

## People and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee Room 2 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street,  
Glenrothes



Thursday, 16 November, 2023 - 10.00 a.m.

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### AGENDA

#### Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct Members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest(s) in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of meeting of People & Communities Scrutiny Committee of 31 August 2023 3 – 8
4. **CITIZENS ADVICE & RIGHTS FIFE – PERFORMANCE REPORT** – Report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods 9 – 60
5. **CUSTOMER & ONLINE SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT** – Report by the Head of Customer & Online Services 61 – 68
6. **CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER REPORT 2022-2023** – Report by the Head of Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services 69 – 105
7. **SWAN AND MEMORIAL COURT METHIL** – Joint Report by the Head of Property Services and the Head of Housing Services 106 – 114
8. **2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES** – Joint Report by the Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services and the Executive Director - Communities 115 – 120
9. **2023-24 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES** – Joint Report by the Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services and the Executive Director - Communities 121 – 127
10. **2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN - CHILDREN & FAMILIES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES** – Joint Report by the Head of Children & Families & Criminal Justice and the Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services 128 – 134
11. **2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE** – Joint Report by the Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services and the Director of Health & Social Care 135 – 141
12. **2023-24 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE** – Report by the Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services and the Director of Health & Social Care 142 – 147

**Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.**

Lindsay Thomson  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Finance and Corporate Services

Fife House  
North Street  
Glenrothes  
Fife, KY7 5LT

9 November, 2023

If telephoning, please ask for:

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### **BLENDED MEETING NOTICE**

This is a formal meeting of the Committee and the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same as in a face to face meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, Standing Orders will apply to the proceedings and the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply in the normal way

For those members who have joined the meeting remotely, if they need to leave the meeting for any reason, they should use the Meeting Chat to advise of this. If a member loses their connection during the meeting, they should make every effort to rejoin the meeting but, if this is not possible, the Committee Officer will note their absence for the remainder of the meeting. If a member must leave the meeting due to a declaration of interest, they should remain out of the meeting until invited back in by the Committee Officer.

If a member wishes to ask a question, speak on any item or move a motion or amendment, they should indicate this by raising their hand at the appropriate time and will then be invited to speak. Those joining remotely should use the "Raise hand" function in Teams.

All decisions taken during this meeting, will be done so by means of a Roll Call vote.

Where items are for noting or where there has been no dissent or contrary view expressed during any debate, either verbally or by the member indicating they wish to speak, the Convener will assume the matter has been agreed.

There will be a short break in proceedings after approximately 90 minutes.

Members joining remotely are reminded to have cameras switched on during meetings and mute microphones when not speaking. During any breaks or adjournments please switch cameras off.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
BLENDED MEETING**

**Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes**

**31 August 2023**

**10.00 am – 1.10 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Eugene Clarke (Convener), Blair Allan, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Alex Campbell, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougall, Lynn Mowatt, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele, Ann Verner, Darren Watt and Jan Wincott.

**ATTENDING:** Michael Enston, Executive Director – Communities; John Mills, Head of Housing Services, Mhairi Mullen, Service Manager (Income, Poverty and Private Housing), Paul Short, Service Manager, Gavin Smith, Service Manager (Housing Access) and Helen Wilkie, Service Manager (Housing Supply), Housing Services; John Rodigan, Head of Environment and Building Services; Emma Lennon, Accountant, Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner and Helen Guthrie, Accountant, Finance and Corporate Services; and Emma Whyte, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

**APOLOGY FOR  
ABSENCE:** Councillor Allan Knox.

**68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were submitted under Standing Order No. 22.

**69. MINUTE**

The committee considered the minute of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting of 8 June 2023.

**Decision**

The committee approved the minute.

**70. HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT AND ‘PATHWAY TO  
IMPROVEMENT’ 2023-26**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services updating members on the ‘Pathway to Improvement’ performance targets for Housing Services for the period 2023- 26.

**Decision**

The committee considered and reviewed :-

- (1) the arrangements set out in Section 1.0 of the report to fulfil the council’s obligation to comply with Audit Scotland’s 2021 SPI Direction;

## 2023 PCS 31

- (2) the Housing Services' performance information in Section 2.0 of the report, including current challenges/priorities and risks; and
- (3) the Housing Services' performance targets for the three years of the 'Pathway to Improvement 2023-26' and the improvement actions detailed for 2023-24 in the report at Appendix 2.

### 71. ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services presenting recommendations for submission of the Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator, based on regulatory guidance established in 2019. The risks were assessed against the council's Annual Return on the Charter for 2022/23.

#### **Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) noted the requirements of the 2019 housing regulatory framework, requesting the preparation of an Annual Assurance Statement;
- (2) agreed the wording of the draft Annual Assurance Statement 2023 based on the compliance position at 31 March 2023;
- (3) authorised the Scrutiny Committee Convener and the Housing and Building Services' Spokesperson to sign the Annual Assurance Statement; and
- (4) agreed submission of the final draft Annual Assurance Statement 2023 to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the deadline of 31 October 2023.

### 72. UPDATE ON HOUSING FUNCTIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services providing an update on progress in relation to the processing of Housing Functional Needs Assessments.

#### **Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) noted the contingency plans put in place to manage the current workload;
- (2) noted the ongoing review of the Housing Occupational Therapy service and the proposed shape of revised service delivery in relation to this; and
- (3) agreed that an update report be submitted to this committee in January 2024.

### 73. VOIDS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, following on from a report presented on 8 June 2023 (previous minute reference - 2023 PCS 27 Para. 63 refers) providing an update on progress, specifically short-term key

actions being taken by the Head of Housing and the Head of Building Services to speed up improvement, in relation to the longer term service improvement plan.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) considered and commented on the voids service update; and
- (2) noted the short-term key actions being taken to speed up improvement.

*The meeting adjourned at 11.25 am and reconvened at 11.35 am.*

**74. TACKLING DAMPNESS AND MOULD IN COUNCIL HOUSES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Environment and Building Services outlining the work to date that council services had taken, supporting the council's landlord role to ensure that the incidence of condensation, dampness and mould in council houses could be more effectively mitigated for the wellbeing of council tenants and their families. In addition, the report provided an Action Plan on how the service would progress this work during 2023/24.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) noted the progress made to date in implementing the new approach:
- (2) agreed the approach and action plan would continue to be supported by additional resources sourced through existing HRA Revenue and Capital Budgets in 2023/24; and
- (3) requested that a full review of the proposed information leaflet for council tenants be reviewed following comments made by members.

**75. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director of Communities providing an update on the revenue budget provisional outturn position for the 2022/23 financial year for Communities and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision**

The committee considered the current financial performance and activity for the 2022/23 revenue budget provisional outturn as detailed in the report.

**76. 2022-23 CAPITAL PLAN PROVISIONAL OUTTURN - COMMUNITIES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director of Communities providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the provisional financial position for the 2022/23 financial year.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current performance and activity for the 2022/23 Capital Monitoring as detailed in the report.

**77. 2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Communities providing an update on the revenue budget projected outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year for Communities and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current financial performance and activity for the 2023/24 revenue budget projected outturn as detailed in the report.

**78. 2023-24 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and Executive Director, Communities providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advised the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current performance and activity for the 2023/24 capital monitoring as detailed in the report.

**79. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – CHILDREN & FAMILIES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services advising members of the provisional outturn for the revenue budget and capital plan for 2022-23 financial year, including the areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) considered and noted the financial performance and activity as detailed in the report in relation to both the revenue budget and capital plan; and
- (2) noted the provisional outturn position (subject to audit) for 2022-23, as detailed in the report, and the reasons for the main variances.

**80. 2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – CHILDREN & FAMILIES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES**

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services and the Executive Director Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the forecasted financial position for the 2023-24

financial year, including the areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) considered and noted the current financial performance and activity detailed in the report in relation to both the revenue budget and capital plan; and
- (2) noted the projected outturn position and the relevant areas of projected over and underspend within the service.

**81. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

The committee considered a joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the 2022-23 revenue budget provisional out-turn for Fife Council Social Care Services for Adults and Older People.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

**82. 2022-23 CAPITAL PLAN PROVISIONAL OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Director of Health and Social Care providing an update on the Health and Social Care capital investment plan and advising on the final out-turn for the 2022-23 financial year for the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the performance and activity across the 2022-23 financial monitoring as detailed in the report.

**83. 2023-24 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

The committee considered a joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services updating members on the 2023-24 revenue budget projected outturn for Fife Council Social Care Services for Adults and Older People.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

**84. 2023-24 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Director of Health and Social Care providing an update on the Health and Social Care Capital Investment Plan review and advising on the projected out-turn for the 2023-24 financial year for the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision**

The committee considered and noted the current performance and activity across the 2023-24 financial monitoring as detailed in the report.

**85. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services asking members to consider the future workplan for the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision**

The committee:-

- (1) considered and noted the People and Communities Scrutiny future workplan;
- (2) agreed to advise the Convener and Lead Officer of any areas for scrutiny they feel appropriate for the committee to consider; and
- (3) agreed that an update report on the Café Inc Provision be placed on the agenda for the November 2023 meeting of the committee.

16 November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 4

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## Citizens Advice & Rights Fife – Performance Report

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**Report by:** Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods

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**Wards Affected:** All Wards

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### Purpose

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This paper and its appendices provide information on the performance of Citizens Advice & Rights Fife (CARF) during 2022/23.

### Recommendation(s)

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It is recommended that the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Consider this paper and its appendices and comment as necessary;
- (b) Consider CARF's proactive approach to the management of demand as well as the plans relating to increasing capacity;
- (c) Comment on CARF's wider impact on those accessing its services.

### Resource Implication(s)

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No resource implications at this stage.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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CARF is monitored in line with the Council's Monitoring & Evaluation Framework therefore legal and risk implications are minimal.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as this report does not propose any change or revision to existing policies and practices.

### Consultation

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No formal consultation was carried out or is required, however the report has been developed alongside CARF's Chief Executive Officer David Redpath, who will be in attendance at Committee alongside CARF's Business Development Manager, Sarah Somerville.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 CARF is a voluntary organisation with charitable status providing advice and support across a wide spectrum of advice areas including welfare benefits, money advice and tribunal representation, amongst many others. 2022/23 represented CARF's second year of a three year SLA (Service Level Agreement). CARF's existing SLA will end in March 2024.
- 1.2 CARF's second year evaluation of its performance against the agreed Service Level Agreement found CARF to be meeting its agreed performance in full. CARF's Annual Report covering this period is included as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 CARF was awarded £1,862,087 core grant support in 2022/23.

## 2.0 CARF demand and capacity

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- 2.1 As with most, if not all, organisations in the post-pandemic era, CARF finds demand constantly exceeding the organisation's capacity. The organisation dealt with over 42,000 issues, over 11,500 calls and almost 12,000 active clients during the 22/23 year. Their work contributed to a client financial gain of almost £7.5m.
- 2.2 CARF's data indicates an organisation working at capacity but even while working at capacity, it is only able to deal with approximately two-thirds of calls being made to the organisation.
- 2.3 Recognising the demand-capacity deficit, CARF is embedding a new approach within its recently updated Business Plan 2023-28 with a very specific emphasis on reducing demand by adopting an ambitious change in strategic direction.
- 2.4 CARF has identified three main strands aimed at reducing demand and increasing capacity in order to close the gap on unmet demand. These are increasing benefit take up rates, increasing access to basic income maximisation across Fife and utilising Artificial Intelligence.

## 3.0 Benefit Take-up

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- 3.1 Following a paper by CARF to the Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis Board it was recognised that a dedicated benefit uptake role that would co-ordinate a rolling calendar of campaigns could bring significant benefit and prevent crises from developing. This post has been hosted by CARF since September 2022 and has had early and significant success.
- 3.2 Working alongside the Council, and utilising data from the Low Income Family Tracker, a highly successful Pension Credit campaign has been run with 867 households who were not in receipt of Pension Credit now in receipt. Based on an average award of £3,300 this is an additional gain of £2.86m not captured in CARF's Client Financial Gain figure referenced at 2.1.

- 3.3 In addition, the campaign was carried out in time for the autumn Cost of Living payment meaning the 867 households benefited from a further £280k.
- 3.4 Through increasing incomes, CARF would expect to see a reduction in demand on their services and future benefit take up campaigns include unpaid carers, young carers, Child Maintenance and Council Tax Reduction, amongst others.

## 4.0 Enablement and Upskilling

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- 4.0 Alongside the benefit take up work, and as indicated in last year's report, CARF has undertaken a significant amount of upskilling/enablement of other agencies to provide basic income maximisation support. This has been done as part of the Our Fife movement, in particular, through the promotion of the online Fife Benefits Calculator accessible here: [www.fife.entitledto.co.uk/home/start](http://www.fife.entitledto.co.uk/home/start)
- 4.1 Since the establishment of the Benefit Uptake post, 45 agencies and 367 individuals have been trained in the use of the Online Benefit Calculator. In addition, the calculator itself has been used over 5,000 times.
- 4.2 CARF has positioned itself within the developing No Wrong Door systems change work currently being undertaken. The ongoing enablement of agencies across Fife can ensure earlier access to basic income maximisation activity and earlier increases in a person's income (where this is identified) which is more likely to avert crises in the household and reduce demand on CARF over time.
- 4.3 A dedicated post within CARF will continue to promote this work, identifying agencies across Fife to work alongside and to co-ordinate the further roll-out of income maximisation upskilling within the region.
- 4.4 In addition, CARF is re-establishing a more community based presence, working alongside Fife Council Welfare Support Assistants, to provide support where complex issues are identified and to further strengthen the wider welfare support within job clubs across Fife.

## 5.0 Use of Artificial Intelligence

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- 5.1 CARF was chosen as a test site for an AI pilot relating to online transcription. This would mean that interviews would be transcribed, sorted and auto-populate CARF's case recording system meaning a reduction in administration time.
- 5.2 At present, data suggests that for every one minute an experienced adviser is with a client, there was an associated two minutes of write up time required.
- 5.3 The pilot is testing the pre-population of the system meaning the adviser would review the information that has been populated rather than have to write the notes up. The reduction in adviser "downtime" should result in increased efficiencies and an increase in the number of clients an adviser can see.
- 5.4 The pilot is in the data gathering stage at present, where the AI is "learning" CARF processes with the likely implementation phase for rolling out being March/April 2024.

- 5.5 CARF is working with the developers to ensure that the AI continues to deliver high quality case recording in line with the expectations of Scottish National Standards and of Citizens Advice Scotland audit requirements.

## 6.0 Summary

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- 6.1 CARF is proactively, and simultaneously, looking at reducing demand and increasing capacity to help achieve their vision of a better life for the people of Fife. The organisation has taken a pragmatic review of its service, the external environment in which it operates, the emerging systems change work by Fife Council and taken steps to ensure the organisation continues to deliver for the people of Fife.
- 6.2 The Committee should note that the change in approach by CARF may result in associated changes in headline performance. For example, while CARF is looking at ways to measure their impact on those who receive income maximisation support elsewhere, there is currently no system of measurement meaning that CARF's work in the enablement and upskilling of other agencies may not be reflected in an increase in headline Client Financial Gain.
- 6.3 Although there may be challenges in data collation, CARF's approach is representative of a new strategic direction designed to be more preventative than in the past, recognising that an increase in this area of work is better for the people of Fife, not just CARF. It is understood by CARF that there will be work required to evidence the value the preventative work is having.
- 6.4 CARF has also commissioned an independent report into the wider benefits their interventions have on behalf of clients including improvements in wellbeing. The report, carried out by Community Enterprise, is attached as Appendix 2. Part of the report discusses how the organisation continues to measure these impacts meaning CARF can provide evidence of both hard and soft outcomes to more widely demonstrate the positive impact their work has on those accessing their services, beyond simple Client Financial Gain.

### CARF Frontline Offices – Activities by location as at September 2023

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Dunfermline Office*</b> <i>Maygate Exchange, Enterprise Hub, Maygate, KY12 7NE</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>	Face to face appointments (all day)	Triage line (all day) Callbacks (AM)	Face to face appointments (AM) Triage line (PM)		
<b>Cowdenbeath Office</b> <i>322 High Street, Cowdenbeath, KY4 9NT</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>	Triage line (all day). Callbacks (AM).			Callbacks (all day) Face to face appointments (AM) Triage line (AM)	Face to face appointments (AM)
<b>Glenrothes Office</b> <i>Units 7-8, Craig Mitchell House, Glenrothes KY7 5QF</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>		Triage line (AM) Face To face appointments (all day) Callbacks (PM)		Triage line (AM) Face to face appointments (AM)	Triage line (AM) Face to face appointments (AM)
<b>Kirkcaldy Office</b> <i>New Volunteer House, 16 East Fergus Place, KY1 1XT</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>	Face to face appointments (AM)	Triage Training (AM)	Face to face appointments (AM)	Callbacks (AM)	Face to face appointments (all day) Triage line (AM) Callbacks (PM)
<b>Cupar Office</b> <i>County Buildings, St Catherine Street, Cupar, KY15 4TA</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>		Face to face appointments (AM)	Face to face appointments (AM) Triage line (all day)		Triage line (all day) Callbacks (all day)
<b>Leven</b> <i>Greig Institute, Forth Street, Leven, Fife KY8 4PF</i> <b>APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE</b>	Triage line (all day) Callbacks (all day))	Callbacks (all day) Face to face appointments (AM) Triage Line (PM)		Face to face appointments (AM) Callbacks (all day) Triage line (PM)	

\* The Dunfermline Office will relocate to the Kingsgate Centre towards the end of 2023 as part of a community Hub.

Complementing face to face appointments on a daily basis are a team of staff and volunteers providing a triage telephony service between the hours of 1000-1500, Monday to Friday. The team can be reached on the following numbers:

<b>General Advice</b>	0345 1400 095	<b>Macmillan Service, for people affected by Cancer</b>	0345 1400 091
<b>Debt and Money Advice</b>	0345 1400 094	<b>Welfare Benefits</b>	0345 1400 092
<b>Text Service for the Deaf Community</b>	0787 2677 904		

Complementing the telephony triage, a team of advisers call back clients identified as in an emergency situation **the same day** between the hours of 0900 and 1700, Monday to Friday. Non-urgent call backs are placed on a call back list with advisers contacting clients between the hours of 0900 and 1700, Monday to Friday.

Full details of CARF locations as well as access to a large advice database for those able to self-help can be found at <http://www.CABFife.org.uk>

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23





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## Chairman's Foreword

Many thanks for taking the time to read the 26th Annual Report of Citizens Advice and Rights Fife. This Report covers the period from April 2022 to March 2023, a period of recalibration for CARF, its volunteers and staff as much as for our clients and everyone else in the wider community. Last year we saw the beginnings of an economic shock to rival the banking crisis of 2008. This has led to a major cost of living crisis that bared its teeth early in the year and is subsequently biting all of our friends and neighbours hard.



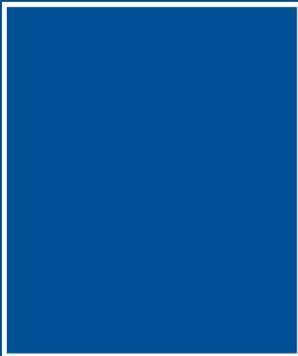
Cost of living crises are not new to the advisers at CARF, and the vast majority of our clients over a number of years have benefitted from high quality income maximisation advice. However, now we are experiencing heavy demand from clients who have never needed to seek such advice and our limited resources hinder our ability to meet this demand to the extent we would like. Work has already begun on our 2023-2028 business plan to harness the latest technological advances, recruit more volunteers and share our expertise with our wider partner network to enable us to help as many of Fife's citizens as possible. We exist to advise and guide our neighbours and seek to improve their lives, especially in the face of adversity, and will work tirelessly to transform and improve further the efficiency and professionalism of our service to achieve that outcome. As Chairman I have, as always, been exposed to the highs and lows of the organisation throughout the year and have seen nothing but creativity, commitment and determination everywhere I look. The pride I feel working alongside such a group of people is profound and I am grateful to them on behalf of our clients, among whom I can also be counted.

I am grateful, too, for the continuing support of our financial sponsors, who have shown such trust and belief in the work that we do and share the values that underpin our vision of a better life for the people of Fife. Our main funder, Fife Council, and Citizens Advice Scotland have also enabled us to submit evidence to central and local Government to improve policies and practices that affect people's lives, creating a fairer Scotland where people are empowered and their rights are respected. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of specialist partners. It is the willingness of our staff and volunteers to work so successfully in concert with such a wide range of outstanding partners that enables CARF to continue to operate above and beyond the sum of our parts.

Peter McTiernan, **Chairman**



# Chief Executive Report



I always find it somewhat unsettling when I come to write this piece for the annual report in that I am made to recognise a further year has passed...

I wrote last year of CARF standing up to the challenges that lay ahead and it is with enormous pride that, when looking back, I can say we have done so. It is testament to the individual staff and volunteers that we continue to deliver such impactful work in such trying times.

The year could so easily have been about consolidating but the organisation has continued to attract increased investment with new projects complementing our traditional work. The confidence our funders have is a nod in our ability to deliver positive outcomes and it is this that we must concentrate on as we move forward.

Through the year there were two introductions I must mention. Firstly, alongside a number of partners, there is an increased focus on benefit take up rates and CARF is now in a position to have a dedicated resource in this area. This is something of a pioneering role in Fife, specifically aimed at preventing crises from arising by increasing incomes. The early successes show this to be a worthwhile investment.

Secondly, our 5 year Business Plan 2023 28 embeds upskilling and enablement in our future plans. Clients should be able to access basic income maximisation advice through various places and services, many of whom they are already engaging with. Our ambitious programme of upskilling has already proven successful and aligns neatly with emerging plans being developed by local partners.

We always strive to do our best for those who need us, regardless of status or circumstance. This is why I always speak of my pride in CARF and why my pride has not diminished from the day I took on this role.

David Redpath, **Chief Executive Officer**

*David Redpath*



A little update for you ....

This morning **£4,230** was paid into my account for the back dated Severe Disability Payment. So with this added to the **£3,690** back dated Personal Independence Payment, I am better off by nearly **£8,000**.

**A phenomenal amount of money.**

This lump sum and receiving the PIP and SDP now has saved me from losing my home and has eased my stress levels . I can now see light at the end of a very long tunnel.

**To put it plainly lifesaving.**

And this is all thanks to yourself (Jonathan), Karen and Steph. I was about to give up on the process of trying to claim PIP until I spoke to you. From the moment your team got involved I was supported at every step and everything was explained to me clearly . You have all been so very kind and I cannot thank you enough for your time and the work that has been done on my behalf.

**Feedback from CARF client**

*Thank you!*



# The Year at a Glance

## 2022-23

- ▶▶▶ **ACTIVE CLIENTS** → **23,214**
- ▶▶▶ **CLIENT FINANCIAL GAIN** → **over £7.4 million**
- ▶▶▶ **VOLUNTEER HOURS** → **9,694**
- ▶▶▶ **ISSUES DEALT WITH** → **41,122**
- ▶▶▶ **MULTIPLE DEBT CASES** → **741**
- ▶▶▶ **SOCIAL POLICY CASES** → **589**

## 2021-22 VS 2022-23 COMPARISON





## Social Policy

The Social Policy Group continue to support CARF's Business Plan and promote the twin aim to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally.



- The Social Policy Group membership has been refreshed with some new faces and increased members overall.
- The group have been tasked with revising CAS social policy training regardless of their own role and length of service.
- The group will be allocated offices and meetings to attend with a view to sharing relevant information and engaging with paid staff and volunteers. As well as continuing to raise awareness and highlight importance of submissions, the hope is the group membership will increase to assist the administrative function of submissions to CAS and to take part in local campaigns.

Our relationship with the national CAS Social Policy team remains strong in terms of CARF contributing towards national campaigns and consultations throughout the year, including submitting feedback to help shape CAS policy team plans.

The CEO, Service Delivery Manager, Money Advice Coordinator and a Money Adviser met with Tom Arthur MSP (Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance) as well as representatives of CAS to speak about:

- The Collaborative Council Tax Tool,
- Working relationship with Fife Council Revenues team, and
- The impact of Covid, the cost of living crisis and forbearance measures in debt legislation on the service and clients.

Throughout the year CARF spoke at a number of events including, but not limited to, FFOTRA (Fife Federation of Tenants & Resident's Association), People First (Scotland) (a disabled person's organisation run by people with disabilities), Women's groups in Cupar & Leven and to a group of S4 & 5 pupils at Viewforth High School.



I honestly don't know where we would be without the help and advice given by the staff. Kind and caring, non-judgmental people. I tell everyone I see how wonderful everyone has been. Thank you so much!

**Feedback from CARF client**



Absolutely excellent. I spoke to Lee, what a lovely lady. She explained everything I needed to know and took care of everything, I cannot praise this lady enough.

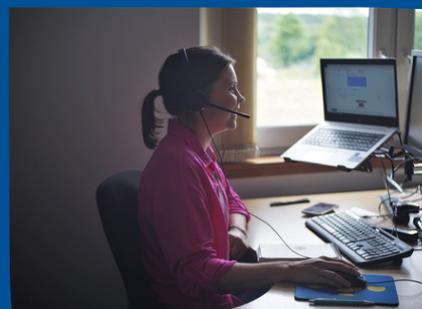
Thank goodness for people like Lee, absolutely amazing and lifted so much weight off my shoulders.

**Feedback from CARF Money Advice client**



# The Impact of Our Projects

NUMBER OF CLIENTS ASSISTED	CLIENT FINANCIAL GAIN	
MACMILLAN	500	£1,099,633
MAKING IT WORK FOR LONE PARENTS	84	£92,273
CARERS INCOME MAXIMISATION PROJECT	332	£378,659
MAKING IT WORK FOR FAMILIES	52	£42,679
FOOD INSECURITY PROJECT	186	£38,094
BOOSTING BUDGETS	79	£98,947
BARNARDOS STRONGER FAMILIES	38	£51,714





## TRANSITION 2 EMPLOYMENT

209

£106,561

## HEALTHY HEATING

679

£238,399

## ARMED SERVICES ADVICE PROJECT

476

£907,559

## MATERNITY SERVICES

370

£347,780



## PATIENT ADVICE SUPPORT SERVICE

258

NO CFG'S\*

\*client financial gains do not fall under the remit of this project

## PENSION WISE

493

NO CFG'S\*

\*client financial gains do not fall under the remit of this project

## MAKING JUSTICE WORK

Due to the eviction ban implemented following the Covid 19 Pandemic, client numbers and gains have seen a significant drop due to the decreased number of clients requiring emergency housing and debt advice. The local authority continues to suspend all eviction action. The project adviser is presently undertaking preventative work.



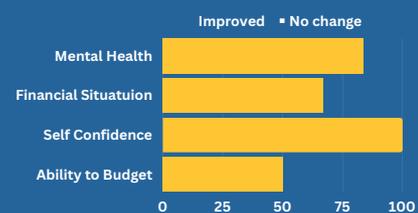
# New Projects for 2022-23

## Boosting Budgets

The Support and Connect project helps families in and out of the school term. As part of the project, a bespoke "Boosting Budgets" 8 week course is offered and covers life skills such as cooking, affordable credit, energy saving and financial education. Those who participate in the 8 week course can access a dedicated CARF Financial Inclusion Caseworker who can assist with:

- Assessing potential entitlement to welfare benefit support
- Applying for welfare benefit entitlements
- Challenging benefit decisions
- Issues with benefit claims such as overpayments
- Assistance to access any discretionary, statutory and charitable funding
- One to one financial capability support to identify potential to reduce expenditure

What difference has the Boosting Budgets made to you:



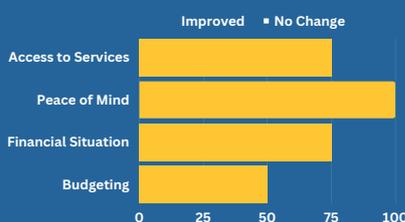
How would you rate the support received from the Boosting Budgets Project?

4.6★  
average rating  
★★★★★

"Great groups, really relaxed and I felt comfortable to express my feelings and difficulties I had been experiencing."

*Boosting Budgets Client*

What difference has the Harbour Project made to you:



"Had it not been for Fraser's help and support...I would be lost with everything"

*Harbour Project Client*

## The Harbour Project

This project gives access to a dedicated service at Trussell Trust's Levenmouth foodbank, providing personalised income maximisation advice and support. This service will include assessing welfare benefit entitlement, budgeting assistance, and information on banking services and affordable credit. The service will also actively refer both internally and externally where further issues are identified e.g. debt issues. A dedicated advisor will be available during Foodbank opening times.



# New Projects for 2022-23

## Boost Your Income

Boost Your Income provides personalised income maximisation advice and support to NHS staff working within Fife. The service is confidential, impartial and able to offer appointments to fit around shift patterns. The project was made possible thanks to a grant from the Fife Health Charity.



The project was relaunched at the start of Challenge Poverty week on 3rd October 2022, with various promotional posts on the NHS staff Intranet as well as the distribution of business cards, posters and pull up banners, to all Fife NHS sites, including GP surgeries.

## Benefit Take Up Campaign

This newly created role in 2022 will focus on the development and delivery of a rolling programme of benefit take up campaigns with the ultimate goal of increasing benefit uptake across Fife. In order to achieve this, the Benefit Take Up Campaign Lead will coordinate a distributed team across a number of agencies and work with various stakeholders, including Fife Council, creating and delivering take up campaigns.





## Future Plans

To remain relevant it is necessary to adapt, refresh and move with the times, often trying to pre-empt what can be on the horizon and taking steps to mitigate or ease the impact future events may have on CARF and its clients.

We have a simple problem where the demand for advice exceeds the existing capacity of CARF and many of our future plans relate to solving this problem.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is largely underutilised in advice provision and may play a key role in helping meet the unmet demand we are currently experiencing. It can help with advice in the first instance but, recognising the importance of human interaction to those who need to access CARF services, we are looking to use AI to reduce the significant and disproportionate administrative burden on our advisers, freeing up time for them to speak to more people.

In addition, we are acutely aware that, in order to provide the best possible service, we must recognise we are not always best placed to provide the advice a client needs or indeed the advice is being given too late and a crisis has occurred which was avoidable. Our upskilling agenda sets out to provide the skills and confidence for other agencies to provide basic income maximisation advice which can lead to increases in an individual's income and an avoidance of crisis.

In parallel, we are increasing focus and time on benefit uptake. Working alongside Fife Council and using data in a way we have never been able to before, we are trying to put money in people's pockets at the earliest opportunity, before crisis strikes and before they reach our doors.

The above represents three massive undertakings for CARF, but they are necessary to ensure our longevity and for ensuring we keep striving for a better life for the people of Fife.

