

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****25 October 2023****Report by Chief Social Work Officer****Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2022/23****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The report presented to elected members is the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report for 2022/23. 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 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
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
  - Training, Learning and Development
  - 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 2022/23 through the delivery of the statutory functions and responsibilities held by the Chief Social Work Officer.
9. We have many examples of success to celebrate and build on. 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 post pandemic has been challenging with added complications and pressures such as the cost of living crisis. 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 2023

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2021-22](#)  
[Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2020-21](#)



**EAST RENFREWSHIRE  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP**

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

**1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023**



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## Introduction – Reflection on the Past Year

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

In the past year our workforce have continued to support individuals and families within East Renfrewshire during national and local difficult times. The experience of many in our communities post pandemic has been challenging with added complications and pressures such as the cost of living crisis. This has involved responding to higher demands for support in unpredictable times. Our staff have continued to respond and support creatively never losing sight of the individual and an attempt to help increase self-efficacy.

This report provides a summary of our statutory services activity and highlights the work and dedication of our staff in supporting our residents and improving outcomes. The report covers the period April 2022 – March 2023. In particular I would highlight the inspection of Children and Young People at Risk of Harm undertaken by the Care Inspectorate in this period. East Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership were graded excellent and had no improvements to make. This is a national first. In January 2023 East Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee received notification of a joint Adult Support and Protection inspection. Although not captured in this timeframe we can now acknowledge that East Renfrewshire was assessed as very good in relation to our local adult support and protection arrangements. As Chief Social Work Officer I am immensely proud of these achievements and am assured that public protection in East Renfrewshire is of the highest standard.

We have other examples of success to celebrate and build on:

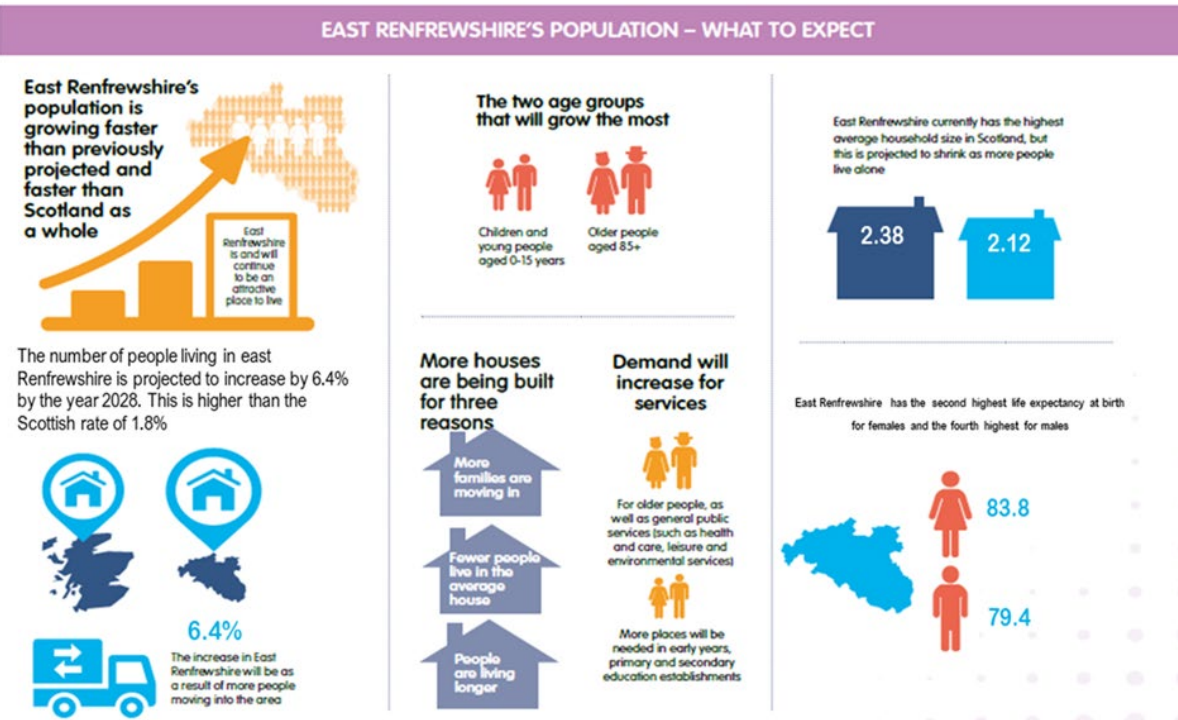
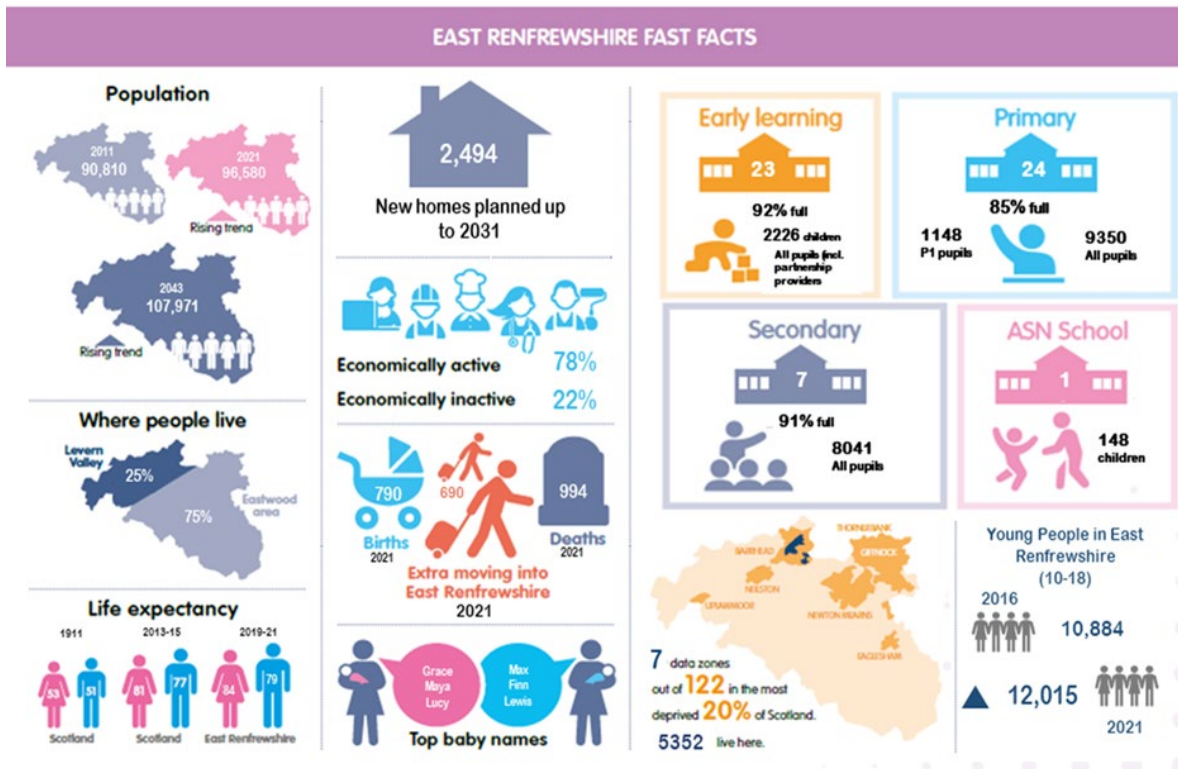
- Excellent partnership working with families and third sector colleagues.
- Multi-agency approaches to mental health and wellbeing.
- Evidenced relational based and trauma informed practice.
- Continued commitment to the principles of The Promise and system wide family support.
- Integrated health and social work teams.
- Commitment from elected members and Chief Executive to the Champions Board and participation of care experienced young people.
- Permanence planning for children unable to remain with birth families.
- Multi-agency neuro-developmental and disability planning and support.
- Commitment to uphold children's rights via UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- Transition planning into adult services for children with complex needs.
- Invaluable community engagement via Talking Points and older resident community groups.
- Excellent public protection services.
- Multi-agency partnership regarding the North Strathclyde Scottish Child Interview team and Barnahaus.
- Evident support to victims of domestic abuse and best use of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) processes.
- Strengthened care home assurance visits.
- Learning Disabilities team implementation of the national Dynamic Support Register.
- Community Pathways teams partnership with Education.
- Implementation planning with Paisley Sheriff Court regarding electronic monitoring and bail supervision.

We are also aware of significant challenges that confront us:

- Ongoing arrivals of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) via the mandated National Transfer Scheme.
- Challenges of recruitment and retention of staff in particular care at home staff and mental health officers.
- Increase of children and adults with a neuro-developmental profile requiring support.
- Supervision of increased private guardianship orders.
- Delivery of high quality services across social work given the financial pressures placed on the sector.
- Crisis in recruiting and retention of learning disability staff.

