
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER 2021/22

Report by Director Social Work & Practice

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

27 October 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This is the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) annual report on the work undertaken on behalf of the Council by the CSWO in this statutory role for 2021/22.**
- 1.2 It provides the Council with an account of the decisions taken by the CSWO in the statutory areas of:
- Fostering and Adoption,
 - Child Protection,
 - Secure Orders,
 - Adult Protection,
 - Adults with Incapacity,
 - Mental Health
 - Justice.
- 1.3 The report also gives an overview of regulation and inspection, workforce issues and social policy themes over the year April 2021 to March 2022, and highlights some of the key challenges for that year.
- 1.4 As has been the case for the last few years, the format of the report is a shortened version from that which was produced prior to the pandemic. This ongoing arrangement has been kept in place to recognise the workload implications caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and pressures that have continued across the Social Work & Social Care landscape as we emerge from this.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Council approves the report of the Chief Social Work Officer attached as *Appendix A*.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In compliance with their statutory functions under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, all Local Authorities must have a CSWO. This requirement was reinforced by the recommendations contained in the Changing Lives Report published by the 21st Century Social Work Review Group to strengthen the governance and leadership roles of the CSWO.
- 3.2 A specific role of the CSWO in Scottish Borders, is to lead professional Social Work across the Council and to ensure that the Council's statutory Social Work legislative requirements are met. The CSWO role reports directly to the Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council.

4 OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 4.1 In 2017 the governance arrangements for Social Work in Scottish Borders Council were revised with the CSWO reporting directly to the Chief Executive. In 2018 the CSWO role absorbed the operational responsibility for Public Protection services on behalf of the Council, creating the role of Chief Social Work & Public Protection Officer. For the purposes of this report, the role and function will be referred to as Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO).
- 4.2 In regard to the ongoing integration agenda of the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), as CSWO, I attend the Integration Joint Board (IJB) as a non-voting member to provide professional advice and guidance in matters pertaining to Social Work.
- 4.3 There are reflections of key Social Work performance data contained in the report, however I would draw members attention to the recent presentation on the development of the Pathfinder project which is fundamentally changing the way in which performance information is made available across the Social Work landscape. As this project progresses, performance information will be much more accessible. Members will see a marked difference in the amount and quality of performance data going forward.
- 4.4 A number of the challenges faced by Social Work in 2021/22 are identified in the report including ongoing financial constraints. As a service we continue to strive to identify and implement new ways of working and engaging with those who use our services – and to do so in a cost effective way, whilst always aiming to deliver improved outcomes for our service users.
- 4.5 We continue to experience challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff. We have progressed with our planning regarding the Social Work trainee program to create opportunities for some of our existing 'unqualified' staff to progress onto professional Social Work qualification. This is a programme that we are continuing to focus on and expand where possible.
- 4.6 Our Public Protection services continue to do everything possible to keep people in Scottish Borders as safe as possible. We have recently had an inspection of our Adult Support & Protection processes, the publication of the findings is due on 18 October 2022.
- 4.7 Despite the challenges, the Council continues to be well placed to deliver high quality services and improve outcomes for all of the people who

access Social Work services.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report but managing service change and efficiencies in the light of increasing demographic 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.

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, Director Social Work & Practice

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart C. Easingwood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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.

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