**CLICK ME OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ OUR 2023 - 2028 BUSINESS PLAN**





# IT Services Report

CARF's IT Service continues to work to maintain the stability and resilience within CARF's IT infrastructure, carrying out maintenance and upgrades on its environment as required. At the same time, we dealt with almost 1000 requests for assistance from our staff and volunteers and 97% were completed within the set service level standard.

- Over the year the emphasis has been on strengthening our environment, including replacement of network hardware that has enhanced the aim to keep systems secure. All our network devices now "talk" to each other, helping to ensure our cybersecurity is as good as it can be.
- During the year we carried out a Security Awareness Proficiency Assessment amongst our staff and volunteers. This provided an assessment of where we sit amongst peer organisations in terms of our collective knowledge on security awareness. This formed the basis of an ongoing plan to enhance knowledge on areas such as passwords and authentication, internet use and email security. Our continued use of market leading security awareness training and phishing testing helps to ensure that all our staff and volunteers understand the risks and challenges we, as with all organisations, face in information security and preventing data breaches.
- During the year, CARF's IT service created a new post for an IT Systems Administrator. This role was successfully filled and has allowed for additional support cover and the opportunity for work to be completed in a quicker timescale.
- Once again we achieved Cyber Essentials certification.
- We have expanded our use of IT Service Management system, which now holds all IT contract, leasing and software information.
- All internet links have been upgraded where possible.
- We introduced electronic document signing which has brought efficiency into many processes, reducing postage costs and staff time.
- A new alerting system for use in interview rooms and for those lone working was deployed which has replaced a disjointed number of solutions. This software is intended to reassure our staff and volunteers and aid in keeping them safe.



## Case Study

\*Agnes contacted CARF for a benefit check as her Partner \*Bob was approaching state pension age in a few months. Both clients suffer from severe disabilities. Agnes was in receipt of contribution-based ESA and Bob was in receipt of income-related ESA, with both being placed in the support group. Agnes and Bob receive the enhanced rate for both components of PIP, with both also receiving Severe Disability Premium. The couple are also in receipt of housing benefit and council tax reduction and they are concerned that the housing benefit will cease if there are any changes to the benefit income.

Agnes had been in touch with the Department for Work and Pensions, where she was advised that when Bob reaches state pension age, they will be treated as a mixed age couple and Agnes would need to make a claim for Universal Credit to ensure the continuance of state benefit entitlement. Agnes was confused and didn't understand what this meant, so she contacted CARF for a benefits check and clarification of what the couple's entitlement would be if a claim was made for Universal Credit.

During the initial contact with an adviser, a benefit check was completed and this showed a huge drop in income for the family if a claim was made for Universal Credit. However, due to entitlement to certain legacy benefits, the information available for the client was inconclusive. A breakdown of clients' legacy benefits at this time was requested from the DWP.

Once a benefit breakdown was received, the adviser was able to complete a more accurate estimate of benefit entitlement. There were still inconsistencies needing clarification, so contact was made with CPAG for more specialised advice about the rules of certain legacy benefits, at which point it was agreed that if Agnes and Bob took the correct steps prior to Bob making a claim for New State Pension, the household income may actually increase.

Both clients were happy with this and a change in circumstances was requested, this would see Bob's income-related ESA cease, with Agnes now able to claim the top up of income-related ESA.

Once the income-related ESA top-up was secured for Agnes, Fife council's housing benefit team were alerted to the change by the DWP, this ensured that housing benefit for working age people would remain in payment. Once the couple were sure that the new payment amounts were correct, they were both able to make new claims for carer's allowance and will both receive a carer's premium.

Clients were delighted with a £13,912.76 annual financial gain and thanked the team for all the advice and assistance received over the 5 month period they worked with CARF.

\*not real name



# Training Report

## Core Learning

This financial year saw West Lothian CAB begin to run a programme to complement CARF training and assist in volunteer recruitment. This saw them running a remote learning course very similar to the one that CARF had been running since August 2020. Conveniently, this ran regularly throughout the year regardless of intake size. The main advantage of this was the ability to send volunteers on a training programme very quickly after they showed interest. Because of this alternative route, this year the organisation ran two in house ATP training courses and provided 3 remote ATP courses.

There were many success stories from our own Adviser Training Programme including Paul who managed to gain employment after a period of being unemployed. He had this to say about the course and its impact on his employment opportunities;

*"I can highly recommend the CARF training programme. I was hugely impressed with the professional approach where every topic is explained in great detail and your input is encouraged at every opportunity.*

*Overall, a highly rewarding experience which provided me with renewed confidence to return to full time work."*



## Outreach Training

An ongoing partnership with the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership's Health Promotions Service continued this year. The Poverty Awareness sessions continued to run in its 45 min lunchtime format. The aim of this course is to support the work of the Poverty Action Working Group of which CARF is a key and active member.



## Internal Training

Over the last few years CARF has strived to offer additional training that augments the mandatory training available through the Adviser Training Programme and online CASlearn system. This supports the “Fulfilling” aspect of CARF’s Business Plan to ensure that staff, both paid and voluntary, feel that they are continually progressing and gaining something from their time with the organisation. This year we were able to solidify our position on training and have people back in the training room at Craig Mitchell House to do training and group work, allowing a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

## External Training

Alongside internal training, CARF strive to offer external training with bespoke sessions in specialist areas, including First Aid Training, Change Management & Managing the Performance of Staff (delivered through Fife College), Gambling Awareness (delivered by Lothian CAB), Fuel Poverty training (delivered by Shelter Scotland). In addition, CARF staff and volunteers have also attended courses from Child Poverty Action Group, Fife Voluntary Action, Citizens Advice Scotland, Money Advice Scotland and NHS Fife.

## Online Learning and Recording

KnowBe4 is CARF’s main mitigation training for its IT risk score. The total number of hours for the year were 253.

CASlearn: 937 online courses were completed on CASlearn by the volunteers and staff in the period April 2022 end of March 2023. This represents a significant increase on the previous year of 661.

The statistics for this year show that the efforts of the past few years to create a working environment that puts support and emphasis on the important role of learning has paid off. There was clear compliance with the mandatory learning hours required by SNSIAP for the first time and the effort required in collecting the hours and the evidence of such was significantly less suggesting that there has been a clear culture change.



# Volunteering in CARF

Like so many Third Sector agencies, CARF has suffered from a decline in volunteer numbers since March 2020, another symptom of the Covid 19 pandemic. From a lofty 100+ volunteers the organisation now counts around 60.

Volunteering plays such a massive part in society and CARF is refocussing its efforts around volunteer recruitment, volunteer retention as well as exploring different ways of recognising the impact volunteers have on the organisation.

Our volunteer survey in February 2023 provided the following insights:



The organisation has assisted many volunteers into paid employment, with volunteers also making the step into paid advice within CARF. The experience of volunteering with CARF is clearly a rewarding one and a story which we want to emphasise.

Our future relies heavily on our ability to attract and retain volunteers and with a renewed emphasis we believe we can increase our volunteer numbers and further contribute to a better life for the people of Fife.

## Financial Position

▶▶▶	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	→	<b>£3,399,048</b>
▶▶▶	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	→	<b>£3,384,606</b>
▶▶▶	<b>OTHER GAINS/LOSSES</b>	→	<b>£638,000</b>
▶▶▶	<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	→	<b>£652,442</b>
▶▶▶	<b>TOTAL FUND BROUGHT FORWARD</b>	→	<b>£1,331,626</b>
▶▶▶	<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	→	<b>£1,984,068</b>

### CARF Board of Directors

Peter McTiernan, **CHAIRMAN**  
Maureen Lyall, **VICE CHAIR**  
David Redpath, **COMPANY SECRETARY**  
Alistair Cairns, **DIRECTOR**  
Lilian Hamilton, **DIRECTOR**  
Martin Davidson, **DIRECTOR**  
Jean Ferguson, **DIRECTOR**  
Matthew Bruce, **DIRECTOR**  
Richard Thomson, **DIRECTOR**

## CARF Aims

The service provided by Citizens Advice and Rights Fife is free, confidential, independent and impartial. We are your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and adhere fully to the twin aims of the CAB service:

- To ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities of the services available, or through an inability to express their needs
- To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally

## Website

 [www.cabfife.org.uk](http://www.cabfife.org.uk)

## Phone

-  General Advice **0345 140 0095**
-  Money Advice **0345 140 0094**
-  Macmillan Fife Welfare Benefits Partnership **0345 140 0091**
-  CARF Textphone for Deaf Community **0787 2677 904**



Citizens Advice and Rights Fife is registered as a charity in Scotland No SCO027015 and a Company Limited by Guarantee No 178060

 Citizens Advice and Rights Fife

 @CABFife

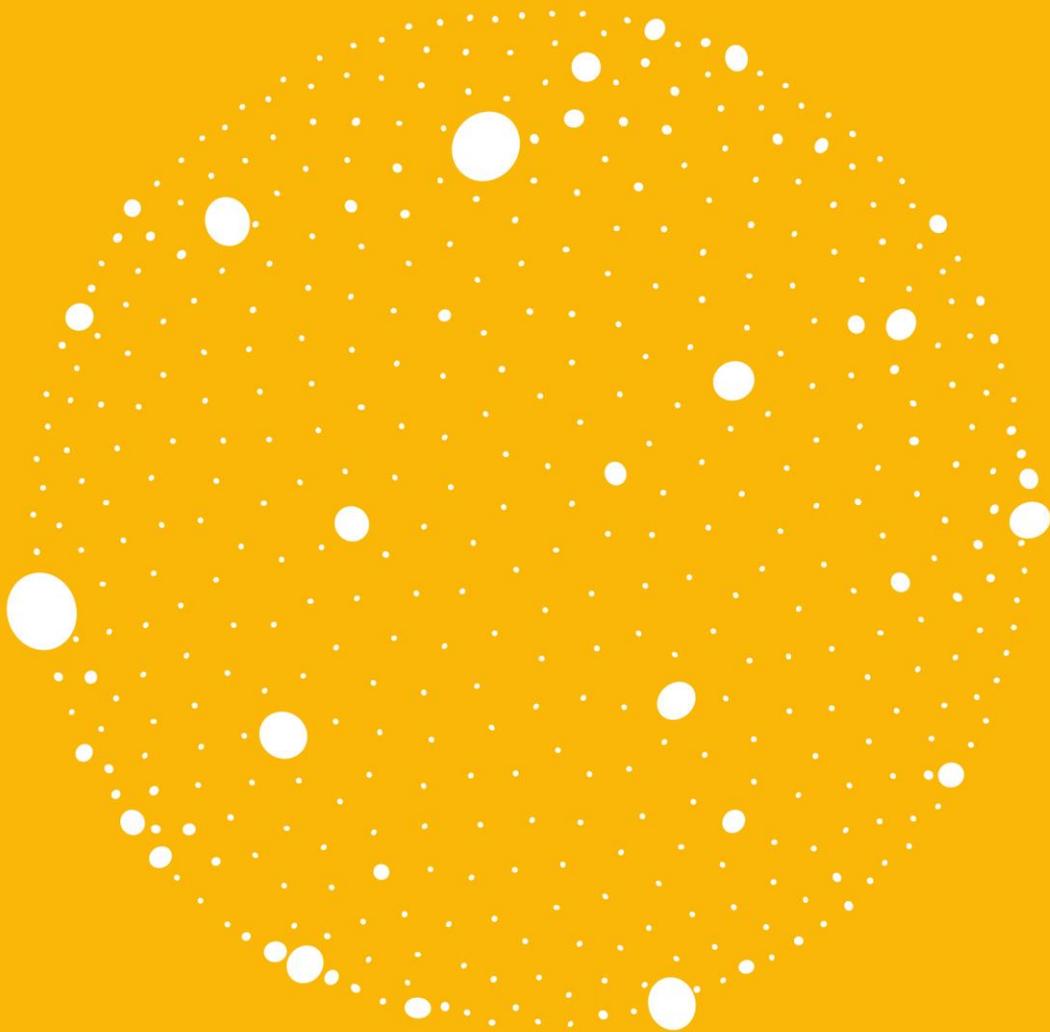
**Citizens  
Advice &  
Rights  
Fife**



Independent advice for our community

# Impact Assessment v3

October 2023



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# 1. Organisational and Study Context

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## 1.1 Introduction and Research Aims

Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) has been delivering their services for a long time and have a very substantial history of impact. However, the bulk of this impact is quantitative and mainly financial. They have developed a particular way of reporting that looks at numbers and finances. What is missing is the qualitative evidence of the difference their work makes to people and families and to the region of Fife.

This is a significant organisation with circa £2m of funding from Fife Council and an additional £1m from individual projects. Keeping fresh in relation to fundraising is vital to the future sustainability of the organisation. Although there is a large multi-million pound financial gain per year, this objective is becoming more difficult. Client financial gain used to be £10m but due to the increasing effectiveness of the organisation in empowering and informing the people of Fife, that has reduced to nearer £8.7m. Although still very high, there is an increasing need to see impact in a different way. What appears to be reducing impact is in fact even greater success.

The environment is becoming more challenging and it is harder to secure third and public sector funding. As a result, there is a need for something that shows more than just a number.

To supplement existing CARF activity, Community Enterprise was commissioned to undertake an objective impact evaluation of the organisation to understand the difference its work is making.

This research focused on the following areas:

- Capture the experience of those closely connected to CARF.
- Explore the impact CARF's services is having on the lives of beneficiaries.
- Capture learning; what service users and partners think is working well and identifying areas for improvement.
- Set out recommendations (if any) that will support the future development of the services.

## 1.2 About CARF

Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife was incorporated in 1997. It is a merger of the independent CAB and what was previously a Fife Council advice service. This is one of the biggest CABs in the UK providing extensive advice services across Fife with bases in Cowdenbeath, St Andrews, Kirkcaldy, Leven, Dunfermline, Cupar and Glenrothes.

CARF is an independent charity that provides free expert advice and assistance individuals across Fife. Like all CABs, it values its services as:

- Free
- Confidential
- Independent
- Impartial

Support is available in person, by phone and online and there is an aspiration to build the capacity and knowledge of local people to be equipped to address issues as they arise.

Advice is people centred and can be in the areas of debt, money advice, housing and wellbeing. They signpost to other partners for more bespoke advice needs.

Aims;

1. To ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities of the services available, or through an inability to express their needs
2. To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services both locally and nationally

### 1.3 CARF in Numbers

In 2022 - 2023 CARF reported the key statistics below to Fife Council.



### 1.4 Methodology

This research was underpinned by a qualitative research approach that aimed to explore key perspectives and experiences from a range of stakeholders either involved in poverty alleviation or with support needs. The majority are or have been involved with CARF. To get a better understanding of the wider landscape, the views of non-service users were also gathered. Semi-structured interviews, an online survey and listening sessions formed the basis of data collection. In total around 70 participants took part in this research.

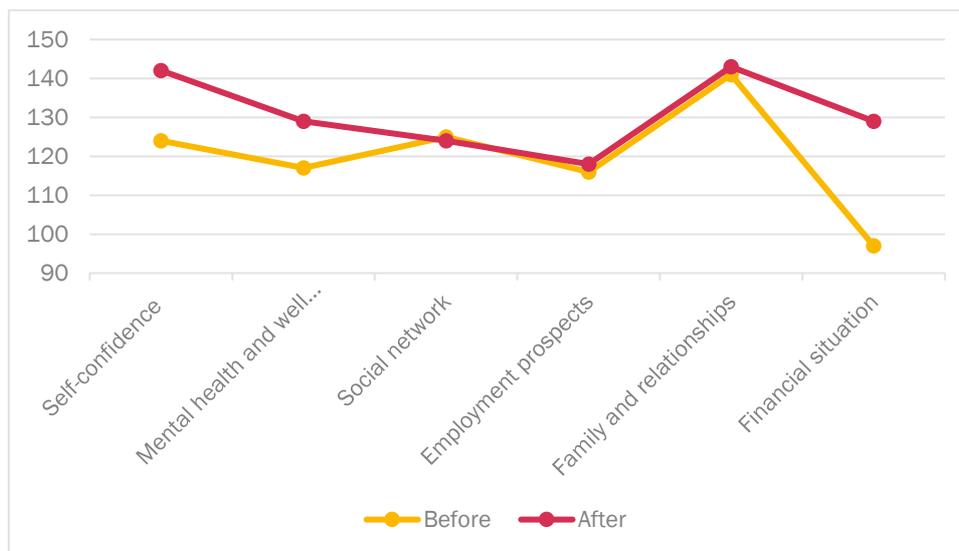


## 2. Findings & Recommendations

### 2.1 Findings

#### Long Term Impact

- Before engaging with CARF, over a quarter (27%) of respondents rated their self-confidence as poor or very poor. After support from CARF, nobody rated their self-confidence as very poor and only 7% rated it poor.
- Before engaging with CARF, 30% of respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor or very poor, however after support from CARF this figure dropped to 13%.
- Respondents' social network increased slightly after support from CARF. Before support, 29% rated their social network as being good or excellent. After, this figure increased to 33%.
- The employment prospects of respondents also appeared to increase through engaging with CARF. 34% felt that their employment prospects were good or excellent before engaging with CARF, after support this figure rose to 41%.
- Before engaging with CARF, 51% of respondents rated their family and relationships either good or excellent. After engaging with CARF, 59% of people rated their family and relationships as good or excellent, 8% more than before.
- Finally, just over half (51%) of people rated their financial situation as poor or very poor before engaging with CARF. However, after support from the organisation, only 11% of people chose one of these ratings, showing a large decrease of 40%.



#### Success Factors

- 51% felt that CARF had been able to resolve their issue and a further 16% felt their issue had been resolved 'to a certain extent' while 30% of respondents felt it was "too early to say."
- The most important factor of success was "Clear and good knowledge and information" (47%) followed by "friendly and approachable staff" (31%)
- Very few were concerned about opening times, although that did come up in the semi-structured interviews.
- The feedback from almost all stakeholders was positive. This was particularly true where a member of CARF staff is attached to a team or organisation e.g., Making it Work for Families.

- CARF advisors (in both the attached worker model and the general team) have a positive reputation and were described as, friendly, approachable and knowledgeable, with the ability to have sensitive conversations with people about money and debt.

### Beneficiary Satisfaction

- When asked how they would rate the staff at CARF, 68% of respondents rated them five stars out of five and 27% rated them four stars. Only 5% rated the staff three stars and nobody rated them either one or two stars. On average, respondent's experience of the staff team was 4.6 stars.

4.6★  
average rating



- Respondents were asked how they would rate the support they received from CARF overall. A positive 49% of respondents rated their overall support as excellent and 49% rated their overall support as good. Only 1 person rated their support as average, and nobody rated their support as poor or very poor.
- Clients were clear that the services helped them make an informed choice.

“This help was an absolute lifeline when I didn't know where to turn. They don't just sympathise, they know things that solve your problems.”

- Some clients interviewed did note that the waiting time impacted on their levels of stress.
- Stakeholders indicated that increased knowledge about the benefits and other support they would be eligible for frees up both money and ‘head space’ to enable families to engage in fun or relaxing activities and improve relationships.
- Volunteers indicated that they see the wider impact of CARF on the beneficiaries they support beyond the addressing of the problem. Signposting to other organisations offers a holistic package that improves the mental health and self-esteem of individuals and in turn makes families stronger and happier.

### Nature of Support Need

- At 48%, benefits help was the biggest demand followed by help with bills (36%). 20% wanted help with money or debt issues.

### Stakeholder Perspective on Impact

- Stakeholders indicated that better relationships with CARF had increase their staff confidence and strengthened their team's work.
- Collaboration was highly valued : “We've all had to adapt to delivering as a partnership. Being open to learning and feedback.” The joined-up approach by CARF makes referral pathways easier.
- Innovation – CARF are seen to be at the forefront of new ways of addressing poverty. Testing out new things such as AI is highly valued.
- Transparency and openness to share knowledge with other Bureaux is highly valued.

“They do make a big difference to the people they support, they're knowledgeable and their approach is good.”

“I had been so stressed about this issue that I was bad tempered with my family and so worried that I couldn't focus on anything else. With the issue sorted, I now get on better with my family and feel more able to get back to work and get back to my hobbies again.”

## Volunteer Impact

- Volunteers joined to find something meaningful to do and felt there were opportunities to use their skills and experience.
- There was huge feedback for the training and support they receive and how valued they feel.

“My confidence has increased a million times from what it was. Before I was quite shy but able to talk to people but when COVID hit it completely changed me. If you spoke to me even 6 months ago, I wouldn't have been able to do this (talking to me on zoom). The support I get from everybody has really helped, they knew what my issues were, how anxious I got and the steps to take to help me gain a bit of confidence by taking smaller steps rather than bigger leaps.”

## Areas of Improvement

- A small number of clients indicated that improved waiting times would be an improvement “Maybe just a fact of life these days but the waiting time on the phone was fairly dispiriting.”
- Stakeholder were concerned about the level of demand vs the capacity of CARF and were worried that they could be overwhelmed.

## How People find the Service

- 53% found the service via web search while 33% were told by a friend and 20% referred from another agency.

## 2.2 Economic Value

CARF were keen to see a financial impact on their work. It is outwith the remit of this report to undertake a full Social Return on Investment study by an SROI practitioner to achieve a numbered ratio of benefit. Even that is a challenging process, fraught with variables. This study has elected to use a simple process to give an indication of what that impact could be. It is not meant to be scientifically robust but to find a different way to articulate the extensive benefit.

There are a range of measurements and the writers of this report are not statisticians, do not own this data and don't have the information that forms the basis of it. In that context and in the interests of understanding a broad return on investment, we have used figures produced by The Housing Association Charitable Trust<sup>1</sup>. Their research assigns monetary amounts to some social values which helps to demonstrate financial impact of the social outcomes. The values are one way to provide a foundation for a basic assessment of social impact beyond the £8m benefit secured, providing evidence of value for money. The figures used are set out below.

- Improvement in confidence - £9,283
- Becoming a member of a social group - £1,850
- Moving from unemployment to full time employment - £14,443
- Feeling in control of life - £15,894
- Relief from anxiety and depression - Adult £36,766

These figures are per person but reflect longer and deeper interventions than CARF are able to offer (e.g. year long placements for people with support needs). It is clear that, though CARF input may be the catalyst, they will not be the only factor. To accommodate attribution levels, we have chosen to use 10% of these figures in the calculations, simply to take into account the specific and short term nature of the CARF interventions vs the impact.

In the future, a full return on investment study could be commissioned.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hact.org.uk/>

As a result

The Social Return on Investment achieves a ratio of £16 of benefit for each £1 investment

The financial return on investment achieves a ratio of £2,10 for every £1 invested.

If we increase attribution to 20% this increases to £31 of benefit for every £1 invested.

CARF Annual Estimated Return on Investment						
Estimated proportion of beneficiaries (Number)	Estimated %	Type of impact	Benchmark	Value of Impact for CARF (10%)		Total Value of Impact
Total number of beneficiaries						23,214
Turnover of the organisation						£3,384,606
6964		30% Improvement in confidence	£9,283	£928		£6,464,867
5804		25% Being a member of a social group	£1,850	£185		£1,073,648
209	From annual report	Moving from unemployment to full employment	£14,443	£14,443		£3,018,587
11607		50% Feeling in control of life	£15,894	£1,589		£18,448,166
6964		30% Relief from anxiety and depression	£36,766	£3,677		£25,604,578
<b>Total</b>						<b>£54,609,845</b>
<b>Total per person</b>						<b>£2,352</b>
<b>Unit cost</b>						<b>£145.80</b>
<b>ROI</b>						<b>16</b>
						£16 of benefit for each £1 spent
						In addition to the £8.7m secured
From HACT financial association to social value						
Figures taken from CARF's Performance Report 2022						

## 2.3 Recommendations

Based on this data, CARF should

1. Design and consolidate a qualitative impact measurement methodology based on the baseline in the current survey. Impact in relation to wellbeing and so on can be fed into a medium-term impact assessment with all beneficiaries.
2. Agree a set of parameters in more detail and commission a return on investment study next year.
3. Train staff and volunteers in impact assessment.
4. Amend the tone of voice and visual language on the website and other written materials to better fit with the impact.
5. Consider a separately branded division because the CAB brand can be a strong identifier but also a limiter.
6. Expand the innovative use of AI to address the main challenge of long phone waiting times. This could potentially be a Knowledge Exchange Partnership with a University.

## Appendices

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## Appendix 1. Stakeholder Conversations and Interviews

5 stakeholders and referrers took part in detailed semi-structured interviews.

### Thoughts about CARF

The feedback from almost all stakeholders was positive, this was particularly true where a member of CARF staff is attached to a team or organisation e.g., Making it Work for Families. Having one named person who spends time in their office, takes part in team meetings or group activities and can attend joint visits was seen to be very valuable. This approach helps to improve communication and to build trusting relationships between staff and with potential clients. Phoning to ask for help can be a big step for someone but if they have already met the person who is 'vouched for' by a worker they already have a relationship with this can really help.

CARF advisors (in both the attached worker model and the general team) have a positive reputation and were described as, friendly, approachable and knowledgeable, with the ability to have sensitive conversations with people about money and debt. The advisors who were in posts attached to another organisation were seen as having a shared ethos and approach that is encouraging and empowering. They provide "a bespoke service, tailored to the person's needs"

### Impact on Beneficiaries

A number of benefits to service users were identified. Understandably a key one is income maximisation but rather than being a benefit itself, it was identified that it helps to improve mental health and wellbeing by reducing stress and anxiety for individuals and their families. This increased knowledge about the benefits and other support they would be eligible for frees up both money and 'head space' to enable families to engage in fun or relaxing activities and improve relationships. In a practical sense this means that people are now, for example, able to provide more and healthier food, buy new school clothes, which can reduce stigma and bullying, or take part in activities that wouldn't have been affordable before.

"They do make a big difference to the people they support, they're knowledgeable and their approach is good."

"They have been able to get people a hell of a lot more money. Knowing what someone would be eligible

"Poverty gets in the way - the parent's ability to sit down and talk about things like their own childhood experiences, attachment issues, what their goals are etc. is very difficult while they're worried about, debt, potential eviction, keeping the lights on, food etc."

date and doing what she needs to. She gets it, she understands the issues people are having and the work we're doing."

As well as helping people to claim benefits they are entitled to, advisers have helped people to access grants and other support. For example, a young person with ADHD received a £2,000 grant to cover the cost of driving lessons which, in turn, increased their confidence and independence, opening up new opportunities for them. Another young person was able to secure and maintain their tenancy by claiming Housing Benefit and accessing support to help with managing day to day costs e.g., cooking on a budget.

"Poverty gets in the way - the parent's ability to sit down and talk about things like their own childhood experiences, attachment issues, what their goals are etc. is very difficult while they're worried about, debt, potential eviction, keeping the lights on, food etc."

## Impact on Partner Agencies

Working with CARF has increased partner's knowledge about benefits and other financial support. This has meant that they can take on some of the more routine work like supporting parents to claim Scottish Child Payments.

There has been increased capacity to deliver training and support, for example a CARF Worker, (as part of the Making it Work for Families project), has input to an employability programme for young people 16+.

The attached workers are seen as 'a known face,' easily accessible and not scary to approach, which is seen as crucial.

They have given the organisations a clearer picture of the impact addressing poverty and maximising income has on the people they are supporting.

Partnership Working has increased involvement in decision making

**"We've all had to adapt to delivering as a partnership. Being open to learning and feedback"**

### Success Factors

- There are regular partnership meetings,
- CARF staff attached to projects are involved in monthly whole team meetings to discuss family cases and how the agencies will work together to deliver support,
- Having a CARF worker attached and co-located has really helped,
- Communication is good both between frontline workers and senior management across the partner agencies,
- When budgets were constrained, there was a joint decision to reduce an attached CARF worker's hours and limit their role to income maximisation. For debt and other general issues clients are referred to the wider CARF service.

**"This 'joined up' approach is valued by staff and young people, it makes the referral pathway easier, rather than having to go through the main CARF number and possibly waiting a week or two for someone to contact them. They can carry out joint visits involving a member of staff the young person already has a trusting relationship with"**

### Other Feedback

- In carrying out self-assessment CARF have at times been harsher on themselves or identified areas for improvement not picked up in the audit. They have strong motivation to identify and address any areas in need of improvement.
- They have developed strong, professional relationships with groups and organisations across Fife.
- They are at the forefront of new developments e.g., testing out artificial intelligence to reduce the burden of recording on volunteers, this is something that can have an impact on volunteer retention. The reporting process means information about each client contact needs to be recorded in a very specific way including coding the topics/issues covered, actions and outcomes. This can take around the same amount of time as the direct engagement with the client and is often given as the reason for volunteers leaving.
- CARF's willingness to share knowledge and experience with other bureaux has been valuable.

- Governance is tight, Board members are proactive, offer their opinions in a respectful way that allows differing views to be raised and explored.
- Their size and level of demand are a potential risk. Community opinion of them could be affected if they are not able to keep pace with increasing demand.
- People can be seen as not engaging when they are overwhelmed by too many people or organisations trying to contact them at the same time. Co-ordination and communication between their worker and the CARF worker is really important. The initial visit is a joint one to introduce the CARF worker who will then spend time with the individual, finding out what their priorities are and how best to support them.

“ We’re really lucky with X, she’s very good, open to having a conversation and making sure she’s up to date and doing what she needs to. She gets it, she understands the issues people are having and the work we’re doing.”

“Having an attached worker has been invaluable, a single contact who understands the work we do and why has been really helpful. The consistency and the ability to build trusting relationships both with their staff team and the families has been crucial. There seems to have been more buy in than there would have been using the general referral process for CARF.”

#### *Looking to the future*

- Common to all was the hope that the model of having a CARF Adviser attached to their team would be able to continue and where possible increase.
- There was a real desire to continue to focus on building real relationships with people in other organisations and projects they will be working with.

## Appendix 2 : Volunteer Conversations and Interviews

4 volunteers were interviewed and these were a mixture of relatively new and longer standing volunteers and there were a number of similarities in regard to why people chose this type of volunteering and what they got out of being involved.

### *Reasons for joining CARF*

- Looking for something meaningful to do, this included people recently retired and people wanting to get back in to paid employment.
- Opportunities to use their existing skills and experience and/or develop new ones.

“I decided to try volunteering with CARF as I knew I was good at understanding finances and dealing with bureaucracy and felt that I could help others who found it more difficult.”

### *Training and support*

Overall, there was positive feedback about the initial volunteer training and the online ATP training that volunteers do at their own pace from home. For some people there was less of a positive response to the initial volunteer training, delivered because it was done remotely due to Covid.

Volunteers are able to access ongoing training including Mental Health First Aid in the same way as paid workers. There was a huge sense of being valued by the organisation as a vital part of the offering not just an optional add on as some had experienced in other volunteer positions.

The opportunity to shadow both in the triage role and callbacks by advisors is helpful. It is useful to understand how the different recording systems are used and to see how other advisers approach things.

