

Children and Young People's Services

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SERVICES



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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

FOREWORD

As portfolio holders of services for Children and Young People, we recognise that every single child and young person has aspirations, dreams, ambitions, abilities, talents and needs. It is our task within Children and Young People's Services to try to do what we can to meet those needs and enable the achievement of those ambitions.

This immense task requires dedication from our school, social work, community, voluntary sector and council staff. It requires a dedication to the task from everybody, from janitors, cleaners, cooks, teachers, psychologists, youth workers, social workers, administration staff and leaders, not to mention the support and input from our partners like the NHS, to keep our children safe and well, and to give them the best quality of life we can with the resources available.

We are forever amazed when we visit schools, sports clubs and youth services to see so much high quality interactions between children and adults, and it is because of that positive approach to making a difference to children's and young people's lives that we will achieve better and better results in the years ahead. We strive to ensure that the whole learning experience for children and young people in school and community settings are positive, friendly and happy. Obviously not every child feels that way, so we must seek more ways to reach every child, parent and carer, to create a memorable, creative and life enhancing learning experience which will give all our children and young people the skills for learning, life and work to equip them for their learning journey beyond their school and community experience in the Scottish Borders.

We know all staff are committed to that aim and we are certainly committed to work as hard as we can to ensure that the resources we have available are directed towards that end. As a council we are indebted to the help of parents, carers, foster carers and the children themselves in working in partnership with services for children and young people to achieve the results shown in this report.

Our services for children and young people are improving, but we are ambitious for further improvement and key actions are set out within this Report demonstrating our commitment to achieving better outcomes for all children and young people in the Scottish Borders. We wish to congratulate every adult and child who has contributed to the success we can now show in both the quality of the services we provide and the outcomes being achieved.

Councillor Sandy Aitchison
Executive Member for
Education

Councillor Vicky Davidson
Executive Member for Culture,
Sport, Youth and Communities

Councillor Frances Renton
Executive Member for Social
Work and Housing



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of our staff it is important to begin by saying that it is a privilege every day to serve the children, the young people and their families in the Scottish Borders. I am proud of the achievements of our children and young people during the period 2014-2015 and the achievements of our staff in enabling and nurturing our children and young people to achieve. I have selected a few success highlights at the beginning of the report to show how well we are doing but I hope you will enjoy reading the full report recognising the high standards being achieved by our children, our young people and our staff. At the same time every member of our staff team is ambitious for all our children and young people to achieve even more. I have an absolute belief in the value of education and community participation in sports, expressive arts and cultural activities: it can provide our children and young people with the opportunity to follow their dreams and be all that they can and aspire to be. I also believe in the value of family and community; a special quality of life that prevails in the Scottish Borders-I am eternally grateful to the families who provide our most vulnerable children and young people with a place of safety and care when they need it most. Together, as we work in partnership for the benefit of our children, our young people and their families I expect us to build on our current achievements and aspire to even better outcomes for every child and young person in the Scottish Borders-I know with your support we can achieve beyond our existing high standards and expectations.

Children and Young People's Services provide a range of services which make a positive difference to our children and young people, service users, families and communities. This Standards and Quality Report sets out a review of the contribution the Children and Young People's Services have made to the Council's Strategic Objectives through the delivery of positive outcomes and support for individuals and communities. The report also addresses how the Service will improve.

Donna Manson

Service Director, Children and Young People

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

2014-2015

- Improved attainment-more young people are attaining higher levels of qualifications and our young people are leaving school with better attainment than ever before – we are in the top quartile nationally.
- Attainment of our most vulnerable children and young people has dramatically improved – we have moved from the fourth to the second quartile nationally.
- Dramatic reduction in school exclusions – now in line with national averages and continually an improving picture.
- Improved attendance – above national levels and improving – top quartile performance.
- Higher participation levels than nationally in sports, in extra-curricular activities and in national awards such as Duke of Edinburgh and volunteering activities – increasing participation levels.
- Increase in positive destination levels and sustained destination levels – in top quartile nationally.
- Increase in foster carers – 33% - from 48 in July 2012 to 64 in July 2015.
- Improved timescales in achieving permanent placements for our children and young people.
- Externally validated high quality and robust Child Protection procedures.
- Wheatlands Young People’s Unit – awarded the Residential Team of the Year National Award.
- Our Community Safety programme is highly regarded, responsive and relevant – extensive and successful work on rail safety completed in every school in 2015.
- Dramatic improvements in supporting income maximisation for our vulnerable families.
- Our Early Years Centres are making a difference to vulnerable families – Psychology of Parenting Programmes evidence high levels of success for our most vulnerable families – all families participating move out of high risk.
- Dental health in young people – top performance nationally.
- Reduction in smoking levels in young people.

Section two of the Standards and Quality Report sets out some of the challenges and opportunities presented by changing demographics and emerging trends in need. Within this context we continue to embrace an ambitious improvement programme. This is set out in the Directorate’s Business Management and Improvement Plan 2015/16.¹

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

2. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE CONTEXT

The context for the Children and Young People's Service is set within the Scottish Borders Corporate Plan 2013-2018² which sets out the strategic policy driving forward the work of the Council.

Our **vision**, our **values** and our **standards** guide the way we work and inform everything from our strategies and policies, through to the work plans of individuals within the organisation.

OUR VISION

“ *We seek the best quality of life for all the people in the Scottish Borders, prosperity for our businesses and good health and resilience for all our communities.* ”

OUR VALUES run through all our work:

Public Service, Respect for All, Courage, Integrity, Compassion and Honesty.

OUR PRIORITIES

The priorities driving our business are:

- Priority 1:** Encouraging sustainable economic growth
- Priority 2:** Improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, both within and out with the formal curriculum
- Priority 3:** Providing high quality support, care and protection to children, young people, adults, families, and older people
- Priority 4:** Building the capacity and resilience of our communities and voluntary sector
- Priority 5:** Maintaining and improving our high quality environment
- Priority 6:** Developing our workforce
- Priority 7:** Developing our assets and resources
- Priority 8:** Ensuring excellent, adaptable, collaborative and accessible public services

We also recognise the context of working with our partners to deliver for our children, our young people and their families. The Community Planning Partnership³ provides our Directorate with a strategic vision and ensures that we deliver the outcomes set out nationally:

“ By 2023, quality of life will have improved for those who are currently living within our most deprived communities, through a stronger economy and through targeted partnership action. ”

The Board is clear that in order to achieve this ambitious vision, the CPP needs to focus on 3 priorities that clearly contribute to a range of National Outcomes, as shown below: Scottish Borders priorities	NATIONAL OUTCOMES
Grow our economy	01. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place to do business in Europe 02. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
Reduce inequalities	05. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed 07. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society 08. We have improved the life chances for young people and families at risk
Maximise the impact from the low carbon agenda	14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production

The leadership of the Children and Young People’s Directorate was re-structured in 2015 to ensure a holistic approach to the development, care and support of our children and young people and their families:

See Appendix 2 – Children and Young People’s Structure Chart

The Education and Children’s Services Business Management and Improvement Plan (BMIP) sets out the key objectives and actions which will be delivered by the Service to contribute to the delivery of the Council’s strategic objectives.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S DIRECTORATE OBJECTIVES	KEY IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS 2015-2017
<p>Our children will have the best possible start in life, developing early communication, social and emotional skills which enable them to access the early levels of Curriculum for Excellence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of provision of Early Learning & Childcare • Expand the provision of Early Years Centres across the 6 localities • Enhance early intervention policy, guidance, practice and provision for our most vulnerable children
<p>The highest possible level of qualifications will be achieved by all learners in the Scottish Borders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise attainment levels for all our children and young people • Develop innovative and collaborative practice with all partners in raising the achievement and attainment of our most vulnerable individuals and groups of learners • Improve the quality of our curriculum including curricular choice and learning pathways to fully meet the needs of all our children and young people • Improve learning, teaching and assessment by creating SBC policy, guidance and frameworks which support improvement, build upon best practice and bring practitioners together to build capacity both within and across schools • Create curriculum learning, teaching and assessment frameworks for literacy and numeracy 3-18
<p>Our children and young people will develop skills for life and work throughout their 3-18 educational experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve employability, personal development and core skills within school led learning frameworks • Develop pathways in the senior phase which lead to the delivery of a broader set of vocational qualifications and opportunities alongside academic qualifications • Develop the Learning Skills and Partnership to build broader links with partners, supporting world of work learning opportunities for all young people and enhancing employer confidence in our young people • Improving systems of support and work opportunities for our most vulnerable school leavers

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE OBJECTIVES	KEY IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS 2015-2017
<p>We will address inequalities and keep children and young people safe through the provision of statutory and early intervention and protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve self evaluation policy, guidance, frameworks and practice • Increase the number of substitute carers and opportunities for short term care of vulnerable teenagers who are in crisis • Develop services and supports for young people who are involved in the Criminal Justice system in line with the Whole Systems Approach • Reduce the time taken in permanence decision making (prior to court processes) • Develop and implement self- directed support for children and young people • Improve transition processes for young people aged 18+ to Adult Services • Develop the service to ensure a quality service to young people aged 16-25 years who have been looked after in line with the Children & Young People Act 2014 • Improve standards of practice and outcomes for looked after children and children within the child protection process • Continue to build on current capacity for social work early intervention work where service capacity allows • Explore the implications for the Social Work Service of providing services to vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds
<p>We will ensure our service successfully meets the needs of all learners and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy, guidance and practice ensuring Inclusion whilst fulfilling our statutory Additional Support for Learning responsibilities • Redesign support for children and young people
<p>We will provide opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers to participate in services and an inclusive approach will minimise the requirement for children and young people to access services outwith the Scottish Borders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop voice and influence of service users in the design and implementation of services through effective participation • Implement a CLD Strategic Plan across the 9 learning community partnerships: • Reduce inequalities in employment and income, health and well being, keeping people safe and housing • Develop a partnership model for our youth strategy work • Build the capacity and resilience within families and communities • Develop partnership approaches to support employability
<p>We will build capacity across services and develop the workforce effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign our services to ensure we have the right structures in place which will enable us to deliver our vision for our children and young people and achieve our objectives • Improve attendance, performance and wellbeing of our staff establishing key processes which support professional learning, development, leadership and support • Ensure all staff responsible for Policies and Strategies are trained on Equality Impact Assessment and ensure that EIAs are conducted on all core business functions

Our Standards and Quality Report is an opportunity to reflect on how we are making a difference to learners, participants, service users, families and communities. In this, it seeks to address:

- How well we deliver on outcomes and support individuals and communities
- How well we improve the quality of our work

Our on-going focus is to ensure that children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and respectful, responsible and included. Key to this is that they receive the help they need, when they need it. In line with both the Scottish Government Programme for Government and the Government's Public Sector Reform Programme, our clear focus is on prevention and early intervention. This is demonstrated through our commitment to achieving the aims of our Early Years Strategy and our approach to implementing the principles of GIRFEC. We are well placed to meet all new statutory duties placed on Local Authorities arising from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 in relation to Early Learning and Childcare and free school meals for all children in P1-3, GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and Corporate Parenting.

Sustained provision and partnership working will continue to underpin the delivery of our services. This is in line with the Scottish Government's increasing expectations for Community Planning Partnerships to work together collaboratively to improve outcomes. We also recognise the importance of making connections across services and the contribution of our services to a wide range of outcomes. In addition, the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill sets a clear agenda to build on our experience of working with communities to support them to achieve their own goals and aspirations through taking independent action and by having their voices heard in the decisions that affect their area.

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) sets us the challenge of helping all children and young people develop the skills and attributes required to enable them to become successful, responsible, confident and effective citizens.

Through an ambitious Improvement Plan we continue to plan for, and respond to, the challenges and opportunities presented by a reduction in resources, changing demographics and trends in need and new legislation.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the 2015 pupil census there were 6379 secondary pupils and 8150 primary pupils attending Scottish Borders Council schools. The number of young people aged 25 and under is expected to decrease by 9.8% in the next 25 years.

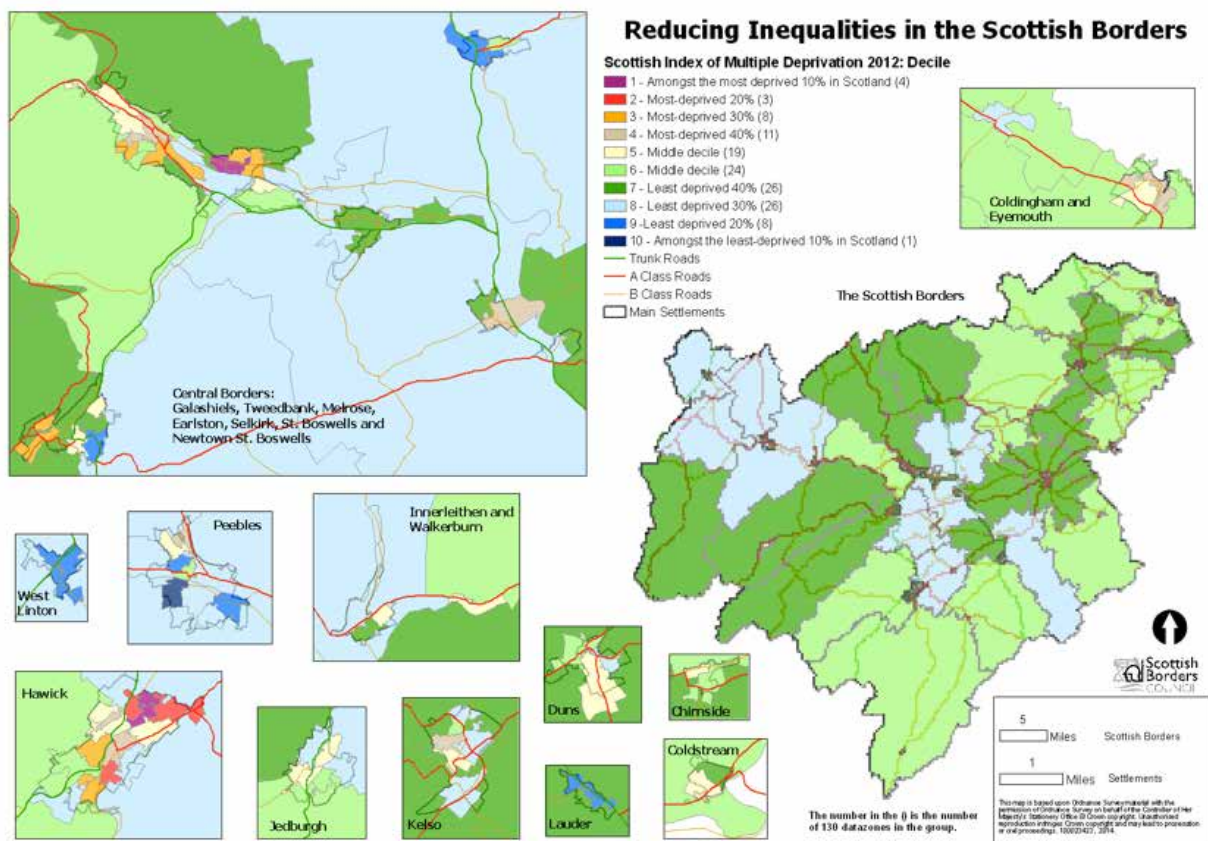
The population of Scottish Borders is spread across a large geographical area. Providing access to essential services to a dispersed population over a large geographic area presents particular challenges. For example, primary school sizes vary significantly. 5 primary schools have fewer than 20 pupils whilst two have over 400 pupils. Additionally, two schools are currently mothballed.

