can. The gender balance has been consistent in recent years with 58% boys and 42% girls. The number of children looked after away from home has decreased. This decrease has been maintained in spite of the challenges posed by our commitment to the National Transfer Scheme and support offered to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. It should also be noted that East Renfrewshire has not placed a child in secure care in this period or for the preceding eight years.

In this year, the average amount of time children were looked after at home increased from seventeen months in 2018/19 to nineteen months in 2023/24.



Intensive Family Support Team

The intensive family support service works alongside community social work, with families of children under the age of twelve years, where a need for more intensive support has been identified. In particular a referral to the team is recommended when children have been, or are at risk of being, removed from the care of their family and if child protection registration is being considered, including at the pre-birth stage. Integrating a Health Visitor within the team has strengthened the support and assessment for children and families for pre-birth and pre-school age children.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 45 children received support from the Intensive Family Support Service. The majority of children supported (46%) were in 0 – 4 age group. The team provide a high level of support to families across seven days with an ethos of upholding the aims of The Promise to keep families together wherever possible and provide the right support at the right time for as long as families need it.

The creation of a health visitor post in our Intensive Family Support team has afforded the opportunity to provide health advice, support and guidance to families we work with when they need it and as often as they need it covering topics such as home safety, sleep routines, nutrition, bonding and attachment. It allows a health visiting service to parents, who would ordinarily not have benefited from this. This includes mothers, whose babies are not in their care, but who have lots of supervised time with their children. The health support ensures parents are given the advice they need

from an experienced health professional. This means we can strive to keep families together where it is safe to do so, recognising the importance of getting it right in the critical early stages of life.

Health visiting advice and guidance has also been given to fathers who do not have full-time care of their children, but are actively involved and want to be the best parent they can be. The impact of the health visitor being integrated into the intensive family support team is hugely beneficial and welcomed by parents.

Youth Intensive Support Service

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the lead service for all looked after young people aged 12 - 26 years, recognising that more intensive interventions are required to improve recovery from trauma, neglect and abuse.

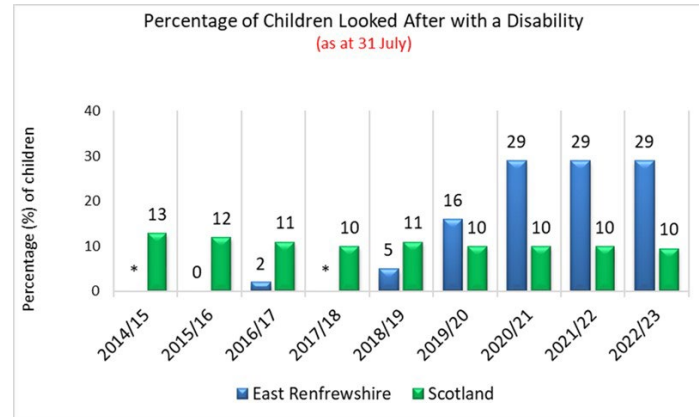
Using a relationship based model the team delivers the statutory duties within the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, namely to support young people eligible for Continuing Care up to the age of 21 years and for Aftercare up to the age of 26 years. The service aim is to successfully engage the most hard to reach young people in East Renfrewshire by providing and co-ordinating multifaceted support plans. The service has the following shared aims across social work and health services:

- To reduce the number of young people looked after and accommodated and at risk of hospitalisation and custody.
- To reduce the impact of historical trauma and abuse for young people.
- To ensure that the transition into adulthood achieves better long term outcomes.

In 2023/24 a total of 156 young people received support from Youth Intensive Support Service and the most common age group was fourteen to twenty. 62.2% of young people were male however, this gender split is affected by the National Transfer Scheme's unaccompanied asylum seeking children arrivals who have been exclusively male. In the reporting period 32% of children and young people supported by the Youth Intensive Support Service are currently looked after and 13% also received additional commissioned support reflecting complexity of presentation and need for holistic wrap around support.

Children with Disabilities

Of note is that 29% of looked after children in East Renfrewshire have a known disability. East Renfrewshire has fully adopted the principles of self-directed support in partnership with children, their families and other people who are important to them.



Note: * represents numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality

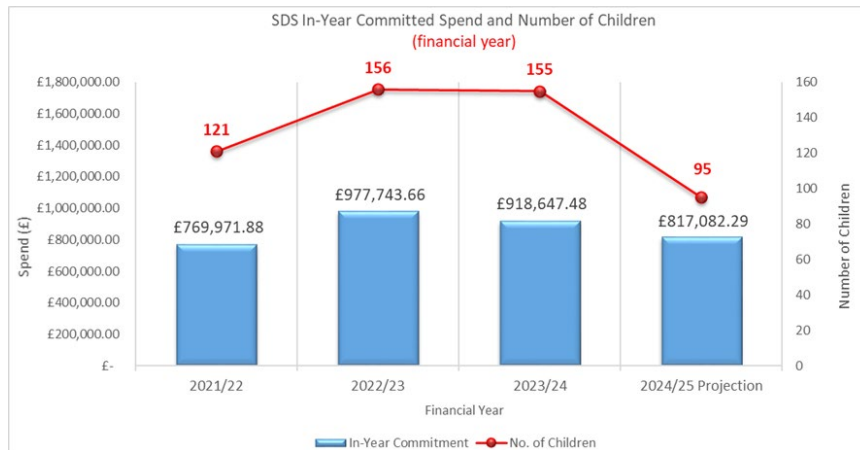
Source: Children's Social Work Statistics, Scottish Government

With the introduction of our Supporting People Framework all our assessments are discussed and agreed by a multi-agency consultation group. This ensures that families and the child's plan are fully considered and support is targeted to the right families. We continue to manage a high level of children with complex needs that require to be looked after away from home. This population increased during the years of Covid19 and have not returned to post pandemic numbers. One factor which has contributed to this trend significantly are the reduced options and resources for suitable respite support in the area.

In 2023/24 and in line with the implementation of the Health and Social Care Partnership's Supporting People Framework, community children's services focused on transforming and redesigning how we review, assess and plan for children with a disability. This included joint work between adult and children's services focusing on preparing and assessing for young people's transition. The work focused on ensuring that children's plans and any decision in relation to budgets were outcomes led which offered parity and flexibility for those in receipt of self-directed support budgets. The team worked closely with partners and other agencies across the Health and Social Care Partnership to fully embed our Supporting People Framework within children's services.

In the reporting period we undertook reviews for all children's plans where families are in receipt of a self-directed support payment. We recognised that there has been an increase in the use of both self-directed support and the request for support from children and families social work services during the recovery from the Covid19 pandemic. In order to support this increasing demand and offer families the best possible service delivery we have realigned some of our social work supports to ensure fair, equitable provision for all our children and their families. This includes a newly developed service based within community children services who will help support future reviews of self-directed support packages and children's individual plans. We will do this in partnership with carers, multi-agency partners and most importantly the child.

The number of children in receipt of an individual budget has decreased by 31% after applying the Supporting People Framework. All children with a support package were reviewed in 2023/24 under this new approach. The service still faces substantial pressure and it is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of significant demand over the years. We continue to work closely with the transition service and adults teams to support with transition planning given the more complex needs presenting. This includes early mapping with education colleagues, timely reviews and transition support from age 14.