One volunteer redid the ATP training after they started volunteering as their understanding of benefits etc. had increased by working on triage and checking things out with people. “It made much more sense – how the whole thing worked.” Redoing this increased confidence and gave the individual a better grounding.

“It took a bit of time to get used to the triage role but the triage ‘sheet’ is helpful as a prompt to make sure you have asked all of the questions you need to and collected the information required before a call back from an advisor.”

“From what I have seen the Bureau Coordinators can be tasked with too many responsibilities including supervising and training new starts like myself but don’t seem to have the time available to do it all. I’d suggest keeping the formal training centralised for longer – the 3 months introductory training was mostly over Zoom and well-structured but since it finished there has been little or no contact with the training team and everything suddenly became the responsibility of a Bureau Co-ordinator with little time to spare. There is much less structure now and although it doesn’t bother me too much as I am pretty self-sufficient and happy to speak up, I can see other trainees being lost due to lack of contact or structure.”

There are 6 monthly catch-up meetings with a supervisor. This can be more frequent if needed. Informal ad hoc support is available as needed.

“I really appreciate the open-door policy for volunteers.”

“CARF is a very supportive organisation, the chat function on Teams is a big help, accessible any time and is a support for everyone. It’s especially useful where people are working from home. There is limited ongoing interaction with volunteers out with your team especially if you’re not working in the office.”

“I feel I am heard alongside everyone else.”

“I really feel as if I am making a difference to people’s lives in what are difficult times.”

“My confidence has increased a million times from what it was. Before I was quite shy but able to talk to people but when COVID hit it completely changed me. If you spoke to me even 6 months ago, I wouldn’t have been able to do this (talking to me on zoom). The support I get from everybody has really helped, they knew what my issues were, how anxious I got and the steps to take to help me gain a bit of confidence by taking smaller steps rather than bigger leaps.”

#### *Involvement in decision making*

Volunteers felt very much part of the team and able to contribute ideas and feedback into strategy.

“I have already been involved in a strategy planning day for CARF and have been asked for feedback on

“I think if you want to get involved it’s very easy to do so” This person volunteered for a group around community engagement.

Regular team meetings give an opportunity to discuss changes to ways of working, procedures.

“I’m more free to speak my mind as a volunteer than might be true as a paid worker, especially where it could

#### *Impact on individuals and families*

“I think this happens on a daily basis – whenever a member of the CARF team answers a call or meets a client face to face we start to make a difference. Sometimes it’s just about providing an empathetic ear to listen to a client’s problems, other times its practical help to maximise their income and claim the benefits they are entitled to. On some occasions it could be helping them navigate the bureaucracy involved in dealing with Government departments or using translators to help foreign nationals access local services.”

“A sense of relief even from the first call, it takes a load off their chest and shows them the light at the end of the tunnel.”

Volunteer Story : A women who had fled from her abusive partner and had no idea of her legal rights or the support organisations who she could access for help until she spoke to us. The individual noted that in this and other occasions, the support is not just practical, but very quickly builds confidence so that people can start to take action on their own.

Working in partnership and signposting people to other sources of help reduces the time and stress clients experience looking for and accessing the help they need.

“Sometimes we get clients referred to us by family members who for emotional reasons are no longer able to offer the support and advice. By assisting the clients, we are taking pressure off what can already be difficult family situations.”

“Even in the short time I’ve been involved you do recognise, in conversations that people are really thankful for your support. For example, a person received compensation and had initially been told she had 12 months to use this money before having to declare it to the HMRC but someone else said that wasn’t the case and she should declare it straight away. I was able to confirm the initial advice was right, the person had been

really anxious and thrown by the conflicting information she had received and was relieved following the advice I was able to provide.”

“One client said to me; “Thank you for your help and understanding, I wish I’d spoken to you sooner, I buried my head in the sand.” This kind of feedback makes what you’re doing worthwhile. It can be transformative, we’re a steppingstone between people having no help or support to having an appointment with a specially trained money adviser to offer help and support to deal with their debt situation, finding the right financial solutions, for example, agreeing lower payments with their creditor, having some debts written off and an increase in their disposable income.”

Help is given with the cost-of-living crisis, supporting people to access crisis funds from their energy provider to help with rising bills. For some providers, the person would need to have had an appointment with a money adviser before they can apply.

Volunteer Story : An older couple who didn’t think they were entitled to anything were supported to apply for carers allowance for looking after each other and this changed their life financially.

“It can provide a big relief for individuals; it can be a big step asking for help and it can feel frightening. It can increase their confidence both to tackle new issues and reach out for help again if they need it. ‘I’ve got this sorted I can get that sorted’.”

Interventions were noted to have an impact on the wider family, for example, if the person has mental health issues the support CARF provides can help to reduce stress and anxiety and improve family relationships.

The advice service is particularly valuable for older people who may be less familiar with using IT and for people who have never applied for benefits before and don’t know what they would be entitled to.

#### *Impact on the wider community*

“Increasing the income of any client helps both their families and local communities as that is usually where the money is spent.”

Neighbour disputes are relatively common. The advice provided can help to reduce tension and help to avoid future conflicts by clarifying legal rights and recommending discussion or mediation as preferred courses of action.

The impact is supported by the number and range of organisations that CARF can signpost people to.

Social policy - seeing a pattern of things arising e.g., the enforced change to prepayment meters and the cost-of-living crisis and pressing for changes to be made.

#### *Impact on individuals as volunteers*

“I enjoy being involved with an organisation committed to trying to change things and improve the quality of life for everyone in Fife.”

“I really feel as if I am making a difference to people’s lives in what are difficult times.”

“I enjoy doing it, knowing I’ve helped someone, made a difference. It never feels like a chore. I just go along and get on with it.”

“My confidence has increased a million times from what it was. Before I was quite shy but able to talk to people but when COVID hit it completely changed me. If you spoke to me even 6 months ago, I wouldn’t have been able to do this (talking to me on zoom). The support I get from everybody has really helped, they knew what my issues were, how anxious I got and the steps to take to help me gain a bit of confidence by taking smaller steps rather than bigger leaps.”

- Increased skills and confidence to try new things including looking for paid employment

“Never in my wildest dreams did I think I’d want to get a job here but that’s what I’m looking at now. Volunteering has prepared me to take the next step.”

“I’ve been amazed by the feedback I’ve received, it’s highlighted parts of myself I wasn’t aware of before around, empathy and being supportive.”

### Other feedback

- “My knowledge of CARF continues to grow as I discover more projects the organisation works on and understand better the range of services it provides to the people of Fife. When I first applied, I had no idea it was so big and offered so much!”
- “Not only am I now aware of the wide range of help provided and the quality of the services delivered I have now seen through the eyes of the clients what an important role it has in the greater Fife community and how much people depend on it.”
- “Internal communication is always a challenge and pressure of work on some of the paid staff is obvious.”
- “The organisation’s great, what they do is really good. They’re a very positive organisation with a culture of help and positivity.”
- Volunteers can also support young people on work placements to help them decide what they might want to do. Some of whom didn’t make a positive choice to do a placement with CARF. For example, a young person who wanted to be a photographer left thinking this is something they might want to do.
- “CARF is a really helpful organisation that can help you through anything or pass you on to another organisation that can help.”
- “I think the way we run now is absolutely fantastic, we provide as much help as we can to as many people as possible.”

### Looking to the future – improvements/developments

- For ease of access, it would be good to have all of the organisations CARF can refer/signpost people to listed on the triage aid sheet (or an accessible database), kept up to date as advisers etc. find out about new ones.
- Awareness raising – a tricky balance to strike between making sure people who could benefit from the advice and assistance CARF can offer and generating a level of demand that can’t be met. One volunteer thought it would be good if they did more awareness raising on local radio.
- Recognise and respond to the difference in tech available across their different sites. A volunteer who operates in 2 different offices finds it really frustrating that on one site it all seems to work fine and on another it can take 20 – 30 minutes to get logged in to the call line. It may be that hardware is an issue, some sites are using laptops and other desktops.
- Review how callbacks are handled. There are a lot of call backs where someone has missed the advisor’s call – when they ring back in response to the message left, they go back on to the waiting list.
- Volunteers are looking forward to the AI system starting as it will help to reduce the time needed to update and code interaction with clients.

## Appendix 3 : Beneficiary Conversations

6 client interviews took place, two who came via CARF suggestions and four who contacted the researchers independently.

### Challenging Story

The first person contacted CARF after receiving a letter from Fife Council instructing the individual to take down a garden shed. Unfortunately, the advisor didn't ask whether the home was owned or rented and as a result the advice given wasn't accurate. The individual was told that as long as the shed fit within specific sizes and didn't have a negative impact on his immediate neighbours there wouldn't be a valid reason for asking him to remove it. However, the person is a social housing tenant, and the issue seems to be more to do with not asking permission rather than the size or location of the shed.

The person was, at time of writing, waiting on a CARF Adviser to contact him to discuss any options for resolving this issue other than taking the shed down.

The individual has found making and receiving calls from CARF difficult. When calls come in from CARF they show up on the phone as suspected spam and the person is reluctant to pick up but does respond to voice mail.

### A Positive Story

Another person interviewed had a more positive experience. That person got in touch for advice relating to a consumer issue. The couple arranged to buy a carpet and have it fitted by a local company that was familiar to them. They paid a deposit but when it came to arranging for the carpet to be fitted, they received different information about what could or couldn't be done and whether any additional charges would need to be paid. They felt that "at best the salespeople were misinformed. At worst they were misleading us, to secure the deal and then landed these things on us later." The person found an alternative supplier who came in at a slightly lower price but further difficulties arose when they tried to get their deposit refunded. "There was constant toing and froing about what could be done, they were stonewalling us, and we were getting quite ill about it. We stood to lose our deposit and were not convinced by that time that we could trust them." They hadn't been shown the terms and conditions and nothing had been signed when they paid the deposit. They were told they should be aware of the terms and conditions as they were on the website. This was when they contacted CARF.

The worker was very good, informative, listened well and asked the right questions to understand what the issue was. The adviser let them know what the options were.

"Very impressed by CARF, they were knowledgeable, concise and sharp."

When they called there was a wait of around 25 minutes – 'a call centre culture, automated functions, the music was fairly good', having a speaker phone made it more bearable as he could put the phone down and get on with other things. Doesn't think this telephone management system is good, "I'm ok I'm retired and don't have family to run about after but other people may have given up." He thinks there should be someone who can pick up straight away and triage calls to cut down the time on hold. There are a number of call options based on the type of advice you were looking for. "Things moved a bit quicker when I got to speak to the advice worker.

CARF helped them make an informed choice – not an option they were entirely happy with but went for the quicker option of sticking with the original.

### *Quotes from beneficiaries*

"I had a very stressful financial issue. A friend told me about CARF and I contacted them immediately. Despite the long wait on the phone, I got an excellent advisor who gave me up to date information. I was then able to sort the issue myself with the confidence that I didn't have when I first called."

“I had been so stressed about this issue that I was bad tempered with my family and so worried that I couldn’t focus on anything else. With the issue sorted, I now get on better with my family and feel more able to get back to work and get back to my hobbies again.”

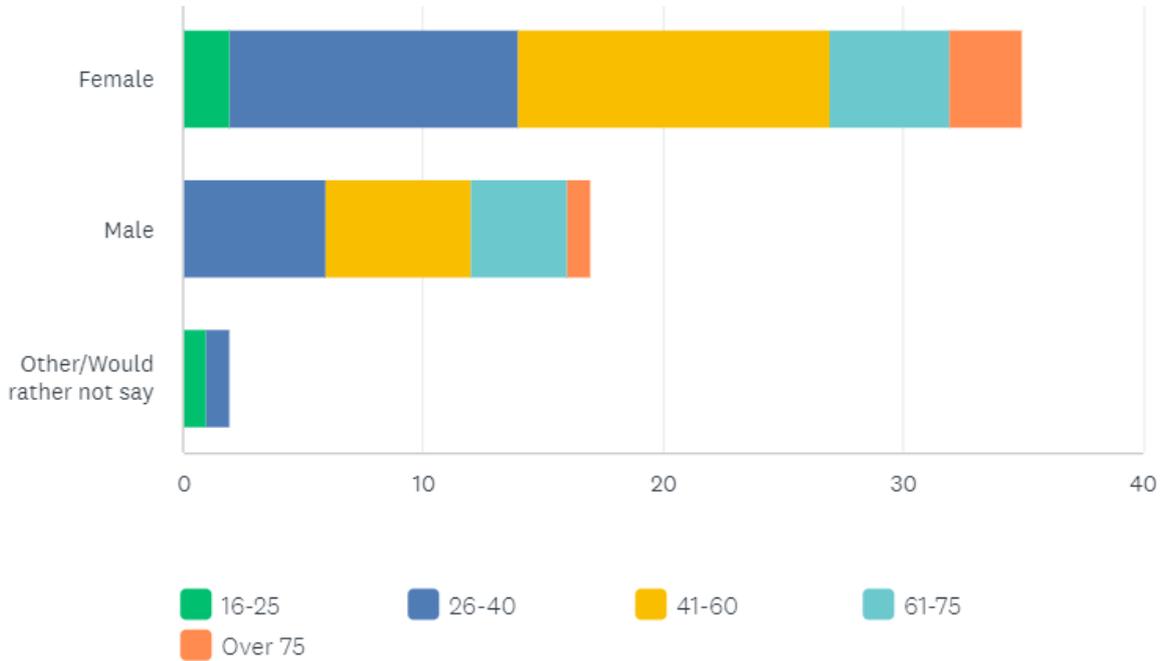
### *Looking to the future*

- Making sure call handlers and advisers ask for enough information to ensure the advice provided is accurate e.g., are they a homeowner or tenant?
- Having a call back option as part of the automated options would be helpful e.g., push 1 for a call back or stay on the line to speak to an adviser.
- “Being told what place in the queue you are isn’t helpful, you could be 25th in the queue and wait 10 minutes or 3rd in the queue and wait an hour. Unless it says you should expect to be answered within x minutes or gives you a call back option with an indication of when you should expect a call back it doesn’t really help.”
- Having a number CARF can use to call clients that can be saved on to their phone and therefore reduce the risk of calls being labelled as potential spam.

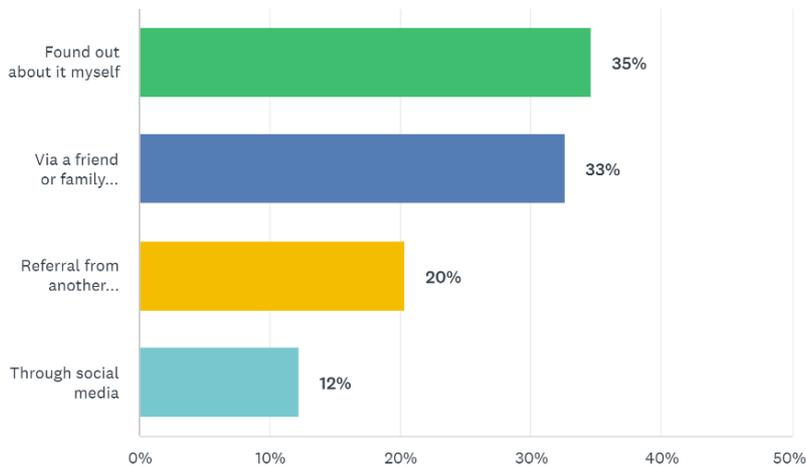
## Appendix 4 : Beneficiary Survey

### Profile of respondents

In total, 53 people responded to the survey<sup>2</sup>. The biggest proportion of those responding were 26 to 60 year old females and around a quarter were men of the same age category.



Respondents were asked which town or area they were from. The majority are based in Fife and most commonly resided in either, Kirkcaldy (17%), Dunfermline (9%), Glenrothes (8%) or Cowdenbeath (8%).

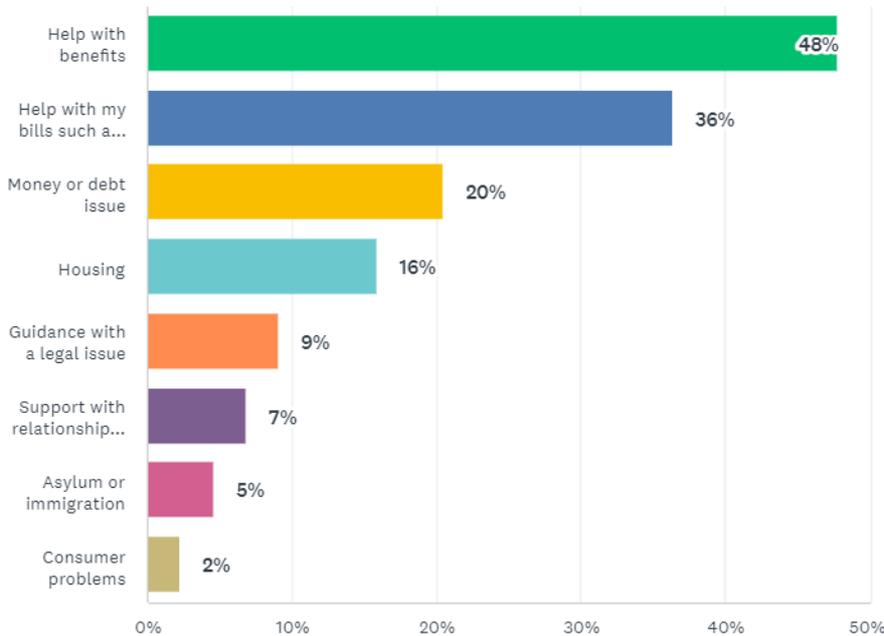


When asked how they found out about CARF, 35% said they found out about the service by themselves. One third found out about CARF via a friend or family member. One fifth were referred to CARF by another organisation and 12% through social media.

<sup>2</sup> Note on the data: the percentages used in the analysis use the number of people who decided to respond to the question and did not skip it. For example, "50% of respondents" will refer to 50% of those who responded to the particular question,

## Support requests

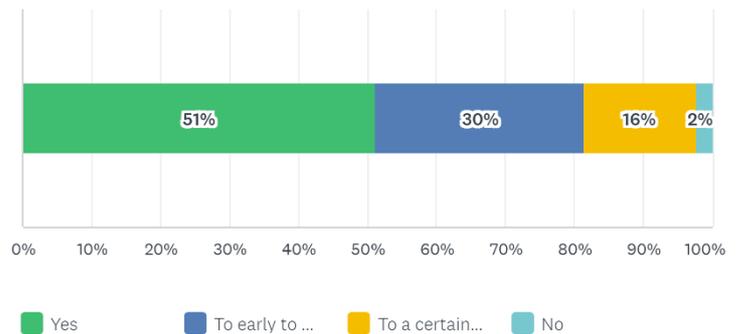
The majority of those completing the survey accessed CARF's support for 'benefit help' (48%) followed by 'help with bills' (36%). A further 20% wanted help with money or debt issues. 16% wanted help with housing. 9% were looking for guidance with a legal issue. Smaller numbers were seeking support with relationship or family issues, 'consumer problems' or 'asylum or immigration.'



## Experience of the service

Just over half of respondents (51%) felt that CARF was able to resolve their issue and a further 16% felt their issue had been resolved 'to a certain extent'. 30% of respondents felt it was 'too early to say'. Only one person did not feel their issue had been resolved.

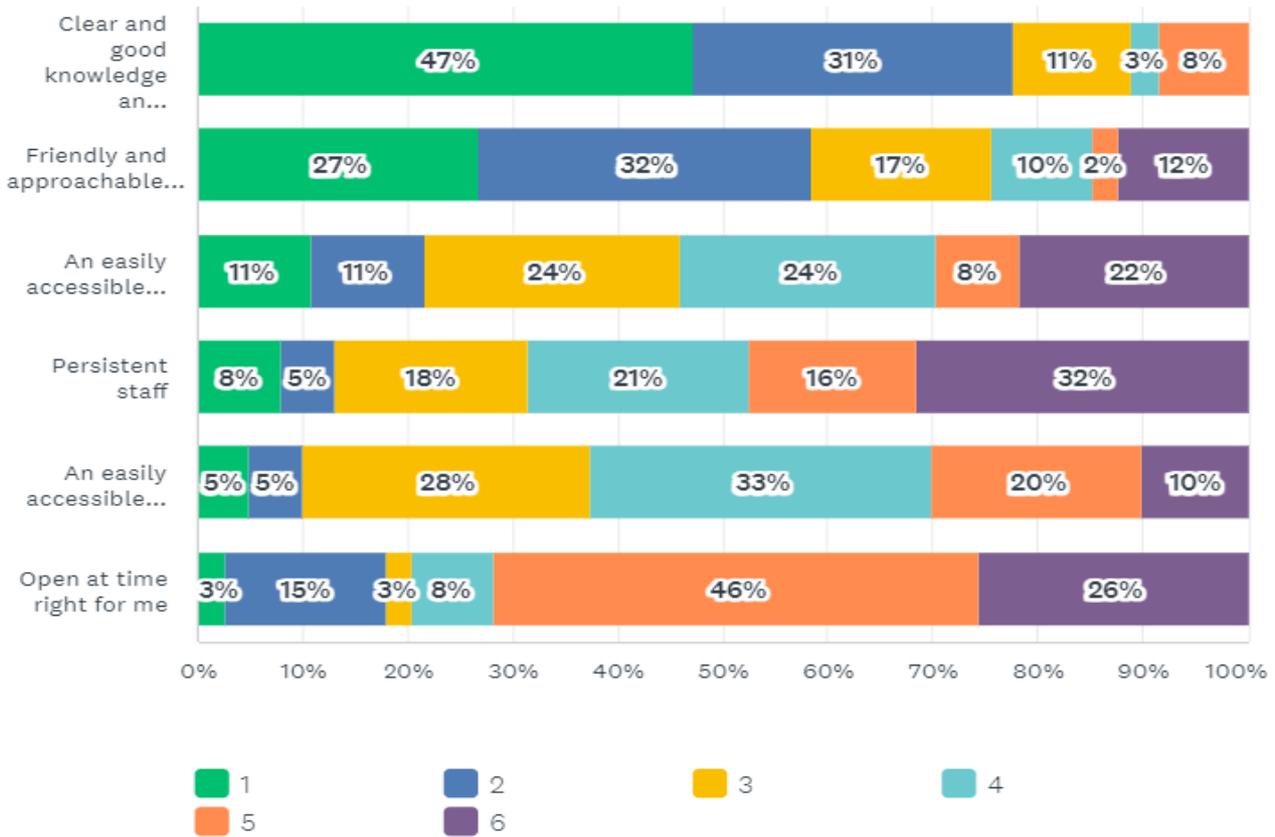
Looking into what made the biggest difference to the outcome, respondents were asked to rate factors for success from most important (1) to least important (6). Scoring highest was 'clear and good knowledge and information': 47% giving this a top rating and a further 31% as the second most important factor. Scoring second best was 'friendly and approachable staff.'



Scoring as making the least difference was 'Open at the right time for me' (72% of respondents scored this least or second least).

'Persistent staff' was also cited as making little difference - nearly half of people (48%) rated this as their least or second least most important factor.

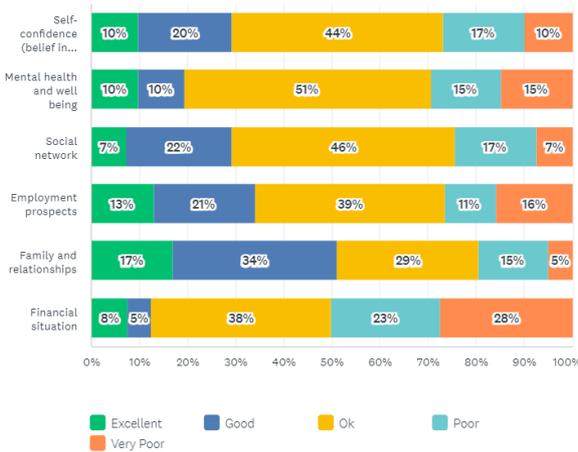
The ease of which the service can be accessed (both in the office and online/ phone) was ranked as being of mid-level importance by most respondents.



### The impact

Respondents were asked to rate a variety of factors before engaging with CARF and then to rate the same factors after the intervention.

#### Before



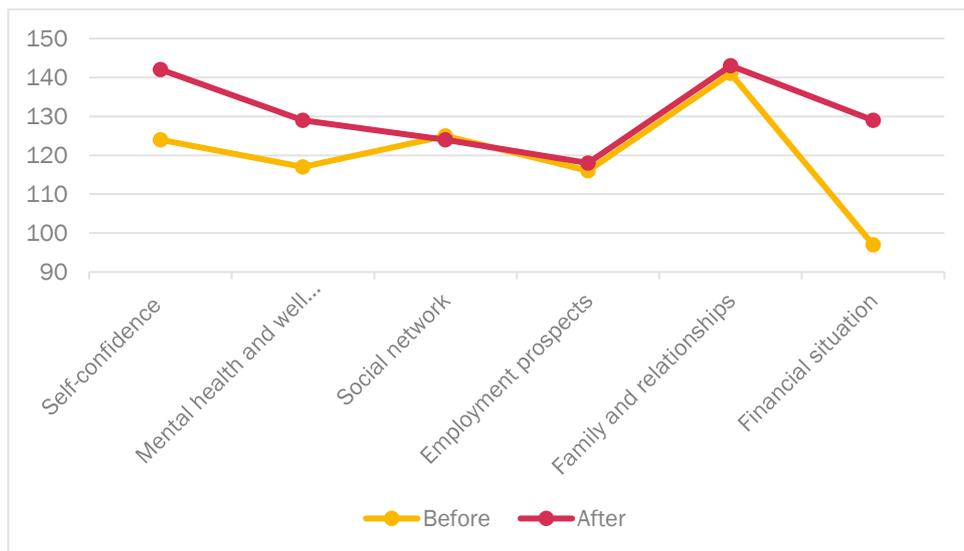
#### After



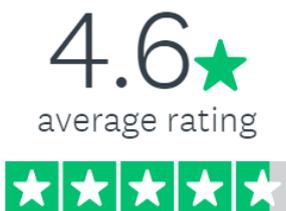
- Before engaging with CARF, over a quarter (27%) of respondents rated their self-confidence as poor or very poor. After support from CARF, nobody rated their self-confidence as very poor and only 7% rated it poor.

- Before engaging with CARF, 30% of respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor or very poor, however after support from CARF this figure dropped to 13%.
- Respondents' social network increased slightly after support from CARF. Before support, 29% rated their social network as being good or excellent. After, this figure increased to 33%.
- The employment prospects of respondents also appeared to increase through engaging with CARF. 34% felt that their employment prospects were good or excellent before engaging with CARF, after support this figure rose to 41%.
- Before engaging with CARF, 51% of respondents rated their family and relationships either good or excellent. After engaging with CARF, 59% of people rated their family and relationships as good or excellent, 8% more than before.
- Finally, just over half (51%) of people rated their financial situation as poor or very poor before engaging with CARF. However, after support from the organisation, only 11% of people chose one of these ratings, showing a large decrease of 40%.

The table below combines the before and after data and uses weightings to highlight that for all factors, ratings either improved or stayed roughly the same after engagement with CARF. Specifically, people's self-confidence, mental health and well-being and financial situation improved after engaging with CARF. Meanwhile, their employment prospects, social network and family and relationships all stayed roughly the same.

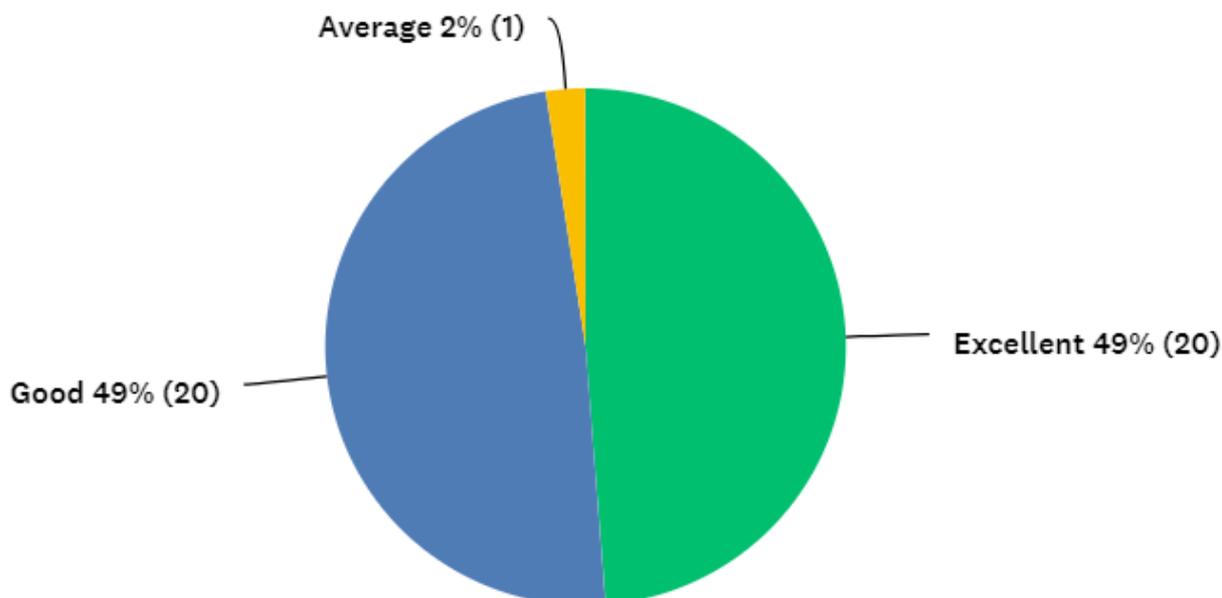


### Rating the support



When asked how they would rate the staff at CARF, 68% of respondents rated them five stars and 27% rated them four stars. Only 5% rated the staff three stars and nobody rated them either one or two stars. On average, respondent's experience of the staff team was 4.6 stars.

Respondents were asked how they would rate the support they received from CARF overall. A positive 49% of respondents rated their overall support as excellent and 49% rated their overall support as good. Only 1 person rated their support as average, and nobody rated their support as poor or very poor.



### Open Comments

“Brilliant support but had to wait a while which was stressful.”

“This help was an absolute lifeline when I didn't know where to turn. They don't just sympathise, they know things that solve your problems.”

“Very happy with the service I received from carf, I will not hesitate to use them again in the future.”

“Just thanks very much for your assistance.”

“Huge relief to speak to someone who knows things. My situation improving made my whole family better.”

“The lady I spoke to on the phone was very polite and helpful. Also sent me an email with everything we talked about and extra information I might need.”

“The worker listened well, analysed the problem well and put me in touch with the right people.”

“it's amazing that all CARF's services are free, we would be lost without them!”

