
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER
2018/19**

Report by Chief Social Work and Public Protection Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

31 October 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This is the twelfth 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 2018 to March 2019, 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.
- 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 In 2017 the governance arrangements for Social Work in Scottish Borders Council were revised with the Chief Social Work Officer reporting directly to the Chief Executive. The Chief Social Work Officer attends the Integration Joint Board as a non-voting member to provide professional advice and guidance in matters pertaining to Social Work. The Chief Social Work Officer also has a role in the strengthening of Children and Young People's leadership group, as well as maintaining oversight of public protection arrangements at a local level.
- 4.2 There have been a number of achievements during this period, including 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 ongoing development and redesign of wider Public Protection services.
- 4.3 Key Social Work performance data is contained in the report in Appendix B.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 There continues to be challenges in recruitment and retention of staff in many aspects of service delivery and we are planning on launching a trainee program to create opportunities for some of our existing 'unqualified' staff to progress onto professional social work courses.
- 4.6 The work on reviewing and developing our Public Protection services is progressing with the suggested realignment of governance, enhanced co-location arrangements and improved working practices being at the centre of the changes. A significant factor in this is the clear focus on looking at risk through the lens of a 'think family' approach.

- 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.

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 have been incorporated into the final report.

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.