# East Renfrewshire Population Facts



**Section 1: Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions**

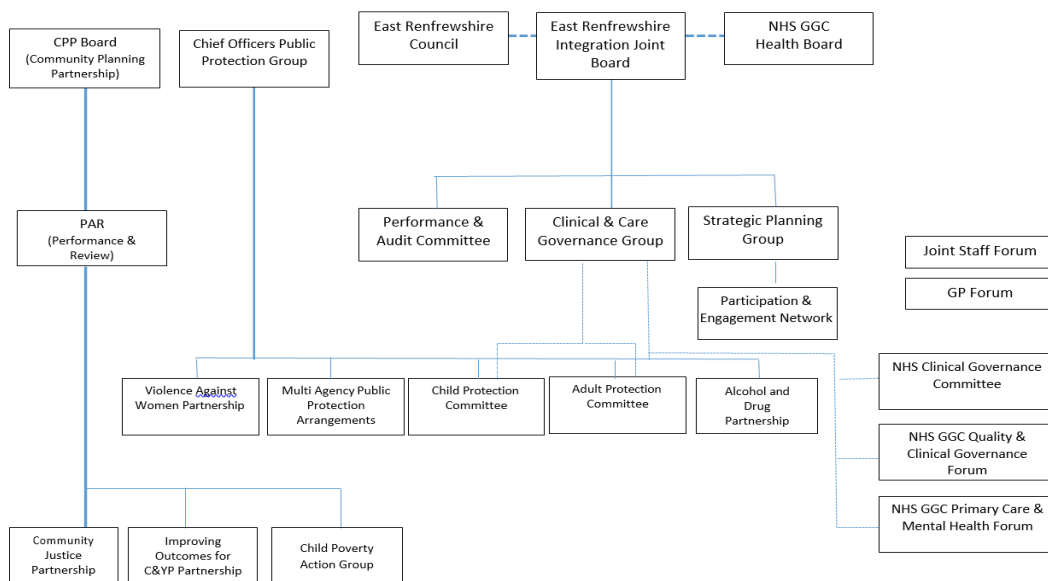
East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in 2015 under the direction of East Renfrewshire’s Integration Joint Board (IJB) and it has built on the Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP), which NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and East Renfrewshire Council established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

During the last 17 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.

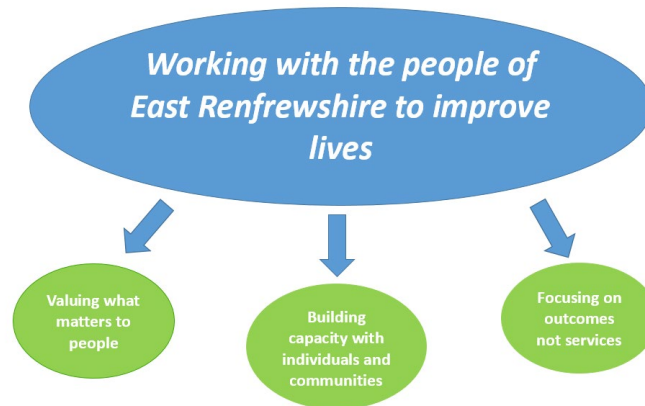
This Chief Social Work Officer report reflects the eighth year of the move to a Health and Social Care Partnership and whilst it outlines the key statutory social work functions, it also explains how they are delivered within the spirit of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation. 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. We have recently extended our priority for mental health to include mental health and wellbeing across our communities. We have 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 our current 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.

We will continue to build on our established relationship with our external provider and partners to work together to develop a shared approach to strategic commissioning and market facilitation for East Renfrewshire. Over the past year we have been working alongside external partners to develop a shared collaborative commissioning statement for East Renfrewshire. This shared statement of intent sets out agreed principles and approach which are co-designed with wider partners and stakeholders on how we will work together.

## **Annual Performance Report**

Our [Annual Performance Report 2022-23](#) has given us an opportunity to demonstrate how we have delivered on our vision and commitments over 2022/23. 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. Although no longer a formal structure of the Integration Joint Board it continues to provide regular scrutiny on the areas requiring development and improvement.

## 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 2022 to 31 March 2023, the Request for Assistance team completed a total of 1734 enquiries and 754 initial assessments, with 29% of those initial assessments requiring targeted intervention, an increase from 2021/22. This highlights the increasing complexities evident in our communities post pandemic.

#### Children 1st Family Group Decision Making

This service is based alongside our request for assistance team and was offered to 51 families across the reporting period. Eight families were already being supported leading into this period and a further 43 families were introduced to the service.

From April 2022 to March 2023 there has been 48% increase in families connected to the Family Group Decision Making Service in comparison to the same period in 2021/22. Family Group Decision Making allows families to be the experts in their own lives and formulate their own plans to make change.

#### Family Group Decision Making Feedback

*"The violence and aggression has stopped. I've stopped reacting as quickly."*

**Parent A**

*"There is more understanding between everyone, and we are all more considerate of each other."*

**Parent B**

*"We are not seeing a lot of families referred back to Request for Assistance after having Family Group Decision Making support."*

**Team Manager, Request for Assistance**

*"Offering Family Group Decision Making put the power back to the family."*

**Social Worker, Request for Assistance**

*"Family Group Decision Making helps families to draw on their strengths and think about their wider network that perhaps they had not considered before."*

**Social Worker, Request for Assistance**

## **Children and Young People’s Mental and Emotional Wellbeing**

As a local authority, East Renfrewshire has recognised the extent of mental health concerns among the children and young people’s population. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the circumstances for many children, young people and their families, and we are now seeing a significant rise in the number of those experiencing challenges with their mental health and wellbeing. This includes those who have a neurodevelopmental diagnosis. 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 is working alongside our existing Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service which links to GP practices. In addition local Youth Counselling provision has also been increased.

### **Children 1st Family Wellbeing Service**

Over the past year, the Family Wellbeing Service has continued to successfully support children, young people and their families. Families are still recovering from the physical, emotional and financial impact of the last couple of years and are presenting at GP surgeries with more acute wellbeing and mental health concerns. Our continued focus on building strong relationships with children and their families as well as partner agencies has enabled us to manage demand, meet the changing needs of families; improve emotional wellbeing and mental health and keep children safe.

At the end of the reporting period 2021/22 156 families were still being supported by the service with a further 146 referrals received during the reporting period 2022/23. This meant that across this reporting period 302 children, young people and their families were offered support from the Family Wellbeing Service.

The latest data suggests that support from the Family Wellbeing Service has reduced the re-presentations of children and young people experiencing emotional distress at GP surgeries by 86% (6 months post closure).

<b>Making a Difference Outcome</b>	<b>% of families who experienced improvement</b>
<b>Increased Safety</b>	92
<b>Improved Relationships</b>	88
<b>Recovery from trauma</b>	87
<b>Improved Wellbeing</b>	87

### **Healthier Minds Team**

In recognition of the identified increase in mental health concerns for children and young people, the partnership invested in multi-agency mental health provision. 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.

During 2022/23:

- 416 children & young people were referred to Healthier Minds, these were discussed over 43 multi-agency screening hubs.
- 39% were supported by Recovery Across Mental Health, Youth Counselling Service and 38% were supported by the Healthier Minds Team, with the remaining young people continuing support with existing services and support being offer from school or had sufficient supports in place.
- 122 re-referrals were received in this period. The three highest reasons for referral remain unchanged since the service was formed; anxiety, low mood and emotional regulation.
- 25% of the children & young people referred have an additional support need, half of which have a diagnosis of Autism with a further 7% of the total number of children & young people referred have traits associated with Autism. A growing number of those referred have a higher level of risk and complexity.
- 93% of the children & young people supported by the Healthier Minds Team reported improved mental health and wellbeing.
- Parents who completed the post evaluation would recommend the service to others.

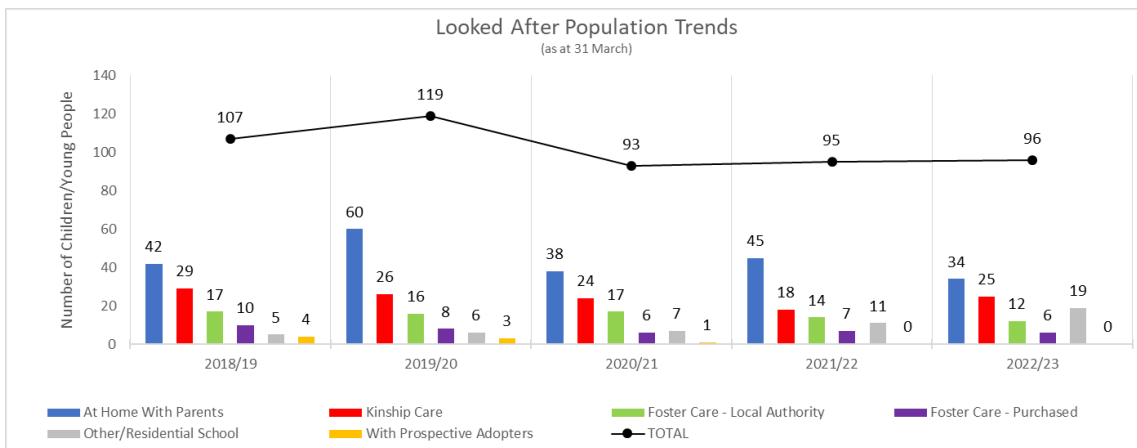
*One young person described how the trusting relationship with the staff had supported them to overcome many challenges such as not attending school, difficult relationships at home and an eating disorder. The young person detailed how this support impacted positively on their wellbeing.*

*"We don't always want to be referred to a 'specialist service' and instead want class teachers, janitors, peers and the whole school community to feel confident to let us talk about mental health."*

***ER Youth Voice and Champions Board Mental Health Working Group***

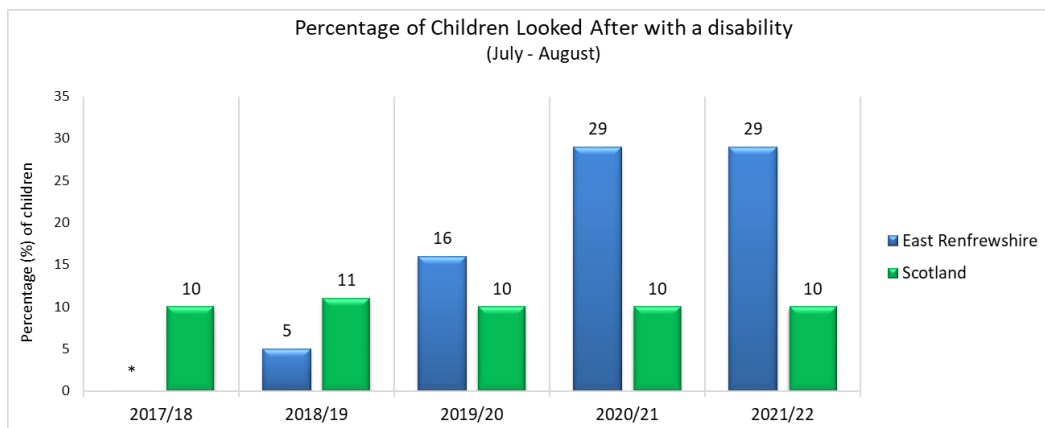
**East Renfrewshire’s Looked after Children and Young People’s Population - A Profile of our Children**

On 31 March 2023, 96 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. The gender balance has been consistent in recent years with 56% boys and 44% girls. We have continued to work to improve outcomes for children by securing permanent destinations for them. The number of children looked after at home is below pre-pandemic levels and there is an overall reduction in the number of children looked after away from home.