### Suggested Improvements

Focusing on how their experience with CARF could have been improved or if there was anything they would like to see change, six people commented that they would like to see the waiting times reduced. People felt they were spending too long in a phone queue or waiting for a call back:

*“Maybe just a fact of life these days but the waiting time on the phone was fairly dispiriting.”*

*“To not have to wait that long for a call back.”*

Further, two people mentioned that they would like to have a CARF office closer to where they live. One person mentioned a need for longer opening times, one person referred to a lack of parking space and finally, one respondent felt that staff could have been more patient with them.

Asked for any final comments, respondents primarily used this space to express their gratitude and praise for the staff/service:

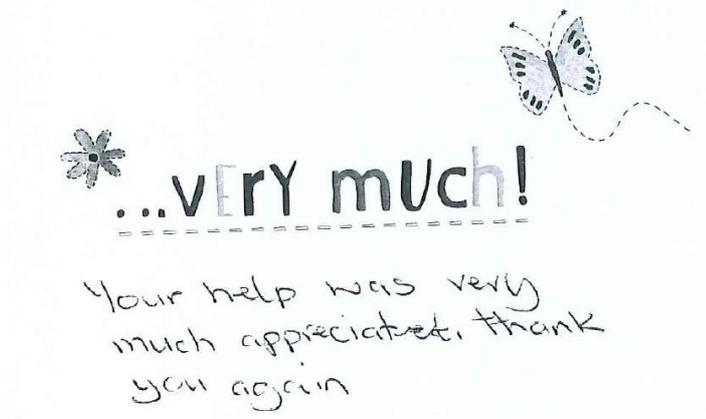
*“This help was an absolute lifeline when I didn't know where to turn. They don't just sympathise, they know things that solve your problems.”*

*“Very happy with the service I received from carf, I will not hesitate to use them again in the future.”*

## Appendix 5 : Testimonials

These have been sent voluntarily to the CARF office.

“The person who supported me was amazing from start to finish . They helped me so much both financially and mentally and I feel now that I can move on with my life worry free . They are an absolute credit to the company”



“I would like to thank you so much for everything that you have done for me and for all your amazing assistance and hard work, I couldn't have done it without you.”

My husband and I are Super Grateful to your support and best assistance. The only regret is that I don't have the chance to glance your beauty face to face. 😊😊😊😊 but you have a lovely voice and a beautiful soul. Thank you for doing such a great job for me.

I would just like to say a massive thank you for your help. I know you will say its just your job, but to me this is absolutely life changing. I couldnt say it without crying on the phone but honestly thankyou so much for your help, without it i would have just went so many more years scared to open letters and watching all the spare wages being taken.. The worry of debt and door chapping has actually ruined years of my life. And the help you have gave me and the way you have been so normal with me and not judgemental or anything has just been amazing and i will be forever grateful for everything you have done.

“

It was a genuine pleasure talking with you today. You made what I thought was going to be a headache of a process into a breath of fresh air. What a welcome surprise! Thorough, informative and reassuring.”

"The whole of CARF services have been phenomenal, you are all definitely unsung heroes."

“Very helpful and knowledgeable and made a great difference to my peace of mind.”

“I could not have asked for a more caring and knowledgeable person to provide the assistance I requested. Excellent all-round.”

“An outstanding service, the team went above and beyond, I am very grateful.”

“Without your care, knowledge and advice I don't know what I would have done. I was at a very low point which is thankfully over. I can thank your bureau enough”

## Appendix 6: Feedback from board, volunteers and staff

A strategic session was held with board, volunteers and staff. The following are the key common findings from that group session:

### What the organisation is good at

- Partnership
- Empowering - helping other organisations to deliver
- Holistic advice
- Perseverance – client focused – get to the root of the issue
- Reaction to crisis – emergency service
- Quality
- Knowledge

### Challenges

- Lack of knowledge of what the organisation does – this can be internally too
- Lack of evidence – hard to find data in the systems
- Poor at communicating impact

### Vision Words

- |                |                  |                        |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • Accessible   | • Free           | • Non-Judgmental       |
| • Reliable     | • Confident      | • Challenge Inequality |
| • Empathetic   | • Skilled        | • Community            |
| • Empowering   | • Confidential   | • Public voices        |
| • Impartiality | • Representative |                        |

### Opportunities and Future Objectives

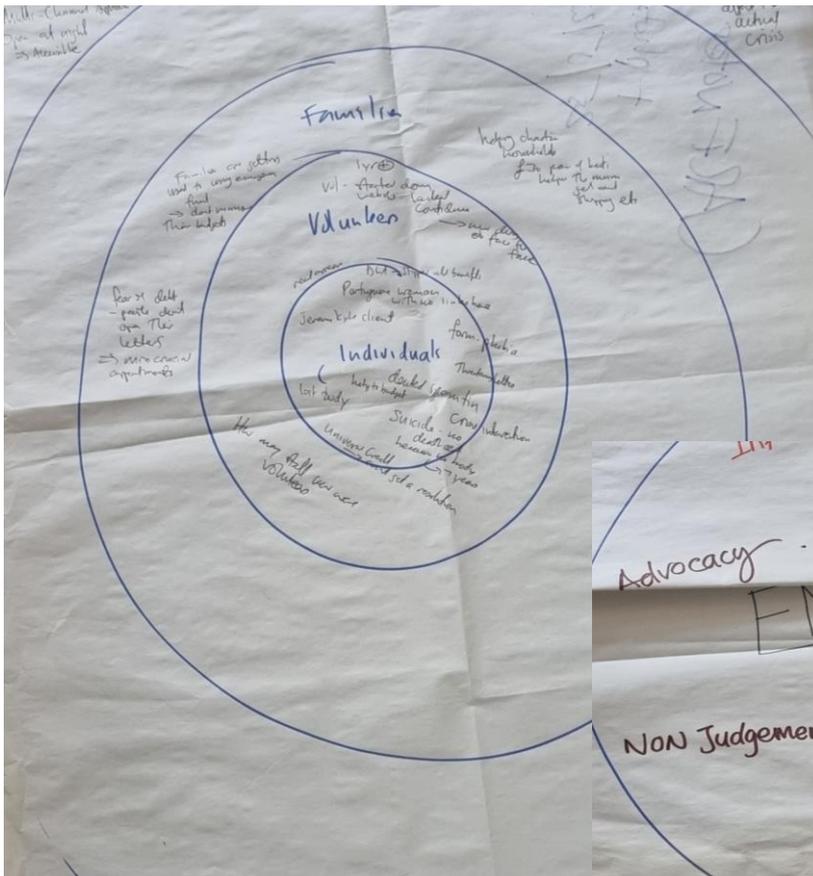
A good impact system

Multi- Channel Approach

Open at night – accessible

Fear of debt and fear of debt – people no longer open their letters.

## Stories



There was then an opportunity to tell stories which ranged from debt advice to tracking down a body maximising inheritance to employment. The benefit impacted on individuals, the volunteer themselves, family and the wider community.



16 November 2023

Agenda Item No. 5

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## Customer & Online Services Annual Report

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**Report by:** Diarmuid Cotter, Head of Customer & Online Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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To present performance scorecard for Customer & Online Services for 2022/23 and first two quarters of 23/24.

### Recommendation(s)

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Members are asked to consider and review:

1. the arrangements set out in **Section 1.0** to fulfil the Council's obligation to comply with Audit Scotland's 2021 SPI Direction.
2. The Customer & Online Services performance information in **Section 2.0**, including current challenges/priorities and risks. A high-level overview of KPIs is attached in Appendix 1 – covering 4 lenses: Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF), Plan for Fife (P4F), Customer, Resources and Service Operations.

### Resource Implications

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None

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are legal requirements highlighted within this report, linked to a risk of regulatory intervention if the Council does not adhere to the standards and expectations set by Audit Scotland.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

### Consultation

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None required

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 Audit Scotland published an update on Statutory Performance Direction in December 2021. The Council is required to report a range of information setting out:
- i. Its performance in improving local public services, provided by both (i) the council itself and (ii) by the council in conjunction with its partners and communities
  - ii. Its progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities
  - iii. Its performance in comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies including information drawn down from LGBF in particular and from other benchmarking activities
  - iv. Its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment.

Below is a Link to the Direction Statutory Performance Indicators published in December 2021:

[https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/um/spi\\_direction\\_2021.pdf](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/um/spi_direction_2021.pdf)

## 2.0 Performance Reporting

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- 2.1 Appendix 1 to this report is presented in the form of a balanced scorecard covering the areas of LGBF/P4F, Customer, Resources and Service Operations. A current snapshot of Service Challenges is included along with a section on Risks.
- 2.2 Customer & Online Services has staffing of 418fte and an operating budget of £13m. It consists of six main areas
- Contact Centre
  - Customer Service Centres (including Registration)
  - Financial Wellbeing & Revenues
  - Online Services
  - Information Team (Fols etc)
  - Customer Escalations Team (complaints etc.)
- 2.3 While some of the work in the service is self-contained there are numerous interdependencies across services particularly, Building Services, Housing, Environment, Transportation, Children & Families and Health & Social Care. Management of these relationships is vital to the success of the service.

### List of Appendices

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#### Appendix 1 – Customer & Online Services Scorecard

Report Contact: Claire Bates  
Author Name: Diarmuid Cotter  
Author's Job Title: Head of Customer & Online Services  
Telephone: 07906502218  
Email: [diarmuid.cotter@fife.gov.uk](mailto:diarmuid.cotter@fife.gov.uk)

## CUSTOMER & ONLINE SERVICES (COS)

### Current Challenges & Priorities

- The cost-of-living crisis has put pressure on the Financial Wellbeing & Revenues area and there is no sign of this abating. The main issues centre around the Welfare Fund.
- The Contact Centre remains an area of high demand even as more transactions are being done online. Close working between the Centre and Online Services remains a priority so that service delivery can become as seamless as possible.
- The Repairs Centre continue to manage increased workloads and the challenge of optimising scheduling tradespeople. This area has recently undergone a review and it is expected changes in this area particularly around the advancement of digital opportunities will see improvements and efficiencies.
- Customer & Online Services are actively engaged in the development of a No Wrong Door approach as part of our commitment to the Plan4Fife and involvement in supporting vulnerable citizens and aiding people in crisis. This will involve a review of how we deliver a face-to-face service in a more effective manner.
- The service realigned the Financial Wellbeing & Revenues area to ensure the service was ready for increased involvement in this area particularly with regards to supporting the vulnerable.
- fife.gov.uk continues to be updated and refined based on customer and service feedback. A primary focus will be on exploiting existing and new technologies to optimise service delivery and enhance the customer experience.
- Staff resourcing remains a challenge due to turnover and difficulties recruiting, so flexibility is required to ensure there is sufficient resource in all areas of the service.

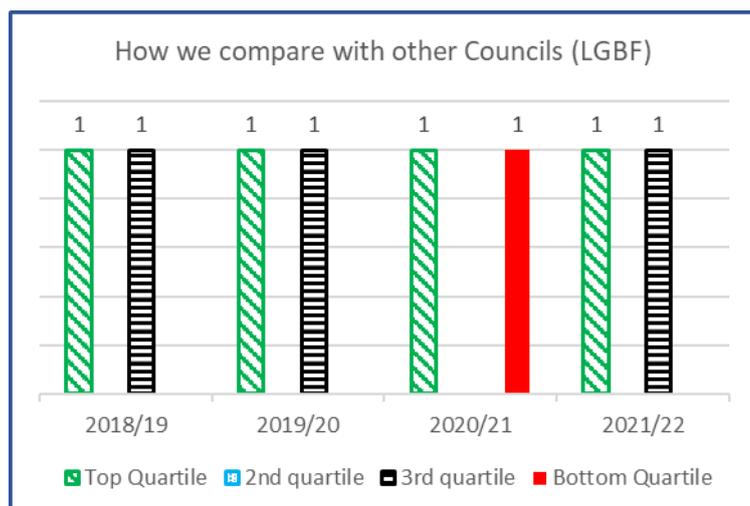
## RISKS/EMERGING RISKS

COS monitors Service Risks. The risks covered by the service, other than wider Council risks, are based on the ability to deliver two key services: -

- Welfare Fund payments
- Council Tax collection

Welfare fund payments are currently out with the set parameters, a resolution has been put in place for the next six months to bring these back within the agreed timescales.

## KEY OUTCOMES (LGBF/P4F)



- Customer & Online Services has two metrics that have LGBF comparisons.
- Cost per dwelling is consistently in the top quartile. Council Tax received % is improving. The collection of Council Tax has increased back to pre-pandemic levels in 2022-23. Indeed, the in-year collection of Council Tax is at the highest level achieved mirroring the collection achieved in 2017-18.
- Figures currently unavailable for 2022/23 for LGBF.

PI Short Name	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Ranked Quartile
Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling (£) Fife (LGBF)	£3.43	£2.15	£1.68	£1.53	£2.58	Not available 22/23
Income from council tax received by year end (%) Fife (LGBF)	95.7%	95.3%	93.6%	95.3%	95.8%	Not available 22/23

A RAG has been added to the following sections of the Template: -

Key to Council Scorecard Results Tables	
Green (G)	Performance improved, on or above target and no action required
Amber (A)	Performance static, slightly below target and action in place
Red (R)	Performance significantly worse, and requires immediate action
N/A	Not Available to report

## CUSTOMER

PI Short Name	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24
Number of fife.gov.uk sessions	4.8m	4.7m	6.1m	5.8m		1.73m	1.83m
Number of Online Transactions	168,739	172,965	135,427	175,506	179,468 (A)	97,962	
Number of Online Accounts	147,000	160,661	81,245	142,025	175,875 (G)	190,534	
Number of Transactions by Customer Service Centres	356,710	312,877	83,192	145,068	187,240 (G)	52,934	57,933
% of Contacts Answered – Contact Centre (all teams)	73.3%	81.96%	86.93%	86.43%	88.38% (G)	91.1%	91.6%
Number of Twitter Followers	48,278	50,886	53,150	53,900	55,244 (G)	55,053	54,879
Number of Facebook Fans	37,833	42,527	52,441	53,613	56,472 (G)	56,798	57,121
% agreeing that the council is good at listening to local people's views before it takes decisions (Scottish Household Survey)	45.8%	53.9%	48%	*N/A	N/A	Not measured for quarters	
% agreeing that the council is good at letting people know about the kinds of services it provides (Scottish Household Survey)	63.5%	64.8%	*N/A	*N/A	N/A	Not measured for quarters	
Customer and Online Services Stage 1 Complaints dealt actioned < 5 days	97%	94%	92%	96%	93% (G)	98%	96%
Customer & Online Services Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days	100%	94%	100%	96%	94% (A)	100%	70%
Fife Council Stage 1 Complaints actioned < 5 days	90%	86%	89%	88%	86% (A)	87%	88%
Fife Council Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days	82%	84%	80%	84%	76% (A)	67%	75%

\*data not collected due to Covid.

- Fife.gov.uk is the main contact method with over 7.89m sessions in 22/23, a significant increase from the 5.8m in 21/22. It has 216 forms available for online transactions with just under 180,000 submitted in 22/23 and 97,962 in first two quarters of 23/24. There has also been a significant 23% increase in the number of online accounts created since 21/22.
- Overall response rates for the Contact Centre are good and have shown a steady improvement even if individual areas can have pinch points.
- Customer Service Centres saw a significant increase in transactions being carried out going from 145,068 in 21/22 to 187,240 in 22/23, an increase of over 29%. In the first two quarters of 23/24 there have been 110,867 transactions
- Complaints total in 22/23 was 245 and year to date in 23/24 is 109. Responsiveness level for the service continues to be satisfactory. The service oversees complaints activity on a Council wide basis.

## RESOURCES

PI Short Name	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24
Customer & Online Services – Average WDL per FTE	13.02	DIV/0	17.06	16.14 (G)	15.64	15.29
Customer & Online Services – Long Term WDL per FTE	7.52	DIV/0	13.79	11.01 (G)	10.14	9.42
COS Workforce who are Female (%)	80.70%	79.70%	73.60%	75.80% (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Workforce who are Full-time (%)	67.60%	68%	64.70%	63.50% (A)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Workforce who are Permanent Employees (%)	88%	88.90%	88.80%	91.90% (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Number of Voluntary Redundancies (FTEs)	13	15	0	0	Not measured for quarters	
COS Employees aged 24 and under (%)	2.90%	2.60%	4.70%	5.80% (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Employees aged 29 and under (%)	7.60%	7%	10.80%	13.20% (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Employees aged 55 and over (%)	23.70%	24%	31.20%	31.60% (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Number of WYI Bids	0	0	0	2 (G)	Not measured for quarters	
COS Number of WYI Programme new starts	0	1	0	0	Not measured for quarters	
Cost of collecting Non-Domestic Rate per chargeable property (£)	£11.35	£14.19	£3.92	£1.96 (G)	Not measured for quarters	
Cost of collecting sundry debtors per debtor account issued (£)	£2.91	£6.71	£4.73	£4.78 (A)	Not measured for quarters	

- FTE Working days lost target has not been met since 2017/18 but there has been improvement in this area with almost 1 FTE working day decrease compared to 21/22, and the first two quarters of 23/24 have continued this downward trend with the average of 15.29 in quarter 2. Continuing this downward trajectory remains a focus. The target is 13 as we aim to get back to 18/19 figures.
- There has been an increase in the number of permanent members of staff rising to 91.90% in 21/22, giving stability to the majority of the workforce.
- The cost for the delivery of the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) service decreased significantly in 22/23 to £1.96 per property compared with £3.92 in 21/22. The overall reduction per property is directly attributed to an increase in the 10% statutory penalty imposed which increased from £384,189 in 21/22 to £497,584 in 2022/23. Again, this is another indicator of the fact that businesses are struggling with pandemic recovery and increased energy costs.
- The costs of raising an invoice has remained static. In 21/22 the cost was £4.73 per invoice raised compared with £4.78 in 22/23. This cost varies dependant on the volume of invoices raised each year.

The table below provides information on **Customer & Online Services** workforce data by Budgeted (FTE) for the current year and the last 4 years.

Budgeted (FTE) April 2019	Budgeted (FTE) April 2020	Budgeted (FTE) April 2021	Budgeted (FTE) April 2022	Budgeted (FTE) April 2023	Difference in FTE 2022 2023
279.51	441.48	400.81	409.40	418.64	9.24

## SERVICE OPERATIONS

PI Short Name	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24
% of Contacts Answered – Out of Hours	93.39%	92.47%	96.72%	97.70% (G)	98.81%	99.01%
% of Contacts Answered – General	84.90%	88.53%	81.34%	83.78% (G)	83.32%	81.65%
% of Contacts Answered – Repairs	73.34%	80.83%	76.27%	78.48% (G)	88.22%	89.55%
% of Contacts Answered – Social Work	76.99%	86.32%	88.99%	90.16% (G)	90.38%	92.44%
% of Contacts Answered – Assessment	92.70%	88.70%	84.30%	76.70% (A)	80.40%	69.20%
% of Contacts Answered – Collections	95.25%	92.09%	88.83%	85.26% (A)	86.92%	84.82%
Registration input accurately %	97.94%	97.82%	98.39%	98.4% (estimate) (G)	Not measured for quarters – 2022 examination by NRS not fully complete yet.	
Rent collected as % of total due in the reporting year	99.96%	99.48%	98.05%	98.70% (G)	94.18%	98.33%
Number of welfare fund applications made	31545	35260	33856	37073 (R)	7671	7394
Average processing time – Crisis Grants (days)	2	1	3	2 (G)	2	2
Average processing time – Community Care Grants (days)	24.9	21.2	37.3	9.8 (G)	23.3	33.7
% FOI requests completed on time	84.94%	88.30%	88.55%	84.56% (A)	89.47%	71.73%
% of EIR requests completed on time	89.49%	93.55%	89.64%	91.92% (G)	88.15%	74.18%
% of SAR requests completed on time	80.42%	86.81%	83.99%	80.96% (A)	76.0%	Not available
In year collection of Non-Domestic Rates (%)	98.20%	98.70%	99%	97.60% (A)	9.30%	30.44%
Average Time to process new HB/CTR claims (in days)	14.2	20.4	37.7	19.8 (G)	21.4	18.7
Average Time to process HB/CTR notification of changes (days)	2.8	3.5	5.6	3 (G)	4.1	5.7
Average Time to Process New CTR Claims (days)	18.1	23.8	31	19.4 (G)	17.1	18
Average Time to Process CTR Changes (days)	4.5	9.1	11.1	4.7 (G)	3.1	5.6

- As a service all our operations are customer facing, this section goes into more detail than the higher-level figures in the Customer section above. It should be noted we also share some metrics with services such as Housing and Finance.
- The Contact Centre figures are divided into their main areas of speciality. Overall, the Contact Centre dealt with 855,085 enquiries across its main area of business in 22/23 continuing the trend of a slight reduction year on year (886,325 in 21/22). There were 1,016,601 enquiries in 18/19.

- There is continued progress in the Repairs Centre with elevated performance in quarter 1 and 2. This is due to a change in how the team deal with calls coming in after a review of processes. Out of hours performance has gradually improved and has seen significant change due to a change in the community alarm system.
- The greatest pressure continues to be on the Revenues areas. The ongoing cost of living crisis has increased demand on benefits and debt services. Mitigation and grants like Energy Bills support Scheme, Council Tax Allowance and changes to Non-Domestic Rates, along with school meal and clothing changes has led to an increase in calls from customers with enquiries.
- The Welfare Fund continues to experience an upward trend in demand and is currently facing challenges in processing applications for both Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants within Government set timescales. Although there has been an improvement in the processing time for Crisis Grants, reducing from 3 days in 21/22 to 2 days in 22/23, it remains 1 day beyond the target time.
- Community Care Grants experienced a substantial reduction in processing time in 22/23, decreasing to 9.8 days this was mainly due to outsourcing CCGs to NEC (formally known as Northgate) for a period of 6 months between January and July of 2022. However due to resource challenges and continued demand there has been an increase in processing time in quarter 1 and 2 this year with current status being 26 days wait. The SWF team will use NEC for another 6 months starting in November 2023 to get processing timescales back into acceptable limits.
- Rent collection continues to be monitored closely. While collection remains reasonably strong it is still not back to pre-pandemic levels.
- Service planning for Customer & Online Services will reflect what is in this report while taking cognisance of trends. Recent years have seen a consolidation of customer contact services across the Council and better use of digital platforms to improve access and information. This needs to go further if we are to realise the Council's desire for end-to-end customer management, joined up referral processes and continuous process improvement. Our improvement capability needs to grow with clearer responsibility in the organisation for customer and business process improvement.
- In other cases, there is a need to change current models if we are to retain community presence and face to face services. There is no longer the footfall to warrant the service offerings in so many of our offices for example. Welfare staff could however be aligned with community teams into a different model of local access. The Registration Service can be enhanced with greater geographical reach enabled through online options. Other services such as telephone contact and Out of Hours services will continue as is though there may be opportunities to further consolidate contact and to utilise technology improvements.

16<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 6

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## 2022-23 Chief Social Work Officers Report

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**Report by:** Christine Moir, Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to share with members the CSWO report covering the period 2022 - 2023 with an update on the forecast financial position for the 2023 - 24.

### Recommendation(s)

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Members are asked to consider the Chief Social Work Officers report.

### Resource Implications

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None.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of activity across social work services during 2022-2023 and the areas of strength and concern within the professional workforce.
- 1.2 Following presentation at committee the report will be sent to the Scottish Government where it is considered along with the other 31 CSWO reports to identify common themes across the Social Work workforce.

## 2.0 Children and Family Social Work Service

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2.1 **Key themes: For Children's Services**, these priorities are established in the Children's Services Plan, Child Protection Committee and Corporate Parenting Plans which set out long-term aspirations and priorities for children, young people and their families. These include:

- Our approach to implementing The Promise
- Hearing and responding to the voices of our children and their families.
- An increased focus on preventative and whole family support service design and delivery.

2.2 **Justice Services key themes:**

**For Justice Services**, our Service Plan and Performance Improvement Framework are informed by the key aims set out within The Scottish Government's Vision for Justice in Scotland 2022:

- Feeling safe is fundamental for individuals and communities to thrive. We will continue to work closely with partners to promote a society in which people feel safe in their communities.
- We will work in collaboration with partner agencies to address the underlying causes of crime and support individuals to live full and healthy lives.
- Our services will be person-centred and trauma informed.

2.3 **Adult and older people key themes:**

**For adult and older people social work services** our priorities include:

- Ensuring that the conditions are in place to maximise social work and social care professional leadership and voice across the integrated system, supporting the rights based and person-centred approach to practice that remains core to our work.
- Continued development of a sustainable, skilled workforce, supporting career choices and advanced practice opportunities.
- Nurturing our organisational culture in parallel with transformation in systems, processes and structures, and a commitment to integrated working and wellbeing support.

## 3.0 Conclusions

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Across all of Fife Council Social Work, there have been many positive and encouraging developments during the last year and these have included: a focus on developing trauma informed service delivery and listening to the voices of those with lived experience.

A key emphasis in the delivery of Social Work Services going forward into 2023/24 will be continuing to recover from the wide-ranging impact of the coronavirus pandemic - this will remain a significant piece of work over the few next years, which will require flexibility and close collaboration with our partners to address:

- Increased complexity in need and demand for specialist services.
- Overall increase in psychological and social support needs across all areas of society impacted by loneliness, wellbeing, and mental health as well as physical health and poverty.

These challenges must be considered against a backdrop of:

- Staff resilience.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Managing capacity, demand and pressures across services within budget constraints.
- Demographic and socio-economic pressures including food and fuel poverty and loss of income.
- Service transformation and the implementation of new legislation and policy including the National Care Service.
- National lack of capacity in resources to meet the needs of those with complex and challenging behaviours.

### Report Contacts:

Christine Moir

CSWO and Head of Children & Families  
and Criminal Justice Services

Fife House

Email: [christine.moir@fife.gov.uk](mailto:christine.moir@fife.gov.uk)



## Chief Social Work Officer Report

2022 to 2023



## Foreword

The requirement for each Council to have a Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) was initially set out in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and further supported by Section 45 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994. The role of the CSWO is to provide professional governance, leadership, and accountability for the delivery of social work services, not only those provided directly by the Council or from within the integrated Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), but also those commissioned or purchased from the voluntary and private sector. Social work services are delivered within a framework of statutory duties and powers and are required to meet national standards and provide best value. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 as well as outline the associated challenges within the context of the current climate within public services. This reporting year, post pandemic, has presented both ongoing opportunities and ongoing challenge.

Our highly committed staff have not been immune to the challenges faced. The safe space between home and work life was recognisably compromised at times during the pandemic and many staff, whilst welcoming a 'return to normal' had developed home working solutions and the service is continuing to work towards reaching a balance which supports both the work and needs of staff.

Over this last year we have continued to strengthen the established partnerships in Fife and pursue opportunities to develop our respective and collective contributions to effecting positive change within a reform agenda. Keeping connected was a key feature of the 'pandemic' and in many ways this has become more pronounced as we begin to better understand the longer-term impact on individuals and communities, exacerbated by the changing economic climate and increasing poverty. Despite increasing challenges, the context, and the significant uncertainty facing the sector, our social work and social care workforce, our carers and other partners across all services have remained committed to providing services that empower, support and protect local people. As ever, my appreciation goes to everyone who works in social work and social care, and those who otherwise support this important work, for all that they have done in the last year for children, young people, adults, and families.

I would like to acknowledge all the colleagues who have supported the production of this report and the associated relevant material for inclusion.

This report will be posted on the Council website and will be shared with the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government.

## Introduction and Background

In Fife, the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is responsible for monitoring Social Work activity across the Council and within the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to ensure that agreed targets are being met and that professional standards are maintained. Operational management responsibility for service delivery rests with relevant management arrangements in those services where the CSWO has no operational management responsibility and reporting arrangements are in place.

The CSWO also has a role to play in specific advisory bodies such as the Chief Officer Public Safety Group and in advising the Council in relation to matters affecting social work services arising from community planning and other partnership bodies. The CSWO also has access as required to the Council's Chief Executive and elected members.

As a Head of Service for Education and Children's Services Directorate, the CSWO has direct operational responsibility for the financial management within the Children and Families and Justice Social Work Services, assuring quality of practice and adherence to national legislative and policy obligations. The role also has oversight of the standards involved in the delivery of social work within Adult and Older People's Services and any budgetary implications that may arise from this.

The wide reach of the role of the CSWO across the entirety of the profession is nationally recognised as comprehensive and vital to the safe delivery of the social work and social care functions carried out on behalf of the local authority and in Health and Social Care Partnership's. To support the CSWO in Fife a new post has been created and will be recruited to during 2023. The Principal Social Work Officer (PSWO) sits within the HSCP and holds delegated accountability for CSWO functions within Adult, Older Adult and social care services. The PSWO directly reports to the Director of Health and Social Care and provides accountability to the CSWO of the social work and social care functions carried out by the workforce in the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Further information about Fife Council Social Work Services is available on our websites: [www.fife.gov.uk](http://www.fife.gov.uk) and [www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org](http://www.fifehealthandsocialcare.org).

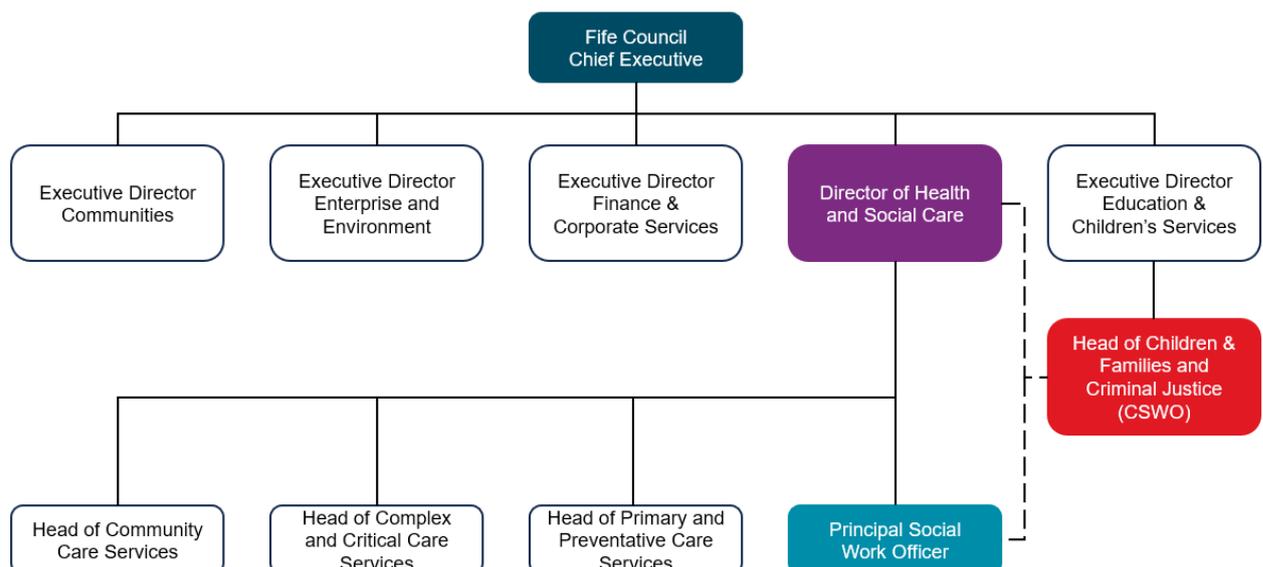
## Governance and Accountability

### Fife Council Political Structure

There are 22 electoral wards in Fife and each ward has three or four councillors who have been elected by the people of that ward to represent them. In total, there are 75 councillors. They are responsible for setting policy for the Council and may sit on various committees where they can vote on a range of matters from local planning to decisions on welfare or education.

