

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER REPORT 2019/20

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is a statutory requirement for all local authorities to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) who is registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The overall role of the CSWO is focused on the provision of effective professional advice and guidance to local authority Elected Members and Officers in the provision of Social Work services, whether directly provided or commissioned. The CSWO also has a responsibility for overall performance improvement and the identification and management of corporate risk insofar as these relate to Social Work Services.
- 1.2 This report covers the period April 2019 to March 2020. To ensure greater consistency across Scotland with regard to the highlighting of key issues and in the sharing of information and learning on a national basis, the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government developed a template for these reports in 2014. This year there was the option of employing an amended version of the report due to the pressures of responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, however much of the work on this report was already completed by that point therefore the standard format is used.
- 1.3 It is of course to be recognised that this report covers a period prior to the full effects of the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent 'lockdown' response becoming clear. Indeed there is a sense of reporting on a previous period in time and it is acknowledged there have been significant changes in the way we work and challenges faced by our staff, service users and communities in the period since March 2020. While it is out with the scope of this report to fully address these challenges Section 14 encapsulates initial thoughts on the response to the pandemic.

2 AREA PROFILE

- 2.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Local Authority area is made up of the main islands of Lewis and Harris, North and South Uist, Benbecula and Barra. The island chain, which lies off the North West coast of Scotland, is some 210 km from Lewis in the north to Barra in the south.
- 2.2 The current population estimate for the Outer Hebrides is 26,720 as at 30 June 2019. This represents a decrease in the overall population of 110 persons (-0.4%) from mid-2018 to mid-2019. The population is estimated to have decreased mainly as a result of less migration into the area and due to negative natural change.
- 2.3 The population is concentrated in Lewis (19,100 approx.), Harris (1,800 approx.), Uists and Benbecula (4,650 approx.) and Barra and Vatersay (1,275 approx). The Stornoway settlement has a population of approximately 7,000. The remaining population is scattered over some 280 townships with the rural population continuing to have a high proportion of Gaelic speakers.
- 2.4 The Gaelic language and culture are important factors in island life. They continue to remain embedded in communities throughout the island chain and are key considerations in the delivery of services. It is forecast that almost 60% of children attending primary 1 in August 2020 will be taught in Gaelic Medium, with GME now being the default for all primary 1 pupils. This is a policy which is often termed 'Gaelic First'.
- 2.5 The Outer Hebrides, along with Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway and South Ayrshire, is estimated to have one of the highest percentages of people aged 65 and over at 25% against the Scottish average of 19%
- 2.6 Broad age groups are as follows: 16% in the 0-15 year age group while Scotland has 17%; 59% working age population while Scotland has 64%; and 25% pensionable age while Scotland is 19%.

- 2.7 The 2018 population projections predict that over the ten year period from 2018 to 2028 there will be changes in broad age groups as follows:
- 13% decline in the 0-15 years group,
 - 6% decline in the working age population (the largest percentage decline in Scotland)
 - 1% decrease in those of pensionable age (one of 6 areas with a decrease)
 - 25% increase in the population of those aged over 75 years.

3 PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES/GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 An Integrated Joint Board (IJB) for the Outer Hebrides was established by the Scottish Parliament on 21 September 2015. The IJB incorporates all adult social work services including Criminal Justice. Further reform was advanced in relation to Criminal Justice Services in 2016-17 with the responsibility for strategic planning of Community Justice Services being reshaped to sit within Community Planning Partnerships and with regional Community Justice Authorities being replaced by one national organisation (Community Justice Scotland). A Community Justice Partnership has been established which includes statutory and non-statutory partners. The Outer Hebrides Community Justice Partnership has a fully operational Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan, which covers the period from 2018 – 2021. The Plan includes all agreed actions towards achieving preferred outcomes. COVID – 19 has impacted on activities in the latter part of the 2019/20 period, with some planned community awareness-raising interventions having to be put on hold. (Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan)
- 3.2 A review of organisational structures and governance arrangements was undertaken to reflect these changes, including the establishment of a joint NHS/Comhairle post of Chief Officer – Health and Social Care. The Chief Officer took up post in July 2015 and led on the preparation and implementation of the IJB's Strategic Plan. The Chief Officer is managed jointly by the Chief Executives of the Comhairle and NHS Western Isles. The Chief Officer resigned his post in January 2020 and left in March. Recruitment of a replacement will be reported in the next CSWO report covering 2020 – 2021. **Appendix 4** outlines the operating structure approved by the IJB for this reporting period.
- 3.3 The Comhairle services delegated to the IJB are managed by two Heads of Service reporting to the Chief Officer. A social work qualified Service Manager provides operational management and professional support to the Comhairle's Assessment and Care Management Services and Criminal Justice Services through a line management structure with three Team Leaders, one of whom is the Lead Officer for Adult Protection. Professional supervision for the adult social work service manager is undertaken jointly by the relevant Head of Service and the CSWO.
- 3.4 Children and Families Social Work services sit within the Comhairle's Education, Skills and Children's Services in which the Director of that Department is supported by a social work qualified Head of Service and one social work qualified Service Manager. **Appendix 5** outlines the management structure in Education, Skills and Children's Services Department at the end of the time period covered by this report. The structure outlined was under review and changes are envisaged by the next reporting period.
- 3.5 The Comhairle's CSWO is also the Head of Children's Services in the Education, Skills and Children's Services. The CSWO is a member of the Integrated Corporate Management Team (led jointly by the Comhairle and NHS Western Isles Chief Executives), is the co-chair, with NHS Western Isles Medical Director, of the IJB's Clinical and Care Governance Committee and is a member of the Western Isles Public Protection Committee's Chief Officer Group (COG), chaired by the Chief Executive of NHS Western Isles.
- 3.6 The CSWO is accountable to the Chief Executive with regard to the Comhairle's Social Work function and, as Head of Children's Services, is accountable to the Director of Education, Skills and Children's Services and reports to the Comhairle through the

established Committee structures. With regard to integrated services, the CSWO is a non-voting member of the IJB.

- 3.7 The multi-agency Child Protection Committee (CPC) is led by an independent Chairperson and works effectively to improve joint services to safeguard and protect children.
- 3.8 The Western Isles Community Planning Partnership's Integrated Children's Services Plan (ICSP) 2017-2020 was approved in June 2017 for implementation across the Partnership area. The Western Isles Children and Young Peoples' Planning Partnership (CYPPP) is chaired by one of the Elected Members. The CYPPP has a lead role in the implementation of the ICSP through a number of thematic planning groups which lead on the implementation of particular actions contained in the ICSP. The chairs of these report progress on a quarterly basis to the CYPPP and through that to the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership. The ICSP for 2020 – 2023 was due to be published at the end of the period covered by this CSWO report however has been delayed as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic and the subsequent public health response. This has however allowed an opportunity to better consider an initial synthesis of the Independent Care Review 'Promise' into this planning process.
- 3.9 The multi-agency 'Getting It Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) and Early Years agendas are well established and there is a strong emphasis on partnership, prevention and early intervention. The Early Years Collaborative Group is clearly focused on collaborative working to build resilience and reduce demand for targeted specialist services. The outcomes of the Independent Care Review's 'Promise' are being considered within this context.
- 3.10 The multi-agency Adult Protection Committee (APC) is led by an independent Chairperson. Multi-agency procedures are continuously reviewed and updated and social workers within the Assessment and Care Management Service are trained 'Council Officers' who carry out initial enquiries and lead on Adult Support and Protection investigations. The CSWO meets with the Chair of the APC and receives minutes of Committee meetings.
- 3.11 The Outer Hebrides Alcohol and Drug Partnership has the strategic responsibility for alcohol and drug issues across the Western Isles. Problematic alcohol use in particular, while data suggests it is in decline, continues to negatively impact on many individuals and families. Key focus areas for the agencies represented on the Partnership are prevention, early support interventions and services providing continued support in individual, family and group settings.
- 3.12 Although both alcohol use and prescription drug use remain a concern in the Western Isles, data did indicates both issues had been in general decline over the last 5 years. In 2014/15, the Western Isles had the 7th highest national rates (defined daily doses/10,000 adult population) for prescriptions of medications for alcohol use. This was showing a decreasing trend, however, in the last two years has increased and in 2019/20 the Western Isles now has the 4th highest rate of prescribing of this type with a slightly higher than national average rate.
- 3.13 2014/15 data relating to prescribed benzodiazepines indicated Western Isles had among the highest prescribing rates in Scotland, with significant numbers of prescriptions administered to those over 65 years of age. 2019/20 has seen a slight increase in this type of prescribing and the Western Isles now has the 4th highest rate of the 14 territorial boards, and the rate is once again above the national average. Over this time period the percentage prescribed to those over 65 years old has remained relatively consistent.
- 3.14 The Justice Social Work Service plays an active role in the work of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). There are routine Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) where services aim to develop actions to minimize risk to victims of domestic violence.