In this year, the average amount of time children were looked after at home increased from 17 months in 2018/19 to 21 months in 2022/23.

As a result of the pandemic there has been a significant increase in the number of children with complex and additional support needs who have become looked after. Currently 29% of looked after children have a disability evidencing that the pandemic has significantly affected families with children who have additional support needs.



Source: Children’s Social Work Statistics, Scottish Government

### **Intensive Family Support Team**

The intensive family support service works alongside community social work, with families of children under the age of 12 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 2022 and March 2023, 46 children received support from the Intensive Family Support Service. The majority of children supported (46%) were in 0 – 4 age group. Building and strengthening parent / carer strengths and safety was the primary intervention in 62.2% of cases. 46.7% of current cases are known to be at risk of accommodation. 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's 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 2022/23 a total of 127 young people received support from Youth Intensive Support Service and the most common age group was nineteen plus years, which made up 37.0% of the total supported. In the reporting period:

- 48.4% were currently looked after.
- 31.0% were known to be at risk of accommodation.
- 16.7% were at risk of custody.
- 19.0% were at risk of hospitalisation.
- 20.6% received additional (commissioned) support.
- In 68.3% of open cases, a signs of safety plan and participation was the most common intervention, followed by support to gain employment, training or education.

### **Champions Board, Group Work and Participation**

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

- Young people engaged in 'Track to the Wall', a nine month programme based around Graffiti Art, song writing and performance leading to young people creating murals and releasing their own songs on Spotify.
- Children and Young People celebrated their care experience through attending Who Cares? Scotland Ceilidh, Time to Shine and the Love Rally alongside their corporate parents.
- Children, Young People, Parents and Carers met with the First Minister in Barrhead on Care Day 2023 to mark the three year anniversary of The Promise and to celebrate lived experience.
- The Champions Board held a premier of a mental health film for their corporate parents. This film was created by young people with lived experience, sharing the challenges they face and will be used as a training resource.
- Children, Young People, Parents and Carers attended workshops to share their views on how it feels to attend a Children's Hearing. This work was in



collaboration with CELCIS and will be used to inform practice both locally and nationally.

- East Renfrewshire hosted a National Leadership Network Roadshow, which was led by one of our Champions Board Members. The event was attended by both young people and Corporate Parents and explored leadership and opportunities available for young people.
- The Mini Champs continue to meet fortnightly to support care identity in a fun, nurturing way.

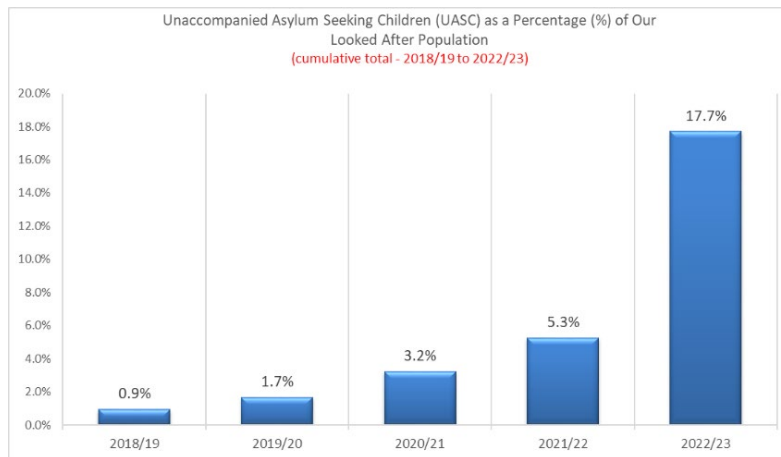
Our Aftercare group continues to meet on a monthly basis, offering support, peer interaction and a sense of belonging.

**Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

The UK Government has been operating the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied minors arriving in England to be transferred to Local Authorities across the UK. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children requiring accommodation is projected to increase for every local authority in Scotland. The Youth Intensive Support Service is the main support service for these unaccompanied children in East Renfrewshire. A total of sixteen Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) have been accommodated in East Renfrewshire since 2017.



Since the implementation of the mandated National Transfer Scheme in November 2021 the proportion of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in our looked after population in East Renfrewshire has risen significantly and is predicted to continue to increase.



## **Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care**

The Fostering, Adoption and Supported Care Team have sought to continue to provide safe and stable placements to meet the needs of children and young people. Our carers have been integral in continuing their support to our children and young people. They have provided consistency, stability and care to our children and young people throughout this year. We continued to progress assessments and foster carer annual reviews through our Adoption and Permanence Panel.

### **Fostering**

We have fourteen approved fostering households providing foster care to eleven children and young people along with two fostering households providing short breaks to two children and their families.

In 2022/23, we had young people ceasing to be looked after and moving into continuing care. The majority of our young people have been able to remain in the same placement and continue to have support from carers who they have developed strong relationships with. This is a real strength in practice for our team with carers showing commitment to young people beyond eighteen years of age.

*“Why my fostering community matters to me....*



***Foster Carers***

### **Adoption**

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

Our team have provided support to children's social workers to complete Child's Adoption and Permanence Report paperwork and progress plans for children to permanence.

*“As Independent Chair of the Adoption and Permanence panel, I have the privilege of reading and hearing about many different aspects of the work that goes on across Children's Services. One of the biggest decisions we can ever make, is in relation to whether a child requires permanent care, away from home. This is complex and emotionally charged work, with many competing demands.*

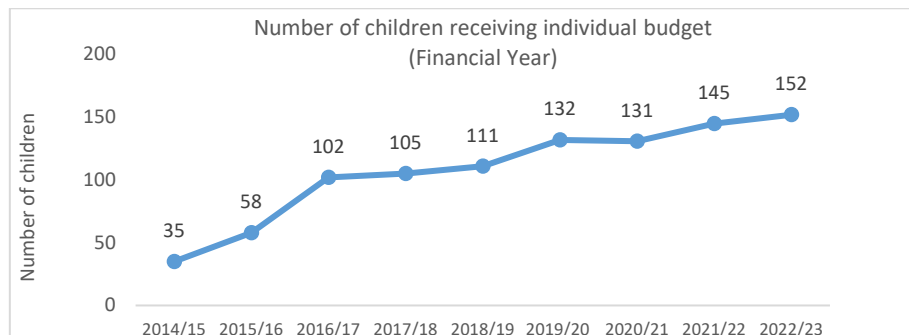
*We have been so impressed by the intentionally inclusive and sensitive practice of supporting parents, and on occasion, grandparents through this multi-layered process. The thought and sensitivity shown to families and time given to truly ensuring that families are supported to understand the very complex steps of permanence planning, has been inspirational to myself and other panel members. It is evident how this support has enabled them to work with (not against) the authority, without shame, for the benefit for their child.*

*To do this work in a way, which models positive working relationships, throughout emotionally challenging decision making, is nothing short of life-changing. As a panel we would wish to feedback our appreciation of the exceptional skills, values and dedication of the workers who carry out this work and we pass on our immense thanks.”*

**Chair of East Renfrewshire Adoption and Permanence Panel.**

### **Children with Disabilities**

We have fully adopted the principles of Self-Directed Support in partnership with children and their families. We recognise that good support planning is reliant on relationship based practice, starting with the family recognising what matters to them, and we are embedding this way of working throughout children's services. Given that 39% of children known to social work teams have a disability, we have undertaken a review of our assessment and planning and have implemented Signs of Wellbeing, a strengths based approach, adapted from Signs of Safety.



The number of children in receipt of an individual budget has increased by 334% since 2014/15 as shown in the chart above. In 2022/23, three quarters of children with disabilities allocated to social workers were in receipt of an individual budget. This will continue to be an area of significant growth and budgetary pressure. Expenditure has decreased from £611,222 for option one payments in 2021/22 to £573,634 in 2022/23

which is a 6% decrease with the same period last year. Although more children are receiving a budget, regular reviews of these have resulted in a decreased spend overall. It is anticipated that this will continue to be an area of significant demand over the years, considering the migration of families who have children with disabilities into East Renfrewshire.

### **Cygnets Parenting Programme for Parents**

East Renfrewshire Cygnets Parenting Programme for parents of children with an Autism diagnosis has been very successful with high attendance and completion rates and programme evaluation has consistently reflected improvement in parental confidence in supporting children and young people with Autism. Six programmes were delivered during 2022/23 to a total of 45 families. An offer was made to families where children (5 – 19 years) had received a diagnosis of Autism during the previous 2 / 3 years.

