

Agenda Item	5
Report No	HCW/21/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Date: 11 November 2021

Report Title: Performance and Quality Assurance Review Report

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to inform Committee of the quality assurance and review processes that are currently underway within the Health and Social Care Directorate.
- 1.2 A more detailed report will be brought to the next Committee (February 2022). This will include more in-depth analysis of the review findings.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. Note the review processes being undertaken in the different services
 - ii. Note the planned use of these findings to help inform practice, service delivery and re-design of services

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource: There is no specific resource issues arising out of the contents of this report. However, this will be re-assessed in the next report when the findings of the review work are known.
- 3.2 Legal: No arising issues.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island): No arising issues.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever: No arising issues.
- 3.5 Risk: Quality assurance and review help inform and assess service risks. These are reflected in the health and social care risk register.

3.6 Gaelic: No arising issues.

4. Background and Context

4.1 Since the inception of integrated services, there have been significant changes to health and social care legislation and national policy developments which has impacted on the health and social care workforce, structural arrangements, and practice. In addition to changes within the services, there have been considerable change in the leadership and management structure of the organisation. Further, the Covid pandemic has, and will continue to, impact on the demand and complexity of need for our services.

4.2 As we come out of Covid, services will not only need to adapt to demand requirements, but they must be actively developing practice models to enable more effective early intervention and prevention work to be delivered.

4.3 During Covid, children's residential services have had to adapt to different working conditions whilst actively trying to keep children and staff safe. This has brought considerable pressure on both staff and the young people.

4.4 We have also seen a significant increase in child concern forms across all geographical areas of Highland over the Summer of 2021, demonstrating an increase in demand as well complexity of needs.

4.5 There is data now coming to the fore that suggests that the prevalence of County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation has increased in the last 18 months with perpetrators focusing on our Care Experienced Young People and residential houses.

5. Quality Assurance and Review Activity

5.1 In July 2021, a small-scale practice review was commissioned to determine how well services were able to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people, and improve their outcomes and, in particular, identify how services were able to measure and demonstrate this.

5.2 The review sought to understand the current strengths and challenges in delivering services across Highland Council, identify if there was inconsistency and the reasons for this, and understand how evidence, including management information, supports and drives practice development.

5.3 This review will conclude in October with the review report being expected towards the end of November 2021.

5.4 Children's residential services are experiencing significant pressures. To inform practice and models required for Highland's care experienced young people an external short-term review of service delivery has been commissioned and is now in progress. This review is being carried out by an experienced senior social work manager who has been brought into the Council to provide an independent assessment of current practice and assess how this aligns with current demand pressures. It is normal practice in Social Work to commission external reviews into areas of service provision and sits well within the learning approach that is expected within children's care and protection services.

6. Improving Practice and Service Re-design

- 6.1 The findings of the above reviews will provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of where and how we need to improve practice, as well as help inform the redesign of services. This will enable us to build on the good practice that is being carried out across the directorate, whilst also ensuring we are embedding the ethos and values of The Promise.
- 6.2 The findings of these reviews and the subsequent practice implications, will be reported to Committee in February 2022. Whilst there are a number of challenges that we need to deal with, it offers an exciting opportunity to promote our vision and make strides into improving outcomes by developing our model of practice which promotes early intervention and prevention.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

Date: 1 November 2021

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