- 3.15 The Community Justice (Scotland) Act sets out the responsibilities of Community Justice Partners in addressing prevention of offending and re-offending. Local arrangements in respect of the Act began formally in April 2017. The Social Work Services Manager continues to lead on community justice planning to ensure the statutory and voluntary community justice partners are fully engaged in the process. Liaison and consultation continues with Community Justice Scotland regarding setting priorities and evidencing Community Justice outcomes.
- 3.16 The Justice Social Work Service commits significant resources to addressing national training requirements. Justice Social Work (JSW) staff have completed training specifically in assessment tools for risk management of sex offenders (Rm2K and SA07) and the LS/CMI Risk Assessment Tool as well as completion of the national Risk of Serious Harm training provided by the Risk Management Authority. Anonymised examples of locally completed Risk of Serious Harm assessments have continued to be used as examples of best practice within training nationally. The Caledonian group work model has proved problematic to implement due to the small numbers of appropriate offenders, geographic location and the distances involved.
- 3.17 2434 hours of Unpaid Work were completed by offenders undertaking a Community Payback Order in local communities in 2019/20. This work is generally of benefit to voluntary sector organisations or in the enhancement of public amenities which would not otherwise have been completed. Positive feedback has been received from many stakeholders in general and, in particular, from Sheriffs and Police colleagues about the inclusive approach taken by the Justice Social Work Service. One letter of complaint was received during 2019/20 in relation to the JSW service. This was subsequently withdrawn by the complainer.

4 SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY LANDSCAPE AND MARKET

- 4.1 Key strategic challenges for Social Work Services in Western Isles include:
- Managing, adapting to and responding to demographic changes (increasing older population and declining working age population).
 - Ensuring there is an effective service throughout the entirety of the island group and not concentrated simply in the population centre of Stornoway.
 - Meeting the requirements of external scrutiny and compliance.
 - Affordability – reducing finances within a landscape of increasing demands and complexity of service needs. A pertinent example is the challenges of the ‘Promise’ published in February 2020 in relation to the ‘Independent Care Review’ of children’s services nationally. There is an acceptance of the changes required, however this requires to be set within the context for reducing local government finance.
 - Recruitment and retention of experienced qualified social work staff at all levels in the key statutory service areas. The Western Isles have lost two experienced MHO during this reporting period and have been unable to replace through open recruitment.
 - Ensuring national models of ‘good’ practice are applicable and suitable for the realities of social work in remote and island communities. Implementing the Caledonian model in community justice has been challenging and it is envisaged the developing JII approach will create significant issues for island social work practice.
 - Promotion of the principles of the Islands Act 2018. In particular ‘island proofing’ national policy and practice guidance.
 - Embedding a sustainable recruitment model for the Care at Home service.
 - Realising the benefits of Health and Social Care Integration.
 - Improving Delayed Discharge outcomes through increased residential and nursing care bed places whilst re-designing community facing services.
 - Developing and providing responsive, flexible support services locally for children and adults to minimise the need for mainland resources.

- Continuing risk to children from alcohol misuse by their parents, parental mental health needs and those families affected by domestic abuse.
- Increasing complexity of the needs of children and adults with disabilities and the imperative to ensure available resources are targeted at those in the most need in as fair and equitable fashion as possible.
- An increase in the numbers of adults with additional support needs requiring services to enable them to live fulfilling and safe lives as independently as possible
- There is a scarcity of local providers of social care services and as such the use of Self Direct Support direct payments is somewhat limited. Without a diversity of providers choice for service users is in reality restricted and in many cases Comhairle services are the only choice available.
- The development of an integrated commissioning strategy to clarify and prioritise the key services needed locally.
- Taking forward the Community Justice arrangements as defined by legislation and in partnership with Community Justice Scotland
- Ensuring that services take account of the needs of an increasingly diverse population which includes residents who are, for example, of Asian, Chinese and Eastern European origin and, more recently, with the re-settlement in Western Isles of Syrian refugees. In schools throughout the Local Authority area there are around 19 languages spoken. It is still to be seen whether or not Brexit will have an effect on this mix.

(It requires to be recognised that since the period covered by this report that the Covid 19 pandemic has further significantly shaped these drivers and significant new challenges have emerged. Section 14 of this report sets out a brief commentary on the initial experience of responding to Covid 19)

- 4.1 The Comhairle continues to be the main provider of Care at Home services, supported by local Third Sector organisations. One national private company operates a 38 bedded nursing home with two local voluntary sector agencies providing a further 47 nursing/care home beds. A three-year framework contract agreement is operational.
- 4.2 The IJB has agreed that extra care housing will feature in the planning for replacement of residential care homes. Building work has begun on a project to establish a 52 bedded care home and 50 extra care housing flats in partnership with the Hebridean Housing Partnership. This is located at Goathill Farm on the edge of Stornoway. (Work was halted in late March 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent public health restrictions. Work will commence once the public health advice allows) There is an aspiration to also deliver extra care housing based services to rural communities, however this is still to be realised in any material sense.
- 4.3 Recruitment to social work posts continues to be a major challenge, as evidenced across a range of services, and it is not unusual to be unsuccessful in filling vacancies or have a limited pool of applicants. The impact of this on the day-to-day management of services can be considerable, particularly given the relatively small scale of the social work management structure. It is worth noting that for the period covered by this report early signs of recruitment activity during the first weeks of the Covid 19 pandemic was that if anything recruitment success had improved for social care posts. It is hypothesised that this could be due to other employers, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries, making staff redundant or not recruiting for the summer season. It is to be seen whether this is a one year anomaly or a pattern.
- 4.4 The Comhairle continue to attempt to combat vacancies through a programme of modern apprenticeships.

5 FINANCE

- 5.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Social Work budget for 2019/20 was £24.011m. The broad financial breakdown was £20.556m in Adult Care and Older People's Services, £0.433m in Criminal Justice Services and £3.022m in Children and Families Services.
- 5.2 Adult Care and Older People's Services had an overspend of £365k for the 2019/20 financial year, the most significant variances being as follows:
- Home Care - £209k overspent
 - Elderly Residential Care - £86k underspent
 - Assessment and Care Services - £105k underspent
 - Commissioning and Partnership Services - £349k overspent
 - Adult Mainland Placements - £98k overspent
 - Adult Care and Support Services - £145k underspent
 - Independent Care Homes - £220k underspent
 - Management and Administration - £328k overspent
- 5.3 The Children's Mainland Placement budget was underspent by £123k during 2019-20. As investment in local services such as respite and prevention continues to develop, fewer children are being placed off island. Additionally, increased governance arrangements are being developed to scrutinise such requests. Overall the budget for children's services broke even for this financial year.
- 5.4 Mainland placement activities for children are reported on regularly to the relevant Comhairle Committees. Adult Services placements are monitored through the Exceptional Care Board reporting to the ICMT of the IJB.
- 5.6 Children's Services undertook and implemented a review of resource staffing. They now work using a 'fluid workforce' model offering greater integration of services with the major third sector partners, Action for Children and Western Isles Foyer. This 'agency fluid workforce, provides resources across the partnership including Respite, Residential Care, Extended Learning and Housing Support. A self-evaluation exercise undertaken by the resource section of children's services this year indicated that the impact on children and young people was 'Very Good' and that the impact on Families was 'Good'. It is planned to further improve early intervention and preventative provision through the introduction of Functional Family Therapy.
- 5.7 The Fostering service in the Western Isles currently provides less than 10 full-time carer placements and less than 5 respite carer placements throughout the Local Authority area. Less than 10 children are in foster placements and a small number of these receive holiday respite care. The Adoption Service in the Western Isles has placed less than 10 children for adoption in the past year. While this has been generally sufficient for the needs faced within the time period of this report there are plans to attempt to recruit more foster carers as there is not an adequate spread of foster carers across the islands.
- 5.8 Significant levels of outreach respite for children with learning disabilities and other particularly complex needs are provided by the Comhairle's Extended Learning Service with additional outreach respite provided by Action for Children which is jointly funded by local authority and NHS Western Isles. The Extended Learning Service currently provides outreach respite to less than 10 children and Action for Children to less than 20 children. Action for Children are also funded to provide Short Breaks respite at Hillcrest Residential Unit in Stornoway and currently provide residential respite to less than 10 children. While the number of service users is small the magnitude and cost of current support packages is high and the sustainability of the level of service questionable.
- 5.9 It is recognised that the allocation of the finite resources at hand has historically been at times iniquitous and idiosyncratic with some service users having exceptionally large packages which have grown organically over time. Improved governance structures have

arrested this trend with a greater scrutiny on assessment and analysis of need. Over the course of 2019/20 a Respite Policy has been developed encompassing services to children and adults designed to reshape outreach and short-break respite provision. The aim of equity of provision and transparency of decision making has been to the fore. This policy is currently going through a consultation process and will be finalised in 2020/21.