INEQUALITIES IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Narrowing the inequality gap and supporting community capacity is a key challenge for the Council and our partners to ensure we address social deprivation where it exists in localities. The Scottish Borders is a safe and healthy place to live when compared to other local authority areas. However, data indicates that there are a number of areas and key groups where significant inequalities exist and where there is a negative impact on children and young people.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation. Of the 130 datazones in the Scottish Borders 5 are found in the 15% of the most deprived datazones in Scotland. These deprived datazones are in Galashiels and Hawick and account for 3.5% of the population of them Scottish Borders.

AREAS OF DEPRIVATION



Living in a deprived area impacts on the lives of children and young people in a variety of ways:

- Whilst rates of child poverty in the Scottish Borders are lower than Scotland as a whole (12.6% compared to 18.6% in Scotland), rates are as high as 41% in our most deprived areas
- Household incomes in Scottish Borders are well below the Scottish average
- Low educational attainment and achievement are more pronounced in areas of deprivation
- Children and young people are more at risk of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes in areas with higher levels of deprivation.

Supporting and protecting vulnerable children and adults is our most important responsibility and we work closely with other public agencies and the voluntary sector to ensure that effective measures are in place. Recent trends suggest that levels of need are increasing. The overall number of Looked After Children has increased from 179 in 2013 to 215 in 2015. The number of accommodated children within this has increased considerably including an 8% increase in Kinship Care. The number of child protection investigations has also increased. In addition the number of children placed on the Child Protection Register throughout the year has increased from 16 in 2013/14 to 27 in 2014/15.

CHILD PROTECTION RETURN 2014/15 - SUMMARY	2013/14		2014/15	
	NO.	%	NO.	%
Investigations				
Number of Child Protection Investigations	92	-	94	-
Number of investigations that went to CC	36	39.1	56	59.6
- Children Not Registered	4	11.1	2	3.6
- Children Registered	32	88.9	54	96.4
No. of de-registrations within reporting year	45	-	43	-
Children on CP Register at 31 July	16	-	27	-



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

3. GIVING OUR CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ENSURING THEY ARE READY TO SUCCEED

The Early Years has been a priority area for action in the Scottish Borders. In 2014/15 we fully committed to the extension and improvement of universal Early Years provision. The extension of provision of early learning and childcare for eligible 2 year olds has been successfully implemented: there has been an uptake from 57% to 78% in the first 2 years (these figures are based on the estimated eligibility figures provided by the Scottish Government). Families are finding the additional provision beneficial.

Schools and Early Years Practitioners are embracing the Early Level within the Curriculum for Excellence and the guidance as set out in "Building the Ambition – National Practice Guidance in Early Learning and Childcare"⁶. Extensive work has been carried out to improve the quality of our early learning environments, our pedagogy and our partnership with parents. This includes quality assurance and training with our partner providers. A focus in school nurseries to include parents in their children's learning across the early level of learning (nursery and primary 1) is engaging parents in their child's learning in literacy and numeracy and ensuring more appropriate home learning in these areas. As a result parents are better prepared to support school learning with more appropriate activities at home, e.g. many parents are now using age appropriate reading materials. Parents are also more understanding of the progression across the early level and the importance of continued learning through play in primary 1. This is reducing parental anxiety and stress associated with worry about their child's progress in the early stages of primary 1. The development of 'floor books' with clear links to the wellbeing indicators is providing parents with better quality information about their child's progress and developing a greater understanding of Curriculum for Excellence at the early level and the equal importance of all the wellbeing indicators in a child's development. Overall, the quality of engagement with families is transforming at this early level of the learner's journey and families are much more included within their child's learning journey and engaged in the development of the early learning environments, e.g. in Melrose Primary School parents are invited in to observe their child learning in primary 1 to consider what kind of learning would be valuable at home. Feedback from families suggests that this is reducing parental anxiety about their child's progress in learning. The inclusive nature of involving parents directly in observing and providing feedback on developing classroom practice is both innovative and dynamic.

The embedded use of the wellbeing indicators by all agencies as part of meetings around the child (MAC) process is developing greater confidence in parenting. Parents find this holistic approach supportive and relevant. It allows them to contribute to the planning of their child's learning and development. The MAC process is very inclusive in seeking both the child's and the parents' views and inputs into the plan around the child. The high quality relationships across Scottish Borders ensure that the MAC is a supportive process which makes the family feel included, respected and involved rather than judged. It builds confidence in parent's ability to remain a key partner in the child's learning, care and development.

There is a **strong commitment to early intervention** in the early years and partners have worked together as they have fully engaged in the Early Years Collaborative national programme and staff have been dedicated to Early Intervention services:

- Home School Link Workers
- Family Support Workers and Play Workers
- Parenting programmes
- Health Visitors
- Youth Justice Social Workers
- Early Years Co-ordination & Assessment Team
- Early Years Assessment Team
- Community Mental Health Workers
- Supported Childminding Service
- Locality Social Workers

The Early Years Centres being developed and implemented in four areas of the Borders are an example of the strong joint commitment to providing early support to families with young children to ensure that families are able to access a range of supports in an open, welcoming environment. They aim to improve health, learning and social outcomes for children through providing open door access to a range of activities tailored to local needs, co-ordinated by a diverse range of professional staff from NHS Borders, Community Learning Development, Early Years practitioners and Social Work. The first centre to open was the Langlee Early Years Centre, which delivers a range of inputs to support nurture and improved parenting, from 1:1 drop in services to programmes such as Incredible Years. Between the Centre's opening in August 2014 and July 2015, there were over 3,500 visits to the centre. The initial goal set was a median increase of 40 families visiting each week to 60 families. The actual outcome was 80 and the goal has been revised upwards for the next 12 months. Initial indications are that these centres are making a significant contribution to improving outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children and are engaging in new ways with families and local communities.

A comprehensive **programme of multi-agency parenting support** is available in the Borders, which ranges from universal inputs such as Bookbug and ante natal education to specific evidence-based programmes aimed at high risk families. The Psychology of Parenting Programme and Incredible Years programmes strengthen parenting skills and family resilience.

The majority of early years staff, including health visitors, school nurses and community mental health workers, have been trained in the Solihull Approach as the universal parenting programme. These workers can form important relationships with families in need and assist in guiding and signposting to other relevant services.

Training in attachment theory is available to education and early years staff, and a standard attachment focused practice tool has been introduced for use by Health Visitors and is improving outcomes for babies under the age of 4 months.

EARLY YEARS SCORECARD

27-30 MONTH ASSESSMENT

Current performance is 82.5 % against a target of 85% of children reaching their expected developmental milestones. The priority area for improvement is to reduce the number of children with concerns about speech and language development (currently 13%).

NURSERY INTO PRIMARY 1

There has been significant improvement in the quality of How Good Is Our School 3 indicators in our nurseries in improvements in performance, the learners' experience, the quality of the curriculum and the quality of the learning environment. A focus on staff networking and sharing of good practice has resulted in the majority of nurseries now delivering very good or good early learning provision.

Impact of early intervention is highlighted in section 6 of this report.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

4. IMPROVING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, BOTH WITHIN AND OUT WITH THE FORMAL CURRICULUM

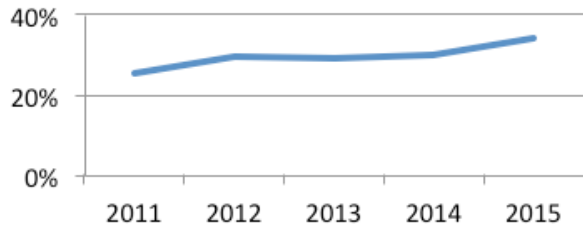
The four capacities within Curriculum for Excellence sets out how children and young people will develop holistically as successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals as well as develop skills for learning, life and work. In this section the report highlights the work taking place to ensure our children and young people are attaining and achieving in these areas which will ensure they leave the school system with the learning, the experiences and the outcomes they will need to go on to achieve in life and in the world of work and further learning.

ATTAINMENT SCORECARD

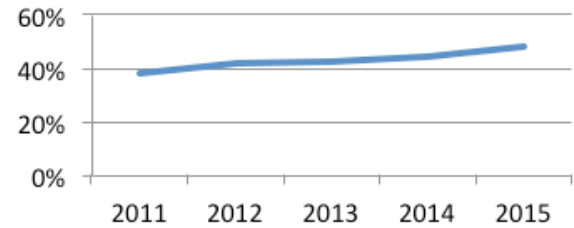
The continued implementation and development of Curriculum for Excellence within our schools and in our partnerships is now impacting upon attainment levels of all children and young people. In 2015 we achieved our highest ever levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy, had more young people leaving school with higher levels of attainment; the attainment of our young people living in deprivation significantly improved and our national standings in attainment improved:

2014/15 SCQF RESULTS FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

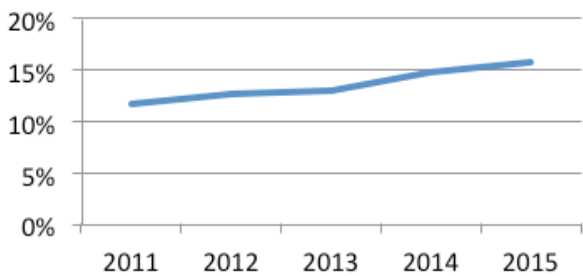
S6: 5+ SCQF LEVEL 6 OR BETTER



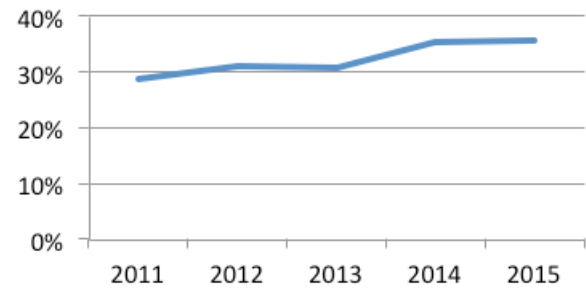
S6: 3+ SCQF LEVEL 6 OR BETTER



S5: 5+ SCQF LEVEL 6 OR BETTER



S5: 3+ SCQF LEVEL 6 OR BETTER



ATTAINMENT LEVELS – NATIONAL SCORECARD

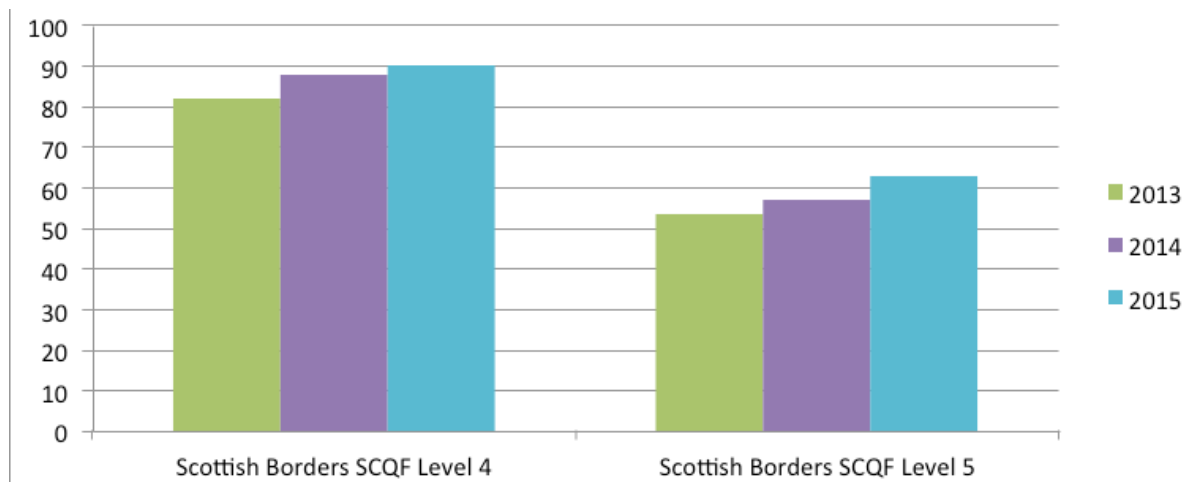
Our national scorecard performance in key measures improved in 2014-2015. The improvement in attainment for our young people living in deprivation is a key indicator of the success of the work being carried out to 'close the attainment gap' in the Scottish Borders:

INDICATOR DESCRIPTION	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	National Ranking	Ranking Within Family Group	Change in overall ranking since 13/14
Attainment-% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 6 ie Higher	29.3%	30.5%	34.4%	5	2 of 8	3
(SIMD)% pupils from deprived areas gaining 5+awards at level 6(SIMD)	0.0%	6.6%	11.8%	15	3 of 8	11