A further programme was provided to an existing group within the Carers Centre. This was the first time the programme was delivered to an established group exclusively within our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community. Of note were the more significant improvements in parental confidence within the Black and Minority Ethnic community. In part this may be reflective of the already established group or the fact that families reported they had minimal Autism specific support, with many children having received a diagnosis a number of years previous.

The majority of parents rated the course as excellent and commented that their understanding of Autism had increased and felt they had an increased awareness of behaviour management techniques.

### **Inclusive Support Service**

The Inclusive Support Service is comprised of three distinct services: holiday provision, out of school activity clubs and individualised support services. 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 2022/23 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 focusing primarily on those with complex support needs.

Our staff provide the nurturing care and support rated as excellent by The Care Inspectorate during an unannounced inspection in July 2022. 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 will build on.

We currently have 249 children registered with the service, and in 2022/23 we have supported young people to engage in out of school activities such as football, drama, music and cooking with activities provided over four 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.

### **Rights of Children**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a core international human rights instrument which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by the UK Government in 1991. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the human rights of every person under the age of eighteen and has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 further strengthens children's rights and places duties on local authorities, health boards and partner agencies to plan, develop and deliver services in this policy and legal context.

Our new Children's Services Plan 2023-26 has been developed using a rights based approach and directly links to our commitment to promoting and protecting children and young people's rights. In preparation for incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law, East Renfrewshire Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership along with the wider partnership, established a UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Group to ensure that all agencies and their staff are supported to consider the implications for how we deliver council services. This group are progressing three main themes linked to participation of children and young people, promotion of rights across all services and publicising children's rights to children and families.

Underpinning this work is a commitment to improving outcomes for all of our children and young people. We respect each child's right to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their potential. However we understand our additional responsibility to protect the rights of particular groups of children and young people who experience barriers to success and achievement or whose rights are threatened by abuse or poverty. For those children who need additional support, we work with them to assess their circumstances and make decisions with them and their families. We seek children's views on a wide range of issues using appropriate and inclusive tools and we routinely consult with them when new policies and services are being developed and reviewed.

### **Children's Services Planning and The Promise in East Renfrewshire**

Children's planning has a very high profile in East Renfrewshire and all partners have worked together to renew commitments to children, young people and their families; as set out in East Renfrewshire's Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023 - 2026 – "At Our Heart – The Next Steps". Our priorities remain keeping children safe, improving children's mental wellbeing, enhancing support to children with complex needs and ensuring that The Promise is at the centre of all we do.

The East Renfrewshire approach, as laid out in the new plan, is underpinned by the Refreshed Getting It Right for Every Child policy framework and informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Across East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Children and Families services the core values of relational

based practice, listening to children, focusing on the strengths of families, and being trauma informed, drive our delivery and inform our understanding of what we need to improve.

The Promise clearly identified the need to significantly upscale family support services and identified whole family support as a priority in the Promise Plan 2021 – 2024. Our support for families is integrated within our services through the Refreshed Getting It Right for Every Child and Signs of Safety approaches. This means that we focus on strengths and work in partnership with parents and children as we help them to identify and achieve their goals.

We have identified five priority groups that we will be focusing on over the next year: complex disability, complex neurodiversity (with co-morbid mental health presentations), domestic violence, child and family poverty, and young families.

## 2.2 Adult Social Work and Social Care

### **Assessment and Review Activity**

The locality teams continue to undertake dynamic risk assessments and staff are encouraged to think creatively in relation to how we support individuals. Despite significant pressures our data show real progress over this period.

### **Care Home Assurance**

Nationally there has been noted to be a significant staffing crisis in our care homes, with difficulties in relation to recruitment and retention of staff. This has resulted in higher than average use of agency staff within some care homes and a more transient workforce. The local impact of this has been noted, and support and assurance continues to be provided and has been at the forefront of East Renfrewshire's response to the care homes since the pandemic.

The Care Home Assurance Team continues to report any relevant data to Scottish Government. There is an established programme of assurance visits to care homes, which post pandemic has enabled good relationships to be developed with care home staff and residents. There is a care home assurance tool, which is used to measure and benchmark the care and safety of residents, the skills and knowledge of the staff, and the overall appearance and facilities of the care home. This is currently being revised following feedback from all partnerships.

### **Initial Contact Team**

In 2022/23 the findings and recommendations from an independent review of the Initial Contact Team have been implemented with a number of strategic and operational improvements now in place.

The recommendations from the review have led to a change of structure and the addition of a number of new roles, designed to strengthen the multi-disciplinary team approach. The team now comprises of a multi-disciplinary health and social care workforce. It has also built excellent partnerships across all sectors on a local, regional and national level. Our partnership approach is broad and inclusive ensuring that we are able to develop and deliver our services in partnership with many other organisations, specifically through our "Talking Points" programme.

In the space of just six months from implementation, the team managed to reduce our waiting list by almost two thirds and have consistently maintained the level below fifty through the first few months of 2023.

### **Learning Disability Community Team**

The challenge facing the Learning Disability team over the past year has been the crisis in recruitment and retention of staff. Within Learning Disability this proves an even greater challenge due to the complexity of some of the people we work with.

The Learning Disability team were at the forefront of developing the Dynamic Support Registers<sup>1</sup>, as a long established team process ensuring greater visibility and collaborative practice for people at risk of placement breakdown, hospital admission or placement out of area.

The team are also undertaking work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) colleagues to develop the transition pathway used in East Renfrewshire as a framework that can be rolled out across NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to improve outcomes for young people moving to adult services. The existing processes are easily adaptable to all young people requiring specialist support into adult services and not specific to those with a learning disability.

The team, in collaboration with the newly created Transitions Team, organised and hosted a Transitions Engagement Event. This provided young people, their families and a range of Health and Social Care Partnership and Education colleagues and third sector partners to congregate, share information and gather the views of young people around their aspirations and expectations of support during the transition to the adult world.

*“Ask about all the family members who might need support - transition can be difficult for the whole family”*

***Transitions to Adulthood Consultation with Service Users***

*“...use carer knowledge in a positive way. We want to be asked about our young person, be listened to, heard, and not dismissed”*

***Transitions to Adulthood Consultation with Service Users***

### **Community Pathways (Previously Day Opportunities)**

This service has continued to develop different models of service delivery that are flexible, responsive and adaptable to the prevailing situation. The team have been working closely with the Care Inspectorate to ensure the registration for the service moving forward reflects the service provision.

The biggest development in the service has been around the provision of support in all of the mainstream secondary schools with young people who require support during their transition from Education. Alongside the process of learning new skills, the development of life skills such as problem solving, communication and developing confidence are just some of the benefits from this work. The service also links in with the wider multi-agency transition mapping process and the specialist knowledge that staff have of working with people with additional support needs is a valued addition to transition signposting and planning.

### **Transitions Team**

This team was established in September 2022 and has been developing the existing pathways in place to support young people moving from children’s to adult services. The team has created strong links with colleagues in all secondary establishments across East Renfrewshire Council, partnerships across Health and Social Care

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<sup>1</sup> The Coming Home Implementation Report (2022) Scottish Government and Cosla



Partnership children's and adult services as well as a vast range of third sector partners in East Renfrewshire. The work being undertaken identifies those individuals who require long term transition planning to prevent crisis situations occurring during this pivotal stage in a young person's life.

By engaging with all agencies who work with young people the team are now able to provide data on future need that contributes to work force planning, financial forecasting and future housing needs.

### **Talking Points**

East Renfrewshire's Talking Points partnership continues to recover well from the impact of the pandemic, receiving almost 700 referrals in the previous twelve months. These referrals are subsequently triaged via the weekly screening group that consists of local partners Voluntary Action, ENABLE, The Carers Centre, Money Advice and Rights Team, Recovery Across Mental Health and the Talking Points Coordinator.

A schedule of drop-in sessions are back live across a number of community venues, alongside some positive group development activity. Three new Community Groups for older people across East Renfrewshire (Busby, Newton Mearns and Neilston) have been supported, and have approximately 120 older residents attending weekly.

*"The club is absolutely brilliant. It's great to have company, especially to those on their own. Lovely to meet new people and chatting to others."*

**Resident A**

### **Supporting Unpaid Carers - Carers (Scotland) Act 2016**

We continue to commission East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre and work in partnership to meet the duties of the Carers (Scotland) Act. To assist with identifying carers we introduced a 'tracker' with 1380 carers being identified across a range of Health and Social Care Partnership teams. This has highlighted an improvement opportunity to increase the number of carers being directed to access the support services available through the Carers' Centre, with referrals numbers remaining constant at 500.

Carers have been identified as one of the cohorts disproportionately affected by cost of living crisis and working in partnership with the Carers' Centre, grants totalling in excess of £80,000 have been awarded to 250 carers to mitigate these challenges and provide flexible access to short breaks.

