


COVER SHEET

Meeting and Date of meeting	Trust Board 21 November 2024	
Title of paper	Executive Director of Social Work Report	
Accountable Director	Name	Colm McCafferty
	Position	Director of CYP Services and Executive Director of Social Work
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This paper sits within the Trust Board role of:	Accountability	
This paper is presented for:	Assurance	
Links to Trust Corporate Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unscheduled Care Transformation and Reform
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Improved Access to Services
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Focus on developing services provided in the Community
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ensure Safe Services while delivering financial recovery
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strengthen Financial and Governance Systems
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital Readiness
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainability of Our Estate
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Embedding Our Co-production Approach
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delivery of Year 3 of Our People Framework

	<p><i>The report author will complete this report cover sheet fully. The Accountable Director must satisfy themselves that the cover sheet is accurate and fully reflects the report. The expectation is that the Accountable Director has read and agreed the content (cover sheet and report).</i></p> <p><i>Its purpose is to provide the Trust Board/Committee with a clear summary of the report/paper being presented, how it impacts on the people we serve and the key matters for attention and the ask of the Trust Board/Committee</i></p>
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1. Reason for Presentation of Paper / Report

This report is a scheduled update on the Executive Director for Social Work's areas of responsibility. It is presented for assurance and information purposes.

2. Detailed summary of paper contents:

The paper provides an overview of issues relating to the social work and social care workforce, including challenges in relation to delivery of statutory functions.

This reporting cycle has a primary focus on minority communities and New Arrivals, challenges experienced and associated service development to meet need.

3. Areas of improvement/achievement:

Regarding statutory functions and social work services in the Trust:

- The Social Work profession, working across Directorates within the Southern Trust, continues to deliver on the discharge of Statutory Functions (SF). However, this is increasingly impacted upon by Social Work staffing challenges across both children's and adult services.
- As of July 2024, 37 newly qualified social workers have commenced their assessed year in employment (AYE) across Directorates. Extensive supports are provided to AYE staff to support them in their role, in an effort to stabilise the workforce.
- Regional SW recruitment commenced in October 2024 and there are a total of 38 band 6 social work vacancies across Southern Trust Directorates. Regional recruitment will be concluded by December 2024, with offers being made mid-December.
- Directorates continue to progress the DSF action plans as agreed with SPPG in June 2024.
- The CYPS SW Improvement Forum is progressing with identification of areas for testing out new service models, to support timely service delivery in the best interests of young people and families, and which takes account of long term Social Work vacancies.
- Adult Community services are undertaking service improvement initiatives with Support from Quality Improvement with a focus on compliance with annual reviews and improving performance.

4. Areas of concern/risk/challenge:

- Social work workforce challenges across all Directorates continue to impact on the Trust's ability to consistently deliver Statutory Functions. All Directorates are focused on managing the challenges and mitigate the impact, with a focus on Quality Improvement initiatives, risk management, and recruitment and retention of staff.
- Within Children's Services, as of 31 September 2024, there are 34 unallocated Looked After Children out of total 683 LAC population. Robust governance arrangements have been established to manage the associated risk, including escalation processes and a plan to allocate these cases as a matter of urgency. The children noted are in long term stable placements.
- As of September 2024, there were 2696 unallocated cases and 2200 outstanding annual reviews in Integrated Care Teams in Adult Community Services. A range of service initiatives are under way to manage and address the associated risks, including a risk assessment and management plan. On 30th September 2024, the Integrated Care Teams appointed 3 new Senior Practitioners to post who will be focusing on urgent unallocated cases and outstanding annual reviews in teams with the most significant deficits. In addition, a quality improvement project has been established in relation to

outstanding annual reviews, with Newry Integrated Care Teams identified as the pilot site.	
5. Impact on Statutory Duties: Provide details on the impact of the following and how.	
<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Safety and Quality Impact</i>
Yes, there are Financial Impacts	Yes, there are Quality, Safety or Experience Impacts
6. Risk Assessment (Risk level and state if a risk assessment be completed)	
Social Work Staffing shortages across all Directorates is on the Corporate Risk Register. Risk Level:	
7. Other Business Intelligence/data (If appropriate)	
8. Impact: Provide details on the impact of the following and how. If this is N/A you should explain why this is an appropriate response.	
Corporate Risk Register	Social Work Staffing shortages across all Directorates is on the Corporate Risk Register.
Board Assurance Framework	Yes. Statutory Functions and associated challenges as previously reported.
Equality and Human Rights	Access to services.