- 5.10 The housing support service for vulnerable young people has changed from being building based to providing outreach support to young people aged 16-25 within their own tenancy. The result is that young people are not being forced to leave for a new tenancy once they outgrow the service. They stay where they are and the service moves. There is an ability to provide overnight support to young people when required. The challenge inherent within this model is accessing appropriate new tenancies as the service user group turns over. The Housing Support Service currently provides support to less than 10 young people.
- 5.11 Additional staff training is essential to ensure that staff are confident and competent, not only in the provision of the most beneficial and effective care to people with multiple conditions and more complex care needs, but also to facilitate the delivery of appropriate support, within the context of increasingly limited resources and for the benefit of the growing number of people, particularly within the older population, who require health and social care support in a variety of circumstances. It is recognised that it is not possible to keep doing more with less. Strategic consideration is required to fundamentally re-think how services are provided within the Western Isles. As mentioned previously in the report the finite, and indeed due to demographic changes potentially reducing, workforce is as restrictive a factor as reductions in financial support.
- 5.13 The implications and management of sickness absence continues to present both financial and operational challenges to the Comhairle, the average number of days sickness for 2019/20 was 12.57 representing a modest decrease from 2018/19 which saw an average of 12.9 days absence.

6 PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 The Care Inspectorate undertook joint strategic inspections of services for both children and young people and for older people in 2015. The Inspectorate reported on the outcome of these inspections in January 2016 for Children's Services and in March 2016 for services to Older People's. The full reports for each of these inspections can be found on the Care Inspectorate website at careinspectorate.com with the Progress Review findings also available on the website.
- 6.2 As in previous years throughout 2019/20 the findings of, and associated action plans, resulting from inspections and reviews, together with other relevant scrutiny exercises, have continued to be reported to and monitored by, as appropriate, Comhairle committees, the Community Planning Partnership and the IJB. Progress on subsequent action and improvement plans form the basis of regular updates.
- 6.3 Action and improvement plans developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders are also monitored and reviewed by the Outer Hebrides Chief Officer Group for Public Protection to ensure progress is being achieved in relation to the delivery of planned improvements.
- 6.5 The Care Inspectorate has continued to inspect individual regulated services, both directly provided and those which are commissioned. Specific details of these inspections can be found at careinspectorate.com and summaries of gradings awarded in both Adult and Children's services are contained in **Appendices 1 to 3** of this report.
- 6.6 The Joint Inspection of Older Peoples' Services follow up visit reflected the improvements implemented across a range of services. The Report evidenced that the partnership has made 'an impressive amount of improvement', and finds that the partnership is in 'a much better place' than in 2015. From meetings with staff and managers at all levels, partner

organisations, and with community representatives, the inspection team witnessed 'a much stronger sense of integration and a determination to work collaboratively and take a whole-system approach'. Throughout 2019/20 this work has continued.

- 6.7 The commitment of frontline staff had been a strength at the time of the original inspection and the inspection team found that this remained the case. The report notes that the partnership continues to face a number of staff recruitment and retention challenges even though we have taken forward a number of positive initiatives, including a large-scale apprenticeship scheme. It is recognised that during the initial preparations for the Covid pandemic in March 2020 this struggle with recruitment eased some, however it is to be hypothesised that this was the result of other sectors such as tourism and hospitality not recruiting. It is very much to be seen whether recruitment will return to previous patterns in coming years.
- 6.8 The re-inspection did not render a re-evaluation of the original grades, since these are a matter of historical record, but it does engage with each of the recommendations. The full Inspection Report is available for public viewing on the Care Inspectorate website.
- 6.7 In Children's Services, a wide-ranging action plan was approved by the Community Planning Partnership. Implementation of this commenced in the latter part of 2015/16 with regular monitoring taking place within service areas and overall scrutiny at a strategic level being undertaken by the Chief Officers' Group for Public Protection. Regular reports on progress in relation to this and subsequent action plans also continue to be submitted to the Children's Services Planning Partnership which reports to the multi-agency Community Planning Partnership
- 6.8 In May/June 2017 the Care Inspectorate undertook a review inspection of Children's Services which resulted in the production of a positive report highlighting key areas of improvement since the 2016 Care Inspectorate report was published. The most significant of these, as detailed in the review report, were:
- Corporate Parenting had been thoroughly embraced by Partners and the voices of care experienced children and young people were increasingly influencing policy and practice;
 - There was evidence of improved collaborative working at all levels across partner organisations
 - Staff were committed to making further improvements in their services and ensuring they enable better outcomes for children, young people and families.
- 6.9 Furthermore, Care Inspectorate officers stated that they were satisfied with the action partners had taken to strengthen and improve services for children and young people and commented favourably on the extent to which improvements had been achieved within a relatively short timeframe. As a result of the outcome of the review inspection the Care Inspectorate indicated that they did not intend to conduct any further progress reviews in relation to the 2015 Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People in the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership area. This was reinforced during a visit in 2019 by the Chief Social Work Advisor and other colleagues from Scottish Government.
- 6.10 The Comhairle Children and Families Services has constructive links with comparator local authorities and strategic developments and training initiatives are supported by expertise provided through a number of national organisations.
- 6.11 Following the death of a child in 2017 a Significant Case Review was undertaken and findings were reported to the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection. Consideration was required to balance the needs of the child and the view of the parents. There needed to be greater consistency in supervision arrangements across agencies. The function and understanding of the Named Person & Lead Professional required to be tightened. There needed to be work on a shared understanding of risk and risk assessment. Informal working

could not replace formal systems. Education & CAMHS teams did not routinely refer to the Children's Reporter. The findings were fully accepted by the COG and a subsequent Action Plan agreed. The actions are in the process of being integrated in to the ICSP.

6.12 In the Scottish Household Survey 2018 89% of respondents indicated they were very or fairly satisfied with local health services. The Local Government Bench Marking Framework reported that in 2018/19 83% of respondents rated care services funded by the council as good or better.

6.13 The last Comhairle Local Scrutiny Plan was 2018/19 (Local Scrutiny Plan) This plan highlighted the strong strategic leadership in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. It was also recognised that the Community Planning Partnership had worked to address recommendations from strategic scrutiny of adult services. The Care Inspectorate found that significant progress had been made in addressing areas for improvement and that there was evidence of improved collaborative working at all levels. Risks highlighted that impacted on Social Work services were:

- The Comhairle will require to continue implementing the agreed process of service redesign to address its financial position in the short term and plan for the medium and long term.
- The Comhairle has problems with recruitment, particularly in social work posts, which is affecting performance in this service area.

6.14 These risks remain relevant to the period covered by the report. In 2019/20 it was agreed to discontinue Local Scrutiny Plans and they were replaced by a revised National Scrutiny Plan summarising all planned and announced strategic scrutiny activity in the 32 local authority areas. The planned activity in the Comhairle did not include social work or social care services.

7 STATUTORY FUNCTION

7.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Committees have welcomed the information provided in previous CSWO annual reports.

Secure Care

7.2 During 2019/20 there were no secure placements required by children from the Western Isles.

Adoption and Fostering

7.3 Adoption is the process whereby parental rights and responsibilities are transferred from birth parents to adopters.

7.4 Although the Courts determine whether an Adoption is granted, the CSWO is the ultimate Comhairle decision maker on matters pertaining to Adoption.