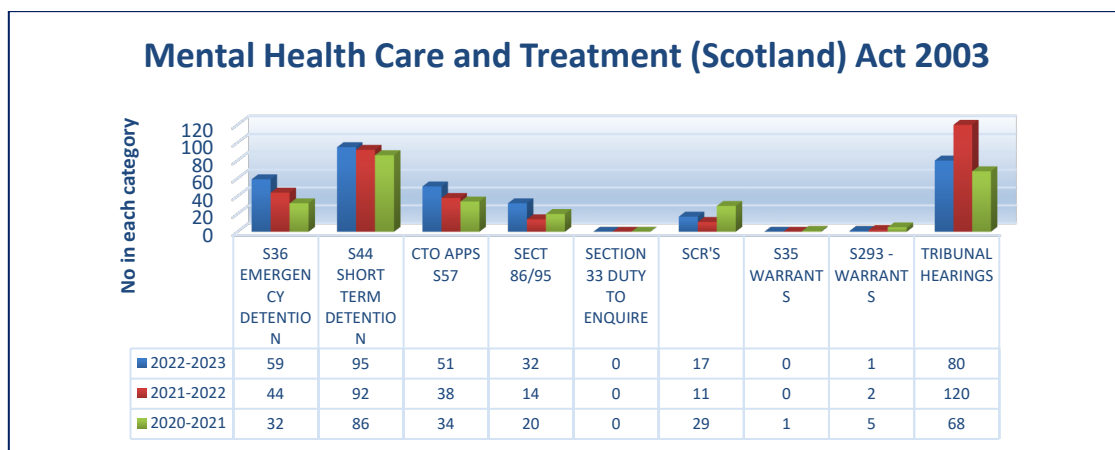
## 2.3 Mental Health

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.

In previous years, similar to other Health and Social Care Partnership's across Scotland, East Renfrewshire experienced challenges in recruiting Mental Health Officers. In order to address these challenges the team structure was adapted to include social workers who have taken on the majority of the care management responsibilities while we encouraged and invested in staff to undertake the post qualifying mental health officer award. Their main duties however remain in care management for individuals with complex needs associated with their mental health diagnosis.

Our Mental Health Officers and social workers work closely with other agencies and professionals across the partnership to improve the quality of experience of people subject to statutory measures and ensure their rights are protected.

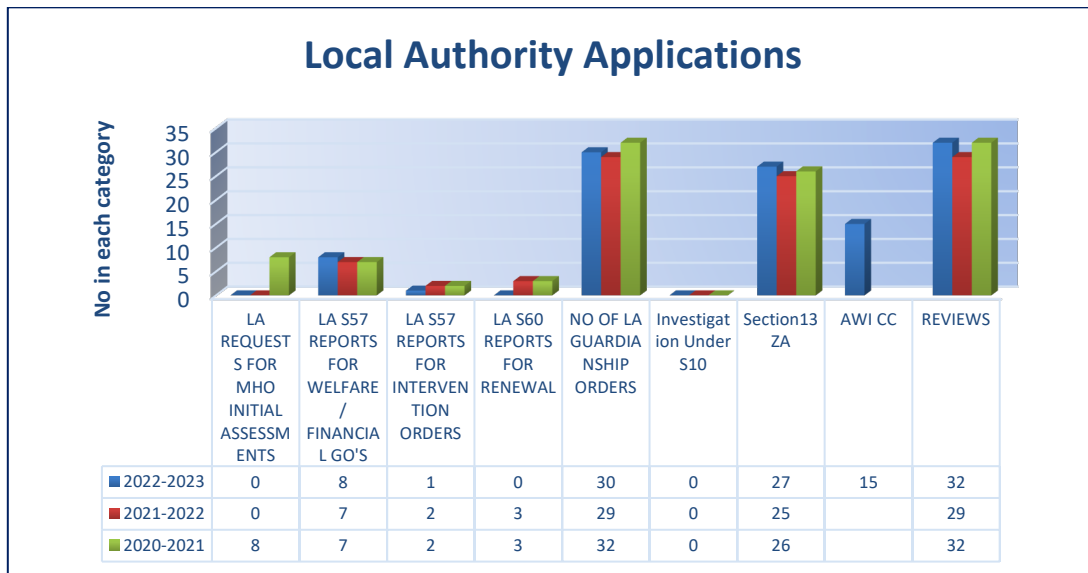
While the Mental Health Officers numbers within the partnership have remained the same, activity generated by the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 has continued to grow. The graph below highlights that statutory work relating to Emergency Detention Certificates, Short Term Detention Certificates and Compulsory Treatment Order applications has risen in comparison to the previous twelve months.



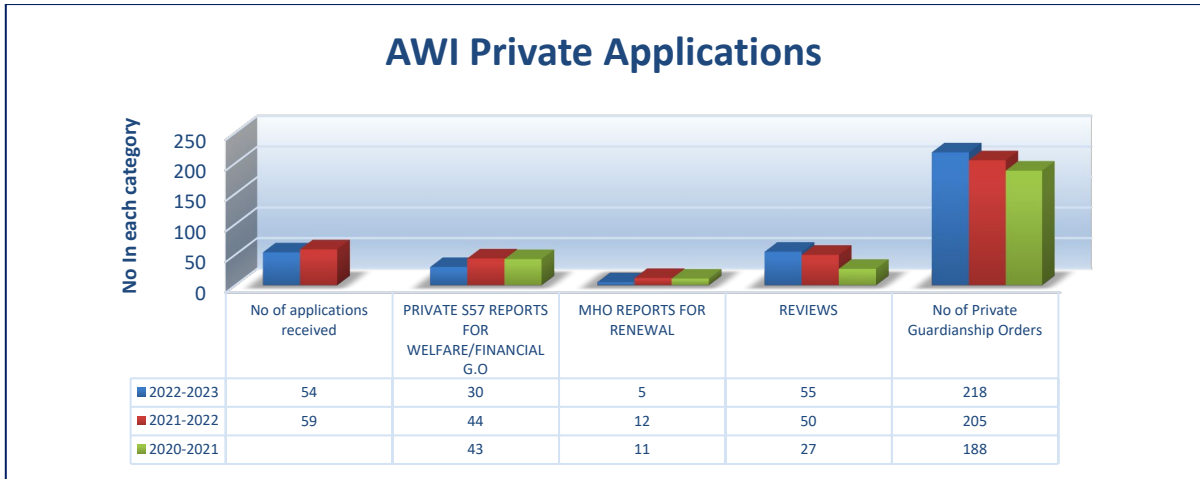
The Adults with Incapacity legislation section 57(2) places a duty on the Local Authority to make an application for Welfare and / or financial powers when specific criteria are met. All decision making has to be underpinned by the principles of the legislation, ensuring that interventions are to the benefit of the adult and the least restrictive option. Given this, consideration is primarily given to the application of 13za, which was an amendment to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. To inform this decision a 13za review (if appropriate) is chaired by a Mental Health Officer. Should the criteria for this not be met an Adults with Incapacity Case Conference is held and chaired by the Service Manager for Mental Health.

The Chief Social Work Officer has overall responsibility for the governance and management of local authority welfare and financial orders which include both guardianship and intervention orders. The introduction of the new Adults with Incapacity procedures in July 2022 transferred the responsibility of delegated welfare guardians to the allocated social worker for those adults who were active cases. For the remaining Chief Social Work Officer Welfare Guardianship orders, this role remains with the Mental Health Officer service. The graph below indicates:

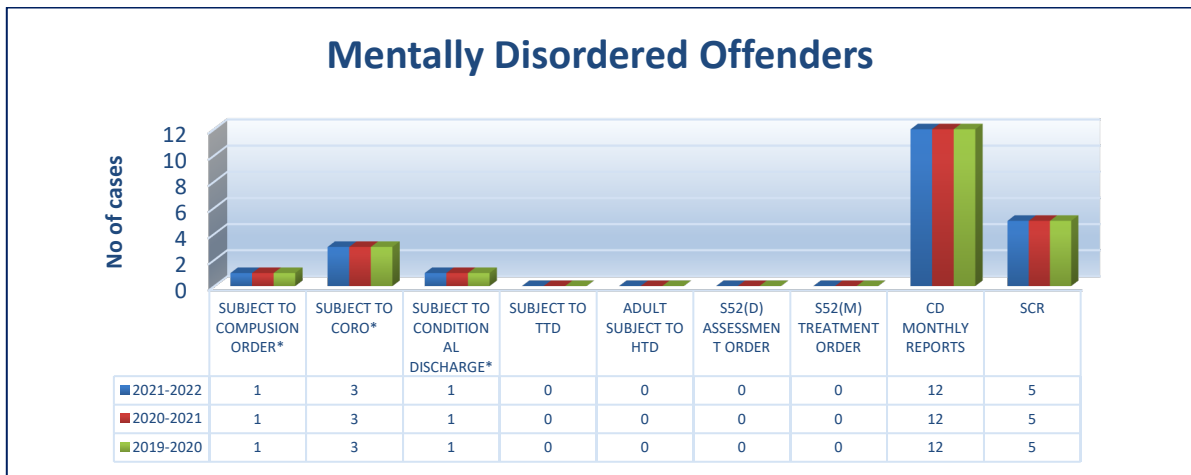
- Individuals currently subject to Local Authority Guardianship have increased slightly although applications to the sheriff court remain relatively stable.
- 13za reviews requiring the attendance of a Mental Health Officers to ensure appropriate application of the criteria and a human rights approach applied remained consistent.
- No renewal applications were required over the last twelve months.



Figures from graph below 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 however, remains a challenge due to the ever increasing amount of guardians to be supervised. Many of these are joint guardians which can bring with it additional complexity.



Referral for mentally disordered offenders remains low with only four individuals subject to mental health court disposals.



The recruitment and retention of Mental Health Officers continues to present challenges across Scotland and East Renfrewshire. Recent national figures highlight a significant shortfall of Mental Health Officers across Scotland which has created a situation where local authorities are competing with one another for a scarce resource.

## 2.4 Criminal Justice

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the Justice System and associated Justice Service delivery during the previous year. With restrictions easing in 2022/23, efforts were undertaken to facilitate recovery.