LITERACY AND NUMERACY 2015 RESULTS FOR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

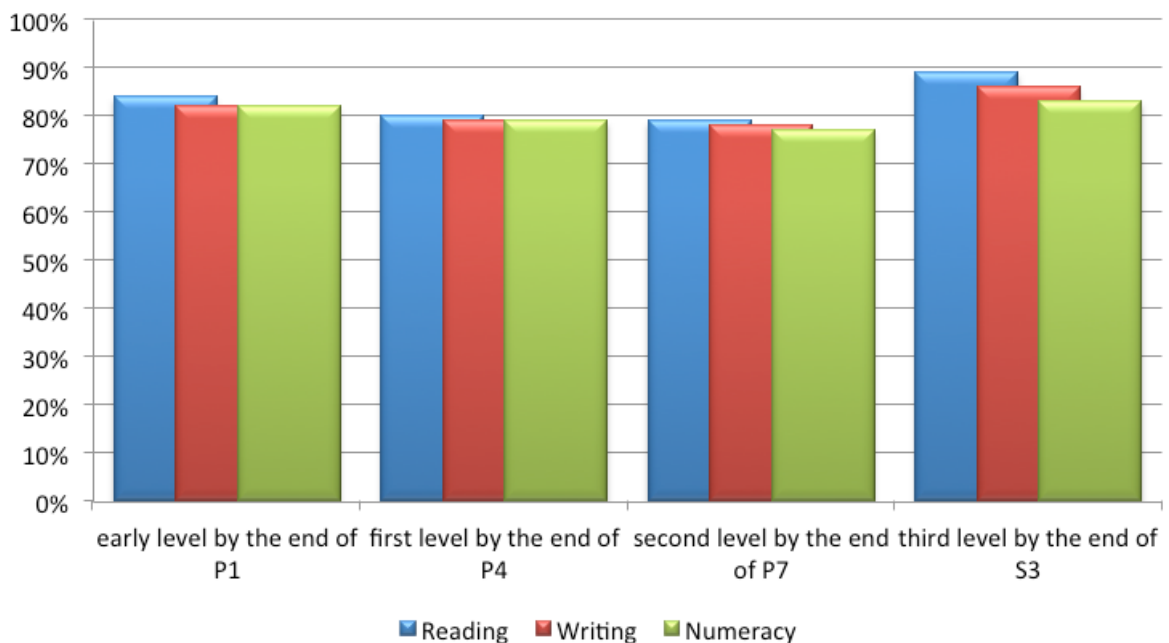
A3 year improving trend in literacy and numeracy levels continues.

IMPROVING ATATINMENT IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY PERCENTAGE OS CANDIDATES ATTAINING LITERACY AND NUMERACY



Scottish Borders Council fully participated in gathering literacy and numeracy statistics for the new National Improvement Framework which will report on levels of literacy and numeracy at key milestones within the Broad General Education (nursery to end of secondary 3). The following levels were reported:

NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK 2015



In 2015 we are proud to report improving attainment levels but we are ambitious to improve from this strong position and raising attainment levels for all children and young people remains a top priority. Key actions and priorities areas for further improvement have been identified through a service of quality improvement visits and regular discussions between staff, Headteachers and officers.

ACHIEVEMENT SCORECARD

ACTIVITY AND SPORTS

The Physical Education programme is integrated into the Borders PASPE (Physical Activity, Sport and PE) Strategy ensuring a progressive and planned learning experience linked to Community Sport. PE has improved from 23% of Primary Pupils and 15% of primary schools meeting the National Target of 2 hrs / week in 2009 to 89% and 90% respectively in 2015 and currently expected to be at 100% in 2016. In secondary schools 89% of our pupils were meeting their 2 hours per week physical activity in 2015 and in 2016 this is expected to be 100%.

Community Sport participation rates of children are 60% overall with higher rates (72%) being reported by younger age groups (<13yrs). This is considerably above national average figures. Participation in programmed activity (Active Schools) is increasing. A Play Strategy is being developed to facilitate local free access to casual sport and recreation including installing Ball Courts at local Schools and “Street Sport” activities in target communities.

Wheatlands Young People Unit are members of the Residential Units of Scotland Football League. Young People received outreach support in the games and in training.

The 2014/15 Active Schools Programme (managed through Borders Sport & Leisure Trust as part of the Borders Integrated Physical Activity, Sport & PE Strategy) has increased the quality and range of opportunities available. In the lead up to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, a local Commonwealth Passport programme provided primary school pupils with exposure to as many Commonwealth Sports as possible in an extra-curricular environment, linking local pupils to local sports clubs in the community. There were 7,911 individual participants, or 54% of the Borders P1-S6 population.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Participant Sessions	190,694	188,116	208,314	211,962
Activity Sessions	8,870	8,799	10,280	10,499
Activities Offered		41	48	51
Activity Session Blocks	930	932	1,165	1,097

The Bikeability programme was delivered in 31% of primary schools in 2014/15. Approximately 25% of schools have introduced the Daily Mile or similar in the last 12 months and more intend to implement this in the new school session. Schools frequently offer taster sessions or short programmes of other sports and activities such as dance, Zumba, martial arts, etc.

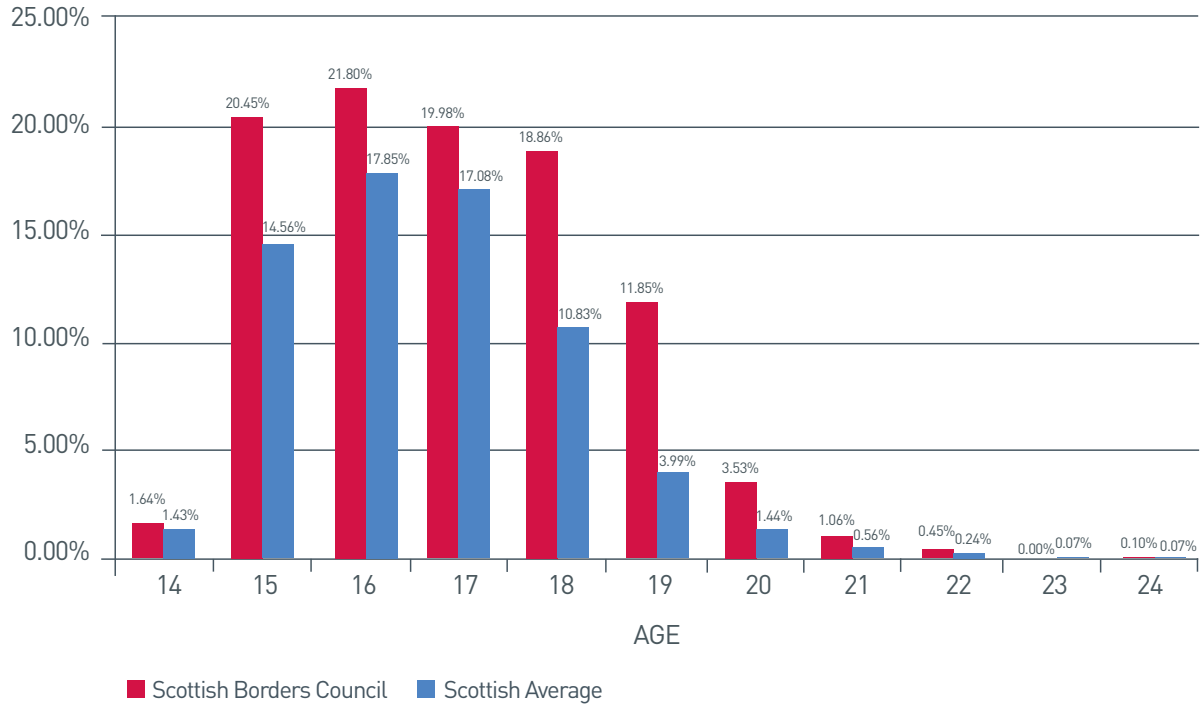
In 2015 Earlston High School and Peebles High School were both awarded the Gold Sports Scotland National Award for excellence in schools sports provision and quality. Only 15 schools in Scotland have been awarded the gold status.

Looked After Children and their carers receive free membership of Borders Sport and Leisure Trust, enabling them to access swimming and other sports and activities. At October 2015, 337 free memberships were in use. Free memberships are also provided for Aberlour respite centre, for staff and children attending.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

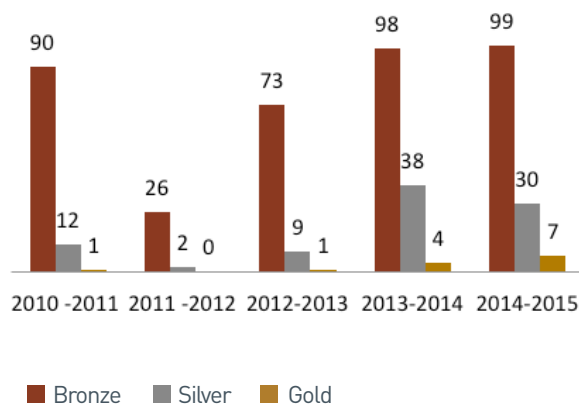
At every age level more young people participate in Duke of Edinburgh compared to nationally:

AGE PROFILE AS A % OF THE POPULATION

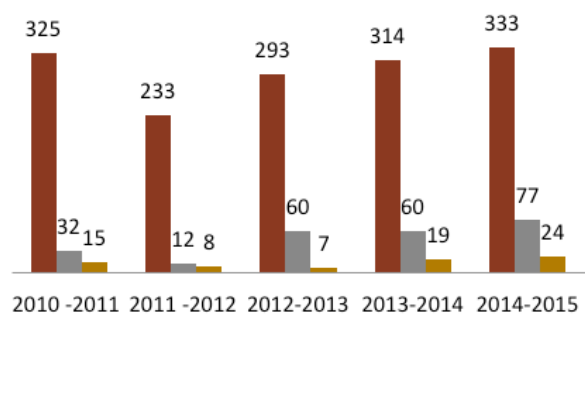


In 2015 award levels remained high and the number of young people joining the scheme is the highest on record:

AWARDS GAINED



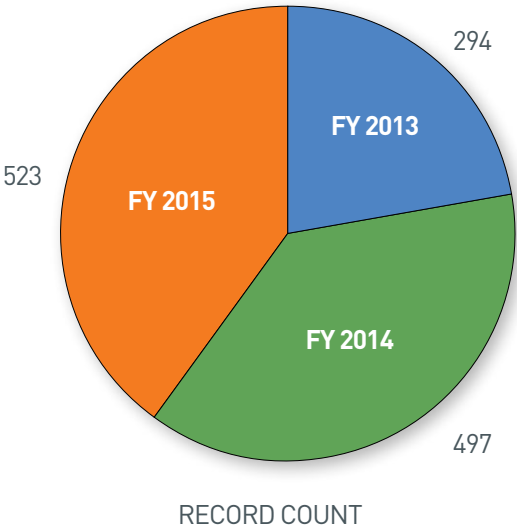
NEW ENTRANTS



VOLUNTEERING AND SALTIRE AWARDS

Saltire Awards are Scottish awards designed to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering. Supported by the Scottish Government, the Saltire Awards enable young volunteers to record the skills, experience and learning gained through successful volunteering placements in school or provided by local and national voluntary agencies. In the Scottish Borders more young people in 2015 registered to participate in Saltire Awards compared to previous years and the numbers of certificates awarded remained at a high level:

SALTIRE AWARD REGISTRATIONS



The level of volunteering within the Saltire Scheme improved in 2015. More young people are contributing more time to their communities.

TYPE OF CERTIFICATE ISSUED IE NO OF HOURS RECOGNISED VOLUNTEERING	2013	2014	2015
Summit –over 500 hours	8	1	5
500 hours completed	7	12	10
200 hours completed	40	41	53
100 hours completed	70	78	131
50 hours completed	123	135	202
25 hours completed	182	216	354
10 hours completed	228	300	354
Challenge hour completed	49	63	86
Total number of awards	707	846	1195

In 2015 higher percentages of young people in the Scottish Borders were more active in school sports, in community sports activities, in volunteering and in Duke of Edinburgh than in previous years and at higher levels than national averages. As we develop a wellbeing strategy in 2016 achievement, participation and activity will be key priority areas where we will continue to strive for improvements to better the emotional, social and physical health and wellbeing of our children and young people.

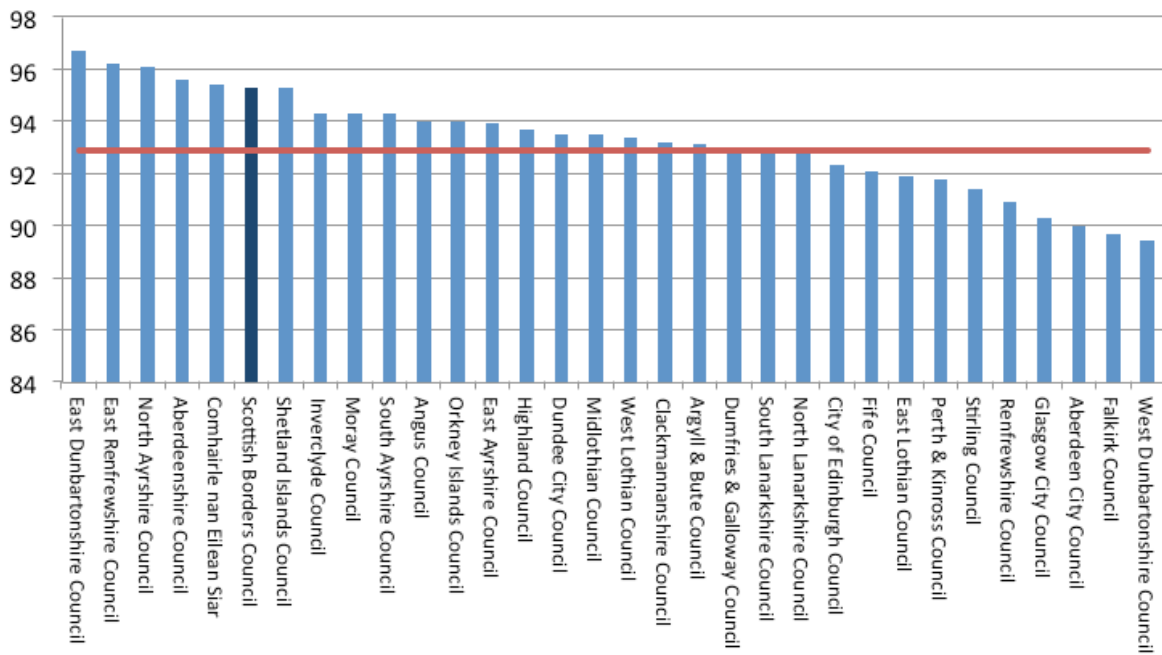
POSITIVE AND SUSTAINED DESTINATIONS

In 2015, 95.3% of our school leavers had a positive destination compared to 92.9% for Scotland. Our positive destination performance has been above national for the last 4 years and for the first time in 14/15 we exceeded the virtual comparator performance. We have the highest performance in our family comparator group and we have maintained a top quartile performance for 2 consecutive years.