7.5 In February 2014 the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act was passed into legislation. In relation to Adoption Services, the Act requires Local Authorities (and registered Adoption services) to provide specific information on approved adopters who are waiting to be matched to the Scotland's Adoption Register.

7.6 The intention is that the Register will facilitate the matching of children with approved adopters on a national rather than Local Authority basis.

7.7 In April 2016 regulations changed the Register from a voluntary service to a mandatory service. This change means that adoption agencies (local authorities and voluntary organisations) are now required to:

- Refer all children to Scotland's Adoption Register a minimum of 3 months after the agency has made the decision that that adoption is in the best interests of a child or, that an application for a permanence order granting authority for a child to be adopted should be made under Section 80 of the Act.
- Refer adopters a minimum of 3 months after their approval by the Adoption Panel.

7.8 During 2019/20 the Comhairle:

- had less than 10 children placed on Scotland's Adoption Register (Permanency Order with authority to adopt).
- less than 10 Adoption Petitions were granted.
- Less than 10 children were matched with prospective adopters.

7.9 During 2019/20 the Agency approved no new Foster Carers at Level 2

7.10 Despite the introduction of a fee based payment system for Foster Carers, the recruitment of Foster Carers continues to present challenges. There has been some interest shown by families in our southern islands however as yet this has not resulted in new foster carers being approved.

8 WELFARE AND FINANCIAL GUARDIANSHIP

8.1 If an adult is unable to make key decisions or take necessary action to safeguard his/her own welfare, a Court can appoint a "welfare guardian" to do so. A welfare guardian might be a friend, relative or other and the Courts can also appoint the CSWO.

8.2 Financial Guardianship arises where there is impairment to the adult's capacity to safeguard his/her property or financial affairs. As with welfare applications, the Court is involved and it may be necessary at times for Local Authorities to undertake this function and responsibility where no one else can do so.

8.3 The Comhairle has four Mental Health Officers (MHOs), all of whom meet the requirements necessary to continue in practice and who contribute to Out of Hours services as required. This is a reduction of one from the last reporting period. Despite attempting to recruit on three separate occasions it has proven impossible to attract social work staff to posts which include MHO status.

8.4 MHO activities during 2019/20 were as follows:

Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000:

- AWI reports – 14
- AWI renewals - 1

Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003:

- Short Term Detentions – 9
- Compulsory Treatment Orders – 3
- Compulsory Treatment Order Renewals – 9

MHOs also took part in:

- Tribunals - 7
- Emergency Detentions - 7
- Social Circumstance Reports – 6
- Supervision of Guardian - 10

There continues to be a high demand for local authority applications for both Welfare and Financial Guardianship Orders.

- 8.5 For people with mental disorder who come to the attention of the police, Appropriate Adults are provided by the Local Authority. The role of the Appropriate Adult is to facilitate communication and ensure that people are not disadvantaged by their mental disorder when making a statement or being interviewed as a suspect or accused. This service is coordinated by the Lead Officer for Adult Protection and provides another form of protection to people who are considered to be vulnerable.
- 8.6 During office hours the Appropriate Adult commitments are met through duty services of Children and Adult Social Work Services as required. Outside of office hours the services are delivered as required by the Out of Hours practitioners from the Social Work Services Out of Hours rota.
- 8.7 The Adult Protection Committee (APC) operates with an Independent Chair and reports to the Chief Officer's Group for Public Protection. The quarterly meetings of the APC include an activity report by the Lead Officer together with an update report from the Chair on national developments, information sharing and actions for the Committee. The Lead Officer attends weekly multi-disciplinary meetings with colleagues from Police Scotland and NHS Western Isles to consider the adult concern reports generated by the national Vulnerable Person Database (VPD).
- 8.8 The Vulnerable Person Database process was introduced in 2016/17 and has continued throughout this reporting period. When Police Scotland are involved with members of the public they consider 'vulnerable', they generate an 'Adult Concern Form'. Activity Reports from multi-agency meetings about VPD reports are presented to the Adult Protection Committee.
- 8.9 The statutory duties in relation to Adult Protection have been supported through investment in data management systems and processes that are embedded within the main social work Carefirst service user database.
- 8.10 The independent Chair of the Adult Protection Committee participates in the National Network and provides a valuable link which facilitates the sharing of best practice and learning with, and from, other Partnerships. This engagement assists the Committee in considering the most effective practice in relation to self-evaluation. Work on self-evaluation across the three island authorities has continued in this reporting period with a view to improving learning and practice. This has proven to be a valuable exercise in comparing processes with areas which encounter similar challenges to those in the Western Isles local authority area and it is intended that this work will continue.

9 COMPLAINTS

- 9.1 The Social Work (Scotland) 1968 Act placed a duty on Local Authorities regarding Social Work complaints, with direction and guidance provided by Scottish Government.
- 9.2 The Scottish Government completed a national review of Social Work Complaints Procedures which resulted in application of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) model 'Complaints Handling Procedures' to Social Work complaints and, accordingly, from 1 April 2017, all Social Work complaints received follow the Social Work Complaints Procedure in that, following a Stage 2 investigation, appeals now proceed to the SPSO rather than a Local Complaints Review Committee.
- 9.3 **Number of Complaints**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Children and Families	8	4	5	2:	6: 2 Upheld	6: 2 Upheld	6: 0 Upheld
				1 partially upheld	2 Partially Upheld	2 Partially Upheld	5 Partially Upheld
				1 not upheld	2 Not Upheld	2 Not Upheld	1 Not Upheld
Community Care	15	12	12	8: 2 upheld;	7: 3 Upheld;	10: 1 Upheld	10: 2 upheld
				5 partially upheld;	3 Partially Upheld	2 Partially Upheld	5 Partially Upheld
				1 not upheld	1 Not Upheld	7 Not Upheld	3 Not Upheld
Criminal Justice	1	0	0	0	0	1 Not Upheld	0
Total	24	16	17	10	13	17	

9.4 The community care complaints ranged from complaints about service provision, policy and procedure, transport and respite care.

9.5 The Children and Families complaints Partially Upheld related to complaints about: communication related to the reduction of respite provision; the ceasing of Kinship payments; and transport issues.

9.6 Complaints are recorded and learning points, whether the complaint is upheld or not, are used to influence and inform service improvements and learning.

10 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

10.1 Quality improvement and assurance systems are in place across our full range of services to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement is applied effectively and consistently and to develop service improvements within the context of integrated service planning.

10.2 There is an open approach to the promotion of reflective practice and self-evaluation in individual, section and multi-disciplinary practice which underpins the Social Work services commitment to ensuring that children & adults are safe and that all decisions are open to review.

10.3 Self-evaluation and inspection reports are converted into Improvement Plans and data is utilised to target interventions, evaluate outcomes and measure impact.

10.4 Children's Services make use of external expertise to review practice and, where relevant, assist in service development.

10.5 There is an effective Child Protection Committee which has promoted high levels of awareness and training in terms of early identification, referral, prevention and intervention on a proactive basis. A sub-committee of the Child Protection Committee uses case file audits to evaluate practice and improve interventions in the lives of children and young people.

10.6 The Getting It Right for Every Child policy agenda and the national minimum data set provide a robust child centred framework for assessment and intervention together with

baseline measures for all objectives in all plans (i.e. for individuals, group settings and the authority) allowing for more effective evaluation of outcomes. At the end of the period covered by this report the Independent Care Review published the Promise and this will also be used to measure the performance of children's services in the Western Isles.

- 10.7 Relevant staff contribute to the My World Assessment process and the construction of individual Child's Plans. Multi-agency training is delivered with an emphasis on ensuring that the team around the child operates effectively whilst also clearly understanding their respective roles and remits within the team. There has been investment in training with a partner third sector organisation to improve the theory base of this work – resilience, solution focused practice and systemic understanding.
- 10.8 The Child's Plan, the use of SMART targets and regular reviews are utilised to track individual progress against baseline measures.
- 10.9 Continued efforts have been made to develop and roll out the use of the 'Outcome Star' outcomes monitoring tool to ensure focus on the key areas of health and wellbeing. The Comhairle has invested in a new database for social work, Eclipse, this has an integrated outcomes tool. Once Eclipse comes on line in the next financial year it will be considered whether or not 'Outcome Star' will remain in use.
- 10.10 There is a continuing recognition that staff development is fundamental to the continuous improvement of the service. Training has covered from practical skills such as first aid through de-escalation, child protection along with others. There is the start of a move away from thinking of development as revolving around predominantly around training events. There is increasing discussion on the theory base of our practice and it's implementation.
- 10.11 It is increasingly necessary that there is an effort to 'island proof', under the terms of the Islands Act 2018, national development opportunities, conferences and training. The Scottish Government financially supported senior leaders from the Western Isles to attend a GIRFEC leadership event. Continuing to push such 'island proofing' to benefit all island based staff will ensure we bring the periphery into the centre and do not allow a professional marginalisation.
- 10.12 Where children are not able to continue to live with their immediate family, the following are among a range of options available, and being further developed, to provide alternativesafe, nurturing and sustainable care to vulnerable children and young people:
- Extension of kinship and foster care services.
 - Redesign of supported residential accommodation.
 - Provision of a broader range of wraparound support and family intervention services.
 - Empowerment of young people to exercise choice and to support them to make their needs known.
 - Provision of parenting classes.

