
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
2015/2016**

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

29 September 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This is the ninth 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 2015 to March 2016, 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 Following the review of the Corporate Management structure in Scottish Borders Council during 2014 a specific service director role was created for the Chief Social Work Officer, reporting directly to the Depute Chief Executive for People.
- 3.3 In 2014 the Scottish Government published a 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 During 2015 the new governance arrangements for Social Work in Scottish Borders Council have become well established in the People Management Team. 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 which have enabled 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 over 530 people are now using this approach.
- 4.3 Key Social Work performance data is contained in the report. The number of children on the Child Protection Register remained lower than the national average during this period. 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 for 2016/17.

- 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.
- 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 will be a priority including improvements in recording, risk assessment and chronologies. Of particular note is the process of self evaluation across adult services as we prepare for further inspection activity in the coming year. Work is also progressing at pace as part of the implementation of the new arrangements for Community Justice.
- 4.6 There continues to be challenges in recruitment and retention of staff in care at home services, however, a successful tender to increase the number of Home Care providers in the Borders combined with the introduction of a minimum hourly rate of £8.25 per hour from October should improve the situation.
- 4.7 As a Council we continue 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

There are no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Service Director Regulatory Services as Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Elaine Torrance, Chief Social Work Officer **Signature**

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Nicola Tait can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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