Champions Board, Group Work and Participation

We continue to support our Champions Board group, Mini Champs and wider participation groups within East Renfrewshire to ensure that relationships and the voice of children is at the heart of what we do. There is engagement with children, young people, families and communities, with the following successes:

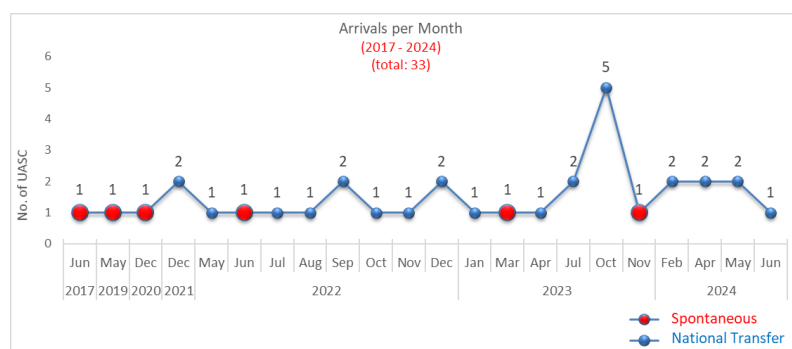
- Young People have attended both the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, (STAF) conference and STAF summit, ensuring their contribution to national discussions around implementation of The Promise.
- The East Renfrewshire Champions Board met with The Promise Scotland as part of the 100 Days of Listening phase of the 'Moving On' Change Programme. Young people were able to share their experience, views and insights around moving on from care.
- Our young people, in partnership with Articulate Cultural Trust, were involved in designing, creating and launching a gable end mural on Strathclyde University to represent and raise awareness of Care Experience.
- As part of a wider summer participation programme, young people engaged in 'Track', a project where they created music and artwork as a way of exploring their identity and expressing their views.
- A relaunch of East Renfrewshire Champions Board took place for new Elected Members, Corporate Parents and Young People. Young Champions

delivered a presentation around the importance of relationships, being listened to and the success of co-production in East Renfrewshire.

- The Champions Board, Mini Champs, Parents and Carers came together to create a short film to share their views on involvement in the Children's Hearing System. This work, in collaboration with CELCIS will be used as a training resource and to inform practice.
- Young people have worked alongside the Scottish Youth Film Foundation to create a film sharing their experiences of being a young person in their local community, exploring issues of stigma, prejudice and identity. This will be used as part of a wider awareness raising campaign as part of East Renfrewshire's implementation of The Promise.
- Children and Young People celebrated their care experience through attending Who Cares? Scotland events such as Time to Shine and the Love Rally alongside their Corporate Parents. During Care Experience Week, a movie night was held at the local theatre for Children, Young People and their families and carers. Elected Members and Corporate Parents joined in on the celebrations for Care Experience Week.
- The Champions Board worked alongside Aberlour Child Care Trust to share their experiences of transitioning to independent living. Members of the Champions Board sat on the "A Good Childhood Board" with Social Work, Aberlour, and Housing to provide feedback on their involvement and guide the progress of the joint Housing / Health and Social Care Partnership care experienced young person housing protocol.
- The Mini Champs has continued to meet fortnightly to support care identity in a fun, nurturing way.
- Our Aftercare group continues to meet on a monthly basis, offering support, peer interaction and a sense of belonging.

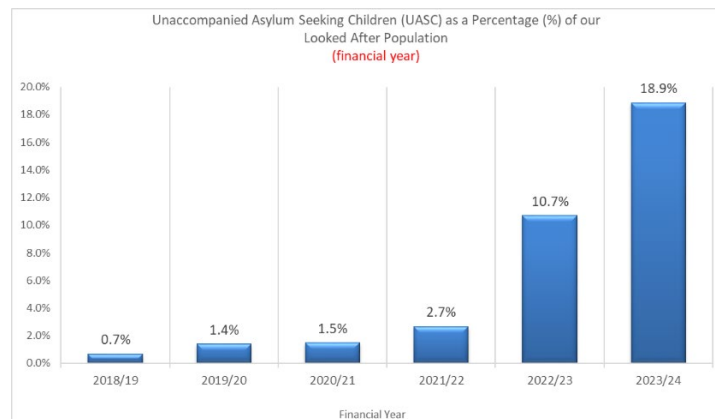
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The Youth Intensive Support Service is the main support service for these unaccompanied children in East Renfrewshire. A total of thirty Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have been accommodated in East Renfrewshire since the start of the National Transfer Scheme in November 2021.



Note: Chart includes data up to 10/07/2024.

Since the implementation of the mandated National Transfer Scheme in November 2021 the proportion of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in our looked after population in East Renfrewshire has risen significantly and is predicted to continue to increase. As young people get older this change is reflected in our aftercare population, currently 9.2% of our aftercare population are unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This group of young people can present with particular and prevalent trauma experiences and are often isolated. Our staff require skilled, compassionate and empathic approaches in supporting this group. The ethnic background of our separated children comprises 11% Afghanis, 6% Albanian, 26% Iranian, 23% Sudanese, 20% Syrian and 14% Vietnamese.



Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care

The Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care Team have continued to provide support, guidance and training to all our carers, ensuring that our fostering families provide safe and stable care which meets the needs of children and young people who require to be cared for away from home.

Fostering

Our fostering households have remained consistent with fourteen approved households offering children and young people emergency, short breaks, interim and permanent foster care. We have continued to focus on recruitment of foster carers after our last campaign's success. To build upon our success we will undertake more targeted recruitment opportunities related to different fostering approvals, highlighting the need for short break fostering to support children in their families' care.

Continuing Care

In 2023/24, our foster carers provided adult placements to young people ceasing to be looked after, which has allowed them to maintain their relationships and have ongoing consistency and support from their carers. Our carers have shown true commitment to supporting our young people into adulthood and in providing this consistency of support and care is helping to improve outcomes for our young people.

Supported Care

In 2023/24, we have foster carers who also have approval to provide supported care. Our supported care service is an adult placement service that can provide short breaks or interim placements for young people up to their 26th birthday. This remains an important service to our young adults who have been previously looked after and who are receiving aftercare support from children's services.

Adoption

We have continued to offer our quarterly support group to adopters, any adoptive parents residing within East Renfrewshire or those that have been matched with East Renfrewshire children. These allow parents to meet up, provide support to each other and hear from guest speakers or have focused input.

Our work with Siblings

The team has been committed to keeping children connected with their siblings who are living apart through adoption or fostering. We have developed our family connection service through establishing and supporting both birth families and adoptive families by writing letters, arranging and supporting in person meet ups between brothers and sisters.

The team recognise the importance of developing and supporting relationships between adoptees, adoptive families and birth families. Letters can play an integral role in helping children to develop their sense of identity, understand their multiple family membership and can help children create a coherent understanding of life history. The team are skilled in providing support, time, and guidance to all family members in creating connections.

We are proud of supporting reunification of siblings who have been separated through adoption; this has been a heartfelt experience for our team and the families we support. Through developing these relationships with adoptive and birth families, we have supported post-adoption links progressing from letters to meeting in person. We have had positive feedback from adoptive and birth families for the support we have provided to them.

We have continued to receive enquiries from prospective adopters and the team are undertaking adoption preparation groups, to progress with these enquiries.

Inclusive Support Service

The Inclusive Support Service is comprised of holiday provision during spring, summer and October school holidays and out of school activity clubs. The service provides a range of targeted support for children and young people aged 5 – 18 years. All of the children and young people who access the service have either complex health or behavioural support needs with a significant number having limited verbal communication.

During 2023/24 East Renfrewshire Inclusive Support Team in consultation with Social Work and partners in Education and Health worked to provide targeted support for our

most vulnerable children and young people. The team organised and delivered targeted support at spring, summer and October holiday provision for over 65 children and young people with complex support needs. Parent feedback highlights holiday provision continues to provide essential respite for families and offers social opportunities for children.

Staff from within Inclusive Support have been crucial to the delivery of aspects of individualised care plans for some highly complex young people and this is an area of need we continue to build on. Our staff continue to provide the nurturing care and support rated as excellent by The Care Inspectorate.

We currently have 238 children registered with the service, and in 2023/24 we have supported young people to engage in a variety of out of school activities such as football, drama, forest school outdoor club, beauty club and cooking. Clubs support young people to learn, and practice life skills and socialise with peers fostering friendships as well as have fun. Activities are provided over three evenings a week and Saturdays. This work is carried out in conjunction with both SupERkids a parent led charity and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

Children and Young People's Rights

During 2023/24 we have been preparing for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Scotland Act 2024; specifically to promote its passing by the Scottish Parliament and what impact it will have on children and families services within East Renfrewshire. During the last year the priority has been to ensure the Health and Social Care Partnership participates in the Council's review of the existing formal complaints process to ensure that child friendly procedures compliant with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are in place and that these are now promoted by staff locally. In addition staff have engaged with the national statutory guidance consultation and taken feedback from young people in relation to the proposed contents. Implementation of the Act's duties already cuts across our Children's Plan delivery, The Promise and GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) implementation, and our engagement with our local partners. However we await the statutory guidance to help our mapping and will engage children and young people in this activity.