There are currently discussions taking place with a national third sector organisation to initiate the use of Functional Family Therapy within the Western Isles with a view to imbedding the principles within interventions with children and their families.

- 10.13 While there have been no inspections of Comhairle children's services in the period covered by this report, initiatives such as those outlined in 10.12 have contributed to significant improvements in service areas. For example, in Fostering and Adoption services, as reflected in positive Fostering and Adoption Inspection Reports in 2016/17 respectively and, in more recent Reports, based on Announced (short notice) inspections, published by the Care Inspectorate in January 2019.

- 10.14 In the most recent inspection of Adoption services two elements of the service were found to be excellent in the provision of care and support and, accordingly, awarded a Grade 6, whilst in the category of quality of staffing, a Grade 5 was awarded.
- 10.15 Inspectors received a range of positive feedback from stakeholders such as ‘Can’t fault anything’ and ‘all excellent’ from social workers in other adoption agencies who also described the preparation of children for adoption and the support for adopters as ‘outstanding’ with impressive and innovative approaches to preparation and support provided to both children and adopters and they expressed having learned valuable practices to take back to their own agencies. An adopter described post adoption support provided as ‘amazing and I know I will always get support when I need it’. Inspectors described areas of outstanding practice and discussed the need to embed this for ongoing and future practice.
- 10.16 The Housing Support Service is a wraparound provision for vulnerable young people who are, or are at risk of becoming homeless. The service was registered for the first time in September 2017 and was the subject of a recent Unannounced Inspection by the Care Inspectorate. The service was inspected across three categories - Quality of care and support, Quality of staffing and quality of management and leadership with grades 5, 4 and 4 being awarded to each area respectively. Since that juncture the service has evolved significantly moving from being based in a single building which the young people had to move on from to offering young people the support in their own tenancies which they carry on once support is no longer needed. It’s sometimes described as a ‘tenancy for life’ model. Staff are working fluidly across two third sector partners and the local authority.
- 10.17 The governance structures in place within Children’s Services have been increased in order to scrutinise in greater depth assessments and analysis of need. Ensuring a more targeted allocation of resources to meet those needs.
- 10.18 The Poverty Action Group and Early Years Collaborative continue to raise awareness across the Community Planning Partnership in relation to child poverty and how this impacts on health and wellbeing. Interventions based on wellbeing indicators are a key focus of the Early Years Collaborative approach.
- 10.19 The Community Planning Partnership has set ambitious targets with partners to break the cycle of intergenerational child poverty and inequality. In addition to this, particularly in the context of the Western Isles, the Community Planning Partnership has a particular focus on addressing the compounding impact of rural poverty and fuel poverty. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan reflects the need to address key issues and those of particular relevance to the Western Isles.
- 10.20 The Short Term Assessment and Reablement Team (START) aims to assist people who have been assessed as having health and/or social care needs to maximize their level of independence by relearning skills or learning new skills that are necessary for day to day living (e.g. getting washed and dressed, mobilising, making meals). The START staff support individuals “to do” for themselves rather than the staff “doing for”. The service runs 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The team consists of Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Reablement Workers and Care and Support Supervisor. The team will work collaboratively with all professionals and services that will contribute to the overall Reablement approach (e.g. hospital based staff, community nursing team, social workers, General Practice staff, Third Sector services etc.) The service operates predominantly within the locality of Stornoway and Broadbay, The service has received positive feedback from the Care Inspectorate.
- 10.21 The Generic Home Care service, like all elements of social care, has proven an area with challenges in recruitment. The service has been enhanced through an extension of the workforce establishment in Uist. Recruitment to the posts commenced in 2019/2020. In addition recruitment of students to the service also begun in 2019/2020. This new development enables students with an interest in health and social care to obtain valuable work experience as well as providing added value to the service during the busy holiday

periods. As noted in other sections of this report; recruitment activity has been more successful at the start of the rise of the Covid 19 pandemic, however this could be due to other industries such as hospitality and tourism not recruiting over this period.

- 10.22 The replacement model of care for Barra and Vatersay continues to be progressed and refined along with Scottish Government. The replacement of residential care home with extra care housing and a new hospital and health and social care hub provides a new complex suitable for the current and emerging population requirements. The fully integrated nature of this project will also provide a replacement primary & secondary school along with leisure facilities. Comhairle and Health Board leaders are now working to identify full funding for the project.
- 10.23 The Lewis Residential Care Review has progressed to the construction phase of the Goathill aspect of the plan. A 52 bedded care home and 50 extra care houses are now due to be completed in 2022. (The project has been delayed significantly due to Covid 19 restrictions which will be reported in the next CSWO report.)
- 10.24 Delayed Discharge continues to highlight challenges in the local health and social care system. Performance has improved, however this is an area requiring consistent and sustained application of multi-disciplinary activity in order to maintain positive momentum.
- 10.25 The implementation of the Carer's Act has been achieved in line with the commitments placed on the Integration Joint Board and partner agencies. The Carers Strategy has been approved and is supported by an action plan to monitor implementation. A respite policy which is in line with the overall strategy has been developed and is being consulted on.

11 PLANNING FOR CHANGE

- 11.1 The IJB Strategic Plan was subjected to a refreshing exercise for a 1 year transitional period from March 2020. It was noted earlier that the Chief Officer of the IJB left the post at this juncture. It was increasingly clear even at the early stage of the Covid 19 pandemic that public health considerations made consultation difficult to progress. Interim arrangements were, and remain, subject to discussion with the Scottish Government.
- 11.2 The future direction of the Comhairle's social work services is being driven by a number of local and national factors and initiatives. Alongside the integration of Health and Social Care services, Self- Directed Support and the Carer's Act continue to be the biggest changes underpinning the delivery of adult social work services. The major capital projects being pursued are required to acknowledge the need for additional capacity in service provision to offer personalised 24/7 care services.
- 11.3 In the period 2019/2020, a total of 167 people with a Learning Disability or ASD were in receipt of Support by CNeS. All 167 were classified as having a learning disability, with 22 having ASD specified separately.

Age Groups:

Age Group	No. of Users
18 to 24	10
25 to 34	32
35 to 44	19
45 to 54	20
55 to 64	29
65 to 74	5
75 to 84	7
85 +	2

Please note that a proportion of records do not include a date of birth at the present time and do not appear to have an active service. This will be investigated in the next month to establish why the records exist.

Service types:

15 Services users are currently on Mainland Placement.

11 Service users are in Residential Care in the Western Isles.

121 individuals are supported to live with their families or in supported accommodation with the help of Social Care services including Telecare & Community Alarms, Day Services and 1:1 supports such as Ark, Macaulay College and Direct Payments.

14 services users have an unpaid carer who is in receipt of a Carers Assessment and Respite Services based on the 2018/19 Carers Return. The majority are parents providing care to Adult Children and have been providing Care in excess of 20 years, with all reporting that more than 50 hrs per week of care is provided. 28.5% are over 75, with a further 60% over 50. 96% of Unpaid Carers for those with a Learning Disability are female, and 65% are parents with the remainder being Adult siblings.

