



CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER

ANNUAL REPORT

2013/14

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of Social Work activity, performance and achievements during the period 2013/14. The report provides information on the statutory decisions made by the CSWO on behalf of the Council and highlights some key challenges in the forthcoming year. The report format follows the template produced by the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor to provide greater standardisation across CSWO's reports issued in April 2014.

Local Authority

The Scottish Borders is located in the south east of Scotland and covers an area of 4,731 square kilometres, the sixth largest local authority in Scotland. It is a rural local authority with only two towns, Galashiels and Hawick, with more than 10,000 people.

The 2011 Census showed that there were 113,870 people in the Scottish Borders, making Scottish Borders one of the least populated regions in Scotland, with a population density the sixth lowest in Scotland.

The latest estimates from National Records of Scotland project a 10.6% increase in population for the Scottish Borders between 2010 and 2035, with significant increases in the population aged 65 or more and in particular the 75+ age group which is predicted to rise by almost 100%. These are age groups that make intensive use of Social Work services.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) in 2012 reported that Scottish Borders contained only 5 (or 0.5%) of the most deprived data zones in Scotland (those in the most deprived 15% of all data zones), a figure which was the same in 2009 but shows an increase since the SIMD started in 2002. Furthermore, the SIMD shows that the more deprived areas in Scottish Borders are still as deprived as they were in 2009, while other regions in Scotland have succeeded in decreasing inequality in their more deprived localities. This relative deprivation adds impetus for Scottish Borders to tackle deprivation and reduce inequalities with at least the same level of commitment as is being deployed in other regions.

Further information can be found in the Scottish Borders Strategic Assessment¹.

Partnership Structures / Governance Arrangements

The requirement that every local authority should have a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is contained within Section 45 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. This replaced the requirement in Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 for each Local Authority to appoint a Director of Social Work.

The responsibilities of the CSWO are clearly laid out in the most recent guidance from the Scottish Government published in 2009. The CSWO is required to ensure the provision of appropriate professional advice in the discharge of local authorities' statutory social work and the role also needs to promote values and standards of professional practice to all social services workers in relation to promoting equality, fairness and social justice.

¹ http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/7249/2014_strategic_assessment

The role provides professional advice to local authorities including elected members and officers to carry out the Local Authority's legal duties in relation to social work. The CSWO assists the Council to understand their responsibilities and the complexities involved when delivering social work services. Key to these are the Council's role as corporate parent, ensuring effective child and adult protection arrangements, the management of high risk offenders as well as carrying out statutory mental health functions.

It is recognised that Social Work has a key contribution to the achievement of national and local outcomes. The CSWO also has a significant role to monitor and improve the quality of service provision and to advise on the identification and management of corporate risk insofar as they relate to social work services.

2013/14 has been a year of considerable change for Social Work in Scottish Borders Council. The Director of Social Work was absent for the period of approximately 6 months and formally resigned in November 2013. The role has been covered during this period by Stella Everingham, Acting Director of Social Work and recently by Elaine Torrance in her new role as Chief Social Work Officer.

In addition, during this period there has been agreement to implement a new Corporate Management structure with the creation of a new "People" Department to cover the service areas of Education and Social Work.

A Depute Chief Executive "People" has been appointed with three key Service Director posts - Chief Social Work Officer, Service Director Children & Young People Officer and a Chief Officer for Health & Social Care Integration. In this revised structure the CSWO will retain operational responsibilities for Criminal Justice Social Work and Mental Health Officer work. The role also leads on behalf of the Council on public protection and ensuring professional leadership for Social Work across all service areas including commissioned services.

During this period of change it has been important to ensure that there has been consistency of decision making and clarity for staff over roles and responsibilities for Social Work and statutory decision making. This has been achieved by ongoing communication including briefing notes, newsletters, management meetings and staff briefings.

The revised structure can be found in Appendix B.

Community Planning Partnership

During 2013 the Community Planning Partnership focused on key priorities identified including early intervention, prevention and building the resilience of communities. Social Work Services play a key role in these areas.

The Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership has set three key priorities for delivering its vision.

1. Grow our economy
2. Reduce inequalities
3. Maximise the impact from the low carbon agenda

A number of lead officers from the members of the Community Planning Partnership have formed a Community Planning Partnership Equality Group. Under this structure, the group ensures that equalities work is mainstreamed, progress towards equalities outcomes is being made, and equalities best practice is shared.

A range of partnership structures are in place that are key to the delivery of Social Work Services. During 2013/14 a Pathfinder Board was established to oversee the development of the Health & Social Care Partnership which in April 2014 was formalised into a Shadow Integration Board including all Adult Social Care Services.

Other examples of strong partnerships are Public Protection, where multi agency Adult Protection, Child Protection and MAPPA arrangements are in place.

Engagement

Key to all of these developments is effective engagement with service users, carers and local communities. For example an effective development using Change Fund monies has been the establishment of a Community Capacity Team across the Borders, which has been successful in developing community responses to local need.

In addition Social Work commission Borders Voluntary Care Voice (BVCV) to provide support to user/carers groups to participate in planning structures and ensure the voice of people using services is central to decision making. Scottish Care were also supported to be a key part of the Reshaping Care agenda and a key partner in agreeing the use of the Change Fund.

Social Services Delivery Landscape/Market

In general, Scottish Borders has a healthy and industrious population. Scottish Borders has a lower than average population of working age; 58.49% compared to the Scottish average of 62.79%. However, there are lower levels of unemployment than the national average, although these reflect a larger proportion of part-time employment than the Scottish average.

Both men and women within Scottish Borders have a longer than average life expectancy at birth than the Scottish average, and 84.1% of people in the Scottish Borders assess their health as being good or very good compared to 82.2% for Scotland.

There are a number of pressures on the provision of Social Work services within Scottish Borders, including but not limited to:

- Demographic shifts, in particular increasing numbers of people in the older age groups, creating a need to increase capacity while maintaining quality and flexibility
- Increasing expectations and requirement to support people in their own homes and communities
- The financial pressure associated with complex or specialist service provision that cannot be provided within the Scottish Borders
- Ongoing developments for integrated services with partner services and organisations, across both Children's Services and Social Care services.

Joint commissioning plans reflecting these priorities have been developed across Older People, Mental Health and Learning Disability Services which detail priorities for investment in line with Council and Partnership priorities and these will help form the basis of the Strategic Plan for the newly formed partnership.

Finance

The Social Work net expenditure for 2013/14 totalled £81,636,411. Of this total £24,516,048 spend on Children's Services, £48,659,215 spend on Adult Services and £8,461,178 on Support Services. However, Social Work services have continued to face significant financial pressures during 2013/14. During planning for 2013/14, significant investment was made in children and adult care services by Scottish Borders Council, in the region of £2.5m, representing 3.4% of the department's net revenue budget. This assisted to help meet the increased costs arising as a result of greater demand for Older People's services, more young adults in transition from Children's Services and the sustained increase in numbers of children requiring high-cost intensive or secure out of area placements. Further planned investment of £7.5m is planned for the next 5 years across these services.

During 2013/14, Social Work services had to be delivered within a climate of increased cost pressures not entirely met by increased funding. Scottish Borders Council's overall funding levels remained constant, yet costs continued to increase (pay costs, inflation, demography, etc). Between 2014/15 and 2018/19, the cost base of the Council is expected to increase by over £28m, yet funding from the Scottish Government, Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates is projected to remain fairly static over this period.

This financial outlook poses significant challenge in the delivery of Social Work services and during 2013/14 a number of efficiencies were achieved totalling almost £1.5m, achieved by some temporary service reductions, and efficiency reviews. Between 2014/15, and 2018/19, further savings measures of £4.0m will require delivery, focussed around a programme of business transformation, efficiency targets and increased income from a review of charging. The Department has worked hard to ensure the need to balance the delivery of quality safe and efficient services whilst delivering financial efficiencies. Such a programme has been rolled out corporately across Scottish Borders Council and whilst Social Work services have a relatively lower share of planned targets to achieve, such a programme will continue to present significant financial challenge.

In terms of key pressures, during 2013/14 emergency remedial action was required to address funding pressures relative to demand across Children's and Adult Services. Over £4m of pressures were experienced during the financial year, £1.3m of which was directly attributable to Children's Out of Area Placements and Transport. Within Social Care & Health, £2.7m of pressures above budget were experienced due to a variety of factors including Homecare, complex Learning & Physical Disability care and Residential Care. Whilst the majority of the drivers of these pressures are permanent, some of the solutions identified and remedial action taken in-year in order to deliver the small reported under-spend were temporary, one-off or non-recurring. As a result therefore, significant further strategic planning and service challenge will be required to ensure affordable and sustainable services going forward.

The implementation of Self-Directed Support is causing some financial pressures on the Council. Each new SDS plan incurs an additional marginal cost to the Council since in many cases there is no direct consequential saving within traditional people, building-based or block-commissioned care services. Other key areas of concern during the year relates to the additional social care costs of older people change fund transformation that whilst delivered improved outcomes and financial savings along the care pathway, did not release resources to meet the additional burden created by the provision of new services.

Early intervention and prevention, a key pillar of public service excellence, will remain a key principle of the Council's new corporate transformation programme currently being developed which will further shape the delivery of all services, including adult social care and children's services over the

long-term future. One key planned development is the development of an Arms Length Organisation for the Adult Social Care Services which will be Council owned but will ensure a more business focused approach.

Performance

Performance Management in Scottish Borders is firmly aligned to the themes and priorities identified in the Scottish Borders Single Outcome Agreement and the Scottish Borders Council Corporate Plan. Social Work services have a key role to play in the delivery of several national and local outcomes, and these are placed at the centre of strategic developments across the authority and in partnership planning. These reflect the national outcomes detailed below:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- We live longer, healthier lives
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Performance is measured and reported at a variety of levels to senior managers within Social Work, to the Scottish Borders Council Corporate Management team, and to the Scottish Borders Council Executive Committee.

There have been a number of notable achievements over the past year and some examples are:

- Improved management and participation in the discharge process to enable people to move into appropriate care settings within suitable timescales
- Implementation of GIRFEC progresses well within the authority, with Scottish Borders partners contributing to the work of the Scottish Government's South East GIRFEC Steering Group. The implementation plan is well established and a multi-agency team in place to carry out the tasks within the plan.
- SDS processes have been developed to ensure that the new legislation can be fully implemented.
- Welfare reform – the Council has adopted a proactive approach to highlight and monitor the impact of Welfare Reform including a focus on communication of changes and provision of advice to the people in the Borders.
- The Early Years agenda is well advanced with the Scottish Borders. Four Early Years Centres are under development with partners and Scottish Borders is well represented in the work of the national Early Years Collaborative.

Statutory Functions

The Chief Social Work Officer has statutory functions that are specific to the role and are referred to in legislation as well as Scottish Government guidance².

Appendix C of this report gives detailed statistics on these functions and associated performance.

Adult Protection referrals remained fairly static during 2013/14 from the previous year. There has continued to be a rise in children requiring out of area placements and notably used two secure placements which is unusual in the Borders but reflecting the significant risks posed by both young people.

In Mental Health the Borders continues to perform well in terms of MHO attendance at emergency assessment stage when compared with other areas. However, completion of social circumstances reports is lower and actions are in place to improve this performance.

In line with Scottish trends the numbers of guardianship applications continue to rise reflecting demographic changes.

In Criminal Justice Social Work there is an upward trend in relation to Diversion from Prosecution, Criminal Justice Social Work Reports, Community Payback Orders and Voluntary Prison throughcare.

Continuous Improvement

2013/14 have seen a range of new service initiatives introduced. In Peebles a new building Extra Care Housing development opened replacing a Care Home. A jointly commissioned core and cluster service for people with enduring Mental Health problems was commissioned and two early years centres established. However there is always more to do.

Self-evaluation is embedded into all social work services through the inspection process, performance monitoring, and a self-evaluation framework to which all services contribute. Multi-agency self-evaluation of services for children and young people is being further developed, with a multi-agency subgroup of the Children and Young People's Planning Partnership called the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Group taking forward this remit.

The first Standards & Quality Report for integrated children's support services (children and families social work and additional support for learning) was produced this year, to align with the statutory Standards & quality Report required of all education authorities. A combined report for the new People Department's services for children and families will be produced next year.

Closer integration of service evaluation and financial monitoring has led to more robust oversight of improvement activity across the senior management team. In particular the work to integrate financial records into the main Frameworki management information system will allow improved scrutiny, authorisation and monitoring of the financial impact of care provision.

The Council continues to have strong public protection multi disciplinary arrangements from the Chief Senior Officers Overview Group, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive through the public protection committees and sub groups. Key to this work is self evaluation, performance monitoring and audit. Case reviews are often undertaken and improvement actions identified and monitored.

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/01/27154047/>

Eighty complaints were received regarding Social Work Services during this period, a slight decrease of 3.75% from the previous year. A total of 77 complaints were investigated of which 13 were upheld, 18 partially upheld, 33 were not upheld, 12 were withdrawn and 1 was I understand found to be invalid.

Some key themes arose from the complaints including:

- Delays in provision of service
- Communication
- Quality of service
- Processes and procedures

When complaints have been upheld clear actions are identified to improve the quality of service provided and these are regularly reviewed to ensure continuous improvement.

The quality of Older People's Care Homes has fluctuated during this period as reflected in the Care Inspectorate grades detailed in Appendix C. A number of remedial actions have been taken to support Care Homes including dementia training, support for nurses in Care Homes and provision of advice and support from the Reviewing Team. A robust risk assessment and management process has been introduced and this will continue to be monitored over the coming year.

Planning for Change

In Scottish Borders there has been significant progress in the implementation of personalisation and Self Directed Support building on the successful use of Direct Payments.

Self Directed Support requires a fundamental shift in the way public services are delivered to ensure that people can control how the resources available to meet their needs are utilised. However, it is recognised that there are challenges in relation to culture change, developing on outcome based assessment process and changing commissioning arrangements.

Consideration is currently being given to how to support the Community Planning Partnership to manage changes to the delivery of Community Justice.

Legislation to integrate Health and Social Care Services is a further significant change. During 2013/14 a Pathfinder Board was established and a programme approach adopted to steer the design of new arrangements for Adults. Locally there has been a commitment to build on the already well established partnership arrangements including the Joint Learning Disability Service, Mental Health Service and Drugs & Alcohol Partnership. The need to ensure improved outcomes for service users and carers is a key priority along with the development of locally accessible services which are important in a rural area.

Of central importance for Social Work is to ensure that the creation new structures does not create potential barriers with other important services and there will need to be clear linkages between Children, Adult, Substance misuse, Housing Services and Community Safety. The further development of the local Community Planning structures will be important to assist with these links.

Implementation of the changes required in the Children and Young People's Bill are also being planned, including the introduction of named workers and the early years agenda.

User and Carer Empowerment

The principles of collaboration and participation are key to Social Work's approach to the development of services in line with Self Directed Support.

There are many examples of engagement in Scottish Borders including:

- Commissioning of Borders Voluntary Care Voice (BVCV) to provide user/carers reference groups
- Commissioning of specialist advocacy service
- Establishment of a Community Capacity Team across the Borders working together with local communities
- Review of the joint Learning Disability governance structures establishing local Citizens Panels
- Support for the development of Mental Health Consultation Cafes
- Children and Young People
- User/carers representation on the local SDS Project Board and other planning groups has ensured co-production approach

Encouraging feedback and engagement from service users, carers and families is important and arrangements are well established in directly provided services as reflected in Care Commission reports. It continues to be important to engage with people who do not currently access services and the Council have a panel in place which provides some feedback and a broader Social Work survey is planned for 2014.

Workforce Planning/Development

Social Work Services has invested heavily in workforce development and this has proven successful in assisting with the recruitment, retention and development of a highly competent workforce. Furthermore, the Senior Management Team and individual services have taken a strong lead on workforce planning issues, liaising with colleagues from other departments to discuss workforce planning issues.

A Social Work Workforce Planning Group was established in early 2012 to further improve co-ordination and to ensure consistent workforce planning across the Department and with internal and external partners. The group produced a Workforce Planning & Development Strategy 2013-2017 – a five year plan to sustain and build upon a workforce with the talent, skills and flexibility to meet changing needs, which reflects the diversity of the population in Scottish Borders.

This strategy is a high level assessment of the staffing needs for all Social Work Services and identifies methods to address the changing workforce demands and established a set of guiding principles for future workforce planning, and devises an action plan to identify risks, gaps and opportunities.

Whilst there are difficulties in projecting figures given major transformation agendas the information gathered to support the strategy setting process enables the Workforce Planning & Development Team to produce and maintain key information on Workforce Capacity, Qualification Levels and workforce registration requirements. This informs the production of detailed specifications and

targets for training delivery to ensure that there is equitable access to training and that essential training and qualifications targets are met.

The Joint Midlothian and Scottish Borders Practice Learning and Development Team works in partnership with operational and planning managers to provide a learning and development service to Social Work and Social Care staff across both authorities. Annual Learning and Development Frameworks have been produced for each of Social Care and Health and Integrated Children's Services. These frameworks are linked to workforce planning information to provide a sound basis for predicting refresher training, learning and development / qualifications requirements over the coming years.

Joint working with Midlothian has enabled the effective delivery of a number of joint programmes:

- Newly Qualified Social Workers are supported through a bi-monthly group.
- Effective Practice Course in Children Services
- PDA in Supervision
- PDA in Practice Learning for South East Scotland
- Court Witness Skills
- Advanced supervision skills

The Department has continued a 'grow your own' approach to developing staff, although reductions in available budget and greater ease of recruiting to certain social work posts has led to fewer sponsorship opportunities for staff. However, essential development programmes are still in place and the creative use of existing funding and the wider use of Student Awards Agency Scotland(SAAS) grants and Independent Learning Accounts (ILAs) have enabled other development opportunities.

The registration of the workforce with the Scottish Social Services Council is a major part of the drive for higher standards in social services nationally and will bring the workforce in line with other professional groups. This process started in 2003 with qualified social workers and other groups required to be registered include residential child care, all managers of residential, day and home care in Adult Services, all workers in adult residential care and nurseries.

With the register for home care workers due to open in 2017 the majority of social care / social work staff will require to be registered by the end of the decade. The Joint Midlothian & Scottish Borders SVQ Assessment Centre continues to support unqualified staff to access vocational qualifications in preparation for registration and this agenda will continue to be a priority over the coming years with progress keeping pace with registration targets and requirements.

The Joint Midlothian & Scottish Borders SVQ Assessment Centre continues to receive 'Excellent' External Verification reports from the SQA with no development points for its programmes. 2013/14 brought major change to departmental structure in Scottish Borders Council with the implementation of two main service groupings of People and Place. Social Work Services' location in People provides opportunities for greater joining with other services particularly with Education Services and the restructuring has also provided an opportunity to take account of forthcoming integration with NHS.

To take account of this changing landscape workforce planning and development services will be undergoing realignment with a decision made to concentrate on a council wide and cross agency Scottish Borders approach. The joint working arrangements with Midlothian came to an end in April 2014 and stronger links established with strategic partners in Scottish Borders such as NHS Borders and Borders College to enable better support of the integration agenda and sectoral development.

Through the SBLearn initiative the corporate Workforce Planning & Development Team are implementing the use of e-learning across all services and, where appropriate, e-learning options for training will augment or replace existing delivery to ensure wider coverage of training. GIRFEC and Child Protection modules have been made mandatory for all staff in Social Work Services – Child Protection for all staff. Corporately, Data Protection and Information Management modules are mandatory for all staff and progress is being made in ensuring widespread use of eLearning.

The Children and Young People's Planning Partnership operates a multi-agency Workforce Development Group sub-group, with a focus on developing joint development opportunities and training for all staff working with children and young people.

Social Work Services works with and provides core funding for Borders Voluntary Community Care Voice to implement the Borders Care Learning Network (BCLN). This plays an important role in supporting the independent and voluntary sector to develop a joint training and development agenda, to ensure good practice and local partnership working in order to maintain and improve standards of care.

There has been a focus on training for staff to implement the new arrangements for Self Directed Support with events, workshops and briefings being provided for all staff and Managers recognising the culture shift that this will require.

Re-ablement training across assessment and Home Care Staff has also been a priority to ensure staff adopt an approach to encourage self-management and promote independence wherever possible.

Key Challenges for the year ahead

Social Work Services continue to face significant challenges in the year ahead including increasing demand for services due to demographic change, managing financial constraints, maintaining service quality and supporting people with whom we work to keep safe and improve quality of life and outcomes. In addition an additional challenge is monitoring the embedding of the new organisation arrangements both in the Council and with the Integration of Health & Social Care. The Council's transformation programme has proved successful in managing Service redesign and change and in 2013/14 efficiencies were made, for example, in redesigning night support, improvements in technology and in the area of substance misuse new services have been jointly commissioned focused on improving outcomes and reducing duplication. However, despite these initiatives there remain particular challenges in the delivery of Social Work and Social Care Services. There continues to be a need for ongoing investment in recruitment and training for the workforce, in particular in domicillary care services. Quality of care home provision requires to be more consistent and work is currently underway to identify additional support for this sector.

The number of young people in out of area placements remains high and a joint review of children and young people's services is underway to identify further local opportunities and services.

The impact of welfare reform on the broader population is being monitored locally. However, research shows that the long term effects on mental and physical ill health, homelessness and inequality will place additional demands on public services.

In Mental Health increased demands on Mental Health Officers is a challenge and there is significant work required to ensure the Council puts in place robust arrangements to manage the new arrangements for Community Justice.

In my role as Chief Social Work Officer role I will endeavour to continue to monitor, review, update and advise the Council during the coming year on key matters highlighted in this report whilst ensuring effective leadership for all staff in Social Work and Social Care during this period of change.