The Promise Ten Year Plan, Corporate Parenting, and Whole Family Wellbeing Delivery.

We are now over four years into the Promise's ten year plan with the 2021 – 2024 phase now complete and the new national Promise Plan for 2024-2030 published in June 2024. Chair of The Promise, Fiona Duncan, wrote to local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships during 2023 requesting a progress update on implementation, as well as plans going forward over the next period. East Renfrewshire responded to this request providing a comprehensive report on our position.

In order to ensure we meet our obligations as outlined in The Promise we recognise the importance of involving those with lived experience in creating services that meet the needs of families and their children.

These proposals devised and negotiated over 2023/24 will take shape over the coming year and progress with Promise implementation will be reported to Council and Integration Joint Board through the Children's Plan annual review process.

To support the delivery of the Promise we have used our Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Grant to enhance universal early response services as well as those with a more targeted focus, this is in line with our original analysis of the needs of families that was undertaken in 2022/23. Over 100 additional families received enhanced support in 2023/24 as a consequence of the funding specifically:

- families with babies and toddlers at risk of being received into care,
- children and young people with significant needs around neuro diversity,
- minority ethnic families,
- children and young people with complex disability,
- women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Tackling Loneliness Together Project – Enhanced support to minority ethnic families

To decrease loneliness among minority ethnic families, Family First, our universal child and family service within the Health and Social Care Partnership, has been working in partnership with communities to create a peer support and parent-led network. Since this new approach has been established numbers accessing the service have significantly increased seeking support for a wide range of issues including housing, money advice, domestic violence, employability, and parenting support. In 2023/24 referrals from minority ethnic families were just under a third of all referrals in comparison to previous years, this is over a 25% increase. In addition isolation and loneliness are high among the different communities often due to language and cultural barriers and this impacts parental mental wellbeing and how families can support their children.

The model is now fully embedded and will continue long term in order that all communities can feel confident in asking for help.

Children's Services Planning

The East Renfrewshire Children's Services Plan 2023-2024 entered its first year of delivery. The local partnership group the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership has worked together to implement across the agreed priorities that were agreed by Council and Integration Joint Board. The partnership continues to be effective, strong and responsive to seeking solutions to complex areas within the children and young people's policy landscape. Developments on progress with full implementation of the plan are due to be reported locally and nationally.

2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care

Assessment and Review Activity

The Supporting People Framework, introduced in April 2023, implemented a universal approach to classifying risk, introducing criteria based upon research and practice that informs our decision making. The framework is a tool to support practice and inform professional judgment, making our decision more justifiable and fairer.

Across Scotland all Health and Social Care Partnerships are experiencing unprecedented financial pressures. In East Renfrewshire we must make significant savings in order to continue providing essential services to our community. In order to achieve these savings we have prioritised social care resources to ensure that we support the people with the most significant needs and that we meet our legal duties in managing risk and harm.

The Supporting People Framework initially set out that social care will be provided when needs and risks are assessed to be in the moderate to critical category. In November 2023 this was refined to substantial and critical need only. A new assessment template was developed based on the strengths and assets based approach of the Supporting People Framework.

Information was shared with the wider community through a public website and in person information sessions. Self-assessment options were explored to strengthen this offer to the community. Alternative approaches involving signposting to Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire and Talking Points network were identified as a more effective delivery method.

In order to implement the Supporting People Framework fairly, a programme of reviews of existing packages of support was commenced. Resources were targeted to identify and prioritise reviews.

To support workers and managers during the assessment and review process, we introduced the Peer Professional Review Group (PPRG). The Peer Professional Review Group is a space for the professional's carrying out an assessment to explore further options, deliberate over complexities, areas of risk management using the skills, expertise and knowledge of their partners. Discussions at the Peer Professional Review Group draw on a range of experience and expertise of the panel to help develop or re-shape care and support plans, taking an asset and strengths-based approach to identifying supports.

Care Home Assurance

We have continued to undertake annual care home assurance visits which further enhanced good working relationships with the care home providers and the partnership.

Our Care Home and Provider Services liaison meetings have facilitated a responsive approach to our partners commissioned to deliver care and support to individuals in our care homes and the community.

Initial Contact Team

The Initial Contact Team was launched in May 2019, as the single point of access for all new queries and referrals related to Adult Health and Social Care. The team was set up to respond to the growing demand and complexity of health and social care support needs across East Renfrewshire, and follows a “right person, right support, right time” delivery model.

The year 2023/24 has continued to see huge demand pressures upon the service, with particular challenges being the increase in duty referrals through the winter period, the increase in demand for equipment and adaptations, and the implementation of the Supporting People Framework.

Learning Disability Community Team

Transitions

The transition team provides support, advice and guidance to our young people with additional supports who are transitioning to adult services. The team meet with education colleagues and families to ensure that the young person has the appropriate supports in place whilst they are transitioning from children services to adult services.

The service works closely with all key partners to coordinate referrals for independent living skill development opportunities and is working to project future needs in partnership with Health and Social Care Partnership commissioning and to develop a robust range of supports for young people to move successfully into young adulthood.

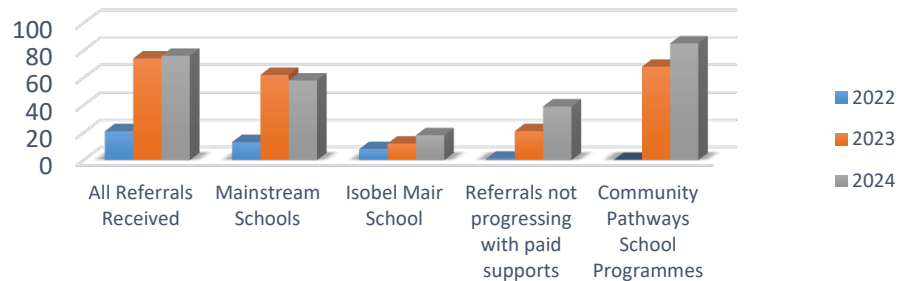
The team try to ensure that the transition is a positive experience for the young person and their family.

Supporting transitions – some key achievements 2023-24

- The Transitions Hub has developed a shared working space for multi-agency and partnership working focussed on transitions. This promotes collaboration and utilisation of third sector and community resources with a focus on developing networks and independence.
- The development of transitions specific resource allocation process that highlights positive collaboration between children and adult services and ensures consistency of eligibility criteria application.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership Transitions Team and Children and Families Services, to ensure young people who will require adult community mental health services have a seamless transition from one service to another. This multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach is evolving and key agencies are being identified to participate in the model including third sector. Young people on the CAMHS waiting list have been prioritised if they are 16/17 years of age to ensure the right support and

treatment is in place prior to them accessing adult services. This is particularly important for those on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway who may require ongoing medication and monitoring.

Transitions Service Referrals



Community Pathways

The service uses community-based spaces throughout East Renfrewshire. It offers day opportunities and community outreach support to people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and neuro-divergent people in East Renfrewshire. The service offers transitions support for younger people moving towards adulthood and provides support with independent living skills, skills for work and volunteering opportunities.

People who attend the service have an individualised support plan, which may involve building based services, outreach support as well as a wide variety of projects, workshops and activities.

Feedback for the transitions work has been extremely positive from young people and their families.

The service has a long history of partnership working with a variety of local partners and this includes volunteering opportunities and traineeships for individuals and subsequent support to access employability programmes.

The learning disability registered service had an unannounced inspection in March 2024 with inspectors grading the service as very good for 'How well do we support people's wellbeing' and 'How good is our leadership'.