### **Community Payback Orders (CPO)**

During 2022/23, the Justice Social Work team demonstrated notable recovery from Covid-19 restrictions across a number of key areas. 83% Community Payback Orders completed within Court timescale, this notably increased from 80% the previous year. Similarly, 86% of Community Payback Orders commenced within seven days, increasing from 61% the year prior.

Developments have been made with regards to our Unpaid Work Service. We complemented our workshop premises by securing an additional workshop. This increased our capacity, enabling the Justice Team to facilitate additional daily attendance to reduce the backlog of Unpaid Work hours. We have worked hard to ensure our premises enable service users to develop new skills. With the easing of restrictions, our Unpaid Work teams have further been able to resume community requests for assistance. This continues to strengthen our relationship with the local community and increase the profile of Unpaid Work. Throughout 2022/23, service users increased those hours completed by 9% from the previous year, amounting to some 9,629 hours completed within 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.

### **Court Services**

We have continued to work closely with our partners in Renfrewshire to ensure Bail Supervision is fully implemented. Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Justice have met regularly throughout 2022/23 to establish and implement the structure necessary to facilitate delivery of Electronic Monitoring and Bail Supervision services and are on course to implement these in the coming months.

### **Service / Staff Development**

The Justice team have sought to continue training and 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 Abuse Risk Assessment version 3 (SARA V3), alongside new staff undertaking training in Safe and Together. The Justice team have further participated in training to administer Naloxone, used to treat opioid

overdose, and completed accredited training in Scottish Mental Health First Aid for Young People.

East Renfrewshire Council hosted a Community Justice Partnership Development Session in January 2023, during which time the Justice team presented to partners with a view to strengthening local links.

The Justice Team continued to ensure 100% attendance at scheduled Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to complement the work undertaken by the Service.

Following a second phase of training, all staff have now been trained in the Throughcare Assessment Release Licence (TARL) process which will strengthen collaborative risk assessments between community-based and prison-based Social Work.

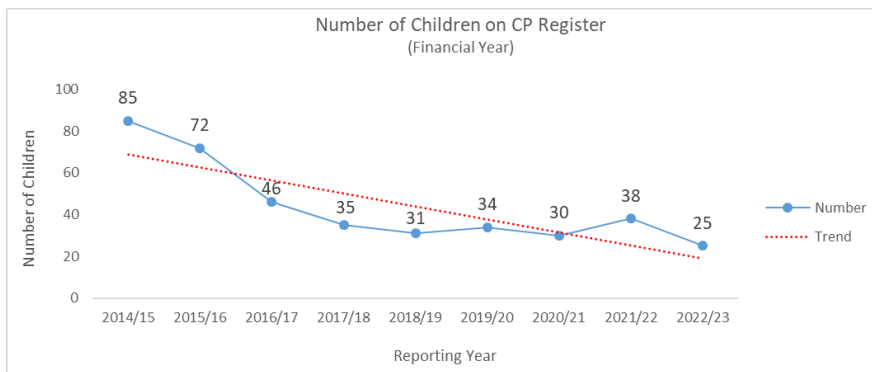
## 2.5 Public Protection

### Child Protection, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

The number of children on East Renfrewshire’s Child Protection Register was 25 in 2022/23. This is a decrease of 34% on the previous year. This is contrary to the national data where there has been a decrease of 20% in the year 2022/23. There is a gap of one year in reporting periods so there may be an increase nationally for the year 2021/2022, before we can make any significant conclusions about this difference. 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.

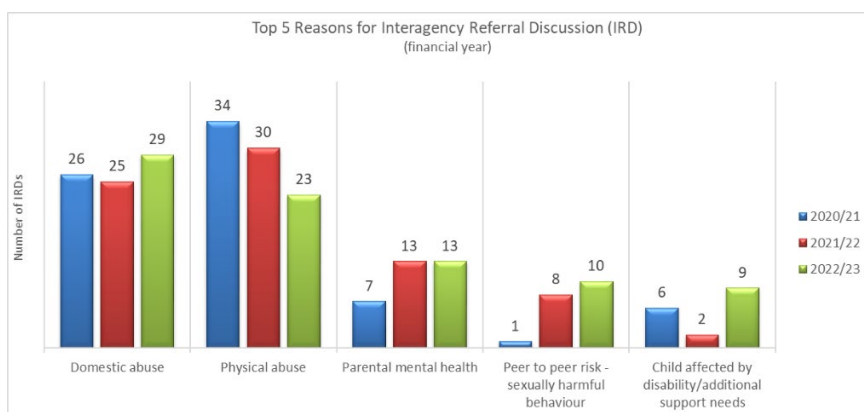
### Child Protection Registrations

The graph below highlights the number of children subject to child protection registrations from 2014/15 until 2022/23.



### Interagency Referral Discussions

During the period April 2022 – March 2023, we have undertaken 116 Interagency Referral Discussions (between social work, police, health and where appropriate Education services) in respect of 170 children (some children may have had more than one interagency referral discussions in the reporting period). This is a decrease on the previous year.



The most common reasons for initiating an Interagency Referral Discussion during 2022/23 are shown in the chart above. The highest reason for an Interagency Referral

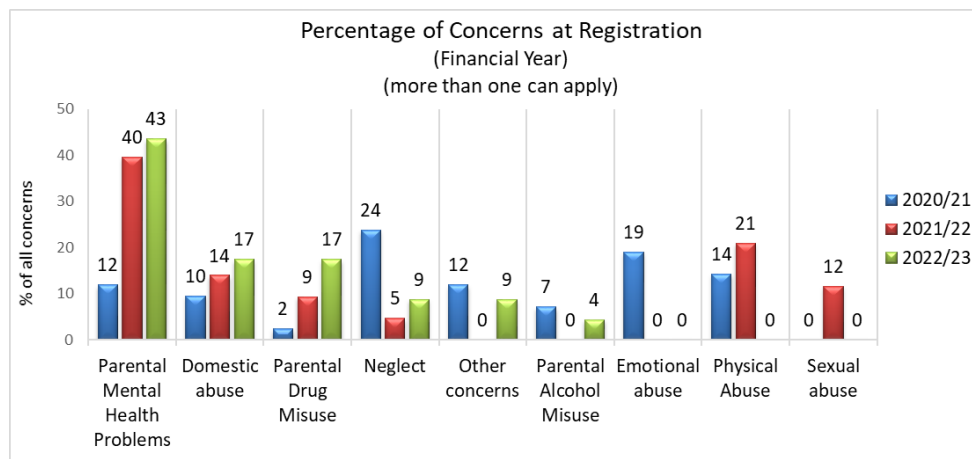
Discussion in the reporting period was domestic abuse. There has been a decrease in Interagency Referral Discussions for domestic abuse, physical abuse and parental alcohol misuse. There has been an increase in peer-to-peer sexually harmful behaviour, neglect and parental mental health.

Of the 167 children and young people subject to Interagency Referral Discussions, 37% were subject to a child protection investigation. Of these children and young people 35% went on to have an initial or pre-birth child protection planning meeting, with 45% having their names placed on the child protection register. This is a decrease on the previous year figure of 70%.

This equates to approximately 6% of all the children and young people who were subject to an Initial Referral Discussion, which is close to the 13% from the previous year.

### **Concerns Identified at Registration**

A child can be placed on the child protection register with more than one concern noted. Parental Mental 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 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.

### **Joint Inspection of Services for Children at Risk of Harm**

This inspection was concluded in July 2022 with the report being published by the Care Inspectorate on 16 August 2022. The report was very positive and East Renfrewshire have received a grading of 'Excellent' for the quality indicator 2.1 Impact on Children and Young People. This is the first time a Health and Social Care Partnership / Local Authority have ever received this grading.



There were no recommendations for improvement in the report and several areas of sector leading good practice were highlighted. This again is a first for any Health and Social Care Partnership / Local Authority.

Below is an example of feedback from children, young people and their families gained during the inspection:

*People just need to not be scared to access it and I think it's the whole thought of, they're going to take your kids that needs to be gone and then I think you'll find that more people would reach out and ask for help.*

**Parent feedback to the joint inspection team**

*"I'm more confident because I know that she's [my support worker] always there, she's like a safety net.*

**Parent Feedback to the joint inspection team**

*"Instead of relying on social work to make the referral to services... can services reach out directly to care experienced young people?"*

**Pathway Planning Informal Consultation**

*"I'm involved with Children 1st and they give me a chance to speak and they'll help me. Children 1st would take me out and try and get to know me, what I like and what I don't like. Now I feel like I'm a lot smarter and I've got better life choices now."*

**Young person feedback to the joint inspection team**

*95% of all multi-agency staff respondents agree or strongly agree that they are proud of the contribution they are making to improve the well-being of children and young people at risk of harm and their families.*

**Joint Inspection Staff Survey 2022**

### **The North Strathclyde Child Interview Team / Barnahaus**

East Renfrewshire is part of a partnership with East Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, Police Scotland and Children 1st, which went live with joint investigating interviews (JII) 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 the joint investigating interviews process from the Children 1st recovery and participation workers who provide the child / young person and their families an opportunity to express their views, needs and concerns.

A critical aim is to ensure that all interviews take place in a safe, child friendly, age appropriate way with consideration given to any developmental or additional needs. All children and their families will receive the practical and emotional support to assist their recovery.

In the reporting period, the team have received 333 referrals and completed 256 interviews. Our overall disclosure rate has been 87% throughout this reporting period (a maintained rate above 85% since the interview team went live). This provides

evidence that children / young person feels safe to speak, where the time taken by interviewers to develop the child's needs, planned in advance ensures a trauma informed approach throughout interview. The main primary concern recorded against referrals to the team in this reporting period was offences under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 (47%) with Physical Assault recorded as our second highest primary concern (34%) and Domestic Abuse as our third (11%).