Our sustained destination in 13/14 performance moved from 94.2 % to 94%; a decrease of 0.2, this was better than the national sustained destination performance of 92.3% to 91.5% (0.8% decrease).

A total of 90.9% of our leavers in decile 1 in 13/14 sustained a positive destination, which was the 4th highest decile performance in Scotland.

SCOTLAND - INITIAL DESTINATIONS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS 2014/15 (DESTINATION PERCENTAGES)





CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

5. PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY SUPPORT, CARE AND PROTECTION TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

INCLUDING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

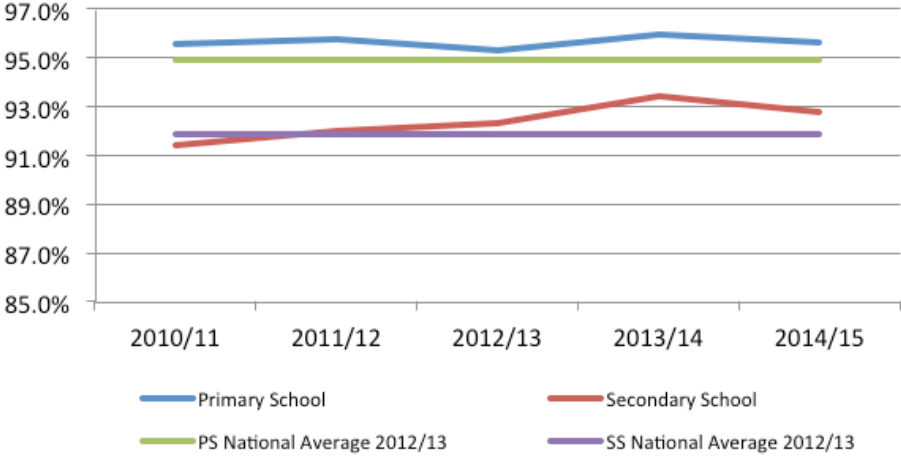
All services within Scottish Borders Council for children and young people sit within the new Children and Young People's Directorate. This has created a tremendous opportunity to make connections and take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people. The key message that has been delivered to all our leaders in 2015 is that our primary goal is for "all children in the Borders (to be) attending school every day 3-18 years and cared for in the Borders".

An "Inclusion and Wellbeing For All" Policy is in development which will make explicit our commitment to ensuring all our children and young people are supported to achieve their best outcomes, wherever possible in their own schools and communities. Key progress has been made in 2015:

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

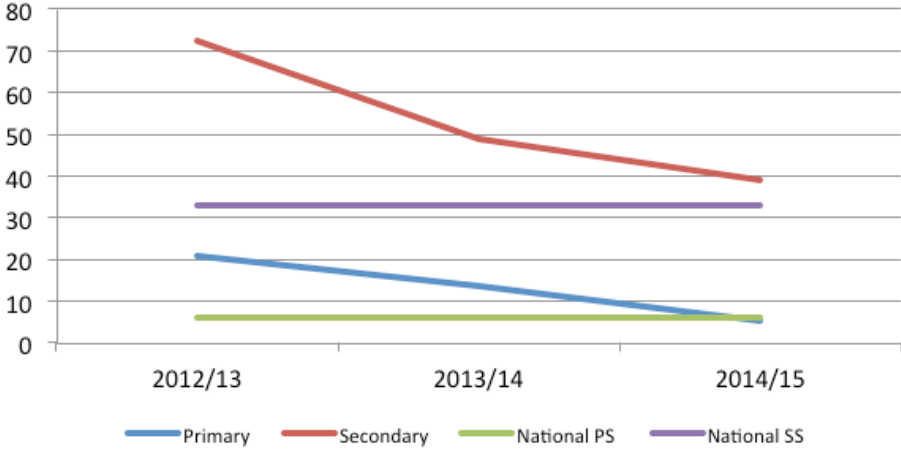
In 2014/15 attendance was higher in the Scottish Borders (94.4%) compared to the Scottish average (93.7%). The overall positive trend in attendance was also reflected in our areas of highest deprivation. Our attendance has been consistently above average for a number of years. In 2015 we maintained our position in the top quartile nationally and there was a slight increase in attendance from the previous year from 94.3% in 2013/14 to 94.4% in 2014/15.

ATTENDANCE TREND FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS



Attendance is monitored and acted upon on a month by month basis. We analyse patterns throughout the year and are working with children, young people and their families to seek ways of supporting and further improving attendance at school. Within Performance Reporting there is a specific focus on our LAC population.

SCHOOL EXCLUSION RATE PER 1000 PUPIL 3 YEAR TREND



EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL

In 2015 exclusion rates significantly reduced to their lowest rates ever in both primary and secondary. However, the rates remain above national in secondary – further improvements are expected and our ambition is for all our schools to aspire to attain an outcome of zero exclusions.

The following actions have contributed to this recent progress and will be key to future improvements as we aim for zero exclusions and improved attendance all the year round:

- Wider achievement opportunities delivered in partnership with the third sector, Borders College and CLD (opportunities for all)
- More vocational opportunities within the core curriculum delivered by local businesses

- Mentoring inputs based upon the risk matrix assessment
- Breakfast clubs and support with financing course resources e.g. books, folders, writing materials
- Enhanced transition experiences
- Planning around the young person at meetings around the child (MAC) to meet needs and provide extra care and support
- Counselling support
- Creating and supporting volunteering opportunities
- Provision of work -based learning placements within the senior phase timetables
- In school exclusion programmes focused on restorative approaches e.g. Hawick High School and Connect Zone in Gala Academy
- Introduction of employability courses within the S4 experience
- Target group individual projects e.g. Gala Academy -work with Voice Of My Own (VOMO) to create a film documenting learner success journeys and aspirations.

The work of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service supports children and young people, particularly those who are disengaged or facing other barriers to participation, to re-engage, improve skills and confidence and achieve. CLD also work with parents and carers to improve adult and family learning, which indirectly improves outcomes for children and young people.

A total of 20,036 youth work opportunities provided by the Community Learning & Development Service were taken up by young people in 2014/15. These include local youth clubs and various learning programmes offered in partnership with schools and other organisations aimed at supporting inclusion and resilience. In 2014/15, 282 young people completed a Youth Work and Schools programme. The groups and approaches include programmes such as Seasons for Growth which support children and young people experiencing short term difficulty and loss which can erode relationships and engagement with learning.

In 2014/15, 26 young people gained Youth Achievement Awards; 31 young people received Dynamic Youth Awards and 127 received SQA awards. The CLD service supported 271 young volunteers in gaining Saltire Awards. In the same period 482 adults successfully completed their community based learning opportunities with 50 adults gaining an accredited award, 254 reporting increased skills and 238 moved on to further learning.

CLD has developed strong partnership working to improve employability for people of all ages. The work of our Opportunities for All team in supporting young people over 16 who are furthest away from the job market was recognised as best practice by HMIE inspections in Kelso, Galashiels and Selkirk. Activity Agreements deliver individualised programmes of learning, designed in partnership with participants, to disengaged young people aged 16-19yrs who often face multiple barriers which prevent them from progressing successfully. The programme is delivered by the CLD Youth work team. Young people progress on to further education, training, volunteering or employment. In 2014/15, 24 young people completed an Activity agreement. This has resulted in a dramatic reduction in young people aged 16-19 years in receipt of Job Seekers Maintenance Allowance – a 33% reduction in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. This year also saw the first, and very successful, outward bound residential for young people on Activity Agreements.

Four CLDS Workers have been trained as Incredible Years Facilitators, as part of the Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP). CLDS Workers have worked with partners, using a structured group work programme with parents/carers of 3-4 year olds to strengthen parent-child attachment. Parents and carers speak very highly of the programme and the majority (15) have reported improvement in parent-child interactions, as measured by completion of a “Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire” (SDQ)

This year also saw the development of the CLD Strategic Action Plan which constitutes a key strand in our drive to reduce inequalities within the Scottish Borders. It supports partners to work together, using early intervention and prevention approaches in tackling inequalities. It defines how third sector organisations, local community groups and public sector services in the partnership will provide CLD opportunities in the Scottish Borders over the next three years. The commitment to partnership working required by all CLD partners to develop our Scottish Borders Plan has been exceptional. Many organisations have contributed to the Plan, and actions are now underway in all areas. Thanks to a grant from Education Scotland, 42 staff from 31 organisations took part in partnership training in outcome focused planning.

The service has focused on quality improvement throughout the year and as a result is better able to evidence the impact of the CLD service. Two CLD staff have trained as associate assessors for Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). CLD partners took part in a pilot Quality Review in Hawick in June. Using a peer review approach, and the "How Good is Our..." suite of Quality Improvement Frameworks, the review team were able to recognise and validate many examples of good practice. Feedback from participants in the Quality Review has been positive and this approach will now be integrated into an annual cycle of partnership self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Youth Borders is the network of third sector youth organisations operating in the Scottish Borders. It facilitates the work of its members through training, insurance, projects, strategic representation and support. Youth Borders works in partnership with SBC and other agencies working with children and young people. In addition to the ongoing work of its members, Youth Borders delivered six key partnership projects in 2014/15, each addressing a Borders-wide issue or offering new opportunities for members and young people:

- Thinking differently on alcohol (improved decision-making for young people on alcohol)
- Sexual Health Training
- Outcome based planning and evaluation training (attended by 110 people from 41 organisations)
- Volunteering capacity building project
- Scottish Youth Parliament and Inspire Awards
- Columba 1400 leadership residential for three groups of young people

An Employability Providers Forum was established based on discussion with members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to address partnership working, sharing information and identifying gaps in provision. The main aims are to develop appropriate local services in response to priority needs, to plan provision effectively and to create productive networks and relationships between agencies and organisations.

We have developed a Supported Employment Scheme, which includes Modern Apprenticeships and work programmes. This Scheme has a specific remit for Looked After Young People.

Programmes to support improved parenting and nurturing are tailored to need and designed to maximise participation among hard-to-reach groups. For example, All Together is a six week Family Learning Programme which aims to involve disengaged P6 children and their main carer. This partnership project with Healthy Living Network, CLD and Eyemouth Primary School was delivered by Instinctively Wild and focused on outdoor education. The course was particularly successful in engaging male children and carers. All family pairs achieved their John Muir Discovery Family Award.

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Children & Young People's Health Strategy 2013-2018 describes how NHS Borders in partnership will further improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people from pre-birth to 18.

In 2015 partnership working has led to improved health outcomes for children and young people in key areas :

- Reduction in the percentage of 15 year olds drinking on a weekly basis
- Improved joint planning and co-ordination of care for young people with complex health needs in transition to adult health services
- Registration and uptake of Healthy Start vitamins (project through the Langlee Early Years Centre)
- The majority of children (75%) are within the healthy weight range at the 27-30 month review (2014/15). A range of healthy weight advice and support is provided in early years settings through groups and through training for the early year's workforce
- A total of 2006 children took part in the Fit4Fun programme in schools between 2011 and 2014. 21% of participants were in the target group of on or over the 91st percentile. Fit4Fun was delivered in five primary schools in 2014-15 and data for this period is currently being analysed. Future work includes targeted group programmes for families with an overweight child and prevention and targeted intervention in early years settings.
- NHS Borders successfully implemented a complex vaccination programme for all primary school children and had the highest uptake (83%) in Scotland. NHS Borders is only one of three Boards exceeding the 75% national target.
- The latest National Dental Improvement Programme report shows that Scottish Borders has the lowest dental caries rates for P7 children in Scotland, 9% which is significantly lower than the Scottish average.

Improving Health and Wellbeing is a key pillar within Curriculum for Excellence in our schools and permeates many learning experiences. Throughout the learner's journey 3-18; children and young people will experience learning experiences focused on developing healthy eating, sleeping and hygiene habits as well as healthy lifestyles. In our nurseries children experience a healthy daily snack which they are involved in planning and preparing. In primary schools most schools insist on a healthy snack. Many schools are working to develop confidence and resilience through growth mindset approaches. Pastoral care staff implement programmes designed to support young people with the pressures of social media. The Community Mental Health Workers provide support to both staff and vulnerable young people. The Borders Child and Young Persons' Mental Health Strategy 2015-18⁷ sets out goals and action to ensure we effectively support children and young people with higher level mental health needs. Achievements over the previous Strategy (2011-14) include the development and embedding of core documentation incorporating a robust risk assessment process; a cross Borders approach to evidence based parenting programmes; a cross Borders "Moving Forward with ADHD" group; and improved data collection and monitoring.

Better Eating, Better Learning (BEBL) is being implemented in schools across the Borders. Schools are being encouraged to include the BEBL self-evaluation in their School Improvement Plans for 2016/17. For example, a working group of P7 pupils at Kingsland Primary School have reviewed the school meals menu and are undertaking ongoing work to develop recipes and include more pupils in the development of school meals.

More than a third of schools have some kind of community growing scheme such as a school or community garden and Wheatlands Young Persons Unit have the Greenhouse Project. Community cooking classes are also growing in popularity, with produce from the gardens often featuring. The Council catering team is working more closely with schools to facilitate initiatives of this kind, and the catering team has undertaken a programme of visits to schools in 2014/15 to share ideas and support.