Breakdown by political groups	
Scottish National Party	34
Scottish Labour Party	18
Scottish Labour and Scottish Co-operative Party	2
Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party	8
Scottish Liberal Democrat Party	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

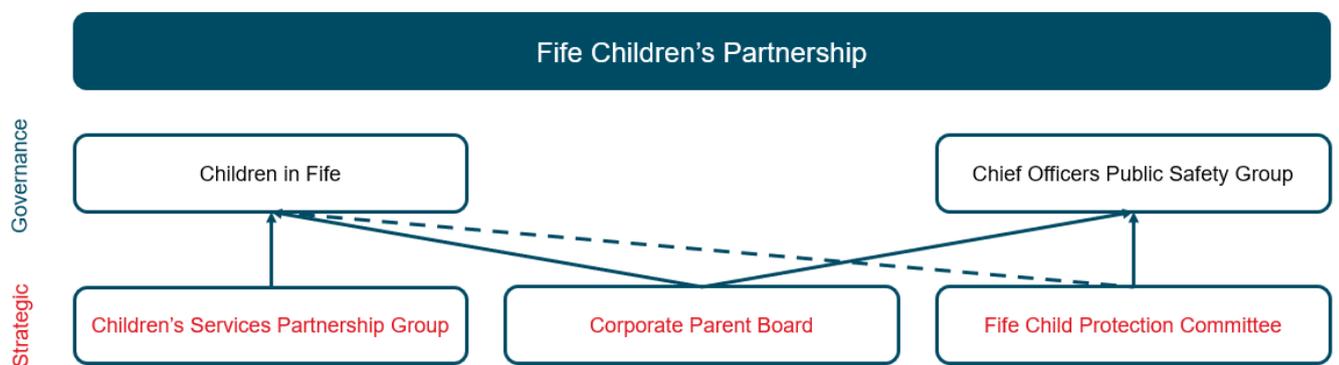
### Fife Council Governance Arrangements with Fife Health and Social Care Partnership 2022-2023



In accordance with the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014 and the agreed Scheme of Delegation, Fife's Adult and Older Adult Social Work Services,

along with the provision of social care through Care at Home, Care Homes, and Adult Residential and Community Services, are delegated to Fife Health and Social Care Partnership. The above diagram reflects the governance arrangements for Fife Council functions and details how the Chief Social Work Officer aligns to this to enable the role to continue to retain oversight and accountability in the social work and social care practices within the H&SC partnership.

## Fife Council Children and Justice Strategic Governance and Accountability

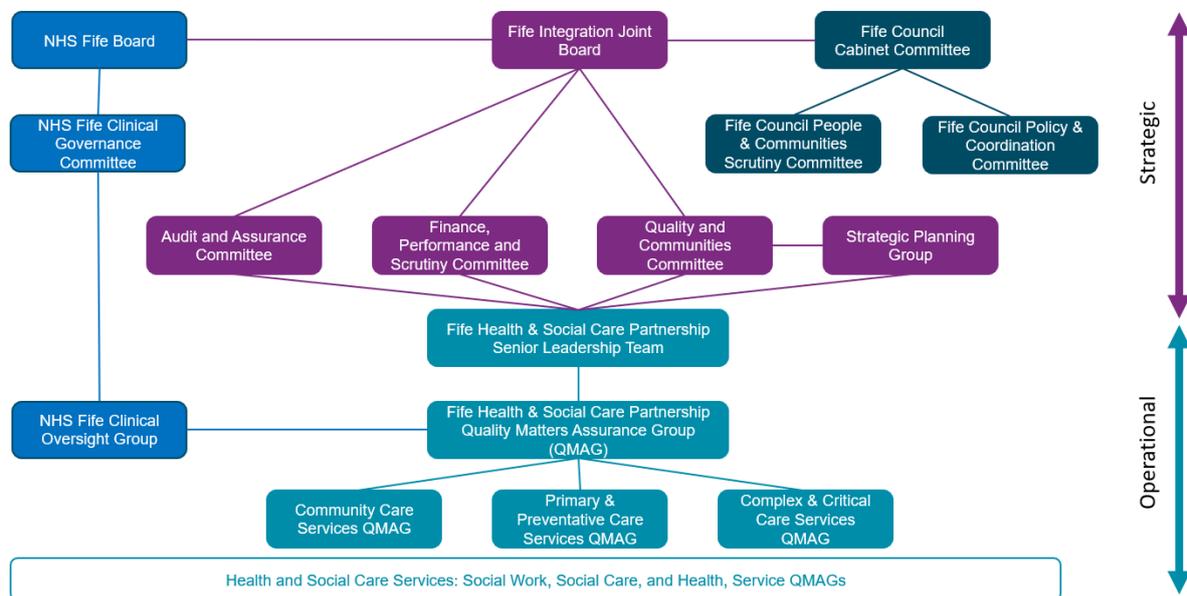


The partnership between services for Children in Fife is well established at both a strategic level and across local areas. The responsibility for the Children's Services Plan (2021-2023) is held by the Fife Partnership, represented by the Children in Fife Group. This partnership binds Fife Council, the voluntary sector, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, NHS Fife, and the Health and Social Care Partnership in common purpose. The Children in Fife Group reports to the Fife Partnership.

The Children's Services Plan is nested within Fife's Community Plan, in particular the following outcomes:

- Improving early years development of children in Fife.
- Raising educational attainment and reducing educational inequality.
- Improving the health of Fifers and narrowing the health inequality gap.
- Making Fife's communities safer.

## Fife Council Social Work Governance Arrangements: Health and Social Care



The above arrangements help ensure effective management of performance throughout partnership social work services in Fife. The Senior Leadership Team below the Director of Health and Social Care/Chief Officer role, comprises of operational business managers, a role that does not require the individual to hold a social work degree or registration and currently none of these posts is occupied by a registered social worker.

The role of Principal Social Work Officer has been introduced into the Partnership as part of the Senior Leadership Team, holding delegated CSWO duties for professional social work functions, to support service delivery, design and development in line with Social Work legislative, policy, guidance and professional standards and expectations.

The Principal Social Work Officer, while directly reporting to the Director/Chief Officer, retains a close link in reporting to the Chief Social Work Officer to provide reassurance that effective social work practices are carried forward in line with the delegated functions of the role.

## **Service Quality and Performance**

### **Children and Families**

The following pages provide an overview of the primary functions of the Children and Families service delivery in Fife. Key challenges in service delivery across all teams in Fife has been the increasing volume and complexity of referrals into social work. Covid recovery, recruitment and retention, and significant budget challenges, have been a challenge on our teams. While commitment to core social work values and legislative duties are central to the work undertaken across Fife, creativity and flexibility are required to meet the needs presented when engaging with individuals and their families.

### **Belonging to Fife**

The Belonging to Fife strategy provides the vision, governance and direction for our work with children and families. The strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The needs, views and wishes of children and young people are at the centre of all planning and decision making.
- Partnership understanding that children have a right to live within their own communities, with their siblings and where possible within their own family.
- Outcomes Focused/Strength based planning reflecting the strengths and capacities of the young person and their family while recognising and managing any risk.
- Recognition that for some children remaining at home or returning home would be unsafe and not in their best interests.
- Residential care is a short-term care option for a period of three to six months (unless there are exceptional circumstances).
- A whole system approach is required, as keeping children in Fife and keeping The Promise necessitates a commitment from all services: Education, Health, Police Scotland and third sector providers.
- A practice focus on the importance of making and sustaining relationships with children and young people.
- A practice focus on maintaining children at home with their parents, recognising and balancing the risks and impact on children life long, if they are removed from parental/family care.

### **Early Intervention**

The Children and Families Contact Centre operates as the “front door” for the service and continues to manage initial referrals from partners and families. The planned development of a Multi-Agency Improvement Team (MAIT) using Whole

Family Wellbeing Funding, will support earlier and more effective screening of referrals received from Health and Education. Further, we anticipate the MAIT will support improvement work within our own service relating to how we intervene with families. This new development is part of a range of initiatives to support transformational change in respect to systems, processes and practice. The focus on earlier intervention within communities has been piloted through a Community Social Work approach initially in Kirkcaldy and more recently Cowdenbeath. This has offered an opportunity to test out earlier connections and conversations on an informal and non-stigmatised basis through a presence in local access points for adults, children, young people and families. i.e., libraries, Schools, The Wells, nurseries, GP practices etc. The learning from this work will contribute to wider whole system change as part of Fife Council reform in respect of a No Wrong Door approach to supporting people and their families with a focus on People and Place. Other whole family wellbeing funded initiatives include a focus on the workforce through multi -agency practice development sessions; early intervention in Schools involving Social Work Senior Practitioners; enhanced support to the Emergency Support Team; embedding of a range of evidence based group work for example Incredible Years and Mellow programmes; co-production with families led by the Third sector and further development of commissioned services evidencing impact through an earlier intervention approach to supporting families.

## **Family Support**

Demand remains high relating to referrals for Family Support. The service's Performance Framework supports an approach to continuous improvement, for example the embedding of practice tools such as the Family Star and My Star, which underpin the strength-based model to engagement with families whilst supporting a co-production approach. A key component of the model is the active involvement of children, young people and their families in the review of support plans ensuing they are central to agreeing and planning the support in place. The service has developed a range of simple feedback mechanisms for families to ensure the right support is available and accessible at the right time. In 2022/2023 new group work opportunities have been delivered across the 3 Family Support Teams, this has been shaped and influenced by a review of data and themes including the active involvement of young people in the detail of the components of the group work programmes.

In 2022, a quality assurance programme of work was completed involving a review along with staff on the support plans in place for all families open to the service, considering the quality of the interventions and partnership working.

## Whole Family Wellbeing

The Scottish Government's focus on Whole Family Support has provided the opportunity to further develop and enhance family support services, considering areas of improvement through self-assessment using the "How Good is Our Family Support" Framework. A number of strands of work are underway across the continuum of need and targeted at our most vulnerable children and young people through enhancement of the Emergency Support Team resource, practical support through Homemakers and a focus on streamlining systems and access routes to services.

## Children and Families Area Teams

During the reporting period, we have recorded a marginal increase in the number of open cases within our Area Teams and our knowledge of service provision would suggest that our numbers have stabilised after a reduction during the pandemic. The last year has evidenced an ongoing commitment and ability to respond to the Setting the Bar report and average caseloads within our 13 front line teams have been significantly reduced and this number sustained at between 12 and 17 children per worker. The development of two permanence teams has allowed staff to focus on both earlier and crisis intervention for children at the edge of care.

Relationship based, trauma-informed practice is central to how we engage with children and their families. Earlier this year, we launched our new Participation and Engagement Strategy with (Area) Team Managers – this document reinforces and consolidates our commitment to relationship-based practice and the importance of upholding/promoting children's rights.

In addition to our Area Teams, we have several Fife-Wide and specialist Teams, and these include:

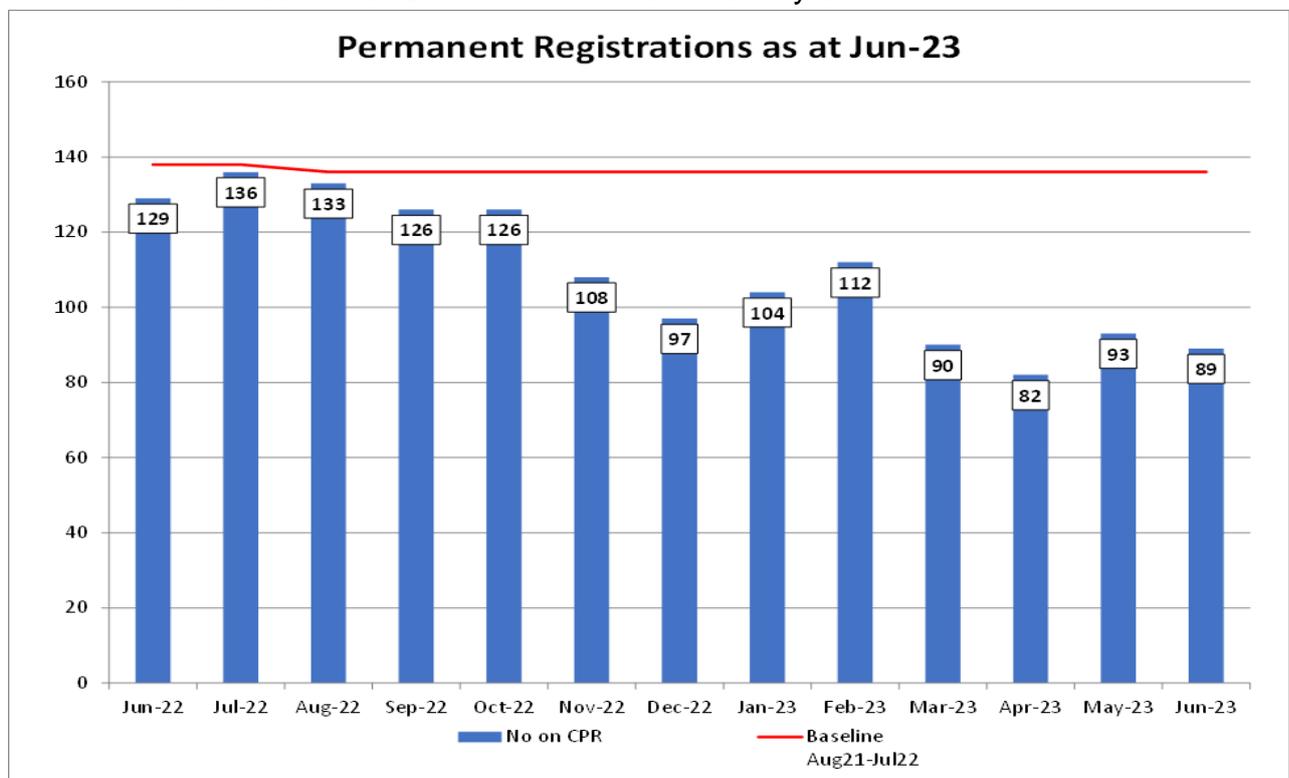
- Children affected by Disability Team
- Child Protection Team
- Close Support Team
- Emergency Support Team
- Multi-systemic Therapy Team
- Two Permanence Teams
- Young People's Team
- Reviewing Service
- Quality Assurance Team
- Residential Services
- Fostering Team
- Kinship Team

- 3 family Support Teams
- Community Social Work team (Test of Change pilot)

## Child Protection

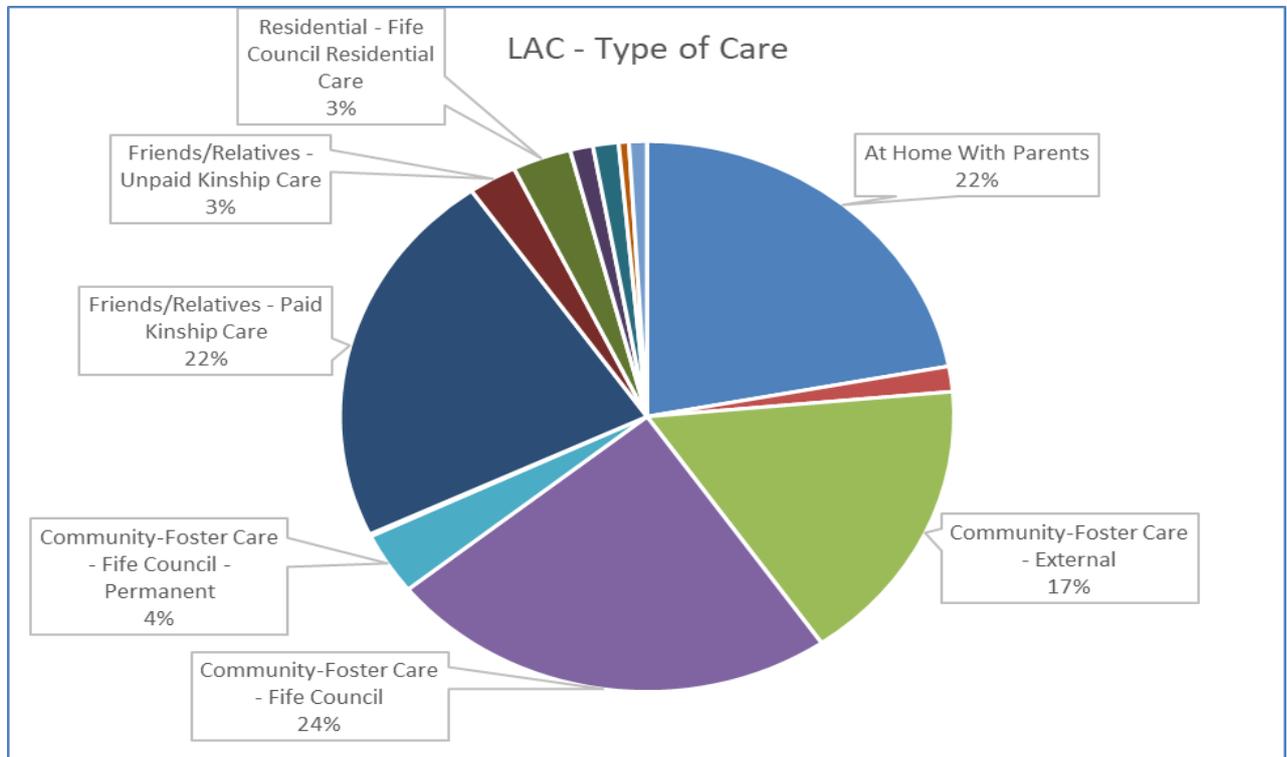
The number of children and young people subject to child protection registration in Fife continues on a downward trend – see below. We recognise that this trend is mirrored across the country, nevertheless, we commissioned our Quality Assurance Team to evaluate: the decision-making relating to a sample of children who were referred to conference and not registered and a sample of chronologies relating to children who were registered. Both exercises are near completion, and we anticipate that the findings will support us in understanding why some children are registered, why some aren't and the journeys that children and families go on before being referred to a child protection case conference.

The Child Protection team have completed SCIM training during the reporting period and data shared mid 2023 stated that all child interviews now follow this new methodology. Reports considering the quality of SCIM interviews, the difference between this methodology and JII and the impact on children have been shared within the Social Work Service and with the Child Protection Committee ensuring we are keeping children and their needs at the centre of our improvement activity. Those who are involved in IRD activity continue to review their work to identify themes and areas for learning and this work will become more established when the New National Guidance for Child Protection is more fully embedded.



## Looked After Children

As of June 2023, there are 743 looked after children in Fife. The overall size of our Looked After population has remained at or below the Scottish average. The graphic below provides a breakdown of the placement status of the overall number:



## Residential Care

The number of children and young people in high-cost residential placements (HCRP) continued to decrease during the reporting period - reduced by 28% in the last year. We have capacity in our internal residential homes to offer residential care when this is assessed as the most appropriate (short term) care setting for a young person and the data above indicates that these internal resources are being used to support children to remain in Fife allowing these children and young people to sustain relationships with family, friends and education provision. This increased capacity, as well as a clear focus on assessing kinship carers prior to receiving a child into care has reduced the number of newly looked after children coming into HCRP to six over the course of 2022-2023.

In May 2022 we successfully opened our own residential resource for children affected by disability and were able to support 3 young people 'home to Fife' with significant benefits for their families who are able to visit far more easily due to locally based care.

Our emergency provision (STEPP) offers a 12-week assessment package with a clear focus on family strengths and supporting children whenever possible to return to family care. We are working to develop additional supports to STEPP in relation to offering increased one-to-one support, outreach and potentially group work.

There is a need to continue to evaluate any gaps in our own residential provision to ensure that future commissioning and the development of our internal resource provision reflects need. Gap analysis over the last two years directly led to the development of a specialist provision for children affected by disability, a home for primary school aged children and a specific residential home for young people leaving care which is registered as an adult resource.

We are aware that 2023-2024 will be a year of some additional challenge as nationally there is a recognition that there are fewer available placements and there is an impact on capacity relating both to cross border placements and our commitment to supporting unaccompanied children and young people (UASC).

## **Fostering**

Despite our ongoing strenuous efforts to recruit, we have seen an overall decline in our number of foster carers. Nevertheless, our data does evidence a declining trend in the use of foster care which can be explained by the increasing use of kinship care but also by effective family strength-based intervention and flexible and immediate support to families at the time of the crisis.

Our scope to reduce the number of purchased placements is limited by the reality that approximately 60% of those placements are permanent care arrangements for children and young people. There has been a reduction from our 2021 data which reflects, children 'aging out' of the system but also reflects some placement breakdowns and changing birth family circumstances which have supported positive rehabilitation.

The Fostering Team continues to be ambitious and ensure that carers and supervising social workers are trauma informed and able to support and sustain foster care placements. Fife is unique in that it has a dedicated therapeutic service (Springfield) for looked after children providing direct support and assistance to foster carers, the child and the professional network. This service offers expertise from social work practitioners, psychotherapy, clinical psychology and play therapy. The reach of this service has recently extended to supporting kinship families and family relationships.

## **Kinship Care**

The drive to increase the number of kinship carers has been central to our Belonging to Fife strategy and reflects the national commitment to valuing family-based care which is supported both by policy and legislation.

The redesign of our Kinship Team has resulted in a significant and sustained increase in the number of kinship arrangements.

The increase in kinship care arrangements coupled with legislative changes has led to a significant reduction in unpaid kinship care arrangements and a reduction in the use of family support arrangements.

Fife were successful in a funding bid from CORA which was centred on understanding 'the system' and partners attitudes to Kinship Care and everyone's contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people in Kinship Care arrangements. An independent review of Kinship Care was commissioned using the funds with a report produced suggesting a number of partnership improvements which is now being taken forward across the partnership, led and reviewed by the multi-agency Kinship Steering Group.

## **Home-Based Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs)**

Our Belonging to Fife strategy promotes the use of home-based CSOs. However, likely as a consequence of our Child Wellbeing Pathway and the use of a Child's Plan, we have not seen an increase in the number of children looked after at home. It is difficult to benchmark this data against other local authorities due to the specific local nature of the Child Wellbeing Pathway in Fife.

We continue to monitor our rates of referral to the Children's Reporter, ensuring that our Social Workers are referring in a timely manner when compulsory measures of care need to be considered. However, this needs to be carefully balanced through professional assessment and judgement in line with the minimum intervention principle.

Fife's Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership, CHIP, continues to consider referral rates from all services and offers challenge to partners relating to early and effective intervention and the appropriate use of legislative powers.

## **Aftercare**

There has been a significant increase in the number of carers recruited to offer a supported lodgings provision. The Government's ambition to support UASC is having an impact on placement availability as, in Fife we have agreed that these

vulnerable and displaced young people become “looked after” by supported lodgings carers to ensure they have a family and community care setting personalised to meet their needs. However, as noted, this is impacting on young people moving on from care in Fife and children coming into care in Fife as additional demand is exceeding placement availability.

Our partnership work with The House Project has also allowed 18 young people to move into supported tenancies to progress towards independent living within a secure and supported environment. A further 10 young people (cohort 3) are moving in the next few months (April-June 2023) with planning about to begin to identify cohort 4.

In common with colleagues across Scotland, the council works hard to provide care and homes for UASC. The challenges of this work are well known but in the last year Fife has been able to maintain a commitment to home these displaced and vulnerable young people largely within supported lodgings care although we had a number, we were able to secure within Kinship arrangements and 2 younger children in fostering arrangements. The service successfully recruited 2 additional workers based in the Young People’s Team whose work will primarily be to support this cohort of young people, building expertise in relation to their specific needs.

The service is also benefiting from the recruitment of a senior mental health nurse who is also based in the Young People’s Team which has allowed easier and more timely access to support for some of our young people whose mental health needs or experience of trauma requires support. This post is funded through our partners in Health and is a joint initiative from Adult Mental Health and CAMHs with the worker being supervised in a matrix manner with Social Work and health participation.

### **Fostering, Permanence, Kinship and Supported Lodgings Panel**

In the last year, a total of 140 Panels were arranged, this included: 74 Fostering Panels; 31 Permanence Panels; 26 Kinship Panels and 9 Supported Lodgings Panels.

A full-time Panel Chair was appointed in September 2021. The Panel Chair provides consistency across all four panels and has oversight on all matters relating to: recruitment, training and appraisal of panel members.

In July 2022 it was agreed that all new approvals would return to face to face panels – this was a move welcomed by panel members, social workers and applicants alike.

## Quality Assurance and Development

Our newly recruited Quality Assurance and Development Team will become increasingly central to supporting our improvement agenda and as such, the primary duties/responsibilities of the team include:

- Undertaking audit activity to monitor compliance with policy, legislation and practice standards.
- Supporting improvement activity through joint working and ongoing review of action plans in partnership with Senior Management Team
- Supporting and developing the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and The Promise
- Leading the work relating to our People with Lived Experience Groups: Embrace
- Supporting the use of MOMO to ensure we are hearing from children.
- Horizon scanning around new policy, legislation and learning across Scotland and wider to share new developments and practice improvement with the service
- Undertaking audit, evaluation or improvement activity identified through service wide learning or other sources as agreed by the Senior Management Team. The first of these activities involved a review of 160 files from across the service and the learning from the work was shared across all teams with areas for improvement and areas of good practice highlighted. The positives included quality of relationship-based practice, timely recording and an understanding of practice framework with areas of improvement being around the detail of what needs to be recorded. The QA Team will carry out a similar audit in early 2024

The Quality Assurance and Development Team work closely with our Reviewing Team and there is a circularity of learning from practice embedded between the two teams.

## Strategic Commissioning

Fife families continue to benefit from a wide range of third sector provision both at an early intervention and intensive level from the numerous partners providing support across the council.

Work completed in 2021 shaped the commissioning of services for children through the development of new service briefs. These will be due for review later in 2023 and the Children's Services Strategic Commissioning Group retain an overview of this work and continue to focus on: monitoring and evaluation processes; governance arrangements; locality-based commissioning models and the experience of families to help support co-development and co-design.

## Adult and Older Adult Social Work and Social Care

Fife's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) deliver social work functions for adults and older adults. The Partnership operates across seven locality areas to support the highest quality of service delivery within these areas. The HSCP Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022 was refreshed and updated during 2022, and the new Strategic Plan for Fife 2023 to 2026 was approved by Fife Integration Joint Board in January 2023. This Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Report includes elements from both of the Partnership's Strategic Plans.

The CSWO retains overall accountability for the whole of social work and links are in place to ensure professional governance supports this. The Principal Social Work Officer (PSWO) role will ensure that professional standards are maintained through assurance reporting to the CSWO and the Director of Health and Social Care.



### Locality Planning

Locality core groups were remobilised in May 2022, after an abeyance due to Covid 19. While continuing to mature as collective spaces, the benefit of the groups has enabled planning based in user experience and will draw on the knowledge of those working within the area. Tests of change are underway in Levenmouth and North East Fife:

Levenmouth Locality “*Public Health Policing*” - A collaboration between Police Scotland, Fife Council, NHS Fife (A&E), Community Mental Health, Scottish Ambulance Service, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Scottish Association of Mental Health, to address an increase in mental health related calls. A mobile triage car is used in Levenmouth to provide a multi-agency approach to supporting timely access to specialist mental health care and assessment in the community, avoiding unnecessary conveyance to A&E. North East Fife Locality are developing a single point of access for community led support for people living with long term conditions. Working collaboratively with the Psychology Service and The Well the aim is to help people experiencing long-term conditions, and those important to them, to access the physical, psychological, social and practical supports that are available in their local community.

## Key Processes

The HSCP has an embedded governance process to enable scrutiny, identification of good practices, and areas for learning across its system. The PSWO role has been designed to ensure social work governance is in place to offer reassurance within the Partnership to the Director/Chief Officer and the CSWO of practices in line with functions carried forward. The PSWO will have a team in place to support this work later in 2023. An early priority for the PSWO will be to develop Professional Assurance and Care Governance Frameworks to assist in providing a framing for professional accountability. In addition to this, a refreshed performance framework will be introduced over the coming year as a key part of the H&SC improvement drive.

## Adult and Older Adult Social Work Teams

Services are provided across twelve teams, six covering older adults (over 65) and six covering adults (from 16 – 65 years of age). Referrals into social work come through Fife's Social Work Contact Centre (SWCC), who triage approximately 200 referrals per week. In 2022/23 locality Social Work Teams received 9915 involvement requests from our Social Work Contact Centre and from this, have completed 4525 outcome focused assessments. In addition to the above, a dedicated Hospital Discharge Social Work Team supports rights-based assessments for those leaving hospital who require support, and there is a dedicated MHO Team to carry forward functions under relevant protective legislation to ensure rights-based practices for those with a mental disorder.

Key challenges in service delivery across all teams in Fife has been the increasing volume and complexity of referrals into social work. Covid recovery, recruitment and retention, and significant fiscal challenges, have been a challenge on our teams. While commitment to core social work values and legislative duties are central to the work undertaken across Fife, creativity and flexibility are required to meet the needs presented when engaging with individuals and their families.

Integrated approaches to considering complex situations are carried forward through our Complex Case review meeting, which involves social work, health and council colleagues to support integrated approaches to meeting complex needs in the community. We are also taking an integrated approach to our development of GIRFE as a pathfinder area, taking forward our development of a model of practice to support our complex transitions.

Adult Services were inspected in June 2022 through the Joint Inspection of Adult Services by the Care Inspectorate (published November 2022).

## Priority areas for improvement

Key area	Priority for improvement
1 - Key performance outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership should continue to develop and refine its processes for capturing robust data on outcomes and ensure that this drives targeted efforts to improve outcomes for people and carers.</li> </ul>
2 - Experience of people who use our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership should make sure that it has an integrated approach to providing information and advice, so that people understand their condition and are supported to make informed choices about their care and treatment.</li> </ul>
5 - Delivery of key processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership should improve how it responds seamlessly from the point of view of people and carers by developing a model of integrated practice, with defined processes for its core services.</li> <li>The partnership should improve its processes for anticipatory care planning, including monitoring the number of plans completed and how effectively they support positive outcomes.</li> </ul>
6 - Strategic planning, policy, quality and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The partnership should consistently monitor performance and outcomes at a locality level to balance responding to local needs with a consistent response across localities.</li> </ul>
9 - Leadership and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders should continue to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their approaches to organisational development as it is rolled out across the wider workforce, including understanding staff experiences of change and of continuing increases in demand.</li> </ul>

The quality and delivery of our services was noted to be good, with the people we support reporting feeling listened to and their needs met. Improvement activity to support our development in areas of improving outcomes for the people we serve, integrating our services, and improving our processes around anticipatory care planning are all underway.