Over this reporting period, East Renfrewshire made 40 referrals to the child interview team, where 75% progressed to a joint investigative interview. An overall disclosure rate of 80% was recorded against these interviews, which is equivalent to that of last year. 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 (45%).

The partnership were successful in winning the award for Excellence in Children's Services at the Scottish Social Services Awards Ceremony in November 2022.

As part of the Barnahaus approach a 'Wee Bairns Hoose' is set to open in late summer 2023. This will be seen as beneficial for children and young people who previously would have been required to attend court as there will be a virtual link to the court.

Capelrig House has been given significant commitment both by East Renfrewshire Council and Children 1st. This development will see a Centre of Excellence open in East Renfrewshire with interest arising from all over the UK, Scottish Government and from colleagues in Iceland who have been instrumental in our journey so far.

### **Our Response to Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse continues to be one of the most common reasons for referral to children's social work services. In the reporting period 2022/23 East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Request for Assistance Team received 425 referrals of which 34% recorded domestic abuse as a concern (compared to 29% in 2021/22). Similar to last year domestic abuse remains the main cause of referral to the Request for Assistance Team.

Women's Aid continue to provide emotional and practical support to women, children and young people. In total 1086 women and children were supported across the three core services, helpline and drop in enquiries. Levels of direct support provided to women in outreach have continued to increase by 13% and the levels of support provided across the core service remain similar to the previous year with 336 women, children and young people supported.

Domestic abuse is a significant factor in child protection interagency discussions. In 2022/23 there were 116 child protection Interagency Referral Discussions held for 170 children (11% decrease on previous year). 29 Interagency Referral Discussion's reported domestic abuse was a significant factor (compared to 25 in 2021/22), this is 25% of the total Interagency Referral Discussion's and a 27% increase in the number of children where domestic abuse was noted (45 children last year compared to 57 this year).

We continue to strengthen the capacity of our services and action across the whole system to mitigate the long-term effects of trauma and abuse experienced by women, children and young people and to ensure their recovery needs are recognised and addressed. We have targeted resources and funds to implement a new programme aligned to the principles of Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDER) for women and children affected by domestic abuse.

### **Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)**

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) is recognised nationally as best practice for addressing cases of domestic abuse that are categorised as high risk. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences continues to demonstrate a high level of commitment and participation with 100% attendance from all agencies.

In the reporting period 2022/23 the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences reported an increase in referrals for high risk victims and children with 134 victims and 195 children discussed. This is an increase of 7% and a decrease of 5% respectively in cases discussed compared to the previous year. Police remain the main referrer to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences however East Renfrewshire demonstrates a significantly higher proportion of referrals from children and families and wider statutory services at 38% compared to 10% nationally and therefore we are able to capture families that might not be known and visible to other services.

A total of 461 actions have been agreed via Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference in this reporting period (compared to 428 the same period the previous year). It is important to note that in this reporting period, 32% of survivors did not have school aged children compared to 26% the previous year, an increase of 6%. Survivors without school aged children were not previously visible in the domestic abuse pathway prior to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. The increase demonstrates increased awareness and identification of survivors across services and an improved pathway response from all agencies.

### **Workforce Development Capacity and Training**

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 227 staff were trained across Adult Services, Children & Families, Mental Health, Addictions, Autism Specialisms, Housing, Education, Care at Home, Community Learning and Development, Health Visiting, Children's Panel and Libraries. An additional 31 participants took up the offer to observe Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences or attend the monthly domestic abuse drop in. The evaluations and feedback have been positive with the range of support increasing the awareness of domestic abuse and understanding of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences pathway.

### **Adult Support and Protection**

East Renfrewshire Council operates a single point of contact for all Adult Support and Protection and adult welfare concern referrals. This dedicated team has greatly strengthened our response to Adult Support and Protection activity locally and led improvements across the Health and Social Care Partnership.

East Renfrewshire has streamlined our approach to screening and triaging adult protection referrals and application of the three-point test. The team have provided coaching and mentoring support to council officers across the Health and Social Care Partnership and strengthened relationships between locality services, external partners, and Police and Fire Service colleagues. The Adult Support and Protection Team is supported on a rota basis by council officers and managers across the Health and Social Care Partnership.

In the reporting period there has been a total of 1010 inquiries undertaken by Council Officers (Adult Service Social Workers) of which 173 progressed to investigation. The 173 Adult Support and Protection investigations, representing a 5% decrease from the previous reporting period. We work closely with partners across East Renfrewshire that allow early intervention and support. This has allowed us to work in a more person centred and creative manner to address risks, reducing the requirement for further Adult Support and Protection activity.

Adults who experience dementia were the highest common client group to be subject to Adult Support and Protection investigation, accounting for 34% of all investigations. Physical Harm remains the most common harm experienced by adults, accounting for 23% of the recorded harms however this is slightly decreased since the previous reporting period.

Financial harm has increased during this reporting period to 14%. There is ongoing work in the Health and Social Care Partnership with partners to continue to raise awareness in this area within the community. It's also important to note that our trading standards colleagues continue to update Health and Social Care Partnership staff of the increasing sophistication of these criminal activities.

In East Renfrewshire, we have continued to strengthen the accuracy and qualitative analysis of our data reporting. This has included clearer reporting to track areas of performance and understand challenges particularly in delays at point of inquiry or investigation or access to advocacy.

Agreement was taken to build upon the success of the Adult Support and Protection Quality Framework process which brought managers together to sample cases and recognised that this could be enhanced to include peer file readers. The audit was envisaged as single-agency, however in our planning we received offers of support from Police Scotland and a request from the Chair of the Adult Protection Committee Continuous Improvement Sub Committee to include Nursing and Advanced Health Practitioners from the Health and Social Care Partnership to give access to the range of information which may be available on health systems. The results of this audit were very positive and areas of improvement were identified and an action plan put in place to progress development in these areas.

At all levels we have created and strengthened channels of communication between partners, providers, care homes and the third sector. These robust channels are meaningful and support information sharing and partnership working. Contacting our Adult Support and Protection team is viewed as a positive step, with the Adult Support and Protection Team providing advice and support to help identify risk at the earliest opportunity.

We have placed collaboration at the heart of our Adult Support and Protection activity. Our procedures are rooted in collaboration and multidisciplinary working, led by the council officer but engaging everyone to get the best outcomes for the adult.

We have developed recording and reporting tools that support our practice and give assurance that we are supporting adults at risk of harm in our community. We have strengthened our recording and reporting of domestic abuse, giving direction and focus to support council officers to identify and support survivors of domestic abuse. We work closely with the Violence Against Women partnership to improve our practice and contribute to the wider objectives of reducing violence to women and girls.

We have delivered Adult Support and Protection awareness sessions for partner agencies including specific, bespoke sessions for care homes and partner providers. We have developed a shared awareness of the complexity and multi-faceted nature of risk, particularly in relation to violence against women and girls, which has improved our joint working and understanding of the roles of other services and partners.

### **Joint Adult Support and Protection Inspection**

The Adult Protection Committee received notification of a joint Adult Support and Protection inspection on 30 January 2023. Examples of good practice and good outcomes for service users and families will be included to illustrate the practice of the Health and Social Care Partnership and partners.

The inspection process will include a staff survey. This has been shared across the Health and Social Care Partnership and partners. The inspection will also include an onsite multi agency file reading and focus groups.

We look forward to the Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection and the opportunity to evidence the great work undertaken across East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

### **Adult Support and Protection Improvements**

East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, has undertaken an ambitious improvement journey to ensure adults at risk of harm are supported to live safely. We are proud of the creative partnership approach we have fostered across East Renfrewshire. This has given us greater confidence in our practice and supported council officers and colleagues to do what is right for the adult in their circumstances.

Much of the improvement journey of the last few years has been focused on Social work practice and procedure. We have worked with partners across East Renfrewshire and welcomed their support in this journey. As we moved forward we will continue to strengthen our joint working practices and the sharing of responsibility across partners and providers, in order to provide consistency and continuity to adults at risk of harm.

### Section 3. Resources

We ended financial year 2022/23 with a £0.590 million operational underspend (0.40% of our £145.9 million budget, excluding set aside), although this position was after significant use of reserves during the year.

The main variances to the budget were:

- £0.460 million underspend in Children and Families was mainly from care package costs and some staff vacancies.
- £1.534 million underspend within Older Peoples services was mainly from purchased nursing and residential care. This reflects the ongoing trend of reduction in nursing and care home admissions but does offset the increase in community activity, particularly in Care at Home. Given this continued trend budgets have been realigned in 2023/24 to recognise this shift in type of care.
- £0.646 million overspend within Intensive Services as our care at home costs reflect that we continue to see high demand post pandemic and we had additional costs delivering the service with diminished capacity, particularly over the winter period.
- £0.726 million overspend within Learning Disability Community Services mainly from care package costs, partially offset by staff vacancies. We have recognised this cost pressure in the 2023/24 budget, which in turn has added to our funding gap and associated saving requirement.
- £0.774 million overspend in the cost of prescribing as we saw increases in the volume of items prescribed and the costs are impacted by the economic climate and supply chain issues, compounded by Brexit and the war in Ukraine. This overspend is after the £0.456 million balance of the smoothing reserve, set up to meet fluctuation, was fully used.

In addition we spent £4.564 million on Covid-19 activity and this was fully funded by the Scottish Government through the ring-fenced reserve balance we brought into 2022/23.