- 11.4 The IJB's management structure has been adapted to create a Head of Community Care encompassing the work of Comhairle Care at Home, Older People's Residential Care and Learning Disability Services. There is a second Head of Service who is responsible for all adult social work services and allied health professionals. The Lead Nurse (Community) reports directly to the Chief Officer
- 11.5 In Children and Families services, the Integrated Children Services Plan 2017-2020 brought together key areas of work presently being delivered with the developments required across all relevant agencies to ensure that the shape and future direction of services for children and young people are fit for purpose. Over the course of 2019/20 the next iteration of the ICSP has been developed. The Independent Care Review's 'Promise' was not published until February 2020 and consideration is being given to how this can be incorporated in to the plan. (As the publication date for the 2020 – 2023 plan approached an indeterminate extension was given to the publication date due to the pressures of the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent 'lockdown'.)
- 11.6 A leading aspect of service re-design within the Comhairle's Children's Services has been the establishment of a Children's Services Partnership designed to bring together key partner agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, within a collaborative service provision framework in which the primary focus is on ensuring that the assessed needs of vulnerable children and families are best met in, or as near as possible to, their own homes and/or their own home communities. Staff now work fluidly across organizational boundaries.
- 11.7 An underpinning principle of the Partnership is to ensure that services are flexible and, offer as far as reasonable equity of access. This principle is particularly relevant in a remote, and predominantly rural, islands area. Work has, for example, begun in developing a policy on respite care with an aim of equity of provision, within the finite resources at hand, and transparency in decision making.
- 11.8 Where there is an assessed need for a child or young person to be supported away from their home or local area base, the emphasis is on ensuring that this is limited to as short a period as possible in order to ensure minimum disruption in relation to crucial links with place, culture, natural support networks and key relationships. The cost of such 'mainland' placements is enormous with costs spiraling near £4500 per week but also in terms of people's ability to remain in touch with family, friends and professional staff.

12 WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

- 12.1 The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) continues to progress its agenda for all members of the workforce to be registered. Failure to support staff to achieve the necessary qualifications presents a significant risk to the employability of staff affected as well as to the sustainable delivery of key services. All staff are PVG checked and compliant with the registration requirements of the SSSC.
- 12.2 There is a Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy. Training plans for service areas are being refreshed.
- 12.3 The Learn Pro e-Learning system is utilised to deliver Health and Safety training, Fire Awareness and Food Safety. Working in partnership with the area Child Protection Officer, CnES Child Protection Training has been adapted to be delivered to all partnership staff via the LearnPro Platform. Adult Protection Training has also been adapted to be delivered through LearnPro.
- 12.4 The Comhairle and IJB continue to develop flexible routes into the caring professions. It is clear that attempts to attract people to come to the islands for such work continue to meet with mixed success. There is a need to 'grow our own' workforce and keep jobs on the islands. Accredited Training and Skills are working in partnership with the Education Department and UHI in the delivery of the National Progression Award to 5th and 6th year pupils in The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis and in Sgoil Lionacleit, Isle of Benbecula. As part of the year two study plan, pupils can undertake an SVQ in Social Services and Health Care which will comprise a Foundation Apprenticeship. This will equip them with the work experience and qualifications required to be fully registrable with the SSSC and work ready on leaving school. A mentor/buddy system is in place which engages past Modern Apprentice candidates to support pupils through the programme.
- 12.5 For Social Work staff there is a formal supervision framework and this is supplemented by the corporate annual appraisal system.
- 12.6 Adult Support and Protection services operate with 4 Mental Health Officers (MHOs) and actively monitors the future need for training and/or recruitment of MHO qualified Social Workers. Attracting MHOs to practice in the islands has been problematic with some vacancies requiring multiple rounds of recruitment and even then on occasion no appointment able to be made. There is a national challenge in recruiting MHO staff which is exacerbated by the remote nature of the Western Isles.
- 12.7 Services for Older People in the Western Isles have been re-designed and reshaped and progress has been made in shifting the balance of care, increasing the support delivered at home and developing new approaches such as reablement and prevention. Given the challenging demographics and the pressure on existing finance and human resources such progress is an indication of commitment in these areas.
- 12.8 The out of office hours social work service is provided on a standby basis with remuneration having been agreed through a 'single status' negotiation almost a decade ago. Social workers receive the same standby allowance as other Comhairle staff in other roles. The resilience of this arrangement has at times relied on the flexibility and commitment of the staff involved. A review of this element of the service is envisaged in the coming year.

13 ADDRESSING KEY CHALLENGES IN THE YEAR AHEAD

- 13.1 This section is written from the perspective of March 2020, however it would be completely foolhardy not to acknowledge that at that time there was only an emerging awareness of the **Covid 19 pandemic** and the subsequent period of lockdown had only just begun. Without a shadow of a doubt the challenges of the period from April 2020 to the end of March 2021 will be hugely impacted by this global public health crisis. There has been a plethora of new guidance and even emergency legislation on continuing to offer services through this period, CSWOs have been drawn into an enhanced oversight function and

home working has become the norm. From the point of view of the CSWO the **volume and complexity of demands have increased** and are expected to continue to do so over the coming year. It is not yet clear what the effects of the public health solutions to the spread of the Covid 19 virus will be, however it is envisaged support will be required in the areas of domestic violence, child protection and mental health to name but three.

- 13.2 Delivering safe and sustainable social work services in remote and rural areas and in an environment of **reducing public finances** will continue to place significant workforce and financial pressure on social work, social care services and the Comhairle as a whole. The added dimension and cost of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic will further exacerbate financial pressures. Despite the responses to Covid 19 and the offer of a degree of financial support from the centre planning continues on reshaping services and meeting need within a shrinking budget.
- 13.3 The **demographics of the islands** provide a demanding context. An aging population with a shrinking working age population to look after them. Recruitment is of acute concern. There is a struggle to attract social work staff. The social care workforce is finite and recruitment success by one organisation or department is simply leaving a gap in another. The expansion of the early years workforce has drawn staff from other types of care work and exacerbated problems in these sectors. There is a need for all organisations and sectors to develop joint initiatives to ensure maximum efficiency and reduce duplication and overlap. Effective recruitment involving inward movement of workers and retention of those already here are vital in expanding 'on island' care capacity.
- 13.4 The 2018 Islands Act explicitly sets out the principle of '**island proofing**' policy and procedure to ensure communities based in island authorities are not disadvantaged. There is a challenge in consistently reminding those developing policy and practice about this duty. Emerging areas include for example the national development of joint interview practice for children where a minimum number of joint interviews per year per worker is being proposed. A minimum number that would not allow island based social workers to practice easily in this area. Within the islands we must too remind ourselves to 'island proof' services across our own islands and not simply concentrate services within the hub of Stornoway.
- 13.5 At the same time as there is an anticipated reduction in budget, significant pressures continue with **rising demand for services**. New legislation and national policy have to be addressed within this context; Review of the integrated arrangement between Comhairle and Health Board, the added demands of the Independent Care Review's Promise, Self-Directed Support where there is little in the way of a mixed economy of providers available therefor the main, and sometimes, only provider is the local authority.
- 13.6 A further challenge is that the support needs of service users living either in their own home, in supported accommodation or in residential care continue to increase. People with complex needs are increasingly being cared for at home by social care staff, supported by health services and Third Sector agency staff. Whilst this may meet the living preferences of existing service users, the challenges associated with providing services in a remote and rural island area are such that, from a financial and staff resource perspective, in the longer term it will not always be possible to sustain individual complex care packages. The skill set of staff requires to develop too as we meet the challenge of an increasingly elderly population and with that a higher number of people with dementia and potentially challenging behaviours.
- 13.7 The deployment of assisted technology is an example of the continuing evolution of services. Key outcomes sought through the use of telecare solutions are:
- Improved level of support to enable people to stay at home for longer
 - Improving the experience of service users who are assisted through these solutions.

As illustrated in the table the number of telecare users as at 31 March 2019 totaled 1029 and had risen to 1047 by 31 March 2020.