The report credits the service for demonstrating a person-centred approach for people with a wide range of different needs. It noted a wide range of interesting activities for people to choose from with an enthusiastic and well-trained staff team. Inspectors observed staff speaking to people kindly and with patience. Support for personal care was provided discreetly, ensuring people were treated with dignity. They found that each person had a personalised timetable of activities, presented in an accessible format and reported the service works well with other professionals and support providers.

The service was described as well managed by a very approachable management team. This was supported by comments from staff, people and their families. A culture of reflection and continual improvement meant people were supported by a service

that worked hard to ensure high-quality support based on current guidance and good practice.

Inspectors found the service should involve people using service more in evaluation and planning, which has been taken forward as an improvement.

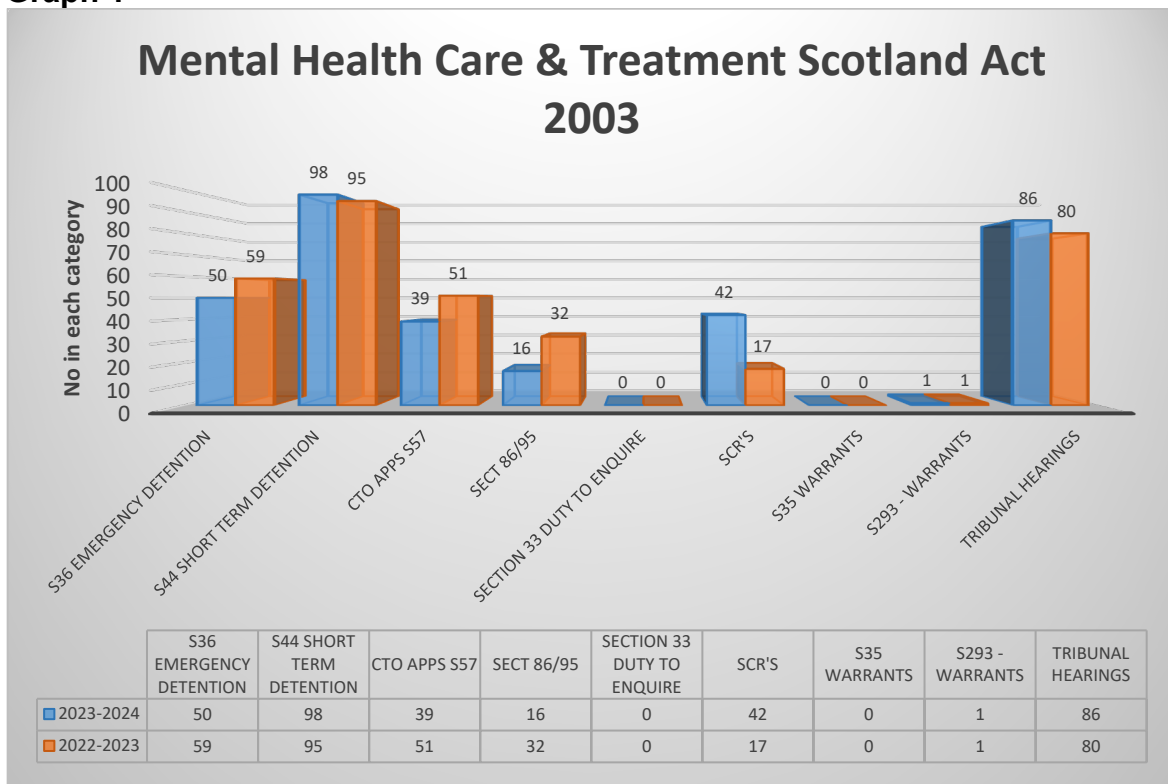
2.3 Mental Health

Mental Health Officers (MHOs) are responsible for carrying out specific duties on behalf of the local authority detailed within the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015, Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

The East Renfrewshire Mental Health Officer service sits under the umbrella of Mental Health Recovery and Learning Disability services within the Health and Social Care Partnership. Operational management for the service is overseen by the service manager, senior manager and Head of Services with the ultimate responsibility for the statutory duties sitting with the Chief Social Work Officer. Mental Health Officers work closely with all partners across East Renfrewshire and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS board area.

Activity generated by the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 has remained consistent although there was a noticeable reduction in the number of Compulsory Treatment Order (CTO) applications made. (Graph 1) However, in contrast the number of Mental Health Tribunals continue to rise which is likely a reflection of the number of Short Term Detention appeals and interim Compulsory Treatment Orders being granted.

