
**SCOTTISH BORDERS PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

Report by Chief Social Work & Public Protection Officer
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

17 DECEMBER 2020

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **In January 2020 Scottish Borders moved from a separate Adult Protection Committee and Child Protection Committee to a Public Protection Committee (PPC). In order to bring the Annual Report together the timescales for both previous Committees have been brought into line; as a result this report informs Members of the activities of Child Protection covering 12 months from August 2019 – July 2020 and Adult Protection covering 16 months from April 2019 – July 2020. Justice Services and Violence Against Women and Girls timescales are August 2019-July 2020.**
- 1.2 The Annual Report (in Appendix 1) covers the main activities of the multi-agency Public Protection Committee (CPC) and its Delivery Groups. The report highlights the continuing work being undertaken in the Scottish Borders to meet the Council's statutory duties to protect children and adults at risk of harm. This includes information on the work of the Child Protection Committee, the Adult Protection Committee, the Violence Against Women Partnership, Justice Services and Prevent, the statistical information collated and the significant training and development that has been provided in this area.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Council note the content of the Public Protection Committee Annual Report.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee (SBPPC) is an inter-agency group of senior staff which provides leadership in promoting the continual improvement of services in this area of work. This entails ensuring that there is an efficient and effective multi-agency response to reports of abuse through, for instance, reviewing and revising practice guidelines, providing joint training and reviewing of individual cases – all conducted within a culture of continuous learning. In addition, the Committee has a role to promote the safety of children and adults through raising awareness in communities across the Scottish Borders to support the key role which members of the public play.
- 3.2 The Public Protection Committee reports directly to the Critical Services Oversight Group (CSOG) consisting of Chief Executive (SBC), Chief Executive (NHS Borders) and Divisional Commander Police Scotland (Police).
- 3.3 During the reporting period 1st August 2019 to 31st July 2020, CPC was chaired by Independent Chair, Michael Batty. During the reporting period 1st April 2019 to December 2019 APC was chaired by Independent Chair, Jim Wilson. The PPC established from January 2020 is chaired by Independent Chair, Michael Batty.
- 3.4 Members of PPC remain committed to the support and protection of children and adults as the focus of the Committee's work and the group has met regularly during the year. Much has been achieved by CPC, APC and their Sub Groups through their inter-agency agendas and effective partnership work which is detailed in the report. Communication was greatly improved by the implementation of regular joint meetings between the APC, CPC and Offender Management Committee. This work is now being taken forward by the PPC.

4 ANNUAL REPORT

The work of the Committee is detailed in the Annual Report and a summary of the key issues are highlighted below.

- 4.1 The Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee (SBPPC) oversees the development of all multi-agency child and adult protection policies and procedures in the Scottish Borders. During this period a number of new sections and protocols were added or updated to ensure best practice and that they are in line with national guidance and legislation.
- 4.2 The SBPPC continues to self-evaluate, to ensure good practice and reflective review, and also to seek areas for improvement and the latest Business Plan for 2020/21 reflects these aims.
- 4.3 The management of performance and practice is overseen by PPC. Performance information and self-evaluation reports continued to be routinely reviewed and on a single agency basis to identify trends and inform practice as required. The report details that there were 509 child protection inter-agency referral discussions in the 12 months between 1st August 2019 and 31st July 2020. There were 434 adult protection referrals in the 16 month period between 1st April 2019 and 31st July 2020 of which 257 resulted in investigation. We protect the rights of everyone we provide support and protection to by ensuring CP/AP conferences record the views of the child/adult by asking a member of staff who is known to them to speak regularly about how safe they feel. Where the person is not able or does not want to provide views we ask someone to do this for them e.g. a family member, teacher or advocacy service.

- 4.4 Lessons learned from Case Reviews and good practice examples from National and local child protection case reviews were brought to PPC. Where required, updates were made to procedures and learning was shared. There continues to be two-way communication with front line workers via Delivery Group representation.
- 4.5 PPC continued to maintain and develop strong working links with local and national strategic groups and the PPC Chair and CP/AP Lead Officer attended national meetings during the period.
- 4.6 PPC continued its commitment to raising awareness of child and adult protection through the delivery of multi-agency training events, the website and newsletters. Posters and leaflets were developed to raise awareness and display at partner organisations.
- 4.7 Training remains a key responsibility of PPC with a range of multi-agency and single agency child and adult protection events being held throughout the year which 772 people attended. A further 124 people accessed specific gender based violence courses.
- 4.8 PPC continued its commitment to creating a positive and transparent culture of continuous learning based upon feedback from those who use and experience our services.
- 4.9 Work has continued to promote Child Protection in schools. One of the highlights of the year was the Committee's engagement with young people from Galashiels Academy to develop resources for young people around awareness of Child Protection and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), using the campaign #AlwaysBeWary.
- 4.10 Below are the priorities of the Business Plan and although timescales have been set, these are subject to change due to Covid-19.

Action
To respond to the new national Child Protection Guidance
To ensure a programme of work to implement the Safe & Together approach to domestic abuse
To ensure identified changes to the Vulnerable Young Persons protocol are fully implemented
To ensure a comprehensive performance monitoring system is agreed and implemented
To develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Vulnerable Adults
To review the functions of PPC in 12 months
To ensure the Improvement Plan in relation to Borders performance against the national Equally Safe strategy is implemented
To introduce multi-agency audits for adult protection
To demonstrate improvements in AP processes to be timely and show effective decision making and action
To provide updated AP procedures and guidance notes
To demonstrate an improved use and application of the Neglect Toolkit to address childhood neglect
To demonstrate a consistent and assured use of integrated chronologies
To demonstrate an increase of ways to gather views of children, young people and their families
To maintain an oversight of MAPPA

As this is the first Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee annual report it is noted that the data provided are for different periods and therefore some sections are not easily brought together. However, it is hoped this

report provides appropriate information on the work of the CPC and APC and introduces the new Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee and its Delivery Groups. The above business plan highlights the work underway and although some progress has been made, timescales will be affected by Covid-19.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The Annual Report is an important document for monitoring activity and for identifying areas of improvement. The risk of not collating information in this way would be a reduction in the quality of strategic work relating to Child and Adult Protection.

5.3 Equalities

It is anticipated that there are no adverse impacts due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This Report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Stuart Easingwood
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Signature

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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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