### Social Work Hospital Discharge Team

Fife have two Social Work Hospital Discharge Teams working in a multidisciplinary way to provide person-centred assessments to individuals in hospital. Both teams work collaboratively with NHS, Fife Council, HSCP colleagues and the third/independent sector to support individuals leaving hospital. Our Front Door Discharge Planning model is a successful integrated health and social work team approach. The social workers on the team ensure that social work assessments can

be provided at the earliest point for individuals, advocating on behalf of people – not patients - preventing unnecessary admissions into hospital and supporting and planning for those ready to be discharged from hospital to their home.

### **Mental Health Officer (MHO) Team**

Fife's MHOs provide a service to individuals who are experiencing mental disorder and may require support to protect their health, safety, welfare finances and property. They strive to balance the need for compulsory treatment or intervention while promoting the rights and needs of people who have mental illness or who lack capacity. Fife "in hours" MHO Service comprises of the MHO dedicated Team and MHO's practicing out with that team. In recognition of the vital role MHO's play in ensuring people in hospital have access to appropriate assessment timeously, the HSCP secured investment to create an additional eight senior practitioner MHO posts in the dedicated MHO Team.

All MHOs in the dedicated team are senior practitioners in recognition of their advanced practice experience and the role they undertake in mentoring and supporting other MHOs across Children and Families, Adult, and Justice Social Work. They support the training of up to six Fife MHO trainees each year, from application preparation through to provision of a practice placement, additionally acting as practice assessors. This year the team supported five candidates to successfully achieve their MHO award.

However, it is fair to reflect that Adult social work has also experienced a challenge in recruiting MHOs and in identifying workers to train as MHOs, the effects of which led to increased pressures on existing MHOs to complete statutory work that is vital to keep people safe in our communities.

This recruitment issue has an impact on our Emergency Out of Hours service which continues to strive to offer an MHO provision, but this is an identified area of challenge for Fife and during 2023 will continue to be a focus for improvement.

### **Technology (Near Me Video Consultation)**

Fife are considering their approach to incorporating technology into Social Work through the addition of Near Me technology. This has enabled teams across Fife Social Work Services to make use of the Near Me video consultation technology when offering engagement with the people we support and those calling into the HSCP for additional information. Training commenced throughout 2022 and by March 2023, 157 practitioners had been trained in the use of the technology. In common with other areas in Scotland, Social Workers are holding professional

discussions around the use of technology to enable best outcomes for the people we engage with.

## **Deaf Communication Service (DCS)**

Fife's Deaf Communication Service work in partnership with teams across Fife to provide advice, information and translation support to ensure D/deaf and Deafblind people have clear pathways which are person-centred to improve their quality of life. They support delivery of the See Hear Strategy and Fife's BSL Plan. The team provide early intervention through the provision of Hearing Screening within our older adult residential homes, screening for individuals with complex needs, and hold monthly clinics in NHS Fife Audiology to offer support and information to people at point of diagnosis.

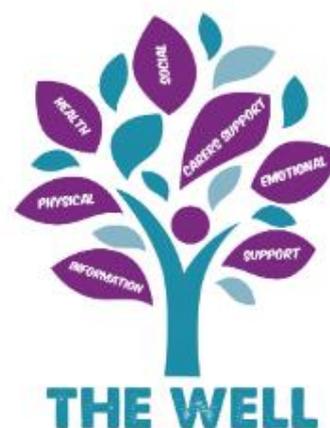
In November 2022, as part of the See Hear Strategy Action Planning, the team worked alongside Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People (SMHSDP) to hold Scotland's first Deaf Mental Health Conference. The conference drew in over 200 delegates with representatives from across Scotland in attendance, including Deaf professionals representing a variety of areas. The creative methods of communicating information about mental health through BSL were reported to be exemplary by those in attendance.

## **Short Breaks**

The Short Break Team provide information to supported adults and their families/carers to assist them to access creative and innovative short break provisions. The team work creatively with individuals and their families to identify if alternative models of service delivery can be provided which will allow the individual to benefit from the break as well as providing their family member with a break from their caring role. This approach supports adults to achieve their outcomes by promoting choice.

## **The Well**

The Well is an excellent example of our commitment to meeting people where they are. Social Work Teams support each of the Wells within Fife to offer a localised service and signpost individuals and professionals to services / supports within their communities. The Well allows individuals to speak to health, social work, and social care professionals and discuss what's important regarding their health and wellbeing. The Well offers a place in communities where



people can drop-in, both in person and online, and find out the information they need to help them stay well and independent.

During 2022/23 1192 individuals engaged with The Well. We currently offer nine physical wells throughout Fife, operating 18hrs per week. The top three enquiries for The Well have been around “Mental Health”, “Community Support” and “Financial Support”.

### **Self-Directed Support (SDS) Team**

The SDS Team review Fife’s processes and procedures in line with legislation and guidance. The new Self-Directed Support Statutory Guidance, the National Framework of Standards, and the proposed Scottish Government Self Directed Support Improvement Plan are key areas of work. The team have been involved in the national consultation with SDS Scotland to shape and develop guidance and standards that will support implementation of best practice, working creatively to engage Social Work Teams in the implementation of national learning by delivering on-line, lunch time sessions.

### **Adult Support and Protection (ASP)**

Adult Support and Protection activity within Fife is led by fully trained Council Officers (Social Work Professionals), based within our SWCC and Locality Social Work Teams. Council Officers take the lead for progressing all ASP duties under the legal framework, from Inter-agency Discussion (IRD) through to Case Conference and Review. Inter-agency partners are fully engaged in this process and contribute to enquiries, investigations and case conferences.

Over the last year the Partnership received 2782 Adult Support and Protection referrals. Of this number 352 progressed to Investigation. While the volume of referrals is aligned to that of the previous year, frontline practitioners have indicated that the complexity of cases taken through ASP has grown. There has been an increase in Large Scale Investigation (LSI) activity over the most recent reporting period (2020-2022) from the previous period.

ASP Interagency practice is audited annually for quality and improvement activity is identified and carried forward specific to Social Work Services. A key improvement action progressed over this year has been the addition of an LSI Audit to the improvement calendar. This has helped to identify single and multi-agency quality in practice and learning to develop a programme of activity for the workforce. In addition to this, core groups have developed into practice to support ongoing activity during an LSI which has enhanced multi agency working on quality services delivered when addressing harm in institutions.

Priority improvement actions for the coming year in ASP include embedding the changes in practice and terminology aligned to the new National Minimum Data Set; the development and roll out of electronic IRD across Social Work Services within Fife; and embedding the use of core groups within our ASP practice.

## **Care at Home**

In June 2021 Fife HSCP initiated engagement with care at home providers across Fife, resulting in the creation of the Care at Home Collaborative. The Collaborative is made up of 16 provider organisations who deliver over 90% of externally commissioned care at home services. During 2022 to 2023, the Collaborative continued to form and develop, and each Collaborative Member regardless of size or scale, had an equal voice in shaping the priorities of the Collaborative and in designing the shape and delivery of care response to meet demand, addressing Fair Work principles, strengthening resilience in current and future care supply.

## **Fife's Care Homes**

Older People's, Residential and Day Services provide care and support to older people in eight resources across Fife from Dunfermline in the West of Fife, Anstruther in the East and Cupar in the Northeast. Two of the Care Homes form part of care villages and provide mixed accommodation alongside opportunities for intergenerational work. The resources offer residential, respite, and short-term assessment and reablement services (STAR). Post covid, day services have reopened and through consultation services are now provided by the voluntary sector. Governance of social work functions within care homes was undertaken across the year with the Chief Social Work Officer participating in the Directors weekly care home assurance meeting supporting oversight of local authority and independent sector care homes.

One of the biggest challenges in the homes has been with recruitment. As experienced elsewhere across the social care sector, there has been a reliance on agency workforce to meet staffing gaps where increased demand has arisen. The main area of vacancies within our homes is for care assistants, who provide a vital level of personal care and support to the people who live in our homes. Recruitment campaigns have been centralised for the Partnership, enabling care homes to streamline resources and meet vacancies, supporting our continually developing approaches to increasing interest in this important area of social care applicants. Over the next year there will be a review of staff vacancies and agency spend across the service to realise maximum benefit for the residents.

## **Accommodation with Care and Support**

Adult Services Resources – Accommodation with Care and Support provides a service to 188 adults with learning disability, physical disability, mental health issues living across Fife. With a staff team of 647, support is provided over 60 Core and Cluster, Housing Support, Group Homes, Single Tenancies and Respite Services. Support can range from a few hours a week to 24 hours a day. The service delivers a person-centred, outcomes focused provision of care and support.

The service has experienced on-going staff recruitment and retention challenges, which has been common within services across the social care sector. However contingency plans are in place to ensure people's critical care and support needs are met in the event of severe staff shortages. The Flexibility Works pilot programme was introduced early 2023 to look at how the service could develop greater flex for frontline staff. This included testing assumptions around advanced notice for shifts, predictable shift patterns, easy shift swaps including flexible hours and developing greater awareness about existing flexible working options and wellbeing benefits. Plans to develop this initiative further will include reviewing the effectiveness of recruitment adverts, promotion of regular discussions about working patterns and considering how staff can input to rotas will feature at a service development meeting in October.

## **Fife Community Support Services**

This service supports adults with learning disability to engage within their communities and to make lasting friendships. Peace of Mind, a Social Enterprise Company, have established self-sustaining friendship groups across Fife for adults with disabilities. Initially part of a programme of activity post Covid as we sought new ways to remobilise after the pandemic, the group is now open to all people with learning disability in Fife. The team current supports approximately 50 adults.

One member of the group has been supported to volunteer in a café in their local community and has developed the confidence to do this without support. The group also have a closed Facebook page which provides a safe, private, online space where group members and carers can share their ideas, news, and interest in forthcoming events.

## Justice Services

### Priorities and Challenges for Fife Justice Social Work Service

As part of the annual Performance Improvement Framework in 2022-23, Fife Justice Social Work Service identified six areas for improvement. These areas were highlighted as part of the self-evaluation activity throughout the year and remaining cognisant to change in guidance and legislation at a national level.

#### **1. Continue to embed robust Performance and Quality Improvement processes within Fife Justice Service**

This area for priority focused on the development and embedding of Quality Improvement with Fife Justice Social Work Service. The initial implementation had taken place in the months before, however initial feedback from auditing managers had been positive. The creation of a Service Manager for Quality Improvement ensured dedicated management overview and dedicated resource to ensure the continued prioritisation of Quality Improvement work within the Service. The development of a new file audit and performance analysis increased the awareness and knowledge of this work across the wider practitioner group. Crucially, the evidence base for service improvement and organisational change was enhanced with the addition of Quality Improvement work throughout the Service.

#### **2. Establish services for Diversion/Structured Deferred Sentence and Enhanced Supervised Bail**

Building upon the success of the Enhanced Bail Supervision Service, which was created in April 2021, the decision was made to extend the welfare-based ethos of the national award-winning Enhanced Bail Supervision Team to encompass other early interventions such as Diversion and Structured Deferred Sentence. This resulted in the team working in a pro-active, welfare-oriented way with those who are deemed to require lower-level intervention and supervision by Justice Social Work.

#### **3. Developing Youth Justice Services**

In April 2022, Fife Justice Social Work Service assumed responsibility for all 16–17-year-olds involved in the Justice System. This involved the recruitment of staff who possessed skills and experience in delivering age specific interventions and also manage third sector provisions to create appropriate interventions for young people made subject to Diversion from Prosecution.

#### **4. Enhancing the service delivered to Dundee Sheriff Court and North-East Fife**

This area for priority focuses on the current delivery of services in the North-East Fife area, acknowledging the additional challenges of delivering services across a wide geographical area, often working in isolation due to the lack of offices and resources in North-East Fife. The staffing complement within the team was increased and discussions in terms of delivering services such as Enhanced Bail Supervision to ensure equity across the Local Authority was explored, with negotiations still ongoing regarding the best approach to delivering these services to external Courts.

#### **5. Improve delivery of Throughcare Services**

A full review of current throughcare services was carried out prior to the development of recommendations which identified that the delivery of Throughcare Services in Fife was lacking in terms of pre-release and post release support. Having identified that a significant number of service users are returned to custody in the initial weeks after being released, it was identified that additional resource was required to increase monitoring and support for the individuals during this period. In addition to this initiative, the staffing complement in both Throughcare East and West teams was increased to acknowledge the increasing complexity of throughcare work for example, the increase in the number of Oral Hearings.

#### **6. COVID-19 Recovery Plan**

COVID-19 Consequential Funding from Scottish Government provided the opportunity to build resilience within the Service to ensure the ability to manage any increase of work which was created as a result of the Court Closures during COVID-19 pandemic. This funding has allowed for the recruitment of staff on longer term contracts, until 2027 which has supported staff retention in the Service against a backdrop of recruitment challenges nationally. The COVID-19 recovery plan remains in place, ensuring that adequate resource can be deployed as and when required.

### **Service Quality and Performance**

Following on from the success of the Performance Review and Improvement Plan 2022-2023, the Service recently published the 2023- 2024 edition which reviews the above priority areas alongside setting out now objectives for the year ahead. The Plan aims to highlight the strategic priorities for the Service, however, also aims to showcase the work undertaken by frontline practitioners and evidence positive outcomes through the use of service user feedback and case examples.

The areas of priority for 2023-24 are as below:

- Throughcare – pre-release support service
- Liquid logic Implementation
- Development of Unpaid Work
- Employability, Tackling Poverty and Preventing Crisis
- Community Engagement
- Women’s Services

To ensure self-evaluation and scrutiny of practice, the Service also established a Significant Review Group which has a range of practitioners from across the Service who review cases which meet the criteria to be reviewed by the Care Inspectorate. The self-evaluation model has been commended by the Care Inspectorate and provides valuable learning Service-wide.

Our Justice Social Work Service was delighted to win at the COSLA Excellence Awards in May 2022. The team came out on top in the Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health category for the work they do with TURN, a programme set up for male service users. The group promotes further education as a way to gain new skills and knowledge to open up paid or voluntary employment, and other opportunities to get involved in their communities. In addition to this accolade, the service was delighted to share the news that Vicki Lorimer, a Social Worker in the Women’s Justice Team was shortlisted for Social Worker of the Year in the Scottish Social Service’s Awards 2022.

## **Organisational Structure**

Since the creation of the Early Intervention Service (EIS) in April 2022, all early intervention work including Enhanced Bail Supervision, Diversion, Structured Deferred Sentence has been undertaken within the team, creating a single point of contact for stakeholders involved in these processes. The team operate across different geographical ‘patch’ areas, delivering interventions with knowledge of local resources. Management of 16–17-year-olds involved in the justice system is also overseen by EIS which is ensuring that sentencing guidelines are adhered to in terms of consideration of alternative measures which divert young people from the adult justice system.

Alongside EIS, there are five Community Payback Area Teams which are set up to deliver Services across Fife:

- Dunfermline
- Cowdenbeath
- Kirkcaldy
- Levenmouth
- Glenrothes

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders are now distributed across Community Payback Area Teams who deliver specialist interventions to those subject to the Order alongside linking them into local resources.

Specialist teams include Throughcare Services, Unpaid Work Team, Groupwork Services Team and Women's Justice Team who work across Fife, also delivering services in geographical 'patch' areas. Voluntary groupwork opportunities are also delivered to both men and women through our bespoke 'TURN' and 'Fife Connect' services respectively.

## **Workforce**

### **Children and Families**

With Children and Families Social Work, Fife mirrors the national picture as set out in the "Setting the Bar" report (Social Work Scotland 2022). This report identifies a challenge with social work retention and recruitment, a reduction of business support, an increase in the complexity and volume of referrals and an ever-changing policy and legislative landscape. The concern from these pressures is that staff will likely feel overwhelmed – this in turn may lead to reduced work quality, excessive hours worked, reduced wellbeing and people subsequently leaving the profession.

Workload pressure is further impacted by changing demographics, the geography of Fife, the hybrid working environment as a consequence of covid, pressures/capacity issues in partner resources and poverty, this all reflects the national picture.

We have responded to these challenges by:

- reconfiguring the staffing structure
- reducing caseloads within front line teams and reviewing these regularly
- front loading services to deal with initial referral demands
- developing a social work qualification pathway for social work assistants
- introducing quality assurance posts
- reviewing and updating supervision and personal development planning
- training and development around leadership
- creating additional permanent posts across teams using re-investment money sufficient to staff 2 permanence teams
- utilising whole family wellbeing money to enhance support at both an early intervention level but also increased posts to offer intensive wrap around support
- ensuring our recruitment campaigns highlight the ability to work flexibly

The service has worked hard not to employ agency staff – our objective is to build in sufficient tolerance to manage the impact of longer-term vacancies and absence.

## **Adult and older adult Social Work and Social Care Workforce**

The Health and Social Care Partnership Workforce Action Plan 2022 - 2023 seeks to "develop career pathways that support improved succession planning for our workforce", and the progress to date is the development of the Care Academy Model with focus on supporting the workforce to access funding, opportunity, and lifelong learning ambition. The Plan also includes the Flexibility Works pilot to explore options for improved flexibility for all staff groups which was trailed within Accommodation and Support Services and will consider how to implement the recommendations in the year two plan. Other key work is the 'Prepare for the impact of staffing requirements in the 'Setting the Bar' report from Social Work Scotland', and progress to date is centred on analysing the workforce data and setting out further recommendations to ensure compliance.

### **Fife Justice Service**

Fife Justice Service continue to invest in the development of staff through learning and development. Ensuring staff have the appropriate learning and experience to support service users is an ongoing priority for the Service. Working in conjunction with HR Workforce Development and Strategy, a training plan was created, including core training required as a baseline for those working in Justice Services. With most of the training arranged centrally through colleagues at Community Justice Scotland this collaboration ensures that Fife Justice staff have access to the key training to undertake their role.

In addition to core training, Fife Justice Service prides itself in developing a training plan which is based around the needs of the workforce, with bespoke training developed around what staff would identify as gaps in learning or would support their understanding and implementation of practice. For staff who have joined the Service, the New to Justice forums are service specific sessions to allow the opportunity to network with others and receive inputs from a range of services which are useful when working with this service user group.

Practitioner groups are invaluable at highlighting and addressing key issues impacting on the workforce. Through shared decision-making forums such as the practitioner groups, staff can raise issues which the management team may not have been aware of. Being part of creative and effective problem solving also ensures that staff feel part of the decision-making process for the service and that their voices are heard.

## Training, Learning and Development

The Human Resources Workforce Development Team continues to work collaboratively with Childrens' Justice and Adults' Social Work and Social Care Services, and multi-agency partners, to provide effective and meaningful workforce development opportunities to all workforce colleagues. This work is underpinned by Fife Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategy and Action Plan, Childrens Services and Justice Services Plan and correlates with a number of national developments, including the national Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy, The Promise, the National Trauma Informed Practice agenda, the Scottish Services Council (SSSC) Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) supported year activity and SSSC registration changes.

Ongoing developments re: the National Care Service, National Social Work Agency and revised Health (Staffing) (Scotland Act 2019) will be monitored and inform the work that takes place.

Fife has strengthened its development and career pathways and is funding six places on the Social Work Advanced Degree programme and five places for the Diploma in Higher Education.

Discussions are taking place in further enhance the offering in relation to Leadership Development, with Coaching, Good Conversation and the Solihull approach to supervision training and postgraduate courses already a part of the annual development programme. Across the Health and Social Care Partnership there are specific leadership development opportunities including a Systems Leadership Programme aimed at senior managers, and an additional Leadership Programme aimed at middle managers due to start in October 2023.

A range of SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) activity is in place to ensure registration needs are met including succession planning modelling and that Fife harnesses the skills and talents of young people who undertake programmes such as Foundation and Social Care Apprenticeships and Modern Apprenticeships.

Single and multi-agency child protection and adult protection activity continues while offering courses to the wider corporate workforce. Specific learning resources are currently being developed in this context. Fife continues to develop and enhance the existing Trauma Informed Practice resources to align with the Scottish Government's National Trauma Training Programme.

CALM theory training provides an understanding and problem-solving approaches to managing aggression and violence and has specialist courses for staff who work within health and social care and Education and Children's Services. While Fife has provided specific support for a number of years to NQSW, the SSSC Supported Year Programme has provided funds and an opportunity to enhance this support and an

18-hour workforce development post is being created, for one year, to progress this agenda.

Within Children's Services, Solihull training has been on offer. Community Mental Health funding has supported the training of the whole workforce including foster carers. Multi-agency Practice Development Sessions have been taking place across all localities focussing on the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme, as part of The Promise. We continue to support NQSW and Early Career Social Workers through forums and targeted training and are keen to develop training that will focus on assessment, risk, child protection and parenting assessment. Integral to all sessions would be the use of judgement, knowledge, and authority to intervene.

A number of post graduate qualifications are offered, and interest always exceeds the offer in relation to supervision and management, practice educators, child protection and permanence qualifications.

Within Adult Services, a number of post graduate qualifications (Dementia, Autism, and Mental Health Officer) continue to be on offer, alongside a range of training that meets service specific needs. Within Justice Services, Working with Interpreters, Motivational Interviewing and Trauma Specialist courses form part of the established programme of training.

The Workforce Development Team works closely with our colleagues in the Digital Skills and Organisational Development Team to provide guidance and resources to ensure the models of delivery for all training are accessible across the services.

## Challenges and Improvements

**Within Children and Families Social Work**, the highest priority is to protect children who have suffered harm or may be at risk of suffering harm. When those children cannot live at home safely, our focus is on providing the best quality of care away from home. To achieve this goal, we work in partnership with other agencies, ensuring that families receive an integrated and co-ordinated response that seeks to meet the range of complex needs that families experience.

Ensuring the views, wishes and contributions of children, young people and their families are reflected in service development, design and delivery is a key priority for us in the forthcoming 12 months.

The challenges facing the Children and Families workforce have been well-documented and subject to national coverage – those challenges remain very relevant in Fife and include:

- The legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic for vulnerable and disadvantaged families.
- Poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.

- Retaining and recruiting qualified and experienced social workers.
- Austerity measures facing local authorities.
- The shortage of resource relating to residential and foster care placements.
- Responding to and implementing the, at times, overwhelming tide of new policy and legislation.
- The impact of increasing numbers of UASC requiring care.

Despite the context described above, we continue to report:

- A reduction in the number of children and young people subject to statutory measures of care.
- A reduction in the number of children and young people being placed in high-cost residential placements and.
- An increase in the number of children living in Kinship arrangements.

The lack of suitable foster or residential placements for children or young people who require to be looked after away from home is a significant challenge and is worthy of further description. This challenge is particularly evident relating to children aged 10-14 years – the pool of foster carers offering a home to children within this age range is diminishing and this has resulted in several children being placed in residential care. We have employed a range of strategies in attempt to attract carers willing to care for older children – to date, these have been met with limited success. A new recruitment and retention strategy for foster carers is written and will be implemented later in 2023 with an increased focus around offering fostering for teenagers requiring care. This will predominantly be centred around advertising on Facebook as local evidence tells us this has yielded the most success. There is an increased offering of training and support to foster carers who do or would offer care within the older age group. An increased focus on scaffolding foster placements for the older age group with intensive support being offered from our Emergency Support Team and the Springfield Service who continue to offer consultation for carers.

**Social Work and Social Care in Adult and Older Adult Services** has been equally challenged and across all teams in Fife there has been an increasing volume and complexity of referrals. Workforce capacity to meet demand has been a challenge with the demand continuing to stretch our resources. This demand has placed significant pressure on finances, and while the budget for services has not reduced this complexity has required services to strictly adhere to eligibility criteria, increasing the threshold for accessing resources, making creativity and flexibility a requirement when seeking to meet the needs presented by the people we engage with. This has in turn impacted on social work professionals who have to balance these organisational demands alongside the professional values requirement to be person centred and rights focussed.

Social Care Service provision within the HSCP and with voluntary, third and independent sector colleagues enables the delivery of high quality and supportive services to the people we work with. Fife's Care at Home Teams, Care Homes, and Adult Resources, provide support and short breaks to those individuals and families living at home or in one of our Care or Residential Homes.

It is however recognised that demand outweighs capacity and there are waiting lists within our services for young people transitioning from child care or school provision and for adults awaiting care services following hospital discharge. Our Adult social work services have experienced an increasing demand to assess and provide packages of care to enable hospital discharge and the capacity of the social workers in teams has been stretched to its limit to meet this need. The ability to recruit and retain the necessary care at home and care home support required for individuals has been increasingly challenging, with resources stretched and not able to cover all the need identified.

**In Justice Services**, priorities continue to be clearly focussed on a social justice, rights-based approach, valuing individuals whilst ensuring public protection at the acute end in relation to managing individuals who present significant risk.

Fife Justice Service continues to utilise the COVID-19 consequential funding in terms of additional staffing to meet the increasing demands as a result of COVID-19 related court closures. Despite there not being the backlog of cases originally forecast by the Scottish Government, there has been a steady increase of business, moving back to pre-COVID levels. Increasing the duration of fixed term contracts to 2027 has supported the recruitment and retention of staff in the service.

With a 'flatline' budget for Justice Social Work Services nationally, the challenge to continue delivering good quality services is significant as staffing costs increase. As a Service, actions have already been enacted to reduce any costs wherever possible, however it is a concerning position as we move forward.

## **The Year Ahead**

Across all of Fife Council Social Work, there have been many positive and encouraging developments during the last year and these have included: a focus on developing trauma informed service delivery and listening to the voices of those with lived experience.

A key emphasis in the delivery of Social Work Services going forward into 2023/24 will be continuing to recover from the wide-ranging impact of the coronavirus pandemic - this will remain a significant piece of work over the few next years, which will require flexibility and close collaboration with our partners to address:

- Increased complexity in need and demand for specialist services

- Overall increase in psychological and social support needs across all areas of society impacted by loneliness, wellbeing, and mental health as well as physical health and poverty.

These challenges must be considered against a backdrop of:

- Staff resilience.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.
- Managing capacity, demand and pressures across services within budget constraints.
- Demographic and socio-economic pressures including food and fuel poverty and loss of income.
- Service transformation and the implementation of new legislation and policy including the National Care Service.
- National lack of capacity in resources to meet the needs of those with complex and challenging behaviours

The uncertainty relating to the future delivery of social work requires our workforce to be agile, flexible and resilient whilst always retaining a focus on meeting local needs in our communities by engaging with individuals and families to drive forward improvement.

We will continue to take forward the key priorities identified across Justice and Children's Services and the Health and Social Care Partnership.

**For Children's Services**, these priorities are established in the Children's Services Plan, Child Protection Committee and Corporate Parenting Plans which set out long-term aspirations and priorities for children, young people and their families. These include:

- Our approach to implementing The Promise
- Hearing and responding to the voices of our children and their families.
- An increased focus on preventative and whole family support service design and delivery.

**For Justice Services**, our Service Plan and Performance Improvement Framework are informed by the key aims set out within The Scottish Government's Vision for Justice in Scotland 2022:

- Feeling safe is fundamental for individuals and communities to thrive. We will continue to work closely with partners to promote a society in which people feel safe in their communities.
- We will work in collaboration with partner agencies to address the underlying causes of crime and support individuals to live full and healthy lives.
- Our services will be person-centred and trauma informed.

**For adult and older people social work services** our priorities include:

- ensuring that the conditions are in place to maximise social work and social care professional leadership and voice across the integrated system, supporting the rights based and person-centred approach to practice that remains core to our work.
- Continued development of a sustainable, skilled workforce, supporting career choices and advanced practice opportunities.
- Nurturing our organisational culture in parallel with transformation in systems, processes and structures, and a commitment to integrated working and wellbeing support.

16 November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 7

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## Swan and Memorial Court Methil

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**Report by:** Alan Paul, Head of Property Services and  
John Mills Head of Housing Service

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**Wards Affected:** 22

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### Purpose

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As requested by the Cabinet Committee at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, this report sets out the background to the recladding works carried out in 2012/13 to improve the insulation of the Swan and Memorial multistorey blocks.

### Recommendation(s)

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The Committee are asked to consider and comment on the report, note the lessons learned.

### Resource Implications

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Not applicable.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are no additional legal or financial risks arising directly from this report. Conversely the lessons learned should reduce scope for future failures.

### Policy & Impact Assessment

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An EqIA is not required because none of the items propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

### Consultation

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Building Services, Property Services and Housing Services staff have been involved in the review of historic activity and will be involved in the remedial activity.

## 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 The October meeting of the Cabinet committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services outlining the outcome of a review of fire safety at Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil. That report recommended that the council replaces the external wall insulation at the high-rise flats as well as internal fire safety improvements and other fire safety mitigations.
- 1.2 The committee endorsed the proposed programme of improvement works and requested that an internal review on lessons learned be reported back to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

## 2.0 Background

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- 2.1 Fife Council is required to carry out regular fire safety risk assessments for all its twelve tower blocks where it has an ownership control. Since the Grenfell fire in 2017 the council has completed a range of work to improve the overall fire safety of the tower blocks in Fife.
- 2.2 Swan and Memorial Courts were the first tower blocks in Fife to be improved with External Wall Insulation (EWI) in 2012 and 2013. The EWI used was a phenolic tile with a render finish. The tile was attached straight onto the buildings without any space between the walls and the EWI. This fully complied with the building standards in force at that time. The lack of any cavity means that there is not the potential for a “flue” effect found in other tower block fires in England. However, it is now clear that phenolic contain some combustible material and therefore there may be an element of risk.
- 2.3 As a consequence, Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) are to be instructed to provide additional advice on the combustibility of the existing phenolic EWI to include, where possible, physical testing. The purpose of this advice is to provide additional confidence that there is low risk of existing EWI tiles catching fire. However, as a precaution and to bring the blocks at Swan and Memorial Courts in line with the other Tower Blocks in Fife, the Cabinet approved the proposal the existing cladding should be stripped down and replaced with mineral wool EWI.

## 3.0 Review findings

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- 3.1 Awareness of the potential issue arose from an investigation initiated by Property Services who engaged Arup’s as a specialist fire engineering consultancy to assess the fire stopping and compartmentation and to provide recommendations for works to meet current standards.
- 3.2 In August 2023 their fire appraisal report was completed. It detailed the findings of investigations which suggested that external wall insulation works undertaken in 2012 did not appear to meet the standards applicable at the time. In response Property Services have undertaken a review of the EWI works contract administration documentation to understand the circumstances.
- 3.3 Unfortunately with the passage of time individuals involved with the project are no longer in the employ of the council and as a consequence there is a degree of conjecture and assumption in the review of events.