Joint working between Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders has improved health services for Looked After Children(LAC). The LAC population is consistently identified through appropriate sharing of information with health visitors, school nurses, GPs and other appropriate staff. All LAC are offered a medical within 2 working days by their GP following child/young person being accommodated, and a health needs assessment within 4 weeks. All LAC have a review health assessment annually completed by the health visitor/school nurse. Training is delivered to carers/ staff supporting LAC on topics such as blood borne viruses, psycho-active drugs, sexual health and relationships by a variety of staff - this area of work is co-ordinated by the LAC nurse, who also retains National links for Health of LAC.

For **Child Protection**, the consultant paediatricians take the health lead for Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs) in partnership with Social Work and Police. In response to recommendations from the 2011 inspection the Child Protection Team have developed a health needs assessment (HNA) for child protection and this is now fully implemented with supporting evidence to highlight improvement on outcomes for children and young people. From January 2014 – January 2015 there were 365 IRDs and 77 health needs assessments were requested (21%); an additional 35 children have had a comprehensive medical completed by a paediatrician.

Community Mental Health Workers work predominantly in school and their public presentation on their service outcomes in May 2015 resulted in widespread positive feedback.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Generic work takes place via universal services to raise awareness and improve the skills of children, young people and parents/carers in recognising and managing risk. With the support of the Police, the third sector and other partners, schools in 2015 delivered inputs on topics such as road safety, online safety, seasonal risks - fireworks and bonfires, water safety.

Partners responded well to emerging issues and trends, developing new inputs around issues such as counter-terrorism and child sexual exploitation. In 2015 a range of activities were implemented:

- Extensive work was carried out in schools on rail safety with the support of the British Transport Police.
- UN International Road safety Week (1st week in May). In February all schools received briefings and information encouraging them to support the event and make a road safety pledge.
- Child safety week (1st week in June). Promotion in all primary schools and nurseries encouraging teachers to promote child safety issues as part of the curriculum.
- Crucial Crew is a multi- agency annual safety event for all P7 pupils now in its 23rd year. In 2015 1,174 children attended from 61 primary schools.
- Safe T road show multi-agency safety and healthy living roadshow to high schools targeted at either 5th years or 4th years. In 2015 there were 4 roadshows at Galashiels, Earlston, Berwickshire and Selkirk High schools, with more to follow in spring 2016. A total of 486 students attended. Workshops were run on the following topics: healthy eating, violence prevention, road safety, Mental Health awareness, risks of tattooing safely, dealing with money and debt, fire safety, CPR and use of community defibrillators.

- Driving into the future road show - multiagency road safety roadshow aimed at 6th year students on the risks, responsibilities and consequences of driving. In 2015, 6 high schools were visited with 3 more to be delivered in 2016, a total of 680 6th years attended in 2015.
- RUTS (Rural Urban Training Scheme) where young people with problems around antisocial behaviour, attendance and achievement are engaged over a week long training course where they develop new skills and take on responsibility. Local Integration Police Officers(LIOs) were intrinsic to a number of in school projects such as Not Alone (bullying), Mentors In Violence, Junior Road Safety Officers and similar. An example of the strength of this work would be Mentors In Violence in Peebles, now in its third year- it was necessary to bring in a selection process such was the number of young people wanting to be mentors.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In the Scottish Borders we have a well established multi-agency system for considering the circumstances of a child or young person where there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing. There is a long established, centrally based co-located Child Protection Unit. Staff in the Locality Social Work Teams, working in partnership with the Child Protection Unit, provide the access point for referrals regarding concerns about a child. Each of the 5 Locality Teams operates a duty system which ensures quick and easy access to a Social Worker if any professional or member of the public has a concern about a child.

Most concerns are managed at a local level and a proportionate response put in place but if the information received suggests that the child may be at risk of significant harm then contact is made with a Child Protection and Reviewing Officer for consultation and if appropriate, the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) process is triggered. This ensures consistency of response across the Community Planning Partnership(CPP) area, prevents decision-making from being influenced by the daily competing pressures on the Locality Teams and benefits the process by facilitating face-to-face communication between Social Work, Police and NHS staff who are co-located in the Unit. This also ensures that when required, Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs) are undertaken in a timely manner.

There is a high level of confidence about the quality of our child protection processes and,. Quality assurance systems are in place to ensure continuous improvement. In 2015 an independent review was commissioned of the IRD process. The overall findings confirmed that our child protection processes continue to be robust. The report states that “Scottish Borders provides a good service but could make some changes to reach towards an excellent service”. The commissioning of this review reflects our transparent approach to quality assuring and improving policies and practice including our commitment to keeping our children and young people safe. In addition to the above, the Child Protection Committee has commissioned a range of surveys and reviews. Over the last year, the work undertaken has included case reviews, gathering the views of parents and case file audits.

Improved consistency in the quality of our risk assessments was also highlighted in the review outlined above. Following the launch of the National Risk Framework, briefings were provided to all relevant staff and subsequent audits have highlighted some good examples of clearly recorded risk assessments which have informed children / young people’s plans. Additional resources and tools are available to support the risk assessment process via our Scottish Borders Child Protection Procedures; e.g. Supporting Children and Young People at Risk of Harm and Suicide and Parental Substance Misuse Screening Tool. In addition to the above activity, an IRD Review Group is in place and meets fortnightly to provide another layer of scrutiny of cases which have just had completed IRDs. There are regular reviews of learning from national significant case reviews and any local Initial Case Reviews (ICRs).

The Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol ensures that any risk in relation to young people who may be involved with either Children or Adult services is managed in a consistent way. In addition to the audit and review work of the CPC, Social Work also undertakes a monthly sample audit of cases which are recorded on the Framework IT system i.e. all children on the child protection register, looked after children and a significant number of children and young people who are supported on a non-statutory basis but are at significant risk of requiring statutory or child protection intervention.

Guidance on developing a chronology for a child or young person is included in our Child's Planning Manual. This is a key priority area and we have made steady progress with regard to the quality of chronologies in cases where Social Work provide the lead professional role. There has been a multi-agency approach to assessing risks and needs for a child for several years using our Universal Information and Assessment (UIA) format accompanied by comprehensive guidance in our Child's Planning Manual. In 2015 following concerns about the complexity of previous versions of our assessment tool, a consultation process was undertaken with frontline staff and managers to design a much simpler format which has been well received. This has improved the format of the assessment document which then ensures that the Plan for the child or young person is tailored to their needs.

The need for assessment to be proportionate to the individual circumstances of a child or young person is emphasised and, on a multiagency basis, this is achieved through the screening process, locality business meetings and the Meeting Around the Child (MAC) process which guides staff to identify key strengths and areas for improvement without having to complete a full UIA prior to developing a Child's Plan. The MAC process is embedded and ahead nationally in the use of all the wellbeing indicators as part of planning improved outcomes for the child/young person.

Wheatlands Young People's Unit provides residential care for up to 5 young people in the Scottish Borders. In a Care Inspectorate inspection in 2015 it was awarded excellent gradings for all quality indicators. The high quality of the provision was further recognised in 2015 when it was awarded the national Young People's Unit of the year.

LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE STATISTICS

- The overall looked after children population has increased from 183 individuals in Apr-13 to 213 in Oct-15.
- Both the number of exclusion incidents and the number of individuals who are responsible for the incidents have decreased. Overall there has been a marked decrease in the number and percentage of exclusions within the secondary looked after pupils from 2013/14 to 2014/15. In 2015/16 there has been no incidents of primary school LAC exclusions and only 3 secondary school LAC exclusion incidents.
- In 2013/14, 80% of looked after children leaving school had a positive destination (education or employment). In 2014/15 this was 100%.
- In the last 2 years the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register who have been reregistered within 2 years has remained very low. Number of children de-registered over the past 2 years:
2014/15
Quarter 1 - 10 individuals
Quarter 2 - 10 individuals
Quarter 3 - 15 individuals
Quarter 4 - 9 individuals
2015/16
Quarter 1 - 14 individuals
Quarter 2 - 13 individuals
- Number of initial case conferences leading to registration in 2015 -29 case conferences in total with 5 not leading to registration.
- Number of pre-birth child protection case conferences from Jan-15 to Oct-15 has been 8. In 2014 it was 2 and in 2013 it was 8.
- We currently monitor and hold all case conferences within 10 working days. Our performance within this area is much better than nationally: the national target is based on 21 days but we work within 10 days.
- In 2014/15, 156 children were referred to the Scottish Children's Reporter, 8.2 per 1,000 compared with the Scottish average of 17.4 per 1,000. The most common ground for referral was lack of parental care and the most common age bracket for referrals was 12-15 years.
- Trends in crime involving young people are closely monitored with performance management information by local officers in Police Scotland. Over the last 3 years there has been a relatively static position in terms of youth crime with very low numbers of crime.
- The time frame between the decision to apply for permanence being made at S.31 meeting to the Permanence Application being lodged in court continues to reduce gradually and work is on-going to address unnecessary drift and delay.
- There has been a 33% increase in the number of foster carers from 2011 to 2015 (from 48 in July 2012 to 64 in July 2015).
- The percentage of children placed away from home who have had 3 or more placements in the current period of care averaged 16.5% between October 2014 and September 2015. Placement breakdown rates are low.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

6. REDUCING INEQUALITIES

Earlier in this report we highlighted that narrowing the inequality gap and supporting community capacity is a key challenge for the Council and our partners to ensure we address social deprivation where it exists in localities. We have 3 over-arching principles in the Scottish Borders which focus us on tackling this challenge:

- **Early Intervention and prevention to break the cycle of poor outcomes**
- **Working with our communities, building on the assets of individuals and communities**
- **Ensuring that children and families' needs are at the centre of design and delivery**

The **Reducing Inequalities strategy**⁵ and the **Community Learning and Development Strategic Plan**⁶ and the **Draft Integrated Children and Young People's Plan**⁷ set our commitment to actions to reduce inequalities for our children, our young people and their families.

In 2015 significant progress can be reported:

Early Intervention and prevention to break the cycle of poor outcomes

Working with partners in 2015 a range of actions were taken focussed on early intervention and prevention:

Nurturing programmes are in place in a number of schools, either as formal nurture groups or as a more general nurture approach to forming and strengthening relationships. Associated activities and facilities such as breakfast clubs, "dens" or safe spaces for play and talk, buddy systems and mentoring help to build strong and caring relationships and support children in school.

The **Supported Childminding Scheme** offered childminding services to families experiencing short term vulnerability, for example due to post natal depression, bereavement, poor physical or mental health, or a child's behavioural and socialisation needs. The service is provided by experienced childminders who have completed additional training and development to support families in stressful situations. In 2014/15, 40 children completed places begun in the previous financial year, and an additional 82 referrals were received. There are currently 53 childminders registered on the scheme. Benefits of the scheme go beyond the immediate support and respite provided – users report that childminders model good parenting, help families to build relationships in the local community, for example through playgroups, etc, and many parents choose to use the same childminder to provide their funded child care when their child becomes eligible.

Social Work Family Support staff work within the localities to directly support parents and children by providing targeted after school support, parenting groups, drop in sessions and supervised contact and assessments. The aim in some situations is to help parents be confident enough to link in to universal supports where appropriate. Evaluations completed at the end of group programmes positively reflect on the work of these groups. Many of the families involved with Family Support have been referred to the Psychology of Parenting Programmes and have fully participated and benefitted from the programme. Family Support are also involved in Complex Family Assessments and spend a significant proportion of their time in supervised contacts.

The multi-agency **Early Years Assessment Team** works with very vulnerable families pre-birth and in the early years. The goal of the service is to assist parents to parent their child successfully and, where this is not possible, to ensure the child is protected from harm and, if necessary, receives timely care and support away from the parents. A 2015 external evaluation of the service was extremely positive: finding evidence of improved wellbeing of children and parents (particularly parental mental health), improvements in parenting and parents' confidence, reduced risk of harm, more positive engagement with other services, and extremely high rates of approval from parents and from wider service providers. The team receive on average 170 referrals per year, (12% of the Borders births per year); all receive support from the midwives and most (70%) additional support from family support workers. A third of cases lead to a pre-birth planning meeting, to ensure that the family is adequately supported during pregnancy and that children get the best start in life. Around 20% of cases are 'held' by Social Workers in the team.

In August 2015, NHS Borders implemented the first hybrid model in Scotland of the **Family Nurse Partnership (FNP)** with NHS Lothian ensuring support to teenage mothers aged 19 and under who met programme criteria. The programme is on trajectory with 100% recruitment of 9 mothers.

The **Early Years Centres** established in 2014/15 provide an opportunity for services working jointly to ensure that families are able to access a range of supports. For example, as part of the national Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP), Scottish Borders is delivering the Incredible Years parenting programme. The first three Incredible Years (IY) groups of 14 sessions took place in Burnfoot, Eyemouth and Langlee, all areas of high deprivation. Twenty-four families took part in the first three IY groups. A multi-agency approach to engagement, utilising the universal reach of Health Visitors, has contributed to exceptionally successful targeting and recruitment. Scottish Borders has also been very successful in targeting families living in remote and rural areas. Compliance with the programme has been strong, with each family attending an average 10 of the 14 sessions. The programme shows strongly improved outcomes for children and families.

A specific **Welfare Benefits Officer** post is situated within the Early Years Team for the purpose of addressing child poverty through income maximisation. Between April and September 2015, the Welfare Benefits officer gave advice and in particular Tax Credit advice and assistance with claims to 114 families, including 18 families in dispute with HMRC. Advice was delivered through home visits, telephone contact, three PACE events in Peebles, Hawick and Kelso (which support those facing redundancy), ten drop in surgeries at the Langlee and Burnfoot Early Year Centres and two Bump to Baby events in Selkirk and Peebles. There were successful outcome in 12 cases involving disputes with HMRC resulting in gains of £123,000. Total gains in the reporting period were over half a million pounds, at £585,000.