People receiving Telecare as at 31/03/2020

0-17 Under 18	2
18-64	79
65-74	171
75-84	377
85+	416
No Age recorded	2
Sum:	1047

- 13.8 Social work and social care staff in the Western Isles continue to provide a broad range of statutory services to service users and the wider community. Self-evaluation, together with inspection and audit work and the analysis of service complaints highlight **areas for improvement and learning**. Communities and service users require to be active participants in developing strategy rather than consulted down the line. **Participation** is a key stone to future self-evaluation and strategic efforts.
- 13.9 The preceding paragraphs point to the challenge of **redesigning services** rather than simply doing more or less of what has traditionally been done up to now. The shape of services will have to change, new solutions found and different models of delivery considered. With this reality, communities and service users require to be engaged with as participants in the change process and with a full understanding of the parameters within which planning is taking place. There will need to be effort at co-production to overcome structural hurdles. Simply demanding a service will not guarantee it is available.
- 13.10 The **IJB Strategic Plan** is being implemented with a core focus on four developmental areas, namely Mental Health, Residential Care in Lewis, Housing with Extra Support on Barra and Intermediate Care Services. The Locality Planning Groups are operational and are developing their own planning mechanisms to address local circumstances.
- 13.11 The **Integrated Children's Services Plan** which is being developed for 2020 – 2023 is concentrating on thematic subgroups encompassing work with children and young people with additional support needs, children and young people's mental health & wellbeing, children and young people in the early years of life, children and young people who are care experienced, children and young people in need of protection and who have experienced trauma. This work will be underpinned by support for multi-disciplinary working, participation and rights, learning & development

14 COVID-19

In addition to the standard CSWO report format a short section on initial reflections on the responses to the Covid 19 outbreak is offered.

- 14.1 The majority of social work and social care services continued to operate throughout the period of lock down and within the parameters of government guidance. To date there has been no need to deploy emergency powers which have been put in place by Westminster or Scottish Governments.
- 14.2 In the initial stages of the 'lockdown' period office based staff began to work from home and there was a concerted effort to step up the IT infrastructure to support this. This quickly reached a stage where the vast majority of meetings, including those with clients, took place virtually. MS Teams has become the dominant platform. Senior staff were involved in

assessing when there was a critical need for direct contact to take place and government and public health guidance followed in relation to infection control.

- 14.3 While day care and residential respite services were closed in line with Scottish Government guidance where critical need was assessed bespoke support packages were developed. By definition services could not remain the same however support was maintained in other ways. In the case of children for example those deemed vulnerable were supported in Hubs based around local schools. Due to the geographical remoteness it was at times challenging to maintain these services and transport to them, however the Hubs remained in operation throughout the lockdown period and until such times as the schools returned to their normal attendance patterns.
- 14.4 The withdrawal of planned respite services ensured that there was capacity to react to critical emergency need and to ensure timeous discharge of patients from hospital.
- 14.5 The data gathered would suggest that duty teams continued to deal appropriately with adult and child protection issues. There has been a consistently high level of contact between Comhairle staff and services users. All data required to be returned to the Scottish Government on this has been. Caution should always be taken in interpreting data for the Western Isles as small variations can appear to be large percentage increases or decreases. Notwithstanding this there appears to have been no significant overall change to the case work load throughout this period. It is to be seen what the long term effects are. Of note is that as lockdown eased there was actually a reduction of children on the Child Protection Register and at the date of writing there are none.
- 14.6 Social work and social care staff have been involved in all levels of the pandemic planning process. Key roles have been taken up in the Care for People Group, Pandemic Operations Group, Pandemic Resilience Group and the Care Home Enhanced Oversight Group. Working closely with health partners. Other partners have also included all the emergency services and third sector colleagues. Early in the course of the pandemic there were NHS and Comhairle PPE leads identified to liaise with national procurement and to facilitate local dissemination.
- 14.7 Staff in both adult service and children's service continued to work directly with clients. Occupational health assessments and risk assessments were completed. Beyond the need to offer general and at times intimate care, these staff had deal with the anxiety provoked by the context in themselves, colleagues, service users and families. Those staff who continued to care for some of the most challenging service users – particularly those with behavioural difficulties – require recognition. These staff carried out a near miraculous job balancing risk assessment and infection control requirements while for example working with clients whose behavior inherently breached social distance and resulted in PPE being pulled away from staff.
- 14.8 Comhairle staff whose substantive post was in service which shut were redeployed into serving the community in other ways. This ranged from working in school hubs through to supporting the local supermarkets with home delivery. Of course there was a proportion of staff who required to 'shield' however this did not appear to effect service delivery to any degree. Indeed with the advent of home working and the increasing use of technology it was possible for a number of the 'shielding' staff to continue with their work.
- 14.9 Home working has become the norm for office based staff. A recent HR survey indicated that two thirds of staff either wanted to continue home working or for there to be a blend of home and office.
- 14.10 There is no doubt that staff have shown huge commitment to ensuring the smoothest possible service delivery to those most vulnerable in our communities. This does have a cost. For example and in a concrete way staff in direct care roles have a backlog of annual leave to take. There is an increased allowance of holidays which can be carried forward however there is a need for rest and recuperation now.

- 14.11 There has been a significantly increased load on the expectations of CSWO. As Head of Children's Services the CSWO has had to spend significantly more time than usual involved in adult care and in particular care home provision. While it is accepted that there was some financial support from the Scottish Government it requires to be acknowledged that within small organisations such as the Western Isles finding people to take on the various roles needed is a limiting factor. There has been a plethora of emergency and general guidance to digest and disseminate.
- 14.12 In starting to consider 'recovery' perhaps the first thing to recognize rather than the impending challenges is the immense amount of great work that has been done. There will require to be a process of gathering the lessons learned – not so much from what went wrong but on what has gone well and needs built on. There are obvious examples in increased multi-agency working or the use of technology / home working.
- 14.13 At whatever point the viral pandemic begins to wain there will be an ongoing need to deal with the anticipated increase in social and personal issues. At a national and international level research is already pointing to increases in drug related issues, increases in domestic violence, increase in child protection and adult protection. It is to be envisaged that that a macro level economic down turn will lead to increases in levels of poverty. To this has to be added the potential effects of Brexit and an exacerbation of the type of issues mentioned above. Local government is preparing for further budgetary austerity. New demands are being placed through initiatives such as the Independent Care Review's Promise. To talk of 'recovery' may still be optimistic language. Certainly services will need to continue to be prepared to respond flexibly to whatever comes their way.

David Gibson
Chief Social Work Officer
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

CNES Care Services - Regulatory Monitoring as at 31 March 2020

The Quality Framework for Care Homes for Older People sets out key questions about the difference a care home is making to people's wellbeing, and the quality of the elements that contribute to that. Care services can use the framework to evaluate their own performance. The Care Inspectorate will also use it on their inspections and improvement advisory work.

In evaluating quality, the Care Inspectorate use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent.

The six-point scale is used to describe the quality seen during an inspection:

6	Excellent	Outstanding or sector leading
5	Very good	Major strengths
4	Good	Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – priority action required
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses – urgent remedial action required

There are no legal differences between residential homes and nursing homes. They are all care homes and can be flexible about the services they offer. They can meet all aspects of accommodation, support and care including nursing and end-of-life care. Two care homes in the Western Isles directly employ registered nurses – Blar Buidhe and Bethesda.

Care at home makes sure that as many people as possible are supported in their own homes. The care at home service can touch on all aspects of daily life in the person's own home.

Support Services can fall under the heading of day care and can be offered within a care home, centre or to those provided directly in the community and not based in a centre. Support services can help with people who need support with very complicated need to people who need time-limited support at various times.

Housing support covers a range of activities that allows people to maintain their accommodation, meet a person's duties and responsibilities as a tenant and also get involved in the local community.

The Care Inspectorate regulate/inspect services using the Health and Social Care Standards and the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

New Framework Based Inspection Gradings

SERVICE	TYPE OF SERVICE	How well do we support people's well-being?	How good is our Leadership?	How good is our staff team?	How good is our setting?	How well is care and support planned?
Ark Perth And Kinross	Housing Support	6	6	-	-	-
Bethesda Care Home	Care Home	5	-	-	-	5
Blar Buidhe Care Home – Hc-One	Care Home	3	3	4	2	4
Daldorch House School	School Care Accommodation	3	-	2	3	4
Daldorch Short Breaks	Care Home	5	-	-	-	4
Dun Berisay Care Home	Care Home	4	-	4	-	3
Dun Eisdean Care Home	Care Home	4	3	3	4	3
Ellen Mhor Care Home - Danshell	Care Home	3	4	4	4	4
Harris House Care Home	Care Home	5	-	-	-	4
Leverburgh Care Home	Care Home	5	-	3	-	4
Linlithgow Care Home – Hc-One	Care Home	5	-	-	-	5
Meallmore Lodge	Care Home	3	4	4	4	3
Taigh A'chridhe Uile Naomh Care Home	Care Home	3	3	3	4	3
The Manor Care Centre	Care Home	4	4	4	-	5
Thistle Care Home – Danshell	Care Home	3	3	3	4	3
Trianaid Care Home	Care Home	4	-	-	-	5