#### **Future Challenges 2023/24 and beyond**

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 2023/24 to 2027/28 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 most significant challenges for 2023/24 and beyond include:

- Delivering a difficult range savings to ensure financial sustainability, recognising this is at odds with our historic focus on prevention.

- Managing the real tension between reduced service capacity as a result of savings and maintaining discharge without delay from hospital.
- Understanding the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on mental and physical health in the longer term.
- 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.

For 2023/24 the cost pressures identified in our budget are of £10.34 million is offset by available funding of £3.28 million leaving a funding gap of £7.06 million; a savings programme is identified to deliver this in full. We recognise there may be some areas where we will not achieve a full year by 31 March 2024 and this will be supported by the remaining earmarked reserves we hold. The prioritisation of care, to support those with the greatest need is required to deliver around 50% of our savings.

Whilst the scale of this challenge is significant to East Renfrewshire, particularly as one the smaller Health and Social Care Partnerships this is not unique; the national position across all public sector services shows a challenging financial outlook and a report compiled on a the position of 29 of the 31 Integration Joint Board's at the beginning of 2023/24 showed a collective financial gap of £305 million which is 3.6% of the respective total budgets; however within individual Integration Joint Boards this gap ranges from 1% to 9%. For East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership the total gap is 4.7%, which equates to 10% against the East Renfrewshire Council contribution and 0.4% against the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde contribution.

Our partner East Renfrewshire Council has agreed just over £0.75 million non-recurring support in 2023/24 for the Health and Social Care Partnership to deliver a number of initiatives related to Covid-19 recovery.

Looking forward to 2024/25 and beyond in any one year the modelled cost pressure could range from £3.4 million to £9 million depending on the combination of factors, recognising the next two years are likely to be particularly challenging before we see economic recovery.

Similarly the resulting potential unfunded gap, as modelled, could range from £2.3 million to £5.9 million. However this will ultimately be determined by the Scottish Government budget settlement each year.

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 wider economic challenges are significant as we are seeing continued increasing inflation across a number of goods and services and in particular prescribed drugs on a global level, impacting nationally. The war in Ukraine has also impacted on supply of goods. The UK economy current intelligence suggests that the cost of fuel and utilities may begin to reduce during this year, however this is only one element of the cost of living crisis. Our population and households are not impacted equally by cost of living and those with lower income are disproportionately affected.

Prescribing will not only rise in line with population increases but is also subject to many other factors.

Maintaining discharge without delay performance is a key issue for us. In order to achieve the target we continue to require more community based provision and this is dependent on availability of care. The medium-term aspiration is that the costs of increased community services will be met by shifting the balance of care from hospital services.

We continue to use learning from how we delivered services during the pandemic to shape and inform future service models.

The longer term impact on the sustainability of our partner care provider market in the post Covid-19 pandemic and current economic climate is a significant issue. Our Strategic Commissioning plan sets out the detail on how we will work with our partners in the third and independent sectors in the coming years. The way we commission services may be impacted by the creation of a national care service. There is an increasing tension between cost expectations from care providers including those on national procurement frameworks and contracts and the funding, or more specifically the lack of that Integration Joint Boards have to meet any additional increases.

We plan to deal with these challenges in the following ways:

- Our Savings, Recovery and Renewal Programme continues and the scope has been widened to incorporate all change and savings activity recognising the cross cutting nature of many work streams. Progress will be reported to every meeting of the Integration Joint Board.
- We will update our Medium-Term Financial Plan on a regular basis reflecting the ongoing and legacy impact of Covid-19, the economic climate and any impact from the National Care Service and / or other policy decisions as these become clearer. This will allow us to continue to use scenario-based financial planning and modelling to assess and refine the impact of different levels of activity,



funding, pressures, possible savings and associated impacts. This will also inform our planning for our 2024/25 budget.

- We will continue to monitor the impacts of Covid-19, Brexit, economic and inflationary factors along with operational issues through our financial and performance monitoring to allow us to take swift action where needed, respond flexibly to immediate situations and to inform longer term planning.
- We will continue to progress and report on our Strategic Improvement Plan until fully complete; work on this was not a priority during the ongoing pandemic response.
- We will complete the review of our Integration Scheme; work that had been undertaken pre-pandemic has been refreshed during 2022/23 and an NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde wide review is in place.
- We routinely report our performance to the Integration Joint Board with further scrutiny from our Performance and Audit Committee and our Clinical and Care Governance Group. The service user and carer representation on the Integration Joint Board and its governance structures is drawn from Your Voice which includes representatives from community care groups, representatives from our localities and representatives from equality organisations including disability and faith groups. We intend to continue the development our performance reporting during 2023/24, building on work done in 2022/23.
- Workforce planning will continue to support identification of our current and future requirements. Recruitment and retention of staff is key to all service delivery and we have mitigated as far as possible by minimising the use of temporary posts and developing our workforce and organisational learning and development plans. Given the overwhelming response to the pandemic over a prolonged period our staff are tired both physically and mentally and the wellbeing of our workforce is paramount. We will progress the action plan agreed as part of our Workforce Plan 2022-25.
- We will progress with the redesign of the Learning Disability Inpatient bed model and progress the programme of health checks for people with a learning disability.
- Governance Code; we have robust governance arrangements supported by a Governance Code.
- The Integration Joint Board continues to operate in a challenging environment and our financial, risk and performance reporting continue to be a key focus of each Integration Joint Board agenda.

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 longer term impact of Covid-19 on our population and the capacity for the Health and Social Care Partnership and its partners to deliver services and implement our savings, Recovery and Renewal programme whilst maintaining financial sustainability remain significant risks.

## **Section 4. Workforce and Looking Forward**

### **Workforce Development**

Learning and Development has continued to play an essential role in developing the workforce within East Renfrewshire, with a return to more face to face delivery and activity resembling pre-pandemic levels. Priorities for this year continued to be the delivery of a rolling induction programme for Care at Home staff to meet the staffing demands arising in the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic.

There has also been a rolling training programme for adult support and protection that has moved to in person training and has included investigative interviewing. This has been consistently positively evaluated. There has also been a continued commitment to enabling staff to undertake post qualifying awards in the form of the Mental Health Officer Award, Masters in Applied Professional Studies and the post qualifying certificate in Child Welfare and Protection.

Work has continued to strengthen the multiagency workforce through the delivery of the Public Protection Programme and multiagency events such as “The Promise” which has been delivered in partnership with Who Cares Scotland. These events have helped facilitate essential multiagency discussions that have formed the basis for subsequent planning.

The implementation of the Scottish Government trauma strategy has continued to gather pace through the work of the local Trauma Multiagency Steering Group.

Following the publication of the outcome of joint inspection of children at risk of harm in East Renfrewshire a bespoke development session was delivered. This included all staff across the whole of the children’s community planning partnership to reflect on the inspection result and focus on next steps and areas of development. This will continue to prioritise relational and trauma informed practice, support to staff and delivery of the Promise.

### **Signs of Safety - Our Approach**

Over 2022/23 we have worked to consolidate the progress made with the implementation of the Signs of Safety approach and begin to plan how the implementation can progress by focussing on what staff and partners need. There has been a further review of the assessment and planning paperwork to ensure consistency across our service delivery and support to children and their families.

We continue to be one of the first local authorities recognised in Scotland as accredited Safe and Together champions, delivering gold standard child protection domestic abuse training to staff. Safe and Together and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences are recognised as best practice both nationally and locally and this was reflected in the recent Care Inspectorate Inspection of services for children and young people at harm in East Renfrewshire.

## **Adult Support and Protection**

We have continued to deliver a rolling programme of Adult Support and Protection training as part of the Public Protection Development Programme. 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 Investigations 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. We have promoted the identification and communication of harm, effective risk assessment and risk management strategies, effective protection planning and preparation for case conference. The training sought to embed collaboration as a foundation of our practice and put the adult at the heart of our involvement and planning.

We have provided flexible and adaptable training opportunities to support staff, partners and providers, developing a strong partnership approach. We have delivered tailored learning experiences for Care Home staff. This training was developed to address the needs of a multi-agency audience with the assistance of Care Home Collaborative staff in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Health and Social Care Partnership Commissioning staff and Adult Support and Protection Team.

## **Workforce**

Similar to other areas East Renfrewshire faces challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff in care at home services and Mental Health Officers. We have a designated Health & Wellbeing Officer who has proactively linked with the workforce offering wellbeing support at an individual and team level.

East Renfrewshire is fortunate in regard to professional social work staffing levels. Although some vacant posts are experienced as in any organisation at any given time, this is not a systemic or pressing issue facing our local area or workforce.

## Conclusion

This report highlights and summarises the statutory duties and activities across the social work workforce in East Renfrewshire. It has profiled areas of service delivery that are excellent and that we should be justifiably proud of. It has also attempted to stress areas of challenge that we face moving forward. All of this is in the context of increased demand for social work services both in terms of the numbers of children, adults and families requiring support but also in relation to increased complexity of need.

We are unable to meet the challenges presented to us without the continued commitment and dedication of our social work and social care staff. I've had the privilege of accompanying staff as they undertake their work. I've witnessed care at home staff supporting vulnerable residents in mid-winter, social workers supporting care experienced young people to try new experiences offering resilience and hope, and have seen day to day how our social workers and managers deal with complexity, trauma and harm. These are not easy tasks to undertake and the challenges cannot be underestimated.

I would like to personally thank all of our workforce for the incredible job they do on a day to day basis. Their passion, values and aspiration to provide the best of services to our residents is an inspiration and makes me proud to represent them as East Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer.