
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
2016/17**

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 September 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This is the tenth annual report on the work undertaken on behalf of the Council in the statutory role of Chief Social Work Officer.**
- 1.2 The report provides the Council with an account of decisions taken by the Chief Social Work Officer in the statutory areas of Fostering and Adoption, Child Protection, Secure Orders, Adult Protection, Adults with Incapacity, Mental Health and Criminal Justice. The report of the Chief Social Work Officer is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.3 It also gives an overview of regulation and inspection, workforce issues and social policy themes over the year April 2016 to March 2017, and highlights some of the key challenges for Social Work for the coming year.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Council approves the report of the Chief Social Work officer attached as Appendix A and in particular notes the elements noted in section 4 of this report.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The requirement that every local authority should have a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer is contained within Section 45 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994. This requirement was reinforced by the recommendation contained in the Changing Lives Report published by the 21st Century Social Work Review Group to strengthen the governance and leadership roles of the Chief Social Work Officer. This national guidance has recently been reviewed to take into account new partnership arrangements.
- 3.2 A specific Service Director role of CSWO has responsibility in Scottish Borders for the leadership of professional Social Work across the Council and ensuring the Council's statutory Social Work legislative requirements are met. This role reports directly to the Chief Executive.
- 3.3 In 2017 the Scottish Government published an updated template and guidance to enable Chief Social Work Officers across Scotland to develop a more consistent approach to the production of their reports and allow summary comparison of the delivery and performance of Social Work across different areas. This template has been used to provide this report. This has provided helpful comparative data for Social Work which has been published to give a picture of Social Work across Scotland.

4 OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 4.1 Early in 2017 the new governance arrangements for Social Work in Scottish Borders Council were revised with the Chief Social Work Officer reporting directly to the Chief Executive. There has continued to be significant changes to governance arrangements in relation to the establishment of the Integration Joint Board and the strengthening of Children and Young People's leadership group, however public protection arrangements have continued to be a high priority for the Council during this period.
- 4.2 There have been a number of achievements during this period. There has been an ongoing focus on improving arrangements for the discharge process from hospital to enable people to move to appropriate care settings in a timely way. The implementation of Getting It Right For Every Child is well under way and the Early Years agenda is well advanced. Processes for Self Directed Support have been further developed to provide service users and carers greater say in choice and the management of their care arrangements and the number of people using this approach has increased from 530 to 1300. A number of service developments are also highlighted including the introduction of local community hubs to improve access and earlier intervention and support.
- 4.3 Key Social Work performance data is contained in the report. The number of children on the Child Protection Register increased during 2016/17 but has more recently reduced slightly. There has been an increase in new foster parents but a number have also de-registered and therefore the recruitment of new foster parents remains a priority. Adult protection referrals have also increased from 171 to 206. Focused work has taken place on financial harm through work with Banks and Trading Standards.

- 4.4 The Mental Health Officer service continues to perform well in terms of attendance at emergency detentions but the demands on the service continue to increase with a notable increase in private and welfare guardianship applications in line with national trends rising by 27 additional cases.
- 4.5 Challenges facing Social Work for 2016/17 are identified in the report. There are ongoing financial constraints and introducing new arrangements for children and young people including the named person remain a priority. Implementation of the actions identified following the Children and Young People's inspection this year has been a priority including improvements in recording, risk assessment and chronologies. Work is also progressing to embed new arrangements for Community Justice and a Community Justice Plan has been agreed. The number of Home Care providers has increased and a minimum hourly rate of £8.25 per hour was implemented in October 2016.
- 4.6 There continues to be challenges in recruitment and retention of staff in care at home services. The introduction of a minimum hourly rate of £8.25 per hour from October 2016 should improve the situation.
- 4.7 A Joint Older Person's Inspection report is also awaited and any recommendations for Social Work will also need to be prioritised.
- 4.8 Public Protection needs to be a continued focus and a review of Public Protection will be undertaken in 2017/18.
- 4.9 The Council continues to be well placed to face these challenges and to deliver high quality services and improve outcomes for all people who access Social Work services.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no specific costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report but managing service change and efficiencies in the light of increasing demand whilst maintaining service quality remains a challenge.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There are no specific concerns that need to be addressed in respect of the recommendations contained in this report. Public protection processes however need to continue to be a high priority for the Council.

5.3 Equalities

Social Justice and equality are key values in Social Work and there are no adverse equality implications arising from the work contained in this report

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no anticipated economic, social or environmental effects.

5.5 Carbon Management

There is no impact on the Council's carbon emissions.

5.6 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