- 3.4 It is clear that to improve the thermal and energy efficiency of the flats, consideration was given to options to improve the insulation. Internal insulation was discounted due to the reduction in floor area and practical difficulties, so external insulation options were considered. Investigations determined that the construction of the tower block was such that there was a limit to the additional weight loading that the structure could bear. This required that a lightweight insulation panel be utilised rather than more prevalent Mineral Wool insulation which would result in the imposition of additional weight.
- 3.5 Though an appropriate lightweight insulation material was identified and specified in the original specification documents and drawings, the insulation material was subsequently altered by the preferred contractor. Unfortunately, there is no written record detailing why the specification was amended. Such changes are not unusual with tender documentation typically permitting substitutes of equal or equivalent materials.
- 3.6 Though similar in type, it is now evident that though the originally specified material did not require fire barriers, the substitute material did. Albeit the site inspection sheets completed by the manufacturers representatives were completed to state fire barriers were not applicable. Recent engagement with the manufacturer suggests there may have been a misunderstanding of differing Scottish technical standards.
- 3.7 A more detailed summary of the products, findings and sequence of events is attached in the appendix.

## **4.0 Conclusion and lessons learned**

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- 4.1 It appears that the structure of the buildings limited insulation options. That necessitated the use of a less familiar product with assurances of the supplier and installer as to product suitability and compliance taken at face value.
- 4.2 To avoid a repetition all project staff are to be reminded of the importance of ensuring substitute materials are fully assessed and performance specification evidenced based before agreeing to substitutes. Written records of all such variations must be retained on file. The case will be highlighted in future staff training.

### **List of Appendices**

1. Investigative report summary

### **Background Papers**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil – Housing Improvements Cabinet Committee 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### **Report Author:**

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## Swan and Memorial Court, Methil

### Review of External Wall Insulation (EWI) October 2023



#### Background

Property Services were involved with the housing team in 2010-13 as part of a SSE funded External Wall Insulation (EWI) over-cladding project at the high rise flats, Swan and Memorial Court, Methil. Property Services had a Contract Administrator (CA) oversee these works. These projects received a Completion Certificate from Building Control in September 2012.

These works were part of the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) which had a national target to reduce carbon emissions by 19.25Mt CO<sub>2</sub> by 2012.

In 2023, Property Services were asked to assist the housing team consider the requirements for retrospective firestopping works to electrical services at Swan and Memorial Court. As part of these discussions, it was recommended that a Fire Engineer be brought in to assess the firestopping and current compartmentation of the flats, and provide recommendations for retrospective works to meet current standards.

Arup provided a fire safety appraisal report on 18 August 2023. Whilst confirming measures to deal with firestopping, they also identified that the EWI, Alsecco product, which was installed in 2011, would not appear to meet the Technical Standards at the time. Due to the type of insulation installed, Kingspan K5 EWB, fire barriers would have been required at each floor level and around penetrations. This requirement was noted on Property Services drawings, but Arup have received an e-

mail from the Alsecco Installation Manager involved in the project at the time to confirm these were not installed.

This short report investigates the following questions:

- Why was this particular External Wall Insulation (EWI) system specified?
- What was our understanding of the performance of that material in the event of a fire?
- Why were fire barriers not included within the system?

### **Why was this particular External Wall Insulation (EWI) system specified?**

It was determined that 'pull out' tests of the existing walls would be required to test their structural integrity and suitability to take the loadings from an EWI system. The testing was carried out by Capital Testing Services, and they provided a Report on Investigation of Cavity Wall Ties and Tensile Testing of Proposed Insulation Fasteners on 06<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Following this Dryburgh Associates, on the 15th August 2011, provided Fife Council with a Structural Performance Specification report identifying the structural requirements to be met by an EWI cladding system.

Hardies Property and Construction Consultants also provided a report on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011, which reviewed the construction build-up of the Swan and Memorial Court properties and advised that an internal insulation solution would not be suitable for these properties.

The Property Services and Housing team assessed all these reports and determined in conjunction with speaking to system manufacturers/installers, Mark Group Ltd and Alumasc, that a lightweight insulation board such as Phenolic insulation would be required to be used as Mineral Wool insulation would be too heavy for the existing structure. This type of insulation also performed well thermally which was a key criteria for this energy saving programme.

Initial drawings from Property Services identified the EWI system to be an Alumasc product named the Swisslab system. Within the project files there is an Alumasc project specific specification (13<sup>th</sup> July 2011) which notes the use of a Phenolic insulation. The specification then notes under a fire barriers section that

*'When using Swisslab with either Phenolic foam or Mineral Wool insulation, additional fire barriers are not required within the insulation layer. Refer to Alumasc Technical services for relevant test documentation.'*

By December 2011, the Building Warrant drawings were revised, and the system changed to an Alsecco EWI product. In February 2012, there is a memo from Property Services issuing Building Control the product literature for the Alsecco EWI and Render system.

The exact specification is later noted in the Solid Wall Insulation Product declaration signed by Property Services on 09<sup>th</sup> December 2012. This confirms that the Alsecco AWK1 External Wall Insulation with 80mm Kingspan Kooltherm K5 External Wall Board was installed.

We have been unable to locate any information to confirm why the specification was changed from Alumasc to Alsecco, but looking at the date of the tender report, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011, it would suggest that the alternative system was 'offered up' by the appointed installer. There is also no test data filed for the installed system.

### **What was our understanding of the performance of that material in the event of a fire?**

The project files contain the data sheet for the Kingspan Kooltherm K5 External Wall Board (Phenolic Insulation), and this confirms that the board was fire rated as Class 0. Cross referencing this to the 2010 Domestic Technical Handbook, this notes in Annexe 2B, Reaction to Fire table that this material would be categorised as Low Risk.

The Domestic Technical Handbook from this date confirms in clause 2.4.4 High Rise Domestic Buildings

*'In order to satisfy standards 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7, the external wall, including any associated cavity barrier or cladding system, should be designed and constructed from:*

- a. products that achieve a non-combustible reaction to fire classification in accordance with annex 2.B; or*
- b. achieve the performance levels in BR 135, 'Fire Performance of external thermal insulation for walls of multi-storey buildings' when read in conjunction with the test methodology in BS 8414: Part 1: 2002 or BS 8414: Part 2: 2005.'*

As the Phenolic insulation was Low Risk and not Non-Combustible, item b above was the standard that Swan and Memorial Court would have to satisfy to comply with the Technical Standards.

BR135 Fire Performance of External Thermal Insulation for Walls of Multistorey Buildings section 6.3.4 Design Principles for Fire Barriers: Render Systems states

*'Various full scale experimental studies have shown that for rendered systems to meet the performance criteria set out in this guide, any fire travelling through the system should be contained to the floor level immediately above the fire origin. To achieve this, the installation of fire barriers at each floor level above the first floor level (ie starting with the second storey) should be considered, or at alternative spacing determined by full-scale testing to the BS 8414 series.'*

This section also goes on to state

*'The use of fire barriers should also be considered for application in vulnerable areas such as window openings and doorways, and around penetrations in the system.'*

BR135 also notes the Phenolic insulation is a Thermoset product and confirms it reacts to fire as follows

*'Unless such materials become directly exposed to the fire source, following significant delamination and cracking of the external render finish, they will typically char in the vicinity of the fire source. If the insulation is directly exposed to the fire source, and adequate fire barriers are not installed, fire spread may arise on the surface of the exposed insulation, allowing additional cracking and delamination of the external render coat to occur, and so providing a route for continued fire spread through the system away from the initial fire source.'*

As Property Services Building Warrant elevational drawings note that

*'Fire Barriers: Design and installation of associated fire barriers required must follow BRE guidance document 'BRE report 135' & cladding manufacturers recommendations.'*

it can be assumed that Property Services staff involved in the project were aware of the EWl properties in relation to fire.

It is worth stating that the Alsecco EWl system would comply with the Domestic Technical Handbook at the time if fire barriers were installed as per BR135.

### **Why were fire barriers not included within the system?**

The project files do not contain information to confirm why the specification was altered from Alumasc to Alsecco.

Although the Alumasc specification which included Phenolic insulation stated that no fire barriers were required there is no specific specification in the files for the Alsecco system or test data to confirm that fire barriers would not be required. Without Alsecco carrying out full scale testing to BR135 or BS8414 which confirmed fire barriers were not required they would have needed to be installed to comply with the Domestic Technical Standards at the time. The Arup reports confirms there is no evidence to indicate that Alsecco carried out these tests.

The project files do contain three Site Inspection Sheets from Alsecco's representatives, these have tick boxes and the section for fire barriers is ticked as not applicable. This example would indicate that Alsecco believed that they were not required.

As representatives from Alsecco and Fife Council involved in the project have now left or have retired it has not been possible to determine the exact reason that fire barriers were not installed. On this basis, the report can only suppose that from the information available in the files and investigation carried out by Arup that Alsecco believed that their system did not require fire barriers. We can assume that this information was presented to the Fife Council teams and that is why the omission was not challenged.

As part of their retrospective fire strategy review, Arup have been in correspondence with Alsecco over the question of the omission of the fire barriers, but their response indicates a misunderstanding of the Domestic Technical Standards in Scotland at the time of the installation.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this review has determined the following:

- That the specification of the EWI cladding was a result of the loadings allowable for the existing structure and the good thermal performance of the insulation.
- The cladding system was low risk in fire classification but was classified as combustible, which required fire barriers to be installed at all floor levels above first floor and around penetrations.
- As advised by the system installer, Alsecco, these fire barriers were not installed. Due to staff having left and retired from both Alsecco and Fife Council it has not been able to determine why the fire barriers were omitted. It appears that Alsecco believed that their system complied with the Domestic Technical Handbook at that time. Based on the current information available that does not appear to be the case.

Using this review to take a lessons learned approach for Fife Council, it would highlight that at the time, a more detailed investigation of manufacturers fire classification claims should have been made relative to the British Standards and technical guidance available.

From the Grenfell investigation, we have learned that within the construction industry around the time of the EWI cladding at Swan and Memorial Court, there was some confusion and even misinformation on products' and systems' fire properties. This may explain why the company's approach, with regards to fire barriers, was not challenged.

We can see from the project files that the installed systems thermal performance was advantageous for this energy saving programme of works. Whilst this is likely to have been the main focus for the team involved at the time, a more detailed analysis of manufacturers claims should have been made.

From a Property Services perspective quality assurance is key to delivery of projects. Current processes for checking material specifications are rigorous to ensure they meet building standards and relevant technical guidance. Following on from this review, all staff will be advised of the outcome of this report. As part of our Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme they will be reminded to make a detailed review of manufacturers' claims on products' properties. We will also provide additional training in this area.

Report prepared by John Peden, Lead Professional Architect, Fife Council Property Services 19.10.23

16 November 2023

Agenda Item No. 8

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## 2023-24 Revenue Budget Projected Outturn – Communities

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**Report by:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
Michael Enston, Executive Director, Communities

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to give members an update on the projected outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year for Communities & the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which are areas in scope of the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee

### Recommendation(s)

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Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity for the 2023/24 Projected Outturn as detailed in this report.

### Resource Implications

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None.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the projected outturn for Communities and the HRA for the 2023-24 Revenue Budget, and to highlight the major variances as at August 2023. This is the second monitoring report to the Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.2 The preparation of the 2023-24 Revenue Budget focussed on applying service underspends, budget realignment and vacancy factors to close the budget gap, and as such no specific savings proposals were approved by the Council as part of the Revenue Budget. There is therefore no requirement to include a Savings Tracker as part of financial reporting for the 2023-24 financial year.

## 2.0 Projected Outturn

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- 2.1 Based on current information for the areas falling under the scope of this Committee, of a net expenditure budget of £81.901m the position across all areas is a projected expenditure of £85.470m resulting in a projected net overspend of £3.569m (4.36%).
- 2.2 A summary of the 2023-24 projected out-turn is detailed in Appendices 1 & 2. This shows projected expenditure against budget across the service headings within the Directorate. There may be some minor rounding differences contained within the appendices, but these are immaterial values that do not impact on the overall financial position. The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of the main areas where there are significant variances (+/-£0.250m) to budgets.

## 3.0 Major Variances

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*Communities & Neighbourhoods: - Projected Overspend £3.185m, movement of £1.693m*

- 3.1 A legacy from the pandemic continues to impact on level of demand and income received for some services. Fife Sports and Leisure Trust and Fife Cultural Trust have an estimated total deficit £1.400m. Council officers continue to review the areas where the level of income received has been impacted by the pandemic and both Trusts continue to receive temporary financial support from the Council. Community Use and Halls and Centres have a forecast overspend of £0.984m due to anticipated underachievement of income. Unachieved savings of £0.512m offset by £0.300m underspend within the Fairer Fife budget. The movement of £1.685m relates to an increase in support required to the Trusts of £0.325m, £0.568m increase in unachieved income from Halls and Community use as a result of a more robust projection based on actuals in the 2nd quarter, and £0.512m relates to the inclusion of unachieved savings within the projection.
- 3.2 *General Fund Housing & Neighbourhoods: - Projected Overspend £0.345m, movement of £0.301m*

The overspend and movement mainly relates to Voids costs within Homelessness. There had been a number of homelessness properties void whilst Change of Tenancy works took place to bring the homelessness properties up to the required standard. This is not an ongoing issue and high numbers of void homelessness properties are not expected in the remainder of the year.

*Housing Revenue Account: - Net Withdrawal from Balances £1.904m, movement nil*

*Repairs & Maintenance – Projected Overspend £7.290m, movement £0.393m*

- 3.3 Change of Tenancy (COTs) is projected to overspend by £5.005m, movement £0.479m which is a result of both a high volume of COTs in year and continued high inflation and material price increases.
- 3.4 Responsive Repairs is projected to overspend by £3.347m, movement £1.521m as a result of continued high inflation and material cost increases. The movement is based on the projected spend for the year based on the volume and cost of repairs carried out to date.
- 3.5 The above overspends are partially offset by underspends & movements on Gas Servicing & Repairs of £0.722m and Planned Maintenance £0.592m. The reduction in gas servicing costs is due to a revision of the prices charged for gas servicing from building services and the revised projection on planned maintenance reflects the level of work contracted for this financial year.
- 3.6 Investment into a fencing pilot and increased funding into estates management works contributes to £0.545m of the overspend. This is funded by a withdrawal from balances.

*Revenue Contribution (Including CFCR) – Underachievement (£6.676m), movement (£0.557m)*

- 3.7 The underachievement of CFCR is due to the increased spends across the HRA. The result is a much lower than planned contribution to the HRA Capital Programme. There will be an impact on the Capital Plan and the funding required to support the HRA Capital Programme as a result of the reduced CFCR.

*Voids – Overspend £0.435m, movement nil*

- 3.8 The overspend on voids is due to a high volume of properties remaining void whilst Change of Tenancy works take place. Both Housing & Building Services have worked to improve voids processes, and this overspend is expected to reduce at the next monitor.

*Other Expenditure – Overspend £1.566m, movement £0.875m*

- 3.9 Disability Adaptations is projected to overspend by £0.500m, movement nil. This increased spend is funded by a withdrawal from balances and will allow for an increased volume of adaptations in year to reduce current waiting list times. The remaining £0.190m overspend relates to increased utility costs.
- 3.10 The remaining overspend and movement of £0.875m mainly relates to Hostels Expenditure. Hostels income is not sufficient to cover operating costs, the Homelessness service is working on delivery models which will look to reduce and or eliminate the hostels overspend. This includes measures proposed in the Fife's Homelessness Reduction Plan 2023/25 presented to Cabinet on 5th October 2023.

*Net Withdrawal from Balances £1.904m*

- 3.11 The net withdrawal from balances includes the investment into fencing and estates of £0.545m and adaptations of £0.500m. The remaining £0.859m relates to contributions into balances at the end of 2022-23. This will be withdrawn in 2023-24 to assist with maintaining the level of CFCR required.

## **4.0 Conclusions**

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- 4.1 The total 2023/24 net revenue budget for areas falling under the scope of this Committee is £81.901m. The projected level of expenditure is £85.470m resulting in a projected overspend of £3.569m (4.36%).

4.2 There is a net withdrawal from HRA balance of £1.904m as detailed in paragraph 3.11.

### **List of Appendices**

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1. Projected Outturn 2023/24 – Communities Directorate
2. Projected Outturn 2023/24 – Housing Revenue Account

### **Background Papers**

None

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY August 2023 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES					Appendix 1	
COMMUNITIES	CURRENT BUDGET 2023-24 £m	FORECAST 2023-24 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
<b>TOTAL COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>104.343</b>	<b>107.912</b>	<b>3.569</b>	<b>3.42%</b>	<b>1.536</b>	<b>2.033</b>
<b>LESS: CORPORATELY MANAGED ITEMS</b>	<b>22.442</b>	<b>22.442</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>81.901</b>	<b>85.470</b>	<b>3.569</b>	<b>4.36%</b>	<b>1.536</b>	<b>2.033</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET</b>						
COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS	51.713	54.898	3.185	6.16%	1.492	1.693
GFH - HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES	14.431	14.776	0.345	2.39%	0.044	0.301
COMMUNITIES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	0.216	0.208	(0.008)	-3.75%	0.000	(0.008)
CUSTOMER & ONLINE SERVICES	15.542	15.589	0.047	0.30%	0.000	0.047
	<b>81.901</b>	<b>85.470</b>	<b>3.569</b>	<b>4.36%</b>	<b>1.536</b>	<b>2.033</b>
<b>SUBJECTIVE GROUPING</b>						
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>81.901</b>	<b>85.470</b>	<b>3.569</b>	<b>4.36%</b>	<b>1.536</b>	<b>2.033</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>(25.232)</b>	<b>(28.251)</b>	<b>(3.020)</b>	<b>11.97%</b>	<b>(1.747)</b>	<b>(1.273)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
EMPLOYEE COSTS	41.638	42.155	0.517	1.24%	0.000	0.517
PREMISES RELATED EXPENDITURE	13.976	17.130	3.153	22.56%	2.433	0.720
TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE	0.497	0.590	0.093	18.66%	0.004	0.089
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	15.580	16.443	0.863	5.54%	(0.654)	1.517
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	32.268	34.227	1.959	6.07%	1.499	0.460
TRANSFER PAYMENTS	0.263	0.287	0.024	9.12%	0.000	0.024
SUPPORT SERVICES CHARGES	2.911	2.890	(0.021)	-0.72%	0.000	(0.021)
	<b>107.133</b>	<b>113.722</b>	<b>6.588</b>	<b>6.15%</b>	<b>3.282</b>	<b>3.306</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81.901</b>	<b>85.470</b>	<b>3.569</b>	<b>4.36%</b>	<b>1.536</b>	<b>2.033</b>

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2023-24						Appendix 2	
	CURRENT BUDGET 2023-24 £m	ACTUAL £m	FORECAST 2023-24 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m	MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE £m
Budgeted Expenditure							
Repairs & Maintenance	40.377	15.576	47.666	7.290	18.05%	6.897	0.393
Supervision & Management	21.464	5.875	20.883	(0.581)	-2.71%	0.000	(0.581)
Funding Investment:							
Cost of Borrowing	32.859	0.000	32.859	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
Revenue Contribution (including CFCR)	27.328	0.226	20.652	(6.676)	-24.43%	(6.119)	(0.557)
	<b>122.028</b>	<b>21.678</b>	<b>122.060</b>	<b>0.033</b>	<b>0.03%</b>	<b>0.779</b>	<b>(0.746)</b>
Voids	2.610	1.090	3.046	0.435	16.68%	0.435	0.000
Housing Support Costs	(0.474)	0.000	(0.474)	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
Garden Care Scheme	0.449	0.127	0.448	(0.002)	-0.37%	0.000	(0.002)
Bad or Doubtful Debts	3.150	(6.288)	3.150	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
Other Expenditure	11.629	3.427	13.195	1.566	13.46%	0.690	0.875
COVID Expenditure	0.000	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	0.00%	0.000	(0.000)
	<b>139.392</b>	<b>20.034</b>	<b>141.424</b>	<b>2.032</b>	<b>1.46%</b>	<b>1.904</b>	<b>0.128</b>
Financed By:							
Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(132.249)	(49.499)	(132.249)	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
Non Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(3.589)	(1.362)	(3.589)	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
Hostels - Accommodation Charges	(2.202)	(0.826)	(2.233)	(0.031)	1.39%	0.000	(0.031)
Other Income	(1.352)	(0.185)	(1.449)	(0.097)	7.18%	0.000	(0.097)
	<b>(139.392)</b>	<b>(51.872)</b>	<b>(139.520)</b>	<b>(0.128)</b>	<b>0.09%</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(0.128)</b>
<b>Contribution From / (To) Balances</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(31.838)</b>	<b>1.904</b>	<b>1.904</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1.904</b>	<b>0.000</b>

16 November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 9

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## 2023-24 Capital Plan Projected Outturn – Communities

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**Report by:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
Michael Enston, Executive Director, Communities Directorate

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advise on the projected financial position for the 2023/24 financial year.

### Recommendation(s)

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Committee is asked to consider the current performance and activity for the 2023/24 Capital Monitoring as detailed in this report.

### Resource Implications

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None.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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None.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 Based on current information, this report summarises the projected capital outturn for the areas falling under the scope of this Committee for 2023/24. At this stage it is forecast that the projected expenditure will be £139.561m, resulting in a projected advancement of £0.367m.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 shows an analysis of specific projects in the current capital investment plan which have a budget greater than £1m and analyses total project cost rather than only in year spend.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 details the forecast expenditure and income against budget for each project. A brief explanation of any significant forecast variances is provided at section 3 within this report.

## 2.0 Governance

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- 2.1 On 21 June 2016 the Executive Committee approved revised governance and scrutiny arrangements for major capital projects. At that meeting the Committee agreed an enhanced level of reporting on capital projects through the quarterly capital expenditure monitoring report.
- 2.2 Major projects are defined as projects with a value of £5m and over. Projects with a value of less than £5m may also be subject to enhanced governance and scrutiny arrangements where there may be greater risk of overspend against budget, a risk of overrun on timescales or where expected benefits may not be delivered. The Investment Strategy Group is currently working to identify these projects as part of a review of the Capital Plan. Elected members will also be able to suggest when a particular project should be scrutinised in more detail.

## 3.0 Issues, Achievements & Financial Performance

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### Key Issues / Risks

- 3.1 Appendix 1 details the total cost forecast position for all capital projects within the areas under the scope of the Committee with an overall value of £1m and over. At this stage of the financial year there are no key issues associated with the major projects.
- 3.2 Across the Capital Investment Plan there continues to be risk that both the timing and the costs of projects are adversely affected by the current economic climate. Throughout the programme, issues are continuing to be identified in relation to the supply of construction materials, the consequences of which have been considered and reflected in the Capital Investment Plan review which was approved by Fife Council on 22 June 2023. Monitoring of the impact of any additional costs on projects still in their infancy will continue and any significant impact on timescales and associated risks will be reported to this committee. Where appropriate, any known impact on timing of delivery of projects has been built in to the rephased plan

and the overall scale of any additional costs or further delays will be considered as part of the review of the Capital Investment Plan.

3.3 These potential risks cover all aspects of the capital plan including both General Fund and the HRA.

### 3.4 Major Projects – Potential Risks and Actions

The Adam Smith Creative Hub, £0.546m overspend and the Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre Phase 2, £0.463m overspend relates to funding that has been approved and the budget is in the process of being realigned.

There is an overspend of £0.512m on Glenwood Regeneration project as a result of the Compulsory Purchase Orders being higher than anticipated.

### Financial Performance – 2023/24 Projected Outturn

3.5 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the projected outturn for each project for the financial year 2023/24. The appendix shows a projected outturn of £139.561m against a Capital Investment plan of £139.194m, a spending level of 100%.

3.6 The reasons for significant variances (+/-£0.500m) are detailed below.

3.7 Slippage is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend less than the budget allocation in a particular year due to a delay in timing on the delivery of the project. This is not uncommon in the capital programme and the reasons for this can be wide and varied. Advancement is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend more than the budget allocation in a particular year due to an acceleration of the budget from future years.

### Significant Variances

#### *Area Community & Corporate Development – Slippage £5.174m*

3.8 Countryside has slippage of (£0.581m) that relates to the Nature Restoration fund, the split of this funding will be coordinated by a governance process and an update will be provided in due course. Slippage of (£1.112m) within Sports & Golf programme for the Glenrothes Golf Depot Hub, discussions are ongoing to identify the appropriate outcome of this project and the expenditure is likely to be rephased across 2024-25 & 2025-26. Improving Health Through Leisure & Sport has slippage of (£0.726m) relating to several playpark projects across Fife, these projects are delayed aligning with the outcome of the play space strategy to be agreed by each area committee and the desire to involve communities to seek match funding against Council and Scottish Government funding for play parks.

3.9 Area Community Facilities slippage of (£1m) relates to the wider discussion as to the scope of the Inverkeithing Community Hub project. Sport & Leisure Facilities has slippage of (£0.984m), and (£0.500m) relates to Synthetic Turf pitch costs being less than anticipated alongside securing external funding. The remaining (£0.484m) relates to delays in park projects such as Duffus Park.

- 3.10 Fife Tourism Infrastructure programme slippage of (£0.457m), projects are being identified to utilise this funding. Sports Leisure and Community Assets is showing slippage of (£0.574m), this funding is being used to support current projects and budget realignment will be actioned in due course.
- 3.11 Parks development projects across Fife have slippage of (£0.330m). Work is ongoing on a number of projects such as Ravenscraig Play Park, Castle Terrace Play Area, and Daisy Park to progress these projects.
- 3.12 Libraries, Museums, Galleries & Theatres has an overspend of £1.232m, Adam Smith Creative Hub, £0.546m and relates to funding that has been approved and the budget is in the process of being realigned. The remainder relates to rigging across theatres in fife of £0.636m, EMRF funding has been sourced to offset this but does not get allocated to budgets until end of the financial year.

*Specific Needs / Sheltered Housing – Advancement £5.500m*

- 3.13 The advancement relates to the Property Acquisition Programme. On 6th April 2023 Cabinet Committee approved additional capital expenditure to enable the Property Acquisition Programme to continue across 2023-26 at a cost of £16.5m to purchase 150 units (50 units per year) at an average cost of £110k per unit. It is projected that 100 of these units will be purchased within 2023-24 resulting in an advancement of spend in 2023-24.

*Specific Needs / Sheltered Housing Income – Advancement £2.500m*

- 3.14 The advancement relates to the increase in Property Acquisitions in year noted in para 3.13 which has increased the level of Scottish Government subsidy expected in year.

## **4.0 Conclusions**

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- 4.1 The total 2023/24 approved programme for the areas in scope of this Committee is £139.194m. The projected level of expenditure is £139.561m, which represents 100% of the total programme, resulting in an advancement of £0.367m.
- 4.2 The management of capital resources require us to look across financial years, as well as within individual years. The current year performance is only a snapshot of the existing plan, and the Directorate will adjust expenditure levels within future years of the plan to accommodate the advancement or slippage of projects.

### **List of Appendices**

1. Total Cost Monitor
2. Capital Monitoring Report by Service

**Background Papers**

None

**Report Contact**

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Project	Theme	Original Approved Budget £m	Current Project Budget £m	Total Projected Outturn £m	Variance £m	Variance %	Current Project Status	Expected Project Completion Date
Abbeyview Integrated Hub	Thriving Places	1.500	9.506	9.506	-	0.00%	Current Project	2024-25
Templehall Community Hub	Thriving Places	1.500	15.304	15.304	-	0.00%	Current Project	2027-28
Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre - Phase 2	Thriving Places	1.600	7.255	7.718	0.463	6.38%	Current Project	2025-26
East Sands Redevelopment Project	Thriving Places	6.000	6.000	6.000	-	0.00%	Future Project	2026-27
Adam Smith Creative Hub	Maintaining Our Assets	2.000	7.171	7.717	0.546	7.62%	Current Project	2023-24
Affordable Housing	Housing Revenue Account	281.869	578.529	578.529	-	0.00%	Current Project	2025-26
<b>Total Major Projects over £5.000m</b>		<b>294.469</b>	<b>623.765</b>	<b>624.774</b>	<b>1.009</b>	<b>0.16%</b>		
Lyne Burn Corridor River Restoration	Thriving Places	1.534	1.654	1.654	-	0.00%	Current Project	2023-24
Silverburn	Thriving Places	1.000	3.580	3.580	-	0.00%	Current Project	2025-26
Glenwood Regeneration	Thriving Places	1.500	2.088	2.600	0.512	24.52%	Current Project	2024-25
Beacon Leisure Centre - Upgrade Enhancements	Thriving Places	1.000	1.000	1.000	-	0.00%	Future Project	2026-27
Inverkeithing Community Swimming Pool	Thriving Places	1.000	1.000	1.000	-	0.00%	Future Project	2028-29
Golf Depot Hub Glenrothes	Maintaining Our Assets	0.650	1.650	1.650	-	0.00%	A60096: AREA COMMUNITY FACILITIES	2025-26
<b>Total Major Projects over £1.000m</b>		<b>6.684</b>	<b>10.972</b>	<b>11.484</b>	<b>0.512</b>	<b>4.67%</b>		
<b>Total Major Projects</b>		<b>301.153</b>	<b>634.737</b>	<b>636.258</b>	<b>1.521</b>	<b>0.24%</b>		

Expenditure	Current Budget £m	Actual to Date £m	Projected Outturn £m	Projected Variance £m	Projected Outturn as % of Plan
Community Facilities Programme	3.041	1.872	3.003	(0.038)	99%
Countryside Programme	1.548	0.164	0.967	(0.581)	62%
Libraries, Museums, Galleries & Theatres	2.760	3.050	3.992	1.232	145%
Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme	0.396	0.024	0.024	(0.372)	6%
Major Parks Programme	0.063	0.027	0.027	(0.036)	43%
Allotments Programme	0.287	0.056	0.223	(0.063)	78%
Parks Development Projects	2.036	0.218	1.706	(0.330)	84%
Future of Leisure	0.011	-	-	(0.011)	0%
Sports & Golf Programme	1.259	-	0.147	(1.112)	12%
Improving Health Through Leisure & Sport	1.215	0.174	0.489	(0.726)	40%
Area Community Facilities	6.300	0.786	5.300	(1.000)	84%
Area Capital Investment	0.641	0.241	0.520	(0.121)	81%
Sport and Leisure Facilities	2.815	0.664	1.831	(0.984)	65%
Fife Tourism Infrastructure Programme	0.523	0.020	0.066	(0.457)	0%
Sports, Leisure and Community Assets	0.890	0.008	0.315	(0.574)	35%
<b>TOTAL AREA COMMUNITY &amp; CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>23.784</b>	<b>7.304</b>	<b>18.610</b>	<b>(5.174)</b>	<b>78%</b>
Disability Adaptations	1.200	0.581	1.200	-	0%
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND HOUSING</b>	<b>1.200</b>	<b>0.581</b>	<b>1.200</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>
Minor Works	1.000	0.183	0.750	(0.250)	75%
Policy Options	6.057	0.385	6.057	-	100%
Regeneration/Estates Action	2.577	0.330	2.868	0.291	111%
Component Replacement	36.000	11.458	36.000	-	100%
Specific Needs/Sheltered Housing	8.595	4.136	14.095	5.500	164%
Structural Works (Specialist)	1.200	0.123	1.200	-	100%
Affordable Housing	56.000	17.420	56.000	-	100%
Major Projects	2.781	0.190	2.781	-	0%
<b>TOTAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b>	<b>114.210</b>	<b>34.226</b>	<b>119.751</b>	<b>5.541</b>	<b>105%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>139.194</b>	<b>42.111</b>	<b>139.561</b>	<b>0.367</b>	<b>100%</b>

Income	Current Budget £m	Actual to Date £m	Projected Outturn £m	Projected Variance £m	Projected Outturn as % of Plan
Parks Development Projects	(0.321)	(0.277)	(0.347)	(0.026)	108%
Area Capital Investment	(0.238)	-	(0.244)	(0.006)	103%
<b>TOTAL AREA COMMUNITY &amp; CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>(1.384)</b>	<b>(0.416)</b>	<b>(1.489)</b>	<b>(0.105)</b>	<b>108%</b>
Component Replacement	-	0.018	-	-	0%
Specific Needs/Sheltered Housing	(2.500)	(3.150)	(5.000)	(2.500)	200%
Affordable Housing	(23.844)	(7.140)	(23.844)	-	100%
<b>TOTAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b>	<b>(26.344)</b>	<b>(10.272)</b>	<b>(28.844)</b>	<b>(2.500)</b>	<b>109%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>(27.728)</b>	<b>(10.688)</b>	<b>(30.333)</b>	<b>(2.605)</b>	<b>109%</b>

16 November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 10

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## 2023-24 Revenue Budget & Capital Plan Projected Outturn - Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services

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**Report by:** Christine Moir, Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services and Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the forecast financial position for the 2023-24 financial year, for the areas in scope of the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services.

