



**Purpose of Paper: SEHSCT Annual Delegated Directed Statutory Functions & Corporate Parenting Report 2022/23**

<b>For Approval</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>	<b>For Noting</b>
A document requiring Board Members majority decision prior to implementation or action.	A document requiring Board Members consideration and debate.	A document that contains information regarding issues of which requiring Board Members should be made aware.

**1.0 Introduction & Background**

This Report provides an overarching Assurance Framework for the Discharge of Delegated Directed Statutory Social Care functions by the Trust covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The scheme requires the Trust to produce a biannual report addressing how it has discharged those Directed Statutory Functions pertaining to social care issues.

**2.0 Key Issues**

The Trust has experienced a number of challenges in relation to the discharge of directed statutory functions within the context of significant workforce issues. All issues are presented in detail in the body of the Report. Some of the ongoing challenges in relation to the provision of care across social care and social work are as follows:

**Workforce**

The Trust continues to face difficulties recruiting qualified social workers during this reporting period. This has resulted in pressure on the workforce, impacting on the Trust’s ability to discharge statutory requirements. The Trust continues to engage at a regional level with the DoH to develop regional recruitment plans including a rolling recruitment programme, cessation of the use of agency programme and fast track processes to recruit final year students into the workforce. This issue is documented on the Trust Corporate Risk Register.

**Mental Capacity Act**

A lack of medical provision continues to impact on the Trust’s ability to meet its full legislative responsibilities in relation to the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016. This is impacted by workforce issues. The Director of Adult Services and Healthcare in Prison will be engaging fully with the Trust’s Executive Management Team to ensure legislative requirements remain a priority.

**Approved Social Work (ASW)**

A numbers of challenges has impacted on the ASW role during this reporting period. These include protracted waits, difficulties with interface working (PSNI and NIAS), RESWs handover and increased complexity and acuity.

The Report reflects the detail of all actions taken across all Directorates to mitigate against challenges and to support to workforce in the delivery of the service and ensure the delegated directed statutory functions are met.

## **Children's Services**

### **Unallocated Cases**

Children's Services have continued to undertake improvement work in relation to unallocated cases; this work has focused on incremental improvements by developing governance processes through the scaling of the Collaborative Unallocated Progress (CUP) process across all safeguarding teams in the Trust and the Children's Disability service.

Unallocated Cases have been added to the Directorate Risk Register in recognition that Unallocated Cases within Children's Safeguarding and Children's Disability remains an area of significant concern due to chronic workforce pressures.

### **Delays in Reviews of Child Protection Case Conferences (RCPCC) and Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews**

Reviews that have been postponed continue to be closely monitored by the responsible Senior Manager and are reported to the Assistant Director on a monthly basis, with a rearranged date. Action Plans will continue to be monitored and reviewed to maximise capacity and performance.

### **Foster Care Provision for Children Looked After by the Trust**

The Trust continues to experience challenges in the recruitment and retention of new foster carers. Within the last year the number of children in foster care has increased by 9% whereas placement availability has decreased by 5%. This has led to an over reliance on private agency foster placements, increased pressure on the residential care provisions and the need for more bespoke placements.

These challenges are being addressed regionally with specific work streams tasked with providing regional recruitment and retention strategies alongside local approaches through recruitment campaigns and retention events for Trust foster carers.

### **Adoption Assessments**

Workforce issues have created lengthy waiting lists for assessments. This is being addressed via bank/agency to create a wider pool of adopters and prevent an over reliance across Trust and voluntary adoption agency placements. Adoption care plans are being progressed and the Adoption Panel is scheduling additional dates to expedite these plans with 29 children exiting the care system through adoption last year.

### **Separated or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

Pressure continues in meeting the needs of separated or unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Trust is accommodating 30 such young people which is an increase of 18 in this reporting period. There are significant pressures on the Trust

to secure appropriate and timely accommodation to meet the needs of these young people.

### **Bespoke Placements**

The Trust is reporting an increased demand in the provision of bespoke placements. There are 5 children in bespoke placements (4 outside of NI) with another transition planned for April 2023. A further 4 children have currently been assessed as needing high cost / bespoke residential care provision.

### **Regional Secure Care Centre (Lakewood)**

Lakewood's ability to meet the continued demand for secure beds need is currently reviewed on the Corporate Risk Register. The Senior Management Team continue to work with SPPG to develop a commissioning framework for Lakewood that will set out a remit for future secure provision.

### **Adult Services**

#### **Adult Mental Health Services**

The challenges in relation to the ASW role are highlighted on page 1 of this document. The Trust continues to work to increase the numbers of ASW and work at local and regional level to address these challenges.

#### **Adult Disability Services**

Workforce pressures have impacted on the completion of annual reviews and a reduction in the completion of carer's assessments, this backlog has been addressed through an action plan.

The Trust has six individuals remaining as inpatients within Muckamore Abbey Hospital. The complexity of the presenting needs for these individuals requires specialised, bespoke services and support. Significant difficulties in workforce recruitment and retention across social care has impacted on the availability of these services.

Inability to admit individuals for assessment and treatment to the regional inpatient hospital at Muckamore has resulted in individuals being admitted to mental health wards. The Trust is progressing plans at both a local and regional level to address this identified need.

The service is reporting an increased demand from adults with significant complexity of need who require bespoke supports and placements. This demand is also evident in the transition between children's and adult's services with increased numbers of children with significant complexity of presenting need.

#### **Primary Care and Older People**

The Trust continues to report a high level of unmet need (4074 hours) in relation to the provision of domiciliary care packages. Significant reform and improvement have reduced the need by 10% over this reporting period and eco-mapping has been used to inform priorities and strategic planning for future service model delivery 2023-2025.

### **3.0 Resource Implications (Organisational, Financial, Human Resources)**

As detailed above.

### **4.0 Impact on Safety, Quality and Experience (SQE)**

As detailed above.

### **5.0 Key Risks and Proposals to Mitigate**

As detailed above.

**Lead Director:** Lyn Preece, Director of Children's Services & Executive Director of Social Work