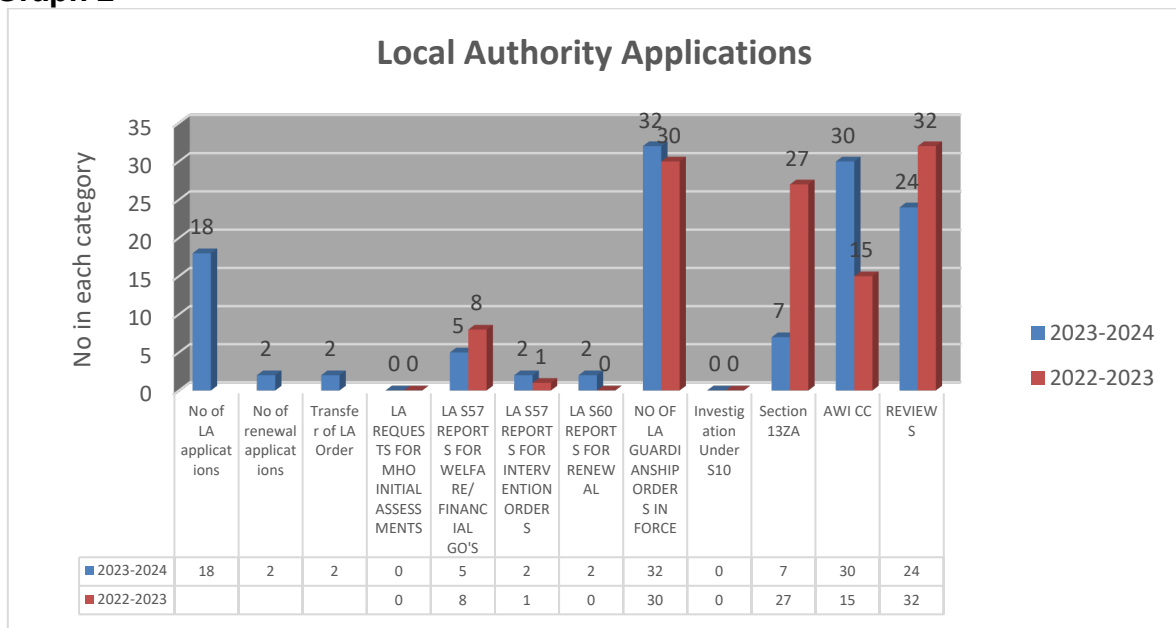
Graph 1



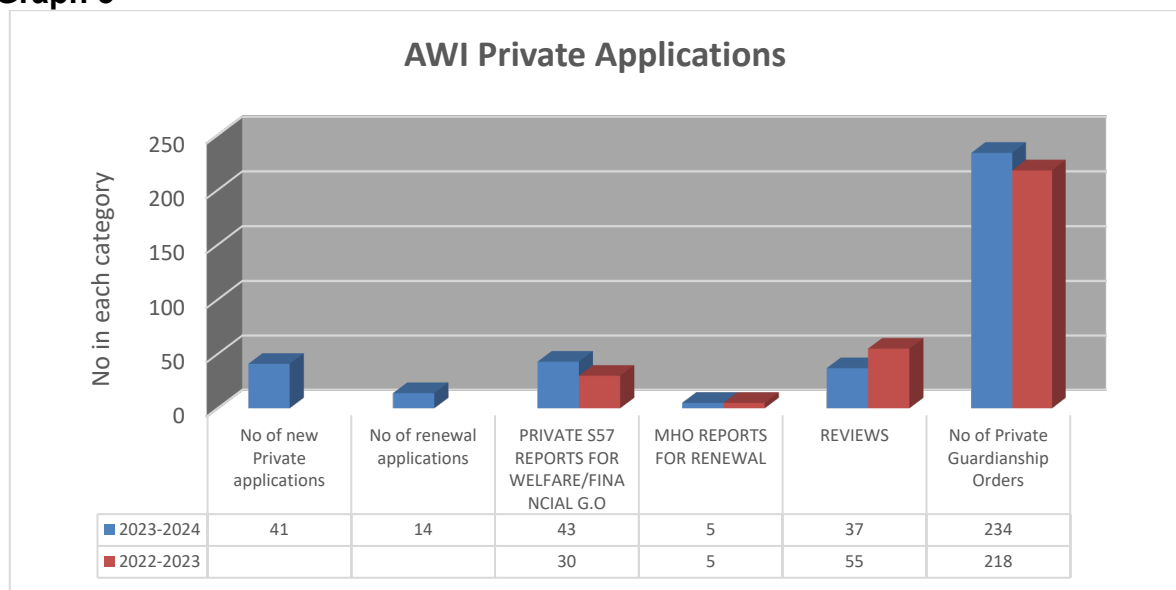
With regard to the activity generated under Adults with Incapacity legislation (Graph 2), one of the main pressures on the service this year has been the increase in adults not meeting the criteria for 13za to facilitate hospital discharge. This was particularly prevalent towards the end of the year with the impact of this being a 100% increase in

the necessity for an Adults with Incapacity Case Conference to progress legal authority to discharge and implement the support plan.

Graph 2

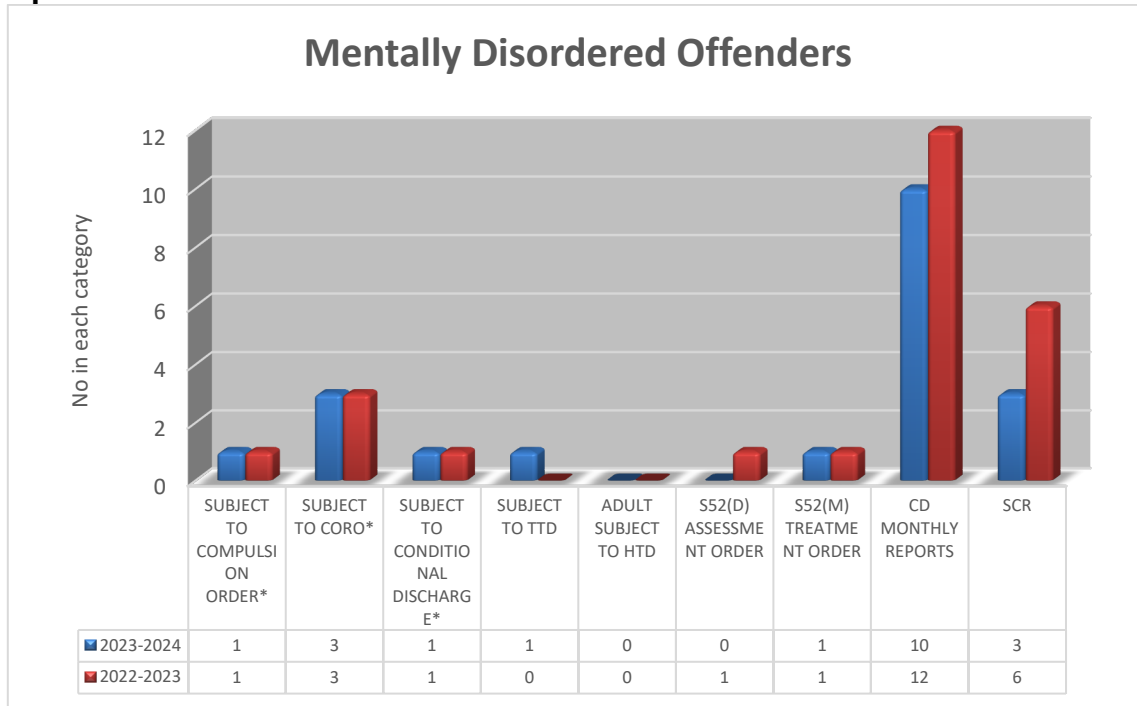


Graph 3



Figures from Graph 3 indicate that the demand for Mental Health Officers reports to accompany private applications for Welfare and Financial Guardianship remain consistent. The supervision of private guardians remains a challenge due to the ever increasing amount of guardians to be supervised which currently sits at 234 (an increase of 16 from last year).

Graph 4



Another area in which activity has increased is within our forensic case load. Numbers however remain relatively low with only seven individuals subject to orders under the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.

Sourcing support for individuals with complex mental health difficulties remains a challenge. There are limited resources within the East Renfrewshire area and we frequently find it necessary to look elsewhere for the level of specialism required. This is further complicated by the current national crisis within housing and the impact this has on safe hospital discharge planning for vulnerable individuals. Over the last year we have looked to develop our connection with our colleagues in housing to ensure that they are a key component of discharge planning and risk management.

2.4 Criminal Justice

Community Payback Orders (CPO)

During 2023/24, the Justice Social Work team have developed in a number of key areas. 89% Community Payback Orders (CPOs) completed within court timescale, this notably increased from 83% the previous year.

We have sought to develop the progress made within the previous year with regards our Unpaid Work Service. We continue to draw upon our bespoke workshops to deliver the Unpaid Work service to our local community. We have worked hard to ensure our premises enable service users to develop new skills. Throughout this, service users have been supported to complete some 7,721 hours of Unpaid Work during 2023/24 to the direct benefit of the community.

As part of our commitment to work in close partnership with the third sector, we commissioned the Wise Group to deliver Community Payback Orders Connect, an online flexible course which provides support in a number of domains including mental health and financial inclusion. This additionally strengthens the digital literacy of those who receive a service from Justice Social Work.

The Justice Service continues to deliver Moving Forward Making Changes programme. This enables us to provide individuals who meet the criteria for this programme access to specialised interventions. Work has progressed at the national level on the revision of Moving Forward Making Changes to Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C). Justice Social Work continue to be involved at the national level in contributions surrounding the upcoming implementation of the revised programme and are on course to implement this programme by January 2025.

Court Services

We continue to work closely with our partners in Renfrewshire to ensure delivery of Electronic Monitoring Bail. We launched our Bail Supervision Service on 19th February 2024 in conjunction with Paisley Sheriff Court, completing a combined 38 assessments during 2023/24. This has enabled us to deliver robust alternatives to custodial remand.

Employability

We continue to work jointly with our partners in Work East Ren in facilitating a shared Community Justice Employability Worker post. This post has allowed considerable progress to be made in the lives of service users accessing the service in increasing their employability profiles. Since this post commenced, there has been 181% increase registrations, 57% increase in employability outcome and 100% achieving a positive employability or training outcome.

Service / Staff Development

The Justice Service have sought to continue training have completed a range of training. Staff continue to access appropriate risk assessment training including Structured Assessment of Protective Factors (SAPROF), Stable and Acute 2007

(SA07) refresher training and the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA V3), alongside new staff undertaking training in Safe and Together. The Justice Service have further participated in enhancing knowledge of working with those experiencing dementia and acquired specialised training in supporting those who have experienced Non-Fatal Strangulation.

The Justice Service continue to engage with our colleagues within the Community Justice Partnership. We have ensured all Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings are held in line with statutory responsibilities. Further, we continue to contribute to East Renfrewshire's British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024.

We have undertaken a joint venture with the Children and Families Intensive Family Support Team. Through support by the Justice Service for funding of Spousal Assault Risk Assessment training and Trauma-Focussed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training, we have commenced a pilot focusing on four key areas: joint risk assessment in selected complex domestic abuse cases; preventative trauma-informed group work for male perpetrators of domestic abuse; supporting children and young people and young parents who have experienced trauma; and group-work with females convicted of offending. The identified outcomes are to provide support both to victims and perpetrators of offences to improve outcomes and in turn enhance community wellbeing.