Reasons for Paper Presentation

<i>Approval</i>	<i>Used when an item requires a formal agreement or endorsement by the meeting / committee members. Examples are approving minutes, budgets, proposals or policies.</i>
<i>Assurance</i>	<i>Used when an item can be measured against a certain criteria / standard. Examples are a project is on course with delivery or financial targets are being met.</i>
<i>Information</i>	<i>Used when an item is presented for the purpose of updating or informing the attendees without requiring a decision or action, such as reports, updates, or announcements.</i>
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Used when an item is listed primarily for open discussion, brainstorming or gathering input from the members without requiring an immediate decision.</i>

Executive Director of Social Work Report for Trust Board 21 November 2024

Corporate Social Work overview

1. WORKFORCE

As previously reported, there continues to be challenges across Directorates to consistently deliver on all Statutory Functions due to the sustained workforce deficits and associated pressures. Every effort continues to be made within the Directorates to manage these challenges and mitigate the impact, with a focus on recruitment and retention of staff.

Two improvement groups have been established, a cross directorate group and CYPS specific group, with support from the Quality Improvement Team. The aim of this work is to strengthen recruitment and increase retention of the SW workforce. This work will ensure a coordinated and concerted approach to address key drivers consistent with Our People Framework including:

- Identity and vision
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Work life balance and staff well-being
- Promotion of social work recruitment and retention.

A measurement plan will incorporate quantitative data, including vacancy rates, turnover, absence, leavers/starters, and qualitative data will be gathered from staff survey e.g. the current pulse survey. Achievements since the inception of the work in May 2024 includes strengthened approaches to team inductions for newly qualified social workers, improved coordination of supports for this staff group, including induction, Assessed year in Employment (AYE) enhanced support, in-service training and mentoring. A range of activity is being undertaken to instil a sense of professional pride and identity, and recognition of staff achievement, such as forums to showcase best practice, the ‘Social Work Spotlight’ newsletter, and connection to regional events such as the NISCC Professional in Practice Awards and regional Social Work Awards. Work is also progressing to optimise opportunities to promote social work as a career and to recruit in line with a regionally agreed model. The number of Southern Trust social care workers commencing the social work degree through the Open University has increased from 2 places to nine places per annum in recent years.

2. SOCIAL WORK & SOCIAL CARE GOVERNANCE/ Statutory Functions (SF)

The Trust continues to deliver on and adhere to statutory functions with a high level of compliance, however this continues to be impacted upon by staffing pressures across the system and increasing demands associated with increasing population growth for both children and older people, inevitably resulting in increased demand for all social work and social care services.

The regional social care system is undergoing change at a number of levels. This includes legislative change, eg the introduction of the Adoption and Children Act (2022) and Adult Safeguarding legislation. While a definitive timeframe has not been agreed for the introduction of these elements of legislation, there is much work underway in terms of preparing the system. In addition, the region await ministerial direction in relation to the next steps arising from the Children's Services review, which could include the creation of a new arm's length body for Children's social work Services. There are also further developments planned in relation to the upscaling of Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams. While all these developments are welcomed, there is concern across the system re the capacity to progress these at a time of significant challenged in respect of social work workforce availability and financial stringency.

Mental Health & Disability Directorate

Within Learning Disability Services work is ongoing in relation to reducing unallocated cases and improving compliance with completion of annual reviews and carers assessments. It is hoped that recruitment into a number of vacant posts will realise continued and consistent improvement in relation to these core statutory functions.

Mental Health services continue to prioritise the uptake of carer's assessments and maintain the significant improvements made in 23/24.

Physical Disability services continue to be challenged by the lack of Physical Disability Nursing Home beds and interest from private nursing homes to accept the most highly complex cases, eg complex brain injury. This is a regional issue and SPPG have agreed to raise with the Department of Health.

Adult Community Services

Within Adult Community Services, the recruitment challenges across Social Work, particularly in Integrated Care Teams, continue to impact on the delivery of statutory functions. There has been significant focus on recruitment in recent months and all vacant SW posts have been recruited to, however there are significant capacity challenges in relation to meeting existing demand.

Work is ongoing in relation to improving compliance with completion of annual reviews (2200 outstanding) and managing unallocated cases (approximately 2696). Improvement work in relation to adult safeguarding has resulted in increased compliance with risk assessments from 46% in Q2 2023 to 70% in Q1 2024.