Aberlour are pre-contracted to the Council and NHS Borders to provide a Residential Outreach Service and offers a range of short break respite care and support for parents and carers with children affected by disabilities. Support includes residential short breaks, outreach within the local community and summer play schemes. This service not only provides families with a short break and time to 'recharge', but it brings together children with significant learning disabilities/complex

needs and offers them a programme of activities which are fun, stimulating and safe; creating an opportunity for them to make friends and pursue leisure activities outwith the school and family environment. This strengthens family wellbeing and resilience. The Care Inspectorate's July 2015 report stated "*Children, young people and their families have continued to receive a high quality and invaluable support.*" The Community Children's Nursing Team (CCNs) provides training to carers/ staff providing respite and act as a resource to provide advice and information about complex health issues. They work closely with Aberlour staff in the development of children with disability care plans and training of staff.

The **CEDAR** (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) programme provides therapeutic group work for children and young people aged 4-16 to help them recover from their experiences of domestic abuse. The project also runs groups for mothers to help them support their child in the recovery process.

Children with complex health needs and their families receive support from the earliest opportunity. The Early Years Co-ordination & Assessment Team assesses all children under 5-years with developmental difficulties, providing a single point, multi-disciplinary assessment with co-ordinated follow-up by relevant professionals and planning for future needs. From Sept 2014 to Sept 2015 72 children were assessed by the team. Ongoing support for children and families is provided by the multidisciplinary Team Around the Child (including health visitor, paediatrician, community children's nurse, Social Work and education).

The **locality model of Children & Families Social Work** is designed to put services on the ground closer to families and enable earlier intervention. The Children and Young People's Leadership Group (CYPLG) fund Social Workers across localities to increase capacity and support earlier intervention. The split between statutory and non-statutory cases is reported to the CYPLG through the Commissioning Group as an indicator of early intervention. In FY 2014/15, 66.25% of cases were non-statutory, evidencing strong early intervention and prevention. Support from universal services from pastoral staff in school, health visitors and school nurses ensure ongoing support and request for additional help when needed.

Secondary school staff receive high quality support from a range of multi-agency staff enabling them to be more responsive to mental health issues and pupil risk taking behaviours at an earlier stage. Pastoral staff in secondary schools and school nurses work closely with Mental Health Workers to engage with families as early as possible. The Locality Police Officer brings relevant information about pupil activity to school staff who can engage with families at the earliest opportunity to discuss risk taking behaviours. Issues developing around teenage activity in localities is brought to the attention of school staff immediately who can then work with the support of partners to tackle risk taking behaviour and address vulnerabilities in young people. High quality information sharing is a key strength of multiagency partnership. Locality business meetings offer the opportunity for shared understanding and guidance to workers.

Significant work has been taking place in schools and with partners to address the gap in children's attainment and achievement:

RAISING ATTAINMENT FOR ALL (RAFA) NATIONAL PROGRAMME

In June 2014, two learning communities from Scottish Borders Council attended a national event in Glasgow to find out about Raising Attainment for All Programme which was based on the improvement cycle introduced by Edward Deming. The two learning communities were Eildon West and Teviot and Liddesdale. Each school chose a specific focus for raising attainment and shared their work at the end of the first year at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2015. The work of the following schools is being shared at national level in the form of case studies for raising attainment: Stow/Clovenfords (numeracy), Tweedbank PS (literacy), Langlee PS (literacy) and Denholm PS (numeracy). The two learning communities are now in their second year of working on raising attainment and both attended the recent national RAfA event where their work was shared with other local education authorities. Selkirk learning community attended the national RAfA event in November 2015 and they are now participating in the programme. Scottish Borders are fully committed to the RAFA improvement methodology –all primary schools are expected to be working with groups of children who are behind their chronological age in literacy and numeracy attainment.

STOW/CLOVENFORDS PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The focus of the RAfA work across two primary schools was on improving numeracy attainment.

The initial children (one in each school) showed rapid progress in attainment and within 6 months there were 11 children involved. Their progress has continued to be measured and demonstrates consistent and maintained gains. The approach has now been implemented across both schools for targeted children.

The success of the project was highlighted in a plenary presentation at the Raising Attainment for All conference in Glasgow in March 2015 with praise from the Education Minister in her keynote speech. A film of the work in both schools was made by Scottish Government (see <https://vimeo.com/126497866>) and Stow has hosted visitors from Scottish Government, The Institute of Healthcare Improvement USA and representatives from the Government of Chile. Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director NHS, has shared the schools' story in USA and Israel while promoting the Methodology for Improvement.

LANGLEE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Langlee Primary sits in a deprived area of Galashiels with over 80% of pupils from P1 - P7 living in deciles 1-3. Standardised test data shows that children make good progress in reading initially in P1-2 but as they progress through the school the percentage at or above expected levels drops off. The staff carried out targeted literacy work with individual children on improving comprehension skills. The children made significant progress in their reading scores to the extent that it was highlighted in the Scottish Parliament Report (Tuesday 26th May 2015) Reference to the RAFA work within the Borders:

“We have outstanding practice in our communities. An example comes from Langlee Primary School in Galashiels. It has paid forensic attention to its data, which showed that, although children made good progress in reading in primary 1 and 2, progress dropped off thereafter. Through engagement with the raising attainment for all programme, the school is addressing the issue and literacy skills are improving.”

All Secondary Schools have been carrying focused work in closing the gap. The range of activities were highlighted in Section 5 of this report. The impact of this work has resulted in the attainment of our children in deprived areas moving from the 4th to the 2nd quartile nationally. Our attainment versus deprivation outcomes have significantly improved across our deciles. In each school there is an attainment gap and all schools are committed to improving attainment for all groups of learners.

The Senior Phase Strategy⁹ recognises the importance of partnerships in delivering the highest quality opportunities for our young people. The strong cohesion across voluntary sector partnerships and CLD provide many skills for learning, life and work opportunities. Blended learning approaches continue to develop. Increased numbers of S4-6 students are engaging with Borders College, QMU (SESAP), YAS/MOOCs and there is greater joint delivery between schools. The aligned timetable (Tuesday/Thursday and Friday afternoons), introduced August 2014, has facilitated cross-sector delivery.

Borders College continues to support schools with the delivery of vocational courses such as construction and hair and beauty, with an increased number being delivered in school settings which reduces impact on other learning opportunities.

Borders College is represented on the Corporate Parenting Operations Group, which focuses on developing services for our Looked After Children and Young People.

Schools are very aware of the need to have an inclusive curriculum that leads to positive destinations of choice. Schools are increasing the range of skills for life and work courses to meet their local context and employment opportunities. All schools are increasing work based learning for S4-6 learners as well as developing careers awareness through learner journey programmes.

All schools operate target setting to help young people achieve their potential; early interventions such as mentoring and supported study help all learners to achieve. Home School Link Workers address low level issues with attendance, engagement and behaviour of learners.

Almost all of Scottish Borders young people, including those who are Looked After, achieve and sustain positive destinations after school, as reflected in our performance against national outcomes. A destination risk matrix has been developed for early identification of those young people who may be at risk of not achieving a positive destination post school. Partnership working with Skills Development Scotland, Opportunities for All and local partners enables planning and tailored support and solutions for young people identified through the matrix.

There are many **Developing the Young Workforce opportunities** being delivered in partnership both locally and internationally, e.g. Jedburgh Grammar has a pilot programme with Johnston's of Elgin and Borders Textile Training Group and a top sports horse breeder near Whistler, Canada.

The **Supported Employment Team** works with LAC young people and young people with additional needs who require support into employment. A Modern Apprenticeship Scheme has been developed, with SBC and NHS Borders contributing to providing the Modern Apprenticeship placements.

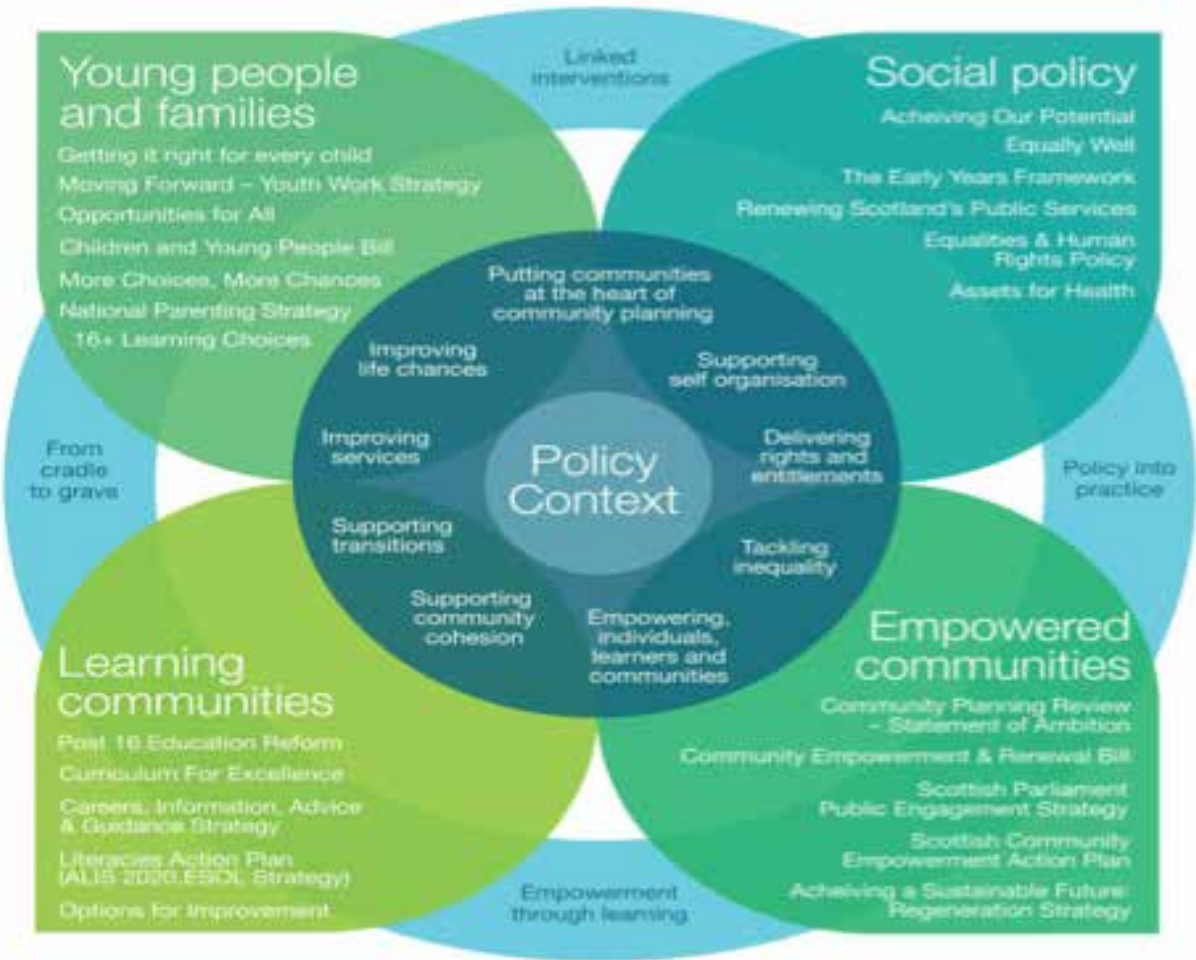
Community Learning and Development (CLD), working in close partnership with Youth Borders, provide youth work programmes across all localities through a number of third sector youth work providers. They provide drop-in sessions as well as targeted programmes of activities. Their members include young people who are experiencing problems engaging with learning and there is evidence that some young people make meaningful engagement in these less formal settings. A number of other third sector services provide valuable support to specific groups of vulnerable

children and young people. These include the Young Carers Service provided by Action for Children, Stable Life, Abuse & Trauma Service provided by Children 1st, Children & Families Drug and Alcohol Service provide by Action for Children, LGBT Borders provided by LGBT Scotland, Penumbra and Interest Link.

The **Early and Effective Intervention Group** meets on a regular basis to discuss young people aged 16/17 who have been reported for an offence. It is a multi-agency forum where information is shared and decisions made on the basis of achieving good outcomes for young people whilst also considering the welfare of the wider community. Between April 2014 and March 2015, there were 185 discussions about young people (156 male and 29 female).

Working with our communities, building on the assets of individuals and communities

The CLD local partnership model that has been developed in Scottish Borders supports the aspirations of the Christie Commission and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. It involves people who live in learning communities shaping local services. With its focus on developing employability, particularly of young people, it supports the recommendations of Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce:



And it takes cognisance of the Inequalities themes in the Scottish Borders Reducing Inequalities Strategic plan:



These themes have been mapped to the CLD Strategic Plan and used to develop our core objectives.

These are:

- Reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing of Borders communities over the six inequalities Themes through early intervention and prevention
- Build the capacity and resilience of our nine Learning Communities and the Voluntary Sector
- Improve partnership working

In 2015, as aspects of the Strategic Plan focused on children and young people embedded and action was taken by Scottish Borders Council and partnerships a number of areas of success can be highlighted:

- Improved partnership working and joint partnership planning: the CLD Strategic Partnership and the 9 Community Partnerships
- Local partnerships have: considered the reducing Inequalities themes and data to identify key issues in their community, engaged with communities (and examined existing consultations) to identify key issues in their community, mapped current CLD activity, identified where additional action is needed to address priority issues, worked in partnership to develop new/ enhanced partnership actions and developed outcome focused plans to address these issues
- Collective approaches have been established aimed at: maximising effectiveness, building capacity, avoiding duplication, removing unnecessary competition, completing partnership evaluation of impact, identifying gaps, connecting to the local community and evolving with local needs, sharing training opportunities and resources

OUTCOMES HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED

- THE CLD STRATEGY HAS **IMPROVED PARTNERSHIP WORKING**:

OUTCOME FOCUSED PLANNING TRAINING

This training was funded by Education Scotland and delivered in four locations in the Borders. The training was designed for CLD partners, especially those from the Voluntary Sector, and sought to increase confidence and capacity of organisations to plan and evaluate their work. It also aimed to support organisations to contribute to CLD planning through Learning Community Partnerships. Ultimately this will increase the strength of the Borders CLD Strategic Plan.

A total of 42 staff from 31 different organisations completed the training. They gained new skills and broke down barriers and concerns around planning and evaluation. They increased familiarity with the tools which are being used to support planning in Learning Community Partnerships.