The Justice Service remains committed to supporting the community in addressing domestically-aggravated offending and the associated consequences of said behaviours. We have continued to ensure 100% attendance at scheduled Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). Following on from the success of having secured a number of 'go-bags' for victims of domestic abuse (eighteen in total) in the previous year, we have secured a further 24 bags and remain ~~in~~ in active consultation with a number of partners to ensure a wide reach of these bags for women fleeing domestic violence.

2.5 Public Protection

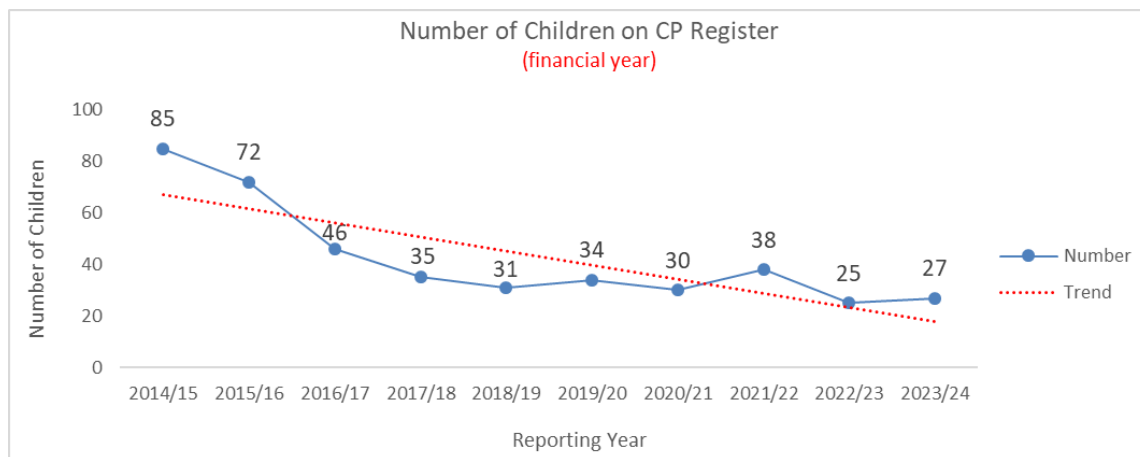
Child Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

The number of children on East Renfrewshire's Child Protection Register was 27 in 2023/24, this is an increase of 8% on the previous year.

In addition to robust management and audit activity, we continue to benchmark against comparator authorities to ensure that the rate of registration activity is proportionate and necessary.

Child Protection Registrations

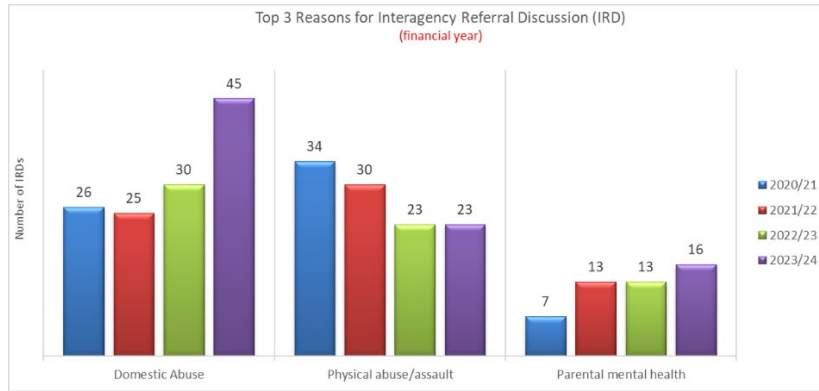
The graph below highlights the number of children subject to child protection registrations from 2014/15 until 2023/24.



Interagency Referral Discussions

During the period April 2023 - March 2024, we have undertaken 152 Interagency Referral Discussions (IRDs) (between social work, police, health and where appropriate education services) in respect of 242 children (some children may have had more than one interagency referral discussions in the reporting period). This is an increase of 31% of Interagency Referral Discussions and an increase of 42% of children on the previous year.

There was a 48% increase in referrals to our Request for Assistance team which may account for the increase in the number of Interagency Referral Discussions taking place.



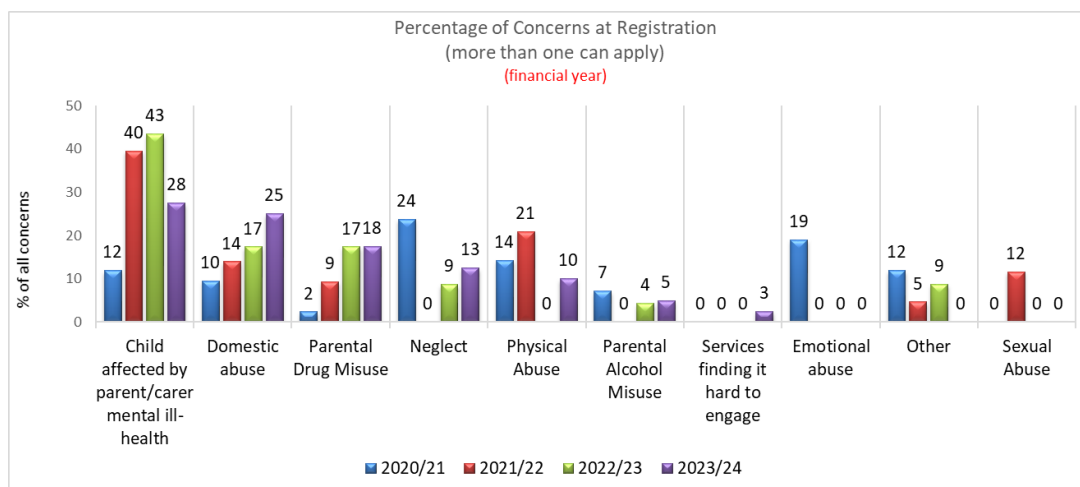
The most common reasons for initiating an Interagency Referral Discussion during 2023/24 are shown in the chart above. The highest reason for an Interagency Referral Discussion in the reporting period was domestic abuse. There has been a small increase in Interagency Referral Discussions for parental mental health and no change in physical abuse/assault.

Of the 242 children and young people subject to Interagency Referral Discussions, 29% were subject to a child protection investigation. Of these children and young people 52% went on to have an initial or pre-birth child protection planning meeting, with 67% of them having their names placed on the child protection register. This is an increase on the previous year figure of 45%.

This equates to approximately 10% of all the children and young people who were subject to an Initial Referral Discussion, which is close to the 6% from the previous year.

Concerns Identified at Registration

A child can be placed on the child protection register with more than one concern noted. Child Affected by Parent / Carer Mental Ill-Health is currently the highest concern at the point of registration followed by domestic abuse and parental drug misuse.



Interagency Referral Discussion Audits

A quarterly programme of Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) audit continues to be an ongoing exercise of our continuous improvement programme for child protection, allowing us to maintain an overview of the initial decision making in child protection processes. We have moved to biannual audits across the academic year.

In line with our commitments towards continual improvement an Interagency Referral Discussion Audit Report was produced in March 2024 covering the period between January – June 2023. Within this period we audited nineteen Interagency Referral Discussion's which was 30.65% of the total audits.

The audits findings included confirmation that we have a joined up approach to the Interagency Referral Discussion process. In addition to this the increased contribution of our colleagues in education being consistently part of the discussion increased the depth of quality.

The North Strathclyde Child Interview Team / Barnahaus

East Renfrewshire are part of the North Strathclyde Child Interview Team; this is a partnership with East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Police Scotland, Scottish Children Reporter's Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Children 1st. Joint investigative interviews (JII) under the Scottish Child Interview Model went live on the 10 August 2020. Children and young people in East Renfrewshire are now interviewed and supported by Police and Social Work who are highly skilled, utilising proven techniques to achieve best evidence. In addition, the child / young person and their non-abusing care giver will have access to trauma informed support and advice throughout their journey from initial disclosure to court proceedings or when the family feel support is no longer required. This is delivered by Children 1st recovery and participation workers who provide the child / young person and their families an opportunity to express their views, needs and concerns.

