

Council's health and social care partnership director quits

A month after a second scathing report by the Care Inspectorate of the council's performance in the Director, Judith Proctor, has announced her resignation.

Executive Director of the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and Chief Officer of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board, Ms Proctor took up the job five years ago, having worked at Aberdeen Council and elsewhere, and previously qualifying as a nurse and midwife. Ms Proctor was one of the Corporate Leadership team comprising the Chief Executive and just four directors of which she was one.



Ms Proctor was responsible for adult social work, older people's services, disability services, learning disabilities, community and primary care health services and providing care for people at home or in nursing homes.

Last week the Head of Finance, Hugh Dunn told the council's Finance & Resources Committee that the body which oversees the health and social care partnership – the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) was overspending by £100,000 a day. The EIJB Chief Finance officer, Moira Pringle told the same meeting that the June meeting would be "absolutely crucial".

Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive of The City of Edinburgh Council, wrote to staff on Friday: "Leading the Partnership through the unprecedented challenge of the global pandemic and supporting improvement across key areas over the past five years, Judith was an extremely popular and valued member of my Corporate Leadership Team.

"I want to thank Judith for her hard work over the past five years and wish her well with her future career."

The reports

There were two reports – the first presented in February dealt with The City of Edinburgh Partnership and its work in Adult Support and Protection. This was carried out at the request of Scottish Ministers and was conducted in collaboration with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland.

The inspectors found that there are 30 social worker vacancies in this area, and this impacts adversely on the work to support and protect adults. It is this "inadequate capacity within social work services which has the most impact, but in addition "Management oversight was lacking for initial inquiries into adult protection concerns...", "Social work did not consistently carry out adult protection investigations when it should have", and the "quality of adult protection case conferences warranted improvement".

The report noted "substantial areas for improvement".

The second Care Inspectorate report investigated adult social work and social care services. This document found that in the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, there were "significant weaknesses in the design, structure, implementation and oversight of key processes, including the assessment of people's needs and in their case management"

In addition the inspections carried out between November 2022 and March 2023 discovered that self-directed support had "not been implemented effectively" and that staff were "overwhelmed".

The inspectors also found there has been no development of a formal medium term financial plan by the council although it was working towards one.

This report stated that under half of those who need it have a care and support plan in place which aligns with their most recent assessment.

The council's IT systems were found to be out of date and "not fit for purpose".

The whole document is rather depressing reading and smacks of a service which is lurching from crisis to crisis.

Staff did not feel that they were equipped with the essential resources to deliver their job roles satisfactorily, or that their workload was manageable.

from the Care Inspectorate Report March 2023

One of the very few ways in which improvement was noted was in the "unmet need waiting list" which was reduced in the year to January 2023. This appears to have come about mainly as a result of the One Edinburgh Command Centre holding daily meetings to discuss those who needed care at home.

SNP social care spokesperson Cllr Vicky Nicolson said: "We'd like to thank Judith for her service and acknowledge that she has done the right thing by standing down, but she must not be made a scapegoat for the mistakes of others.

"The recovery plan for these services is strong but the current Labour Convener overseeing Edinburgh's care services has failed to drive the improvements identified through the plan. He should also consider his position.

"Regrettably, the Chief Executive of the Council has some serious questions to answer too.

"Social care in Edinburgh needs wholesale new leadership and the swapping out of one senior officer is nowhere near enough."

Council discussion

On Thursday the matter of the Care Inspection Reports was raised at the full council meeting by Green councillor, Claire Miller. This was not a motion to seek anyone's resignation, but a motion asking councillors to read the reports, and for time to be set aside in the council diary for an improvement plan to be prepared and produced to Policy and Sustainability Committee within one month.

It also came in the wake of a meeting of the EIJB in April which was cancelled.

Cllr Miller who is a member of the EIJB noted that the board had met in March to set a budget but it failed to do so. She also said: "The next board meeting was cancelled a week before it was due to take place, before an agenda had even been issued. The next week the budget working group was cancelled. In protest at this and the series of cancellation of meetings, and the lack of space for the board and for elected members to discuss these serious issues and determine what to do next, I have asked for time to be set in the diary because the next formal meeting would not be until the end of May. I have managed to get that now. And thankfully we are going to be having some informal meetings before that board meeting where hopefully board members will be able to get a rundown of what officers are doing just now and give the space to ensure that there is feedback and discussion about those issues. But to me that is not good governance."

She explained that she did not feel that she should be in a position where "we need to chase to get good governance".

She continued: "I feel that that's how bad things are at this time. Not only is the Care Inspectorate telling us where the services need to improve, but folks in this council elected to represent the people of the city, and people appointed to the integration Joint Board are not even able to meet to ensure

that decisions are made and leadership is provided at this important time.

“So I’ll end by saying sorry for not even getting into the issues that the Care Inspectorate reports actually document – but I would urge everybody here please look at them.”

Cllr Miller’s motion to council on 4 May 2023:

8.2 By Councillor Miller – Care Inspection Reports

“Council:

1. Notes the findings of the Inspection of Adult Social Work and Social Care Services by the Care Inspectorate (published 21 March) and the joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection (published 14 February) both of which identify substantial areas for improvement.
2. Notes with concern the areas identified for improvement, which include protection, quality and availability of services, legislative compliance, outcomes-focused practice, and community support.
3. Recognises that, while financial and labour market pressures present challenges to the council, change and improvements are needed across areas such as IT, workforce strategy, processes, policies, and integration across the sector.
4. Notes the requirement to prepare an improvement plan in response to both inspections, thanks officers for beginning this work, and calls for improvement plans to be reported to the Policy & Sustainability Committee within one cycle.”

March 2023 Report:



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