- The partnership employability strategy has **impacted on employability**; positive and sustained destinations have improved upon previous years - we are in the top quartile nationally. There was a 33% reduction in 2015 in 16-19 year olds on Job Seekers allowance compared to the previous year.
- Activity Agreements have **improved the life chances** of 24 young people:

ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS are an alternative to continuing in school for some young people. For example, a young man on a social work behaviour order who had been asked to leave yet another school was offered an Activity Agreement. He had become a known face with the police and was offending regularly, had no qualifications, no friends and was disinterested in everything:

Since starting his Activity Agreement in October 2014 this young person has:

- gained two Bronze Youth Achievement Awards
- gained a John Muir Award in Conservation
- taken part in a film with Voice Of My Own
- held the role of Treasurer in an enterprise project at Christmas

He has now moved into a positive destination working with a large knitwear company in the Borders.

- **PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES HAVE IMPROVED THE WELLBEING OF FAMILIES:**

MY MAIN MAN PROGRAMME

This programme enables children (P5) and the main men in their lives to spend quality time together, strengthening relationships and bonds through experiencing a range of activities which promote emotional wellbeing and good mental health.

The programme provides much needed opportunities for men to engage in a positive healthy learning environment with their children. Over four one day sessions they experience a range of activities that enable them to work together, get to know each other better and broaden their view of the world.

'We're creating memories'

'We don't get the chance to do stuff together ... this has been great'

'I've got to know more about my grandson'

'It was fantastic (Child)'

'I'd like to do more of this (child)'

- **PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES KEEP OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE:**

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS GROUP AND YOUTH MEDIA, GALA ACADEMY

A group of young people from the school set out to improve relationships in their school in line with SBC's Respectful Relationships Policy. The group comprises between 20-30 young people from S1-S6. In small groups they looked at how media could further their ideas of how to promote Respectful Relationships Policy.

A poster campaign was launched around the school using the designs created by the group. Young people were able to voice their opinion using radio and other media such as an audio visual presentation. This was produced and shown around the school and is available to the wider public via the internet. A Wired Audioboo page has also been created.

- **PARTNERSHIPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE SKILLS OF VULNERABLE FAMILIES:**

PEEBLES ESOL CONVERSATION GROUP

This group meets one morning each week at Peebles Community Centre. Up to 6 learners of mixed ability and nationality attend regularly. It is truly international with learners coming from Bulgaria, Portugal, Spain, Korea and Brazil. The sessions are topic based and offer very practical English for everyday living. Subjects have included travel at home and abroad, health matters and the history of the Beltane Festival in Peebles.

6 learners attended and evidenced improvement in their spoken English, both listening and speaking

6 learners report more confidence in their ability to take part in everyday activities such as shopping, visiting the doctor and talking to the school.

6 learners are better prepared to take part in ESOL classes at all levels.

- PARTNERSHIPS **REDUCE THE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS** FOR YOUNG SCHOOL LEAVER:

NEXT STEPS HOUSING PROJECT IN BERWICKSHIRE

This project is delivered by Berwickshire Housing Association in Berwickshire High School to help, support and prepare vulnerable young people for future tenancies. The young people learn skills around independent living such as cooking and how to budget for outgoings including rent and food.

- PARTNERSHIPS **BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY:**

VOLUNTEERING AT WILTON LODGE PARK, HAWICK

Almost 80 volunteers are registered to work in the Park and garden and the building which houses Hawick Museum. Volunteers are supported by a Volunteer Co-ordinator, with Volunteer Centre Borders providing registration support and advice. Individual volunteers come from all walks of life and are developing a range of skills, including horticulture and curating museum exhibitions.

"We had chippers, mashers, bakers. We also had a bumper crop of runner beans and huge pumpkins, squash and courgettes."

"I took one of the courgettes home to my mum. It was massive."

"We've catalogued 1,600 items this year - sheet music, films, photographs and artefacts. It takes about 20 minutes for us to catalogue each item....You are involved in things you wouldn't believe."

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014-2015

7. ENSURING THAT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' NEEDS ARE AT THE CENTRE OF DESIGN AND DELIVERY

There is a commitment in Scottish Borders to **involve our children, young people, families** and other stakeholders in the development of services and strategies and a variety of approaches have been adopted to facilitate this. This can range from consultation on proposals to full co-production where children and young people are involved in an early stage in shaping services. This method of co-production will be deployed to support the coproduction of a Media Devices in Schools and Learning Settings policy and the Inclusion and Wellbeing for All policy development in 2016.

The **voices** of our children and young people are included in a number of plans and strategies. For example, Young Carers worked with the commissioned support service to develop the refreshed Young Carers Strategy 2015-18. The Strategy has been brought to life with the inclusion of a number of direct quotes and experiences from young carers. Other young people worked with Officers to inform and develop our Corporate Parenting Strategy, Community Learning & Development Strategy, and other key pieces of work. Children and Young People also played a key role within the development of the Children & Young People's Health Strategy.

The Children and Young People's Planning Group is exploring a range of venues for meetings in order to meet and consult with young people in their own areas (be it youth groups, school clubs, specialist projects or cafes), aiming to reach as many of the most isolated or disengaged young people as possible and listen to their voice.

Our systems for improving the collation and aggregation of service user views continue to develop. The introduction of the Wellbeing Web is an effective tool for measuring progress against agreed outcomes for individuals, and will also give us the collated views of service users as it is rolled out for more people, particularly around the information collected under "involved". This will help us to identify issues for service users which will inform service improvements.

Within the Scottish Borders, there is a programme which aims to increase the number of children and young people (12 – 15) who are actively involved in local decision making. Community, Learning and Development (CLD) Service delivers the **Youth Voice, Youth Chex** and **Child Right's programmes**, which support children and young people across Scottish Borders to influence decision-makers and have their voices heard in the development and provision of services. This programme of work is led by the Participation and Engagement Officer, who has a key responsibility for Children and Young people and who also has a responsibility for the promotion of the rights of children and young people. A number of groups have been organised

to support young people to develop campaigns and raise awareness of issues important to them and their peers. Programme delivery has maximised the use of technology such as social media to support the groups and increase dialogue with young people including the most hard to reach groups. The programme also supports Head Teams and Pupil Councils which operate across the full range of schools within the Scottish Borders.

The programme provides support to 3 Members of the **Scottish Youth Parliament** who represent the constituent views of young people and for the first time this year, one of whom is currently a member of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament. The Scottish Borders will host a sitting of the Scottish Youth Parliament in March 2016 and the 3 MSYPs are involved in preparing for the event, supported by the Participation and Engagement Officer for Children and Young People. Most recently one of the MSYPs and one of the members of Youth Chex (aged 14 and 16 respectively) gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Rural Affairs on the effects of living in rural communities for young people. Evidence was given by four young people in total and therefore the representation from the Scottish Borders was strong and vibrant.

Opportunities for engagement with young people and Senior Officers and Elected Members have increased recently with the significant development of the election of 2 young people who are non-voting members of the Education Executive Committee. This proposal was approved by the Education Executive in January 2015 and 2 young people were elected to these positions through their Pupil Councils. They have attended the committee meetings and have actively participated in the discussions to provide the views of young people on the business being discussed. They have engaged well with the Elected Members. Another development in the past 12 months has been the inclusion of senior pupils at the Children and Young People Department's Head Teacher meetings. Head Teachers and Senior Education Officers have engaged very positively, finding the views of young people have assisted in their decision making particularly in areas of future policy. There has been direct evidence of this influencing in decision making, with a proposal to end prelim exams in one school being rejected due to the views of the senior pupils.

There are other examples of **young people taking a lead** and being involved in service planning and decision making through being involved as a member of a Youth Committee or as a volunteer within the 7 generic youth work organisations and specialist youth projects that operate within the Scottish Borders. The Youth Committees take an active role in taking forward specific developments for their organisation and are involved in planning, interview panels for staff and as peer support to other service users. Many volunteer within the groups, developing their skills and experience, gaining the confidence to speak up and take a lead in a range of activities within their organisation as well as becoming involved and other groups like Youth Voice and Youth Chex.

As well as providing support to the MSYPs, the Participation and Engagement Officer has supported 2 young people to table a motion for free transport for under 16s at the Scottish Rural Parliament sitting in 2014. The issue was taken up by the Rural Parliament (most recently mentioned by the First Minister at the recent Rural Parliament sitting) and a pilot project has been set up in Berwickshire, Chaired by the Chief Officer of Berwickshire Housing Association. The project is looking at existing services and suggestions for improving transport in our most rural settings.

Youth groups and specialist groups have been actively involved in all of the 9 CLD locality partnerships to develop the CLD Strategic Plan and identify priorities and outcomes for children and young people in each area. New partnerships have developed as a result, some very specific, to increase further the opportunities for children and young people and identify any gaps. Some examples include an intergenerational allotment project in Eyemouth, an intergenerational IT project space in Peebles and a mental health awareness project for young people in Kelso.

An interagency group is reviewing work initiated by the Child Protection Committee to improve services for children and young people. A piece of work has been taken forward in conjunction with the Youth Voice programme to discuss **young people's views on child protection** with a questionnaire sent to all schools in the Borders. Work continues to review the findings from the questionnaire to identify an appropriate model of engagement to be implemented. A leaflet is now given to children which has been specifically designed to explain the case conference process to them. This leaflet encourages children aged 8 years and over to attend and to write down their thoughts and views. These views are taken to the conference and included in the minutes. The views of parents and children with experience of child protection involvement were included in the update of the leaflet in 2014. Parents are always invited to attend case conferences and their views are recorded in the minutes. The Chair of the conference always meets with the parents beforehand to help them understand the case conference along with the process.

In addition active feedback from children and young people who are being fostered is sought from the **Fostering Panel** and these views are discussed, leading to changes where appropriate. Following the 2015 Inspection of Wheatlands Young People's Unit, one young person attended the Scottish Borders Council Executive with the Unit Manager to talk about life in Wheatlands.

During the development of policies on behalf of the Children and Young People's Leadership Group the Scottish Borders Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process is undertaken, which considers all policies and strategies against the recognised equality groups, including children and young people. This provides reassurance that policies are robust in terms of identifying and assessing impact on children and young people, as well as other equality groups.

As part of the Community Planning Partnership, there is a strong commitment to effective consultation with our stakeholders. The EIA process incorporates a systematic analysis of consultation with equality groups.

When engaging with children, young people and families, the key aim is to **identify and remove barriers** whenever possible. Our support centres work with children with a range of severe and complex needs. Staff who know the children best use skills to help them to express their views and contribute to both their own support plans and development plans.

An example of this is the development of Communication Passports by Speech and Language Therapists in conjunction with Education colleagues for children and young people who have complex needs and require help in communicating their basic needs and wants. These passports are developed jointly and are key documents in ensuring all those that come into contact with these children and young people have an understanding of the key people in their lives and basic likes and dislikes. In the process for transition to adult health services the health passport developed by the adult Learning Disability Service is being introduced.

Within the development of the Early Years Centres, there was extensive consultation with groups of local parents to identify their requirements and this has informed the range of services provided in each of the Centres.

The CYPLG is committed to ensuring that the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child is fully embedded across all services and approved the recommendation that a Child Right's Strategy be developed to promote the principles across all partners. The development of the strategy will be progressed by the Participation Officer for Children and Young People.

An Elected Member is appointed to the role of **Children's Champion** to highlight and promote the role of children and young people across the work of SBC. Elected Members and NHS Non Executive Directors are actively involved in the work of the of key areas such as **Corporate Parenting** and Education and a number have undertaken visits recently to the Residential Unit, Schools and the Early Years Centres to gain a better understanding of how services are provided for children and young people.

Our Children and Families Social Work Service carried out a service user survey in 2015 (Appendix 3). The majority of the respondents were satisfied with their experience of Children & Young People's Support Services. 55.88% indicated they were very satisfied and 25% were fairly satisfied with the service provided.

8. FEEDBACK COMMENT FORM

Children & Young People's Services would be happy to receive your comments on the Standards and Quality Report 2014-2015.