Over this reporting period, East Renfrewshire made 32 referrals to the child interview team, where 94% progressed to a joint investigative interview. An overall disclosure rate of 96% was recorded against these interviews, which is an increase in comparison to last reporting period. An offence under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 was the primary reason for referral for children and young people who reside in East Renfrewshire (50%), followed by Physical Assault (28%) and thereafter Domestic Abuse (25%). Caution is required here as given the relatively small numbers more detailed breakdown of information here could result in victims becoming identifiable. Of note is that in the main the victims were offended against, or witness to actions regarding adult males. Assurance is given in how seriously any offences against a child are taken and that partners are committed to investigating concerns, managing risk, supporting victims for trauma support and recovery and importantly assisting them in their journey to achieve justice.

The Bairns' Hoose had its official launch in August 2023 and the first joint investigative interview took place in September 2023. Over a six month period, 63% interviews have taken place from referrals across the North Strathclyde Partnership within an environment that provides a safe, child friendly, age appropriate setting where children and young people can have the opportunity to view the space which provides a virtual

link to Court, giving some reassurance that they will not require to step into an environment where they could face their perpetrator. The feedback provided by families that have utilised this house has been extremely positive.

Our Response to Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse continues to be the predominant cause for concern in referrals to our children services and features as one of the most significant factors within child protection interagency discussions. Of the 351 referrals made to the Request for Assistance team, 32.8% domestic abuse concerns were reported and 30% child protection interagency referral discussions (IRD's) noted domestic abuse as a significant factor. The number of children where domestic abuse was noted as a significant factor increased by 49% in 2023/24.

There were 41 adults referred to East Renfrewshire Adult Support and Protection where Domestic Abuse was highlighted as a concern during the reporting period. This represents a 64% increase from previous year 2022-23 (25 individuals). Eighteen Adult Support & Protection enquiries investigations were completed with 50% referred to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). In fifteen cases multiple forms of coercive control were reported and 72 reports of coercive control identified with monitoring and controlling the victims daily activities most common.

Through our multi-agency approach we work collaboratively to deliver a significant range of actions to ensure an effective and sustainable approach to preventing, reducing and responding effectively to domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women and girls. This includes the implementation of Routine Sensitive Enquiry, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Safe and Together practice to ensure a perpetrator pattern based, child centred, survivor strengths approach to working with domestic abuse. We continue to strengthen the capacity of our services and action across the whole system to address the long-term effects of trauma and abuse experienced by women, children and young people.

We worked collaboratively with our partners in Rape Crisis Glasgow and Clyde to launch a new sexual violence outreach support service in East Renfrewshire for women and girls (age 13+). This is an important addition to the specialist support available for women and girls who have experienced rape, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

As part of our work to protect people from harm and abuse, we have established and continue to support a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in East Renfrewshire for high-risk domestic abuse victims.

In 2023/24 we continued to see an increase in support required as a result of domestic abuse with 155 victims and 260 children discussed at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. This is an increase of 15.6% and 33% respectively in cases discussed compared to the previous year. 21.32% of victims did not have children and this is important as women without children were not previously visible in the domestic abuse pathway and this demonstrates continued increase in awareness and risk assessment across the range of services and improved pathway response.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences referrals from all statutory services nationally continue to be low overall and may suggest that unless a victim in Scotland reports domestic abuse to the Police or seeks out support from a specialist domestic abuse service, they are unlikely to be referred to their local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. This is not the case locally as East Renfrewshire demonstrates a higher proportion of referrals from children and families and wider statutory services with 33% locally compared to 10% nationally and therefore we are able to capture families that might not be known to another service.

We continue to work together with East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service to provide direct support for women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. Following a significant increase in calls to the helpline and drop-in following the pandemic the service is now seeing a move back towards levels experienced pre-pandemic. During the period, East Renfrewshire Women's Aid Service supported 1059 women and children across the three core services and helpline in 2023/24, a reduction of 2.5% from the previous year.

Women's Aid further launched a new Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) Programme. This is a twelve week group work programme for women and children to support their recovery from domestic abuse.

Women supported by the service recently met with the Promise lead planner to discuss their experiences of seeking support and how services could be improved. Women gave positive feedback about their experiences of Women's Aid and described their experiences of being supported as employees and feedback on family-oriented support such as health visiting, education and after school care.

Training and Capacity Building

Domestic Abuse, Risk Assessment, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences and Safe and Together training continues to be delivered in addition to the provision of bespoke sessions for key partners. Over the course of the last year 181 staff were trained across a range of disciplines including Adult Services, Children & Families, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs, Housing, Education, Care at Home, Community Learning and Development and Health Visiting.

Additionally domestic abuse training sessions were delivered to the council Human Resources (HR) and managers to support the implementation of the new policy for HR and managers. Bespoke training was delivered to all community pharmacies across East Renfrewshire and a further 25 participants took up the offer to attend and observe a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. Workers are further supported out with training with specialist domestic abuse advice as required.

East Renfrewshire participated in the national campaign 16 Days of Action to end violence against women and girls by developing a specific local programme of key messaging and campaign activity delivered throughout the 16 days and concluded the campaign by launching our new Domestic Abuse Policy and Revised Guidance for employees.

Adult Support and Protection

East Renfrewshire operates a dedicated Adult Support and Protection team, which acts as a single point of contact for all Adult Support and Protection and adult welfare concern referrals. The dedicated Adult Support and Protection team has greatly strengthened and streamlined our approach to screening and triaging adult protection referrals and application of the three-point test.

Adult Support and Protection activity has continued to increase over this period, in keeping with the trend identified since the implementation of the 2007 Act. In the reporting period there has been a total of 1107 inquiries undertaken by Council Officers of which 228 progressed to investigation. The 228 Adult Support and Protection investigations, represents a 33% increase from the previous reporting period.

In order to support consistent thresholds, robust decision making and management oversight, all inquiries (100%) have been reviewed and approved by the Adult Support and Protection Team Manager and Duty Manager in line with our local Adult Support and Protection local operating procedure.

Adults who experience problems arising from infirmity due to age were the highest common client group to be subject to Adult Support and Protection investigation, accounting for 25% of all investigations. Institutional harm was the most common harm experienced by adults, accounting for 22% of the recorded harms. This was significantly increased from the previous reporting period due to the Large Scale Investigation (LSI) conducted during this period.

The Large Scale Investigation was conducted in relation to a privately operated care home in the 2023/24 period. This was a significant undertaking with ten Council Officers, supported by a range of professionals across the Health and Social Care Partnership undertaking 59 Adult Support and Protection Inquiries and Investigations for all of the residents, both East Renfrewshire Council residents and placing authority residents.

Joint Adult Support and Protection Inspection

The Adult Protection Committee received notification of a joint Adult Support and Protection inspection on 30 January 2023. The Inspection took place over the following four months, and focussed on 'Key Processes' and 'Strategic Leadership'. [The Inspection Report](#) was published on 27 June 2023.

The Joint Inspection report was complimentary of our strategic leadership, recognising our commitment to supporting adults at risk of harm and developing a culture of learning and continuous improvement, which supported the development of adult support and protection services.

We welcome the external scrutiny and feedback that the joint inspection brought and benefited from the experience of working with the joint inspection team through the inspection process.

We have continued to provide flexible and adaptable training opportunities to support staff, partners and providers, developing a strong partnership approach. These courses are provided both as a part of our Public Protection Development Programme, but also as bespoke session for partners and providers to support their improvement.

ASP Training, Learning and Development

In this period we improved and delivered our rolling programme of Adult Support and Protection training as part of the Public Protection Development Programme 2023/24. This programme set out a multi-levelled structure of training, developed to support staff at all levels of knowledge and involvement to identify the right training for their role.

The suite of training materials drew on learning from our previous Large Scale Investigation and supporting organisations to improve their practice. This has provided a range of introductory and more detailed training events that focused on supporting improved practice.

