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**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER  
2017/18**

**Report by Chief Social Work and Public Protection Officer**  
**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

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**29 November 2018**

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**1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This is the eleventh 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.
- 1.3 It also gives an overview of regulation and inspection, workforce issues and social policy themes over the year April 2017 to March 2018, 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 and Public Protection Officer attached as Appendix A.**

### **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 role of Chief Social Work and Public Protection Officer 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. Processes for Self-Directed Support have been further developed to provide service users and carer's greater say in choice and the management of their care arrangements.
- 4.3 Key Social Work performance data is contained in the report. For example, the number of children on the Child Protection Register reduced slightly during 2017/18. Adult protection referrals have continued to increase from 171 - 206 - 265 in the last three years.
- 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 an ongoing increase in private and welfare guardianship applications which in line with national trends.
- 4.5 Challenges facing Social Work for 2017/18 are identified in the report. There are ongoing financial constraints and we continue to strive to identify and implement new ways of working and engaging those who use our services to improve outcomes. The outcome of the more recent Older Adults

Services Inspection has led to the development of a structured improvement plan to ensure that we continue to improve. In addition to this, work continues on the further development of Children and Families Social Work services.

- 4.6 There continues to be challenges in recruitment and retention of staff in care at home services. The recruitment of permanent Social Workers across all areas of practice also remains challenging and is something we are looking to explore solutions to.
- 4.7 Public Protection services are currently being reviewed and developed with a view to developing a wider family approach to the identification and management of risk.
- 4.8 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 significant 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. The review and development of Public Protection services however, needs 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 Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

**Approved by**

**Stuart C. Easingwood**

**Chief Social Work and Public Protection Officer    Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

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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.

Contact us at Social Work, Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, 01835 825080.