Existing Framework Based Inspection Gradings

Service	Type of Service	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of the Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management & Leadership
Ardseileach	Care Home	4	-	-	3
Ark Angus	Housing Support	5	-	-	5
Ark Western Isles	Housing Support	5	-	-	4
Barra Day Centre	Support Service	6	-	5	-
Cantraybridge	Care Home	6	-	5	-
Cobhair Bharraigh	Support Service	5	-	5	-
Craigard Centre	Support Service	5	-	5	4
Crossroads Harris Care Attendant Scheme	Support Service	6	-	-	6
Crossroads Lewis Care Attendant Scheme	Support Service	5	-	5	-
Gateway Highland Homeless Trust	Housing Support	5	-	-	5
Generic C@H L&H	Support Service	4	-	4	4
Generic C@H U&B	Support Service	2	-	3	3
Grianan Day Care Centre	Support Service	4	-	-	4
Harris House Support Service	Support Service	5	6	-	4
L&H Community Living	Support Service	4	-	-	3
Newton Dee	Housing Support	5	-	-	5
Penumbra Western Isles	Housing Support	6	-	-	6
Solas Centre, Alzheimer Scotland	Day Support Service	6	-	5	5
Tagsa Uibhist	Support Service	5	-	-	5
Taigh a'Chridhe Uile Naomh	Support Service	5	-	-	4
Trianaid	Care Home	5	-	-	5
Trianaid	Support Service	4	-	-	4

Adult English Framework

In addition we have one service user who uses Richmond Court, Hall Lane, Willington, County Durham which was scored under the English regulatory system as follows on 30 May 2018:

Is the service safe?	Is the service effective?	Is the service caring?	Is the service responsive?	Is the service well led?
Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

Children's Services Registered 2019 / 2020

New Framework Based Inspection Gradings

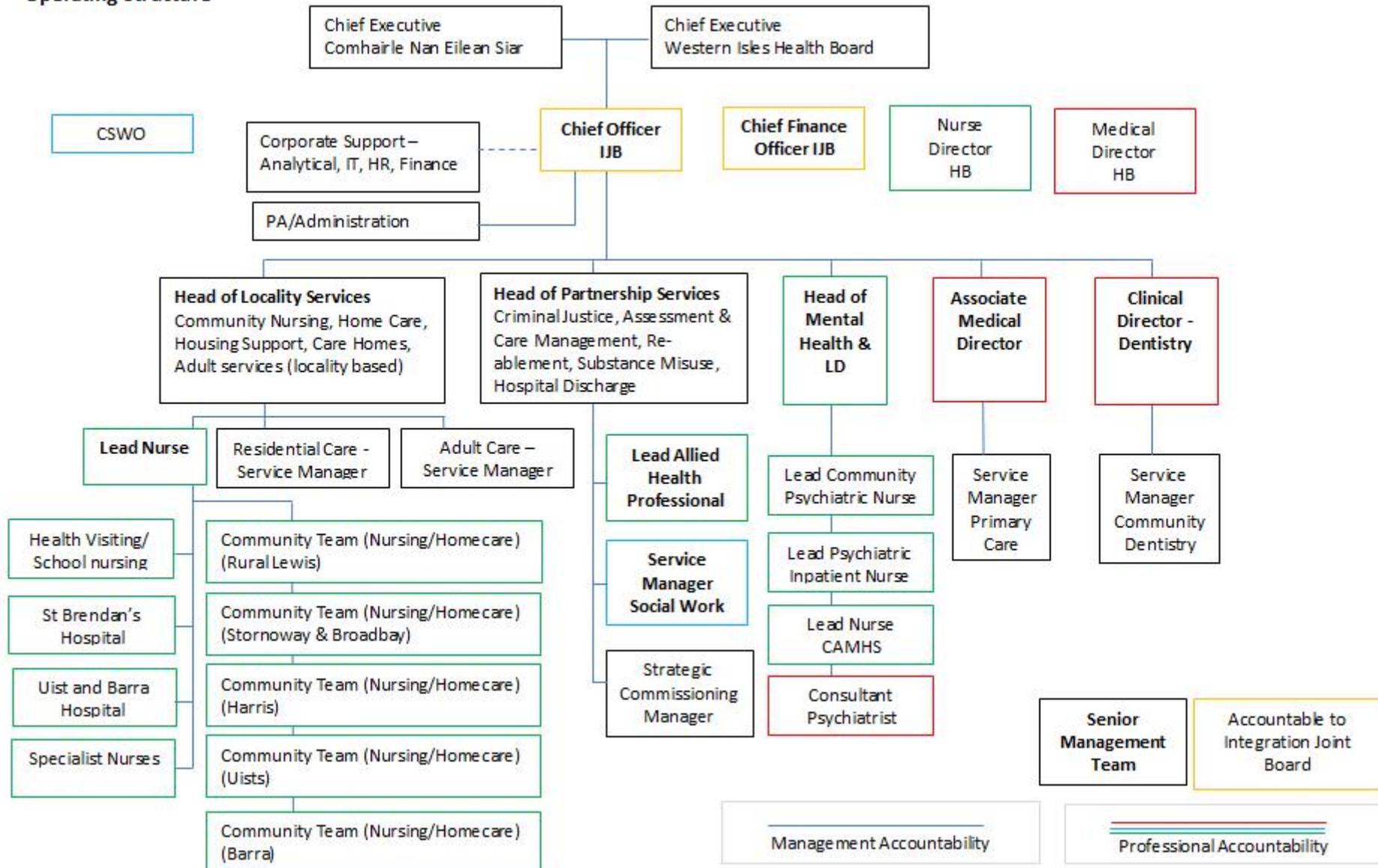
Service	Type of Service	How well do we support people's well-being?	How good is our Leadership?	How good is our staff team?	How good is our setting?	How well is care and support planned?
Action for Children, Hillcrest	Care Home Service	4	-	-	-	3

Existing Framework Based Inspection Gradings

Service	Type of service	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staff	Quality of Management & Leadership
Action for Children, Outreach Respite	Support Services	5	-	5	-
Adoption Service	Adoption Service	6	-	5	-
An Cotan	Day Care of Children	6	-	-	5
Castlebay Primary School	Day Care of Children	5	4	-	-
Cothrom Og	Day Care of Children	4	4	-	-
Fostering Service	Fostering Service	4	-	5	-
Old House	Housing Support Service	5	-	4	4
Pairc Playgroup	Day Care of Children	6	-	5	-
Rowantree House	Care Home Service	4	4	5	4
Saoghal Beag Nursery	Day Care of Children	4	5	3	3
Sgoil Araich an lochdair	Day Care of Children	6	5	-	-
Sgoil Araich an Oib	Day Care of Children	5	5	-	-
Sgoil Araich an Rubha	Day Care of Children	5	5	-	-
Sgoil Araich an Tairbeart	Day Care of Children	4	-	3	-
Sgoil Araich an Taobh Siar	Day Care of Children	4	-	4	-
Sgoil Araich Bhaile a Mhanaich	Day Care of Children	5	-	5	-

Service	Type of service	Quality of Care & Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staff	Quality of Management & Leadership
Sgoil Araich Bhreascleit	Day Care of Children	5	-	-	5
Sgoil Araich Dhalabroig	Day Care of Children	5	-	-	5
Sgoil Araich Lacasdail	Day Care of Children	4	4	-	-
Sgoil Araich Lionail	Day Care of Children	4	4	-	3
Sgoil Araich Loch a Tuath	Day Care of Children	3	-	3	3
Sgoil Araich nan Loch	Day Care of Children	4	3	-	-
Sgoil Araich Shiaboist	Day Care of Children	4	-	5	-
Sgoil Araich Thunga	Day Care of Children	4	3	4	4
Sgoil Araich Uig	Day Care of Children	4	4	-	-
Stornoway Childcare Centre	Day Care of Children	6	5	-	5
Stornoway Playgroup	Day Care of Children	5	-	-	4
Stornoway Primary School Nursery	Day Care of Children	4	-	4	-
Tolsta School Nursery (Service discontinued during 19/20)	Day Care of Children	6	6	-	-
Western Isles Foyer	Housing Support	5	-	-	5
WI Mobile Childcare Service	Day Care of Children	5	4	-	-

Operating Structure



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR
Department of Education and Children's Services – Structure from August 2018 DRAFT