Section 3. Resources

Financial Performance 2023/24

This was a very challenging year for the Health and Social Care Partnership as we worked to balance meeting the demand for services within the allocated budget. We needed to deliver just over £7 million of savings as part of our plans to balance our budget and we were not able to do this. We used £1.9 million reserves as planned to support us to redesign how we deliver services and we achieved £2.7 million of savings during the year. This meant we had a £2.5 million shortfall against planned savings and when this shortfall is combined with the additional cost pressures from delivering services we ended the year with a deficit of £4.7 million.

This meant during the financial year 2023/24 we moved to a financial recovery position and had a number of discussions with both of our partners; East Renfrewshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Both partners have provided additional funding, on a non-recurring basis, for 2023/24 to eliminate this deficit. The savings shortfall and service pressure have been addressed by the Integration Joint Board in the budget set for 2024/25.

Future Challenges

The Integration Joint Board continues to face a number of challenges, risks and uncertainties in the coming years and this is set out in our current Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2028/29 and our Strategic Plan for 2022/23 to 2024/25. These key strategies also inform our strategic risk register and collectively support medium-term planning and decision making.

The Integration Joint Board operates in a complex environment with requirements to ensure statutory obligations, legislative and policy requirements, performance targets and governance and reporting criteria are met whilst ensuring the operational oversight of the delivery of health and care services.

UK and Scottish Government legislation and policies and how they are funded can have implications on the Integration Joint Board and how and where we use our funding over time.

The most significant challenges for 2024/25 and beyond include:

- Delivering savings to ensure financial sustainability, ensuring sufficient flexibility to allow for slippage, shortfalls or changes.
- Recognising the tension between delivering a level of savings that will allow the Integration Joint Board to start to rebuild reserves and protecting service delivery.
- Managing reduced service capacity as a result of savings and maintaining discharge without delay from hospital and other key indicators.

- Delivering on our Recovery & Renewal programme for areas of change, including the implementation of a new case recording system.
- Understanding the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on mental and physical health.
- Recruitment and retention of our workforce, particularly in the current cost of living crisis.
- Managing prescribing demand and costs in partnership with our GPs.
- Supporting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our workforce and our wider population, again further impacted by the current cost of living challenges.
- Meeting increased demand for universal services without funding for growth, including increased population demand and new care homes opening with the area.
- We may also need to prepare for the challenges and opportunities that may arise from a national care service.

The Integration Joint Board agreed its budget for the financial year 2024/25 on 27th March 2024 recognising the significant challenges brought forward from 2023/24 as well as new demand and cost pressures for 2024/25.

Whilst the scale of this challenge is significant to East Renfrewshire, particularly as one of the smaller Health and Social Care Partnerships this is not unique; the national position across all public sector services shows a challenging financial outlook.

Demographic pressures remain a very specific challenge for East Renfrewshire as we have an increasing elderly population with a higher life expectancy than the Scottish average and a rise in the number of children with complex needs resulting in an increase in demand for services.

The future challenges detailed above and our associated response include the main areas of risk that the Integration Joint Board is facing. The uncertainty of the current economic climate, the longer term impact of Covid-19 on our population, the capacity for East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and its partners to meet continued demand and complexity whilst delivering such challenging savings remain significant risks.

Section 4. Workforce and Looking Forward

Training, Learning and Development

Learning and Development remains a priority for the workforce and the service has continued to deliver a wide range of training in spite of the considerable financial and resource pressures. Temporary funding was secured to deliver the National Transforming Trauma Programme (NTTP).

Following the appointment of a Trauma Lead, the Trauma Training programme was further developed with the launch of a Level 2 Skilled Training. The roll out of the Level 3 programme has expanded to include relevant partners across the council and Health and Social Care Partnership and there has been significant evidence of shared learning.

Consistent with the aims of the Promise, our employability advisers from our Care Experienced and Resettled Employability programmes took part in Level 2 Trauma Informed training with the aim of ensuring that all front line practitioners and managers are able to deliver services through a trauma informed lens.

A review of our Signs of Safety training programme was undertaken to identify areas in need of refresh. These included subjects such as the harm matrix and safety planning, timelines and network meetings and a programme of training has been delivered that will be fully evaluated once complete. Signs of Safety continues to be our established practice model with all new members of social work staff undertaking training.

A large scale training programme was undertaken in relation to the newly launched Supporting People Framework and work is ongoing to embed the learning. This is a new framework and there has been extensive support put in place to support front line staff and managers given the scale and speed that delivery entails.

Training was also delivered on Unaccompanied Children and Young people from *Just Right Scotland*. This was in recognition of the challenges facing teams, in particular our family placement services. This was delivered to a cross section of staff, including partners across the council.

A comprehensive foster care training programme was launched and a trainer approved to deliver the accredited Promoting Positive Behaviour (PBB) training programme to foster carers. This was also in response of the increasing complexity of children and young people being placed with our carers.

In January 2024 East Renfrewshire was awarded funding to become a pilot site to support the implementation of the Newly Qualified Social Worker Supported Year programme. The service has begun to scope need, review our induction programme and begin work on the development of a Learning Hub that will support post-registration continuous professional learning (CPL). This will enable us to build on existing strengths, work with established practice forums and our Advanced Practitioner group to ensure a sustainable approach in the longer term.

An annual review of learning needs was undertaken by our learning and development service consisting of consultation with managers and staff that formed the basis of our annual multiagency public protection training programme. Identified gaps were in relation to separated children, permanency and court skills and work is underway to deliver further training on Age of Criminal Responsibility legislation (ACR) as well as the new National Guidance on Child Protection. Our public protection programme has continued to provide essential training to support both internal staff and external organisations to improve their practice and effectively manage risk. In addition to routine courses in risk assessment and management, a flexible approach has been adopted to include bespoke sessions for providers as need demands.

Our Registered Care at Home service underwent an inspection in January 2024 in which our induction programme was commended. The need for ongoing refresher training was highlighted as well as specific management training in areas such as auditing and this is in the process of being addressed.

The partnership was also the subject of a strategic Adult Support and Protection inspection in 2023, which included scrutiny of our learning and development programme. The inspection commented on the “culture of learning and continuous improvement” that was evident. Most staff reported in the staff survey that they had access to appropriate and effective training.

Looking Forward

As Chief Social Work Officer I am committed to the ongoing professional development and training for all our staff and to build on our quality improvements.

We are committed to keeping The Promise in East Renfrewshire and to this end we will seek approval of the Council and Integration Joint Board to establish an East Renfrewshire Promise Board which will be a completely new way of working in partnership with children and families who have used East Renfrewshire Council and Health and Social Care Partnership services. We will also implement a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme to support the Promise Keepers, their workforce and all Corporate Parents to understand purpose and intent.

We will work alongside partners to ensure that the voices of children are listened to and respected in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and will also remain committed to reducing poverty and inequality in our communities.

Participation and involvement and importantly, analysis of what those who use our services tell us, will remain an utmost priority.

Conclusion

This report highlights and summarises the statutory duties and activities across the social work workforce in East Renfrewshire. It reflects, what I believe as Chief Social Work Officer, the high quality standard of our profession in the fields of children and families, justice and adult social work. Our residents and communities rightly expect quality services when they require them and I am heartened that our workforce show ongoing commitment in delivering this.

In the past year we have witnessed considerable challenge and demand requiring us to make savings and efficiencies, redesign and reduce our workforce and pivot resource to ensure ongoing viability and stability. This will continue to be a challenge in the forthcoming year and it will therefore be important to work within financial parameters whilst highlighting areas of potential or actual risk that could impact on the provision of social work and social care services.

I would like to personally thank all our staff for their kindness, commitment, drive and professionalism in their delivery of support. I can attest that many go far and beyond normal duties of what would be expected to support our residents and keep them safe. This is particularly appreciated for managing this in an uncertain, challenging and complex space. Their values, actions and support continue to make me proud to represent them as East Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer.

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