If you wish to give your contact details please provide then below:

TITLE	FIRST NAME	SURNAME
ADDRESS		

OR, if you are employed by Scottish Borders Council:

SERVICE	
FIRST NAME	LIST NAME
ADDRESS	
COMMENTS	

Please return this page to:

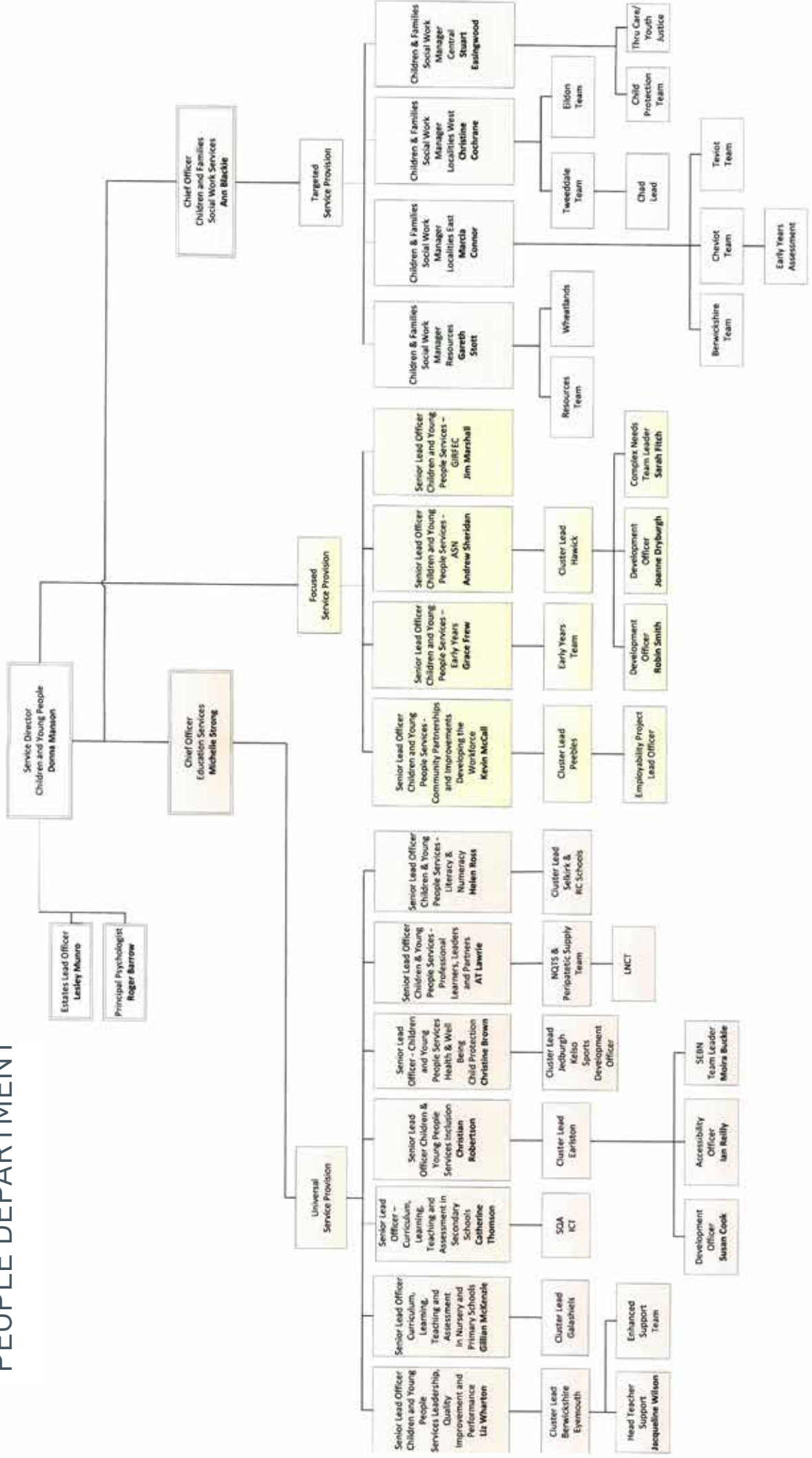
ANNE WORRELL
Corporate Management Support | Scottish Borders Council | Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells | MELROSE | TD6 0SA
Alternatively e-mail: aworrell@scotborders.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

REFERENCES

- ¹ Directorate's Business Management and Improvement Plan 2015/16
- ² Scottish Borders Corporate Plan 2013/18
- ³ Community Planning Partnership
- ⁴ Scottish Borders GIRFEC Implementation Plan (PIEG)
- ⁵ Reducing Inequalities Strategy
- ⁶ Building the Ambition – National Practice Guidance in Early Learning and Childcare
- ⁷ The Borders Child and Young Persons' Mental Health Strategy 2015-18
- ⁸ Reducing Inequalities Strategy
- ⁹ Community Learning & Development Strategic Plan
- ¹⁰ Draft Integrated Children & Young People' Plan
- ¹¹ Senior Phase Strategy
- ¹² CLD Strategic Plan
- ¹³ Partnership Employability Strategy
- ¹⁴ Young Carers Strategy 2015-18

APPENDIX 2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PEOPLE DEPARTMENT



APPENDIX 3



ITEM

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK SERVICE USER SURVEY 2015 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT TEAM

December 2015

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise managers of the results of the Service Users Survey carried out between June and September 2015.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 2013, managers agreed to a service users' survey being carried out as a method of obtaining additional data from users of Children and Young People's Support Services. The survey focused on the process of engagement with services and the customer's experience of that engagement.
- 2.2 The target audience for the survey was agreed as all active Social Work cases held on Framework (approximately 650).

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 A total of 68 surveys were returned. The majority of respondents (60.29%) were parents, and most (70.59%) had been involved with the service for over a year.

	Berwick-shire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Not stated				1	3	4	5.88%
Foster carer	8		6	1		15	22.06%
Kinship carer - other family member	2		1	2		5	7.35%
Other (please specify)		1	2			3	4.41%
Parent	9	7	5	7	13	41	60.29%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

- 3.2 The majority of respondents were satisfied with their experience of Children and Young People Support Services. Asked the question **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with our service?**, 38 (55.88%) answered they were **Very satisfied** and another 17 (25.00%) answered **Fairly satisfied**.

	Berwick-shire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Very satisfied	14	4	5	5	10	38	55.88%
Fairly satisfied	3	2	6	4	2	17	25.00%
Fairly dissatisfied		1		1		2	2.94%
Very dissatisfied	1		2	1	1	5	7.35%
Not stated	1	1	1		3	6	8.82%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

- 3.3 A large majority of respondents agreed that our services were helping to make things better for them and their families.

Have we helped / are we helping to make things better for you?

	Berwick-shire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Yes, a lot	13	4	5	3	9	34	50.00%
Yes, a bit	5	3	5	7	5	25	36.76%
Not sure			1			1	1.47%
No, not much		1	2		1	4	5.88%
No, not at all	1		1	1	1	4	5.88%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

Have we helped / are we helping to make things better for your family?

	Berwick-shire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Yes, a lot	13	5	5	6	9	38	55.88%
Yes, a bit	5	1	3	3	5	17	25.00%
Not sure			1			1	1.47%
No, not much		1	2	1	1	5	7.35%
No, not at all	1	1	2	1	1	6	8.82%
No answer			1			1	1.47%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

- 3.4 A similar pattern was observed in the other questions, with all questions receiving a majority of 70% or higher for the two most positive answers (see Appendix 1). This is a very pleasing result which managers should ensure is passed on to staff.
- 3.5 Analysis of the negative responses suggests that predictably, the outcome of a case has a significant impact on the respondent's experience of the service. Comments from the most negative respondents indicated that most of these had had children become Looked After.

- 3.6 However, there were also several negative comments to do with the way staff had interacted and communicated with the respondent/s. No particular workers could be identified, but managers may wish to address respectful communication generally with their staff.
- 3.7 Several respondents took the opportunity in the comments to specifically identify, thank and praise individual workers. These comments have been shared with managers to pass on to the individuals concerned and feed into the PRD process.

4 LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPROVEMENTS FROM 2014 SURVEY

- 4.1 All managers should review the comments where problems were identified with communication and respect, and share these with their teams. While some respondents were clearly involved in protracted disputes with Children and Young People Support Services and/or partner agencies, all staff working with families should be reminded to treat service users with respect at all times.
- 4.2 The question “**Have you felt able to make your feelings known when you talk to us?**” had a comparatively weak response in the 2014 survey (69.80%). Some respondents made specific reference to finding it hard to be open with workers. However the same question in the 2015 survey showed a significant improvement, with 82.36% of respondents stating they always or mostly could make their feelings known. This is an excellent result, showing that our commitment to empowering our service users and helping them to express their views is working. Managers should share this very positive result with their teams.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No financial implications arise from the recommendations of this report.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Managers are asked to:
 - 6.1.1 Note the results of the 2015 survey
 - 6.1.2 Share the results of the survey with their teams

Author(s)

Name	Designation
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Appendix 1: Children's Services Survey Results 2015

This survey is asking about your experience of:

Berwickshire Family Support	6
Berwickshire Social Work	16
Cheviot Family Support	2
Cheviot Social Work	6
Eildon Social Work	11
Family Support Worker, Teviot ICS	3
Teviot ICS	9
Tweeddale Family Support	3
Tweeddale Social Work	8
Tweeddale Social Work - CHAD	4
Grand Total	68

1. Have you been treated with respect? Please tick the appropriate box.

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Always	17	5	6	8	13	49	72.06%
Mostly	1	2	5	1	3	12	17.65%
Sometimes			2	1		3	4.41%
Not really		1				1	1.47%
Not at all	1		1	1		3	4.41%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

2. Have we listened to you?

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Always	15	3	4	6	14	42	61.76%
Mostly	3	3	7	2	1	16	23.53%
Sometimes		1	1	2	1	5	7.35%
Not really		1	2	1		4	5.88%
Not at all	1					1	1.47%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

3. Have we explained things to you – our services, why we are getting involved, what will happen next?

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
			1			1	1.47%
Always	12	6	4	2	11	35	51.47%
Mostly	6	1	8	6	4	25	36.76%
Sometimes	1	1		1		3	4.41%
Not really			1	1	1	3	4.41%
Not at all				1		1	1.47%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

4. Have you felt able to make your feelings known when you talk to us?							
	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Always	17	3	6	6	11	43	63.24%
Mostly	1	2	4	2	4	13	19.12%
Sometimes		2	2	1	1	6	8.82%
Not really			2	1		3	4.41%
Not at all	1	1		1		3	4.41%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

5. Have we helped / are we helping to make things better for you?							
	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Yes, a lot	13	4	5	3	9	34	50.00%
Yes, a bit	5	3	5	7	5	25	36.76%
Not sure			1			1	1.47%
No, not much		1	2		1	4	5.88%
No, not at all	1		1	1	1	4	5.88%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

6. Have we helped / are we helping to make things better for your family?							
	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Yes, a lot	13	5	5	6	9	38	55.88%
Yes, a bit	5	1	3	3	5	17	25.00%
Not sure			1			1	1.47%
No, not much		1	2	1	1	5	7.35%
No, not at all	1	1	2	1	1	6	8.82%
No answer			1			1	1.47%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

Comments:

Berwickshire

Made things a lot worse
 Social Worker is extremely helpful and understanding regarding our young person and information we require
 Still challenging at times but things are better

Cheviot

Again current support is perfect
 Family not been involved really
 Still ongoing concerns. Lack of resources, communication, sibling support etc.

Eildon

I have sent the detailed response to (team leader) about my concerns
 Indeed the social worker we work with has helped us loads
 Ruining a good family thus causing more disruption to the child stability with mother and father splitting up after 30 years and due to the damning comments within social work report has resulted in father judging himself as a poor parent, making poor parent

Supports a parent to maintain suitable/quality contact

Teviot and Liddesdale

No. When Social make up their minds that's it

Not my family but yes for the grandparents

Thank you

Very little until recent involvement following allocation of social worker

Tweeddale

Comment as I above

lack of resources in the community has meant you have not been able to help as much as you would like

(Name) has been an excellent social worker and has listened to everything I had to say and worked well with my parents to keep my child stable and safe

My family and I are very happy with the service we feel it is helping us

7. Is there anything we could have done or could do differently or better to help?

Berwickshire

Kept family together. Provided more support. Provided more support for children to be able to come home

No working well

Nothing

(Named worker) has been great

Some people need to listen and be less opinionated, particularly EDT

Very happy with the support given

Cheviot

Keep up good work that we are receiving now

(Child) is like a different kid a have seen a mass improvement on his behaviour at home and at school. So I want to take the time in thanking you. (Named worker), thank you for being there for us.

Not really

Yes. Communication is key. You need to listen to the parents properly and act in the time set. Train staff to listen and understand all needs are different. Everyone is an individual! Perhaps meeting the individual involved at home might help as you

Eildon

As above there has been times when you haven't always listened

Have a service where a child can feel at ease speaking with someone they trust in a suitable environment, not a social work office or classroom and they can discuss issues such as dyslexia, bullying, intimidation, poor confident for example frightening to

I know it is not always possible but keeping the same Social Worker in place as it takes the family and the new Social Worker a bit of time to get used to each other

Listen to the child! It can be a rare occurrence to find a traumatised child who is able to express their needs openly. They may not give you another chance!

Listen to the parent! Regardless if they are birth, adoptive or foster parents.

More co-operation much sooner

No

No, but perhaps recruiting more Social Workers!

Sometimes, communication could be better as returning calls often delayed

We understand that money is an issue but we had our direct payment cut from 12 hours to 4 hours per week. Ideally 6 hours would have been better as it has been very difficult

Teviot and Liddesdale

At the start and for a while thereafter I believe there was an assumption that as a Kinship carer and employed in Social Work that myself and my family did not require support

EDT to stick to care plan

Listen to my opinions and don't always take the grandparents side

Social Services have helped me get in touch with other services about domestic abuse, but at times feel as if I was railroaded into stuff that I didn't want to take part in about abuse. Everyone has different ways of coping with such stuff

Yes helped when asked and saying that you were when not and telling lies to cover own backs

Tweeddale

No

No everything is perfect

Nothing so far

Overall very satisfied with current support worker

The culture is very defensive and protective of SS and in honesty I think little would be different in terms of outcome if SS not involved at all. I am shocked at how much SS have agreed with me over the years but how little they actually do. Very limited support.

8. How long have you been involved with us?

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Not stated				1	3	4	5.88%
0-3 months	2	1				3	4.41%
3-6 months	2		1		2	5	7.35%
6-12 months	5	1			2	8	11.76%
More than a year	10	6	13	10	9	48	70.59%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

9. Please tell us what category below fits you best.

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Not stated				1	3	4	5.88%
Foster carer	8		6	1		15	22.06%
Kinship carer - other family member	2		1	2		5	7.35%
Other (please specify)		1	2			3	4.41%
Parent	9	7	5	7	13	41	60.29%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

10. Are there other supports or services you would like to be able to use in the future?

Berwickshire

Nope. Stick services up ****!
Social Services. Family Centre
Yes - Training

Cheviot

Do not know what is there. Very little in the Borders - needs lots of improving
Unsure of what other services there are

Eildon

No

Locality Not Recorded

Mental health support

Teviot and Liddesdale

N/A
None. Don't trust any of you lot
Not sure
Possibly respite care

Tweeddale

A lunch time session for our son is being arranged
Left childrens service - transition slow
No

11. Do you know how to make a complaint about our services if necessary?

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Not stated					3	3	4.41%
No	2		6	1	3	12	17.65%
Not sure	1	2	2	3	4	12	17.65%
Yes	16	6	6	7	6	41	60.29%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

12. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with our service?

	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon	Teviot and Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Grand Total	Percentage
Very satisfied	14	4	5	5	10	38	55.88%
Fairly satisfied	3	2	6	4	2	17	25.00%
Fairly dissatisfied		1		1		2	2.94%
Very dissatisfied	1		2	1	1	5	7.35%
Not stated	1	1	1		3	6	8.82%
Grand Total	19	8	14	11	16	68	100.00%

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