Children and Young People's services

The staffing deficits across both the Family Support & Safeguarding Division and the Corporate Parenting Division within CYPS, continues to impact on the Services' ability to allocate cases with the Family Support service, Children with Disabilities service and within the Child in Care service. The Directorate Social Work Service Improvement Forum is progressing with identification of areas for testing out new service models to support timely service delivery in the best interests of young people and families, and which takes account of staff pressures.

Trusts' Chief Executives have recently been invited to a forthcoming Health Committee meeting in response to a BBC Spotlight programme which focused on the lack of short breaks provision in a number of Trusts. The Southern Trust have managed to continue to develop short breaks provision for families of children with a disability. This has been achieved via continued development of the short breaks fostering service and Short Breaks Residential Care for children with disabilities.

This service provided 650 overnight short breaks within the last financial year, and when combined with residential short breaks provision, this equates to 2,041 nights provided to families in need, with an average of 56 service users availing of a short break every month. However, there are approximately 45 children awaiting short breaks provision at present. Where appropriate, day opportunities are provided in support to the families.

SOCIAL WORK & SOCIAL CARE RESPONDING TO CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND EMERGING NEED

Over the past 25 years the demographics within Northern Ireland have changed considerably due, initially, to economic migration. Economic opportunities have attracted migrants from various countries, leading to a more culturally diverse population, including Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and Lithuania.

Migrants have enriched the cultural landscape and have fostered a multi-cultural environment. In addition, the migrant population play an important role in the economy, filling labour shortages and supporting local businesses, particularly in sectors where there is a shortage of local workers, eg. hospitality, construction and healthcare. The rapid change in demographics has brought some challenges in relation to increased pressures on housing, some public services and associated implications in relation to social integration.

Asylum

An asylum seeker is a person who has travelled to another country by their own means to request international protection (asylum). By doing so, an asylum seeker is exercising their right to seek asylum as enshrined in international law.

In recent years, several geopolitical events have contributed to an unprecedented number of people seeking asylum across Europe, Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This has occurred in response to threat from conflict and war, eg civil war in Syria in 2011 led to millions fleeing the country; aftermath of the war in Afghanistan in 2021 and famine in sub-Saharan Africa. Other factors include political instability and human rights abuses, eg. persecution of the LGBTQ community and

religious persecution. In addition, following the 2015 migration crisis (mass movement of people across Europe), many people from conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa sought asylum in Europe, with some arriving in Northern Ireland as part of the Government's resettlement programmes and family reunification.

New entrants relocate to NI and the SHSCT for various reasons, including work and economic reasons; access to education for themselves and for their children; and fleeing for safety from violence, war or persecution due to their religion, gender, race or sexual identity and or preference.

Refugee Resettlement

In recent years, there have been a number of resettlement schemes that have supported refugees to resettle in Southern Trust area. Below is an example but not an exhaustive list.

Refugee Resettlement figures				
	Ages			Total
	0-5 years	6-18 years	18+	
Ukrainian Refugees	24	175	688	887
Syrian Refugees	63	123	183	367
Afghan Refugees	9	18	18	45
Asylum Seekers	16	13	85	114
Total	112	329	974	1413

The Ukrainian Scheme – introduced in response to the Ukrainian/Russian war in 2023. This includes Homes for Ukraine scheme, Family Scheme and Work Visas. There has been an agreed extension for right to remain from February 2024 for another 18 months subject to review. During the initial stages of this scheme, there were some emerging issues regarding potential exploitation and work was progressed by PSNI and Social services in relation to responding to specific concerns and associated requirements.

Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme (VPRS) was launched in 2014 and ran until February 2021. There were over 20,000 Syrians relocated to the UK, 367 to the Southern Trust area. These families were provided with additional support to register with a GP, allocated housing, support workers and support services, and had full recourse to public funds. This population have generally settled well and integrated into the area.

Afghan Refugees have been resettled in the UK under two separate schemes. Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy since 2015. The schemes supported Afghan citizens who worked or assisted the UK government during the conflict. The Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS) was set up to support individuals and their families who would have been vulnerable to harm in their country of origin due to their views on human rights, religion and support for LGBT community etc. Afghan refugees resettled here have similar supports to the Syrian schemes. They are provided with accommodation, support and support workers to help with access health care, education etc. and have full recourse to public funds on arrival.

Other Asylum Seekers