### Recommendation(s)

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Members are asked to:

- a. consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in this report in relation to both the revenue budget and capital plan;
- b. note the projected outturn position and the relevant areas of projected over and under spend within the service.

### Resource Implications

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The Service is committed to managing the spend within the overall level of resource available and in continuing to promote the aims of the Children and Families Strategy in terms of addressing the balance of care.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the projected outturn for the Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services, for the 2023-24 Revenue Budget and Capital Plan, and to highlight the major variances as at August 2023. This is the second monitoring report to the Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.2 The preparation of the 2023-24 Revenue Budget focussed on applying service underspends, budget realignment and vacancy factors to close the budget gap, and as such no specific savings proposals were approved by the Council as part of the Revenue Budget. There is therefore no requirement to include a Savings Tracker as part of financial reporting for the 2023-24 financial year.

## 2.0 Revenue Budget - Projected Outturn

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- 2.1 **Projected Outturn – Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services**
- 2.2 The projected overspend for this financial year, for Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services is £1.059m. A summary of the 2023-24 projected outturn is detailed in Appendix 1. This shows projected expenditure against budget across the service headings within the Service. It should be noted that the balances are extracted from the ledger system and are shown as rounded thousands. This may mean that there are some rounding differences contained within the appendices, but these are immaterial values that do not impact on the overall financial position. The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of the main areas where there are significant variances (+/-£0.250m) to budgets.

## 3.0 Revenue Budget - Major Variances

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- 3.1 **Children & Families / Criminal Justice :- projected outturn - £ 1.059m overspend, movement £ 2.164m**
- 3.2 The position for the service reflects a projected overspend for Children and Families / Criminal Justice Service. This reflects the service's Belonging to Five Strategy which has sought to address the balance of care and support children to remain safely at home rather than in purchased care arrangements.
- 3.3 The projected overspend is mainly due to an increase in the number of higher cost residential placements of £1.809m, and associated costs of other placements of £0.634m. Whilst the overall number of placements is remaining fairly static, and is still low in comparison to other authorities, the mix of placement types has changed with more high cost placements since the last report in order to meet the needs of young people.
- 3.4 Also included in the projection is the anticipated cost associated with the new national foster and kinship rates agreed nationally. This will create an estimated pressure of £1.590m on Children and Families budget as the additional cost will be in excess of the advised Scottish Government funding. This figure will be updated when carer arrangements have been reviewed and the actual financial impact has been identified.

- 3.5 Within Continuing Care a projected overspend of £0.485m is included, due to spend being in excess of Scottish Government funding, and overspends in relation to direct payments of £0.498m, grants/payments to individuals of £0.500m and respite care of £0.405m reflecting the costs associated with these care arrangements.
- 3.6 Projected underspends are included across the service mainly due to lead in times for the implementation of plans and recruitment under the whole family wellbeing funding of £1.600m, and underspends due to recruitment lead in times and turnover on staffing of £1.582m. Underspends are also included in in-house foster care of £1.185m and kinship care of £0.688m due to the shifting balance of care.
- 3.7 The movement since the last monitoring report of £2.164m is mainly due to the anticipated impact of the new national foster care allowance of £1.590m and the cost of child placements of £0.509m, due to changes to the types of care required to meet need.

## 4.0 Capital Plan – Projected Outturn

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- 4.1 **Children & Families / Criminal Justice :- projected outturn - £ 0.250m**
- 4.2 The Capital Plan Review approved by the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 includes a new major project for Children and Families Service under the Looked After Children heading, which is the replacement of the current Glenmar children's house to provide suitable accommodation to support children with complex care needs. The indicative timeline for the project as indicated in Appendix 2 is 2025-26.
- 4.3 In terms of the current year monitoring report included at Appendix 3, the projected outturn for the service Capital Plan for 2023-24 is on budget at £0.250m. The monitoring of the impact of any additional costs, impact on timescales and associated risks with capital projects is an ongoing process, with the known impact on timing of delivery of projects being built into the Plan as part of the rephasing exercise. The overall scale of any additional costs or further delays will be kept under review and reported in future reports.
- 4.4 In addition to some initial spend on the replacement of Glenmar children's house, the projects planned for 2023-24 under the heading of Looked After Children are relatively small in nature and are required to improve and maintain the Council's existing residential house provision. Needs are assessed and prioritised to ensure the budget is deployed effectively, taking account of the current economic climate, supply of construction materials and the ability to deliver projects timeously.

## 5.0 Conclusions

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- 5.1 The projected outturn for Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services Revenue Budget for 2023-24 is a projected overspend of £1.059m.
- 5.2 The Capital Plan for the Service for 2023-24 is projected to spend on budget, with a projected outturn of £0.250m.

## List of Appendices

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1. Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services Revenue Monitor 2023-24
2. Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services Capital Plan 2023-24 – Major Projects
3. Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services Capital Plan 2023-24 – Current Year Monitoring Report

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY					Appendix 1	
PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE						
CHILDREN & FAMILIES/CRIMINAL JUSTICE						
	£m	£m	£m		£m	£m
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>67.095</b>	<b>68.153</b>	<b>1.059</b>	<b>1.58%</b>	<b>(1.105)</b>	<b>2.164</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET</b>						
CHILDREN & FAMILIES/CJS	67.095	68.153	1.059	1.58%	(1.105)	2.164

SUBJECTIVE GROUPING						
	£m	£m	£m	%		
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>67.095</b>	<b>68.153</b>	<b>1.059</b>	<b>1.58%</b>	<b>(1.105)</b>	<b>2.164</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>(9.804)</b>	<b>(11.099)</b>	<b>(1.295)</b>	<b>13.21%</b>	<b>(0.942)</b>	<b>(0.353)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
EMPLOYEE COSTS	38.569	37.935	(0.634)	-1.64%	(0.051)	(0.583)
PREMISES RELATED EXPENDITURE	0.487	1.126	0.639	131.32%	0.633	0.006
TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE	1.688	1.808	0.120	7.11%	0.000	0.120
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	5.846	3.427	(2.419)	-41.38%	(1.973)	(0.446)
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	24.907	29.497	4.590	18.43%	1.747	2.843
TRANSFER PAYMENTS	5.401	5.460	0.058	1.08%	(0.519)	0.577
SUPPORT SERVICES CHARGES	0.001	0.000	(0.001)	-100.00%	0.000	(0.001)
	<b>76.899</b>	<b>79.253</b>	<b>2.354</b>	<b>3.06%</b>	<b>(0.163)</b>	<b>2.517</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67.095</b>	<b>68.153</b>	<b>1.059</b>	<b>1.58%</b>	<b>(1.105)</b>	<b>2.164</b>

Project	Theme	Original Approved Budget £m	Current Project Budget £m	Total Projected Outturn £m	Variance £m	Variance %	Current Project Status	Expected Project Completion Date
Reprovision Glenmar Childrens Home		2.525	2.525	2.525	-	0.00%	Future Project	2025-26
<b>Total Major Projects over £1.000m</b>		<b>2.525</b>	<b>2.525</b>	<b>2.525</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.00%</b>		
<b>Total Major Projects</b>		<b>2.525</b>	<b>2.525</b>	<b>2.525</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.00%</b>		

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Current Budget £m</b>	<b>Actual to Date £m</b>	<b>Projected Outturn £m</b>	<b>Projected Variance £m</b>	<b>Projected Outturn as % of Plan</b>
Looked After Children Homes Reprovision	0.100	-	0.100	-	100%
Looked After Children	0.150	-	0.150	-	100%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>0.250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Income</b>	<b>Current Budget £m</b>	<b>Actual to Date £m</b>	<b>Projected Outturn £m</b>	<b>Projected Variance £m</b>	<b>Projected Outturn as % of Plan</b>
Looked After Children Homes Reprovision	-	-	-	-	0%
Looked After Children	-	-	-	-	0%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0%</b>

16 November 2023  
Agenda Item No. 11

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## 2023-24 Revenue Budget Projected Out-turn – Health & Social Care

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**Report by:** Nicky Connor, Director of Health and Social Care  
Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance & Corporate Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to give members an update on the 2023-24 projected out-turn at August 2023 and the movement from June 2023 for Fife Council Social Care Services for Adults and Older People.

### Recommendation(s)

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Committee is asked to consider the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

### Resource Implications

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None

### Legal & Risk Implications

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The Service requires to manage the risk to individual clients and the community in Fife whilst undertaking its statutory duties within the budget approved by the Council for 2023-24.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the projected outturn for the Health & Social Care Service, for the 2023-24 Revenue Budget, and to highlight the major variances as at August 2023 at Section 3 of the report. This is the second monitoring report to the Scrutiny Committee for the 2023-24 financial year.
- 1.2 Section 4 of the report summarises the progress on delivery of approved budget savings and provides an explanation of any variances to the delivery of the savings target.

## 2.0 IJB Budget

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- 2.1 The Health & Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) consists of parts of NHS, Social Care for Adults and Older People and an element of Fife Council Housing, specifically adaptations to houses. It does not include any social care expenditure incurred through Education & Children's Services. The budget is managed by the Integration Joint Board (IJB).
  - 2.1.1 The IJB budget was approved on 31 March 2023. The cost to deliver services at existing levels required more funding than was currently available from both partner organisations and therefore a £21m package of savings plan to close the funding gap was presented and approved at that meeting. Additional allocations are awarded in year through Health budget allocations and the current budget for 2023-24 as at August is £667.120m.
  - 2.1.2 There is no available funding from Scottish Government for Covid-19 expenditure in 2023-24. Costs will be funded by existing Budgets.
  - 2.1.3 Reserves totalling £37.719m are held by Fife Council on behalf of the IJB, of which £16.225m is ear-marked for specific use. Of the £21.494m, commitments of £2.726m have been brought forward from 2022/23. The IJB approved the earmarking of £10m of reserves in anticipation of delays in delivering cashable savings in 2023-24. The IJB also approved further commitments of £1.549m at the July Committee, leaving a balance for use of £7.219m.
- 2.2 IJB Integration Scheme
  - 2.2.1 To reflect the partnership working between the NHS and Fife Council through the Health & Social Care Partnership, an agreement has been reached on how any overspends should be shared between the partners. This is known as the risk share agreement. Following the review in 21-22 the new share is Fife Council funds 38% and NHS funds 62% of any overall H&SCP overspend, regardless of where the overspend is incurred.

- 2.2.2 The H&SC Partnership is managed by the Integration Joint Board (IJB). Included in the budget was the recognition that resources would transfer as more care is moved from a hospital setting to a home or homely setting. The budget and outturn includes income from NHS of £10.880m for this transfer of resources.
- 2.2.3 Expenditure of £1.567m on adaptations to houses by Fife Council Housing Services is included in the overall budget for IJB. Housing is anticipating a small overspend which will be funded by IJB balances and will be used to clear the waiting list of jobs. Housing expenditure is reported to the Community and Housing Services Committee and is therefore outwith the scope of this report.
- 2.2.4 Part of the budget within Fife Council Social Care is excluded from the overall budget managed by IJB. The excluded element is the Contracts team, who manage the commissioning of services. The budget for this area is £1.639m, currently showing a projected underspend of (£0.138m) due to vacancies. As this is not part of the budget managed by IJB, 100% of any over- or under-spend is funded by Fife Council.

### 3.0 Major Variances for Social Care

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- 3.1 The budget allocated to Fife Council for Social Care for Adults and Older People is £215.896m which includes the budget for Contracts Team of £1.639m.
- 3.1.1 The projected underspend for Social Care for Adults and Older People within Fife Council is (£0.707m) or 0.33% of the net service managed budget which, is a reduction of (£3.183m) from the projected June overspend position. A summary is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 **Integrated Complex and Critical Care** has a projected underspend of (£2.266m), movement of (£3.013m). The main variances and reasons for movement are detailed as follows:
- 3.2.1 Adults Placements – overspend £4.168m, movement (£0.044m)

The overspend mainly relates to a £3m saving in 2023-24 using Digital Sensor Technology. The scale of this transformational change requires substantial planning and business cases are currently being worked on however, this has led to delays in meeting the saving this year.

There is a £0.656m under achievement on the re-provision of care saving that has been substituted and met from an underspend on vacancies. The rest of the overspend relates to a greater number of adult packages having been commissioned than the budget available. The service closely monitors the commissioning of these packages and reduces packages where possible.

The movement is due to delays in commencing packages.

### 3.2.2 Adults Supported Living – underspend (£4.214m), movement (£1.084m)

Within Community Support Services - vacancies are being held whilst the future design of the service is established. This is resulting in an underspend on staffing of (£2.339m). Difficulties in recruiting staff led to a projected underspend of (£1.345m) within the group homes.

The movement is due to recruitment difficulties. The service is currently reviewing the skills mix / responsibilities across roles with a view to creating a new role to try and attract more candidates.

### 3.2.3 Adults Fife Wide – underspend (£1.815m), movement (£1.755m)

This underspend is due to placements for named individuals that are yet to commence as they are currently in hospital.

The movement is due to the individuals being discharged from hospital later than expected.

### 3.2.4 Social Care Fieldwork Teams – underspend (£0.405m), movement (£0.130m)

This underspend is mainly due to staffing vacancies being slower than expected to recruit to (£1.271m). This is partially offset by overspends in transport for taxis to college and day care provision of £0.478m and third party and direct payments £0.420m.

The movement is due to a slight increase in vacancies.

### 3.3 **Integrated Community Care Services** has a projected overspend of £2.777m, movement £0.802m. The main variances and reasons for movement are detailed as follows:

#### 3.3.1 Care at Home – overspend £1.211m, movement £0.196m

This is mainly due to an overspend on Self Directed Support Payments £2m (where a service user is provided with funding to employ a personal carer) due to more packages being commissioned than budgeted. Work is already underway to review this position.

This is offset by vacancies in Internal Homecare (£2m).

In addition, the £1m saving for Bed Based modelling, Commissioning and Scheduling is not being met this year, mainly due to the scale of this transformational change. The Home First strategy which will help to enable this saving was approved in July 2023 and workstreams to take forward the work are in place. In addition, there is a requirement for a business case for the saving, work has commenced on this.

#### 3.3.2 Older People Residential & Daycare – overspend £1.772, movement £0.804m

The main variance is due to projected costs for Agency across Care Homes of £2.5m, this cost is partially offset by vacancies £1m. Measures to reduce agency costs are being progressed with the Service. The service has secured business management support to progress a Care Home Staffing Analysis Report to provide analysis both service wide and for each care home, with a view to establishing causation and a solution to the current agency requirement.

The Daycare services saving of £0.500m is currently being met through vacancies within the Service.

The movement is due to an increase in projected agency costs.

3.3.3 Older People Nursing & Residential – underspend (£0.514m), movement (£0.293m)

The main variance and movement are due to a reduction in the number and cost of packages commissioned.

3.3.4 Older People Fife Wide (Hospital Discharge) – overspend £0.272m, movement £0.116m

The main variance and movement are due to agency costs, as a result of higher demand from hospital discharges.

3.4 **Integrated Professional & Business Enabling** has an underspend of (£1.080m), movement (£0.884m)

The main variance and movement are due to delays in commencing projects within the Carers Act (£0.500m) and staff vacancies (£0.369m).

## 4.0 Progress on Budget Savings

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4.1 This section details revenue budget savings for Social Care for Adults and Older People, detailing achievements against the current year approved budget savings as at March.

4.2 New savings of £7.587m were approved by the IJB for 2023-24. Previously unmet savings of £2.594m are required to be made in 2023-24 to balance the budget. The service expects £5.998m (59% of target) to be achieved out of the total savings of £10.181m. This leaves unachieved savings of £4.183m. As mentioned in point 2.1.3 above, £4m of reserves will be allocated to the new 2023-24 savings in anticipation of delays in the delivery of these cashable savings.

## 5.0 Conclusions

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5.1 The projected outturn for Social Care for Adults and Older People for the 2023-24 financial year as at August 2023 is an underspend of (£0.707m), which will be transferred to IJB reserves at the end of the Financial year.

## List of Appendices

### Appendix 1: Social Care – Revenue Budget 2023-24

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BUDGET MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY August 2023 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES					Appendix 1	
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	CURRENT BUDGET 2023-24 £m	FORECAST 2023-24 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	£m	£m
<b>TOTAL COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>233.505</b>	<b>232.798</b>	<b>(0.707)</b>	<b>-0.30%</b>	<b>2.476</b>	<b>(3.183)</b>
LESS: CORPORATELY MANAGED ITEMS	17.609	17.609	0.000	0.00%	0.000	0.000
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>215.896</b>	<b>215.189</b>	<b>(0.707)</b>	<b>-0.33%</b>	<b>2.476</b>	<b>(3.183)</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF SERVICE MANAGED BUDGET</b>						
INTEGRATED COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES	105.248	108.025	2.777	2.64%	1.975	0.802
INTEGRATED COMPLEX AND CRITICAL SERVICES	111.881	109.616	(2.266)	-2.03%	0.747	(3.013)
H&SC PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS ENABLING	(2.871)	(3.951)	(1.080)	37.61%	(0.196)	(0.884)
FC CONTRACTS	1.639	1.500	(0.138)	-8.44%	(0.050)	(0.088)
<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE</b>	<b>215.896</b>	<b>215.189</b>	<b>(0.707)</b>	<b>-0.33%</b>	<b>2.476</b>	<b>(3.183)</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTION TO IJB</b>			<b>0.707</b>		<b>(2.476)</b>	<b>3.183</b>
<b>MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE</b>						
SUBJECTIVE GROUPING	CURRENT BUDGET 2023-24 £m	FORECAST 2023-24 £m	VARIANCE £m	VARIANCE %	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE	PREVIOUS REPORTED VARIANCE
<b>SERVICE MANAGED NET BUDGET</b>	<b>215.896</b>	<b>215.189</b>	<b>(0.707)</b>	<b>-0.33%</b>	<b>2.476</b>	<b>(3.183)</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>(107.504)</b>	<b>(107.578)</b>	<b>(0.074)</b>	<b>0.07%</b>	<b>(1.349)</b>	<b>1.275</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
EMPLOYEE COSTS	109.061	101.809	(7.253)	-6.65%	(5.445)	(1.807)
PREMISES RELATED EXPENDITURE	3.951	4.119	0.168	4.26%	(0.045)	0.213
TRANSPORT RELATED EXPENDITURE	2.940	3.610	0.670	22.80%	0.412	0.259
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	12.379	11.979	(0.400)	-3.23%	1.031	(1.431)
THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS	184.331	189.354	5.024	2.73%	5.766	(0.742)
TRANSFER PAYMENTS	10.727	11.886	1.159	10.81%	2.108	(0.948)
SUPPORT SERVICES CHARGES	0.012	0.010	(0.002)	-13.04%	0.000	(0.002)
	<b>323.400</b>	<b>322.767</b>	<b>(0.633)</b>	<b>-0.20%</b>	<b>3.825</b>	<b>(4.458)</b>
<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE</b>	<b>215.896</b>	<b>215.189</b>	<b>(0.707)</b>	<b>-0.33%</b>	<b>2.476</b>	<b>(3.183)</b>

16 November 2023

Agenda Item No. 12

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## 2023-24 Capital Plan Projected Outturn – Health & Social Care

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**Report by:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services  
Nicky Connor, Director of Health and Social Care

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Health and Social Care Capital Investment Plan review and advise on the projected out-turn for the 2023-24 financial year for People and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

### Recommendation(s)

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The Committee is asked to consider the current performance and activity across the 2023-24 Financial Monitoring as detailed in this report.

### Resource Implications

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None.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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None.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqlA has not been completed and is not necessary as no change or revision to existing policies and practices is proposed.

### Consultation

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None.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 Based on current information, this report summarises the projected capital outturn as at 30 August 2023 for the areas falling under the scope of this Committee. Total expenditure is expected to be £2.190m, representing 0.95% of the approved capital programme for 2023/24.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 shows an analysis of specific projects in the current capital investment plan which have a budget greater than £1m and analyses total project cost rather than only in year spend.
- 1.3 Appendix 2 details the forecast expenditure against budget for each project.
- 1.4 Care Homes – Background information  
Methil Site - Intergenerational Care Village consisting of a 36-bed care home with adjoining 39 place nursery and cafe. The site includes a mix of 35 extra care and specific needs housing bungalows.  
  
Cupar Site – 24 bed care home and 12, 1-bed flats for adults with support needs and adults and older people’s day service facilities.  
  
Anstruther Site – 24 bed care home and 12, 1- and 2-bedroom extra care housing flats, including an older people’s day service facility and café.
- 1.5 Respite Provision Broad Street - £2m has been allocated over 2024 to 2026 to build a suitable property as an alternative to the current Respite provision at Broad Street on the site of the former Forward Centre. This project is in its infancy and requires to be linked in with the existing plans to use the site as a core and cluster model of residential apartments for Adult’s who require care and support.

## 2.0 Issues, Achievements & Financial Performance

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### 2.1 Key Issues / Risks

- 2.1.1 Appendix 1 details the total cost position for all capital projects within the areas under the scope of the Committee with an overall value of £1m and over. The key risks associated with the major projects are noted below.

### 2.2 Major Projects – Potential Risks and Actions

- 2.2.1 Across the Capital Investment Plan there continues to be risk that both the timing and the costs of projects are adversely affected by the current economic climate. Throughout the programme, issues are continuing to be identified in relation to the supply of construction materials, the consequences of which have been considered and reflected in the Capital Investment Plan review which was approved by Fife Council on 22 June 2023. Monitoring of the impact of any additional costs on projects still in their infancy will continue and any significant impact on timescales and associated risks will be reported to this committee. Where appropriate, any known impact on timing of delivery of projects has been built in to the rephased plan and the overall scale of any additional costs or further delays will be considered as part of the review of the Capital Investment Plan.

2.2.2 COVID-19 restrictions have eased, however, there remains a risk that new variants emerge which could impact on project delivery in future years. These potential risks cover all aspects of the capital plan including both General Fund and the HRA.

### **2.3 Progress/Achievements**

2.3.1 Methil Site – operational from July 23.

2.3.2 Cupar Site – the Tender period started 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, with documentation being issued for Open Market testing. Early enabling works including removal of soil contamination and electrical sub-station works, is due to commence on site in November 2023. With full construction anticipated to start on site by February 2024 with completion by August 2025.

2.3.3 Anstruther Site – there was a slight delay due to having to appoint external M&E Consultants who have now been appointed and issued with the full briefing package and programme. The Planning application is expected to be submitted in October 2023 and construction is expected to commence by January 2025 with completion by July 2026.

2.3.4 Glenrothes Respite Provision - discussion at the Care Home Project Board in August 2023 identified individuals who require to be on the Board to take this project forward e.g., Social Work Adult services. The next step is to produce a project brief and business case.

### **2.4 Financial Performance – 2023-24 Provisional Outturn**

2.4.1 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the provisional outturn for each project for the financial year 2023-24.

2.4.2 There is no capital income budget for 2023-24 for the areas under the scope of this committee.

2.4.3 Slippage is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend less than the budget allocation in a particular year due to a delay in timing on the delivery of the project. This is not uncommon in the capital programme and the reasons for this can be wide and varied. Advancement is the term used to describe projects that are expected to spend more than the budget allocation in a particular year due to an acceleration of the budget from future years.

2.4.4 There are no significant variances (+/- £0.500m).

## **3.0 Conclusions**

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3.1 The total 2023-24 approved programme for the areas in scope of the Health & Social Care Scrutiny Committee is £2.317m. The level of projected expenditure is £2.190m, with slippage of £0.127m projected on the minor works programme.

3.2 The management of capital resources require us to look across financial years, as well as within individual years. The current year performance is only a snapshot of

the existing plan, and the Directorate will adjust expenditure levels within future years of the plan to accommodate the advancement or slippage of projects.

### **List of Appendices**

1. Total Cost Monitor
2. Capital Monitoring Report

### **Report Contact**

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Finance Service

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FIFE COUNCIL  
PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE  
CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33  
TOTAL COST MONITOR - MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

Project	Service	Current Project Budget £m	Total Projected Outturn £m	Variance £m	Variance %	Current Project Status	Expected Project Completion Date
Methil Care Home	Opportunities for All	8.023	8.023	0.000	0%	Current Project	2023-24
Cupar Care Home	Opportunities for All	8.774	8.774	0.000	0%	Current Project	2025-26
Anstruther Care Home	Opportunities for All	11.197	11.197	0.000	0%	Feasibility	2026-27
<b>Total Major Projects over £5.000m</b>		<b>27.995</b>	<b>27.995</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0%</b>		
Glenrothes Respite Provision	Opportunities for All	2.000	2.000	0.000	0%	Feasibility	2026-27
<b>Total Major Projects over £1.000m</b>		<b>2.000</b>	<b>2.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0%</b>		
<b>Total Major Projects</b>		<b>29.995</b>	<b>29.995</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0%</b>		

FIFE COUNCIL  
 PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
 HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE  
 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2023-33  
 MONITORING REPORT 2023-24

Appendix 2

Expenditure	Current Budget £m	Actual to Date £m	Projected Outturn £m	Projected Variance £m	Projected Outturn as % of Plan
Capital Minor Works	0.077	-	-	-0.077	0%
Adult Services (Resources)	0.150	(0.003)	0.125	-0.025	83%
Older People's Residential/Day Care	0.172	0.013	0.147	-0.025	86%
Re-Provision Of Care For Older People	1.619	2.420	1.619	0.000	100%
Telehealth Care	0.300	-	0.300	0.000	100%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2.317</b>	<b>2.430</b>	<b>2.190</b>	<b>(0.127)</b>	<b>95%</b>

16 November 2023

Agenda Item No. 13

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## People & Communities Scrutiny Committee Workplan

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**Report by:** Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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This report supports the Committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the Committee.

### Recommendation(s)

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It is recommended that the Committee review the workplan and that members come forward with suggestions for areas of scrutiny.

### Resource Implications

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Committee should consider the resource implication for Council staff of any request for future reports.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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Committee should consider seeking inclusion of future items on the workplan by prioritising those which have the biggest impact and those which seek to deal with the highest level of risk.

### Impact Assessment

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None required for this paper.

### Consultation

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The purpose of the paper is to support the Committee's discussion and therefore no consultation is necessary.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 Each Scrutiny Committee operates a workplan which contains items which fall under three broad headings: performance reporting, planning; and improvement work. These items will often lead to reactive rather than proactive scrutiny. Discussion on the workplan agenda item will afford members the opportunity to shape, as a committee, the agenda with future items of business it wishes to review in more detail.

## 2.0 Conclusions

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- 2.1 The current workplan is included as Appendix one and should be reviewed by the committee to help inform scrutiny activity.

### List of Appendices

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1. Workplan

### Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

None

### Report Contact

Helena Couperwhite  
Committee Services Manager  
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<b>People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 29 February 2024</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service(s)</b>	<b>Contact(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Minute			
Armed Forces Covenant Report	Legal & Democratic Services	Lindsay Thomson	
Police Scotland Local Policing Plan - Annual Report	Police Scotland	Derek McEwan	
Update on Housing Functional Needs Assessments	Housing Services	John Mills, Paul Short	
Communities & Neighbourhoods Annual Report	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Paul Vaughan	
Fife Coast & Countryside Trust Annual Report	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	
Fife Golf Trust Annual Report	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	
Fife Sports & Leisure Trust Annual Report	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	
Fife Cultural Trust	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	
Fife Council Duty of Candor Annual Report	Health and Social Care	Avril Sweeney	
HRNA Backlog	Housing Services	John Mills	
Availability of temporary accommodation	Housing Services	John Mills	
Delivery of Affordable Housing	Housing Services	John Mills	
Café Inc Update	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Paul Vaughan	

<b>People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 25 April 2024</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service(s)</b>	<b>Contact(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Fife Corporate Parenting Board	Education and Children's Services	Fiona Balloch	
Adult Protection Annual Report	Health and Social Care	Christine Moir	
Chief Social Work Annual Report	Health and Social Care	Fiona Mckay, Christine Moir	
Social Work Annual Performance Report	Education and Children's Services, Health and Social Care	Christine Moir	

<b>People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 27 June 2024</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service(s)</b>	<b>Contact(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Plan 12 Months Performance Report	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	Kenneth Barbour	
Fife Community Safety Partnership Update	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Patricia Spacey	

<b>Unallocated</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service(s)</b>	<b>Contact(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Child Protection Annual Report	Education and Children's Services	Christine Moir	
Day Care Provision	Health and Social Care	Nicky Connor	
Self Directed Care Packages	Health and Social Care	Nicky Connor	
Rockgelly	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Paul Vaughan	report will be considered at area committee in the first instance

<b>Unallocated</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Service(s)</b>	<b>Contact(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Equality & Diversity Outcomes Report		Zahida Ramzan	