



Paper No. SET/65/20	
	Tick One ✓
For discussion	
For approval	✓
For information/noting	

Date of Trust Board Meeting: 25th November 2020

Confidential or Public Agenda: Public

Agenda item: Interval Delegated Statutory Functions
& Corporate Parenting Report,
November 2020

1.0 Introduction

Interval Delegated Statutory Functions & Corporate Parenting Report 2020
The report is presented for consideration for approval by Trust Board.

2.0 Background information

This is an interval report on the discharge of delegated statutory functions in respect of services undertaken by the social work & social care workforce within the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (The Trust) covering the period 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2020. The scheme provides an overarching assurance framework for the discharge of statutory social care functions. The scheme requires the Trust to produce a biannual report addressing how it has discharged those statutory functions pertaining to social care issues.

This report provides assurance and analysis of the Trust's provision of delegated statutory functions across social care services. This report comprises of an executive summary, an update on the HSCB action plan, agreed on the 9th October 2020, and the interim corporate parenting report (CC302). The Trust is reporting that it is satisfied that delegated statutory function requirements have achieved reasonable compliance within the context of responding to the coronavirus pandemic and the temporary amendments to the social care regulations.

3.0 During this reporting period the Executive Director of Social Work is reporting significant compliance with delegated statutory functions. Some of the ongoing challenges in relation to the provision of care across social care and social work are as follows;

Children's services

Referrals for children referred for an assessment of need

There has been a significant decrease in the numbers of children referred for an assessment of need (805) in this reporting period, from 2140 in March 2020 to 1335 on 30th September 2020. It is suggested this decrease can be attributed to the lack of professional involvement in children's lives over the lockdown period. Referrals from all professional groups decreased, with the most significant decrease from teachers with a reduction of 196 referrals from the previous

reporting period. It is anticipated that now schools have reopened this situation will be resolved. To ensure the needs of children at risk continued to be met throughout the lockdown period the Trust worked with the education authority and local schools to identify the children most in need of support and developed out of school activities to respond to these needs. These services were developed in partnership with early years services in the Trust. This ensured that children in need of family support, children in need of safeguarding support and children who are looked after by the Trust were able to access additional activities and supports.

Foster care provision for children in care

During this reporting period the number of children in the care of the Trust has decreased by 3 children and young people. However, the Trust has experienced a rise by 125 in the population of children who are looked after since March 2018. Consequently the Trust has experienced a continued ongoing reliance on the use of independent sector placements over a period of time. There are currently a total of 98 children who are looked after in independent fostering. This has remained static since the last reporting period. The Trust also had 4 young people placed in independent residential services at the end of this reporting period, which is an increase of one since March 2020. This continues to place considerable fiscal challenges on the Trust. The Trust notes an increase in complex needs of children requiring placements, which impacts on capacity to enable placement choice.

Placement provision for children in care

The Trust has seen an increase in children waiting for appropriate placement provision, in accordance with their assessed need, from 17 at 31st March 2020 to 18 at 30th September 2020. The Trust continues to experience challenges in resourcing an appropriate range of suitable placements. This is a regional issue. The Trust is continuing to explore alternative placement options to meet the needs of children through the reconfiguration of a children's home and use of alternative premises with staff providing care to children.

Kinship assessments/ unregulated placements

The continued increase in demand for kinship placements has been an influencing factor on the number of unregulated placements within the Trust. The Trust has 86 kinship foster care households who are in the process of being assessed as kinship carers; this is an increase from 56 at 31st March 2020. 67 of these placements are children where placements have not been approved within 12 weeks. The Trust continues to work to reduce the level of unregulated placements. The increase in kinship placements within this reporting period has seen a growing demand for kinship assessments. The Trust has developed governance procedures to ensure rigorous oversight of all unregulated placements and continues to ensure information is with regard to same is reported to the Health and Social Care Board.

Statutory visits for children who are looked after

The Trust ensured that 3,744 statutory visits to children who are looked after took place between 1st April 2020 and 30th September 2020. 922 of these visits were outside statutory timescales. The Trust wishes to highlight the innovative responses of staff to ensure statutory visits have been undertaken in the midst of COVID 19. Whilst 926 statutory visits were outside timescales due to the

circumstances staff worked inventively to ensure that statutory visits were completed in new ways to support the safe and effective care of children and young people.

3744 statutory visits took place with this reporting period. 922 outstanding visits were facilitated through the use of technology such as zoom, facetime and what's app to mitigate risk once systems were agreed.

Reviews for children who are looked after

There has been a significant increase in statutory reviews being outside timescales; from 28 reviews reported 30th March 2020 to 219 reviews reported 30th September 2020. It should however be noted that of this number 201 reviews were outside timescales for COVID 19 related reasons, meaning 18 reviews were outside timescales for other reasons. This is a reduction from the previous reporting period.

Police involvement with children who are looked after by the Trust

There is an evident fluctuation with regard to young people from our children's homes being referred to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, with some homes seeing an increase of 100% + within this reporting period. Given that there has been a reduction in offending behaviour during this reporting period, (from 20 to 13) further assessment to understand the changes in referral patterns will be undertaken. A review of each PSNI notification will take place to identify if staff require support with professional development with regard to this referral trend.

Leaving care

There continues to be significant challenges faced by the leaving care service in relation to accommodation, mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse. These challenges are in the context of increasing complexity of need among the young people accessing this service, some of whom require bespoke placement arrangements.

Children and young people with a disability

Within this reporting period the Trust has assessed an increased number of younger children with disabilities who require higher levels of family support and short breaks. A number of these cases will require care placements outside their family home in the very near future.

The demand for service provision for children with disabilities continues to rise. The additional complexities due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the initial close down and subsequent reduction of all overnight short breaks. This has increased challenges for the families who access support and for the service as a whole.

During this reporting period the Trust has experienced an increased demand for direct payments, through self-directed support, as well as requests for outreach provision. There has also been a greater need for placements outside the family home for children with a disability. Consequently there are nine children/young people living in learning disability units. Lindsay House's statement of purpose has been amended to move from a short break to short stay provision in order to safeguard children and young people. This change

has impacted significantly on the Trusts ability to provide respite to children with disabilities and the Trust is currently exploring alternatives to enhance support to children and families

Early years

Early years services have seen a significant increase in the numbers of inspections not completed within this reporting period due to the current COVID crisis. There are now 470 outstanding inspections of early years provision. As per regional guidance from the Department of Health, all inspections of early years providers were paused during this reporting period as the team undertook various roles in response to the pandemic. In agreement with the HSCB, 70 inspections have been prioritised in this next cycle, due to commence on 2 November 2020. Given the current rise in infection rates across the region this timescale may need to be revised.

Adult mental health services

An independent review into mental health hospital social work was concluded in February 2020. The action plan with regard to same is being progressed and includes addressing workforce issues and improvements in supervision.

During this reporting period the mental health directorate continues to experience workforce pressures in the provision of a seamless approved social work (ASW) service. This has occurred due to the demographic of the workforce population. A Trust ASW strategy is being progressed to address some of the workforce challenges for this professional staff group.

Adult learning disability services

The implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) has presented a number of challenges in relation to the expansion of the ASW role and the implementation of Deprivation of Liberty safeguards. There is a plan in place across adult services to achieve compliance with legislation by December 2020 and this is currently on target.

Muckamore Abbey Hospital being closed to admissions has led to significant challenges in providing appropriate support to people with a learning disability who present with mental health issues. An interim proposed pathway has been agreed in the event of an inpatient bed being required until a more appropriate long term service becomes available. An assessment and treatment model is currently being progressed.

During this reporting period there have been issues raised by RQIA with regard to the completion of monitoring reports within Trust regulated services. The Trust will provide an update to HSCB in regard to progress on this issue.

Primary care and older people

Domiciliary care services

Due to COVID 19 the Trust has paused packages of care where families have requested a break due to concerns about virus spread. During this reporting period the Trust was able to reduce waiting list for services to 10. Waiting lists continue to be reviewed weekly and the continuation of funding for the reform of

domiciliary care pilot promotes person centred provision of care.

Mental Capacity Act (2019)

The discharge of the delegated statutory function associated with the MCA has been challenging. There is a plan in place across adult services to achieve compliance with this legislation by December 2020 and this is currently on target.

3.1 The Trust's current workforce arrangements for both the professional leadership of delegated statutory functions and the operational delivery of the service

The EDSW has ensured that those managers who are responsible for the professional leadership of delegated statutory functions and the operational delivery of the service are professionally qualified social workers.

A professionally qualified social worker is employed at Director and/or Assistant Director level in all of the directorates undertaking statutory functions. This ensures accountability arrangements are clear and unambiguous.

Social work leads from across the Trust programmes of care and the Assistant Director (SCG) meet regularly with representatives from HSCB to review the action points agreed as part of the annual review of the provision of delegated statutory functions and Corporate Parenting for 2020

4.0 Recommendation/s for the Trust Board (please state if the paper/s is for information/noting or for approval by Board members)

For approval.

Lead Director: Ms Barbara Campbell

Designation: Director of Childrens Services & Executive Director of Social Worker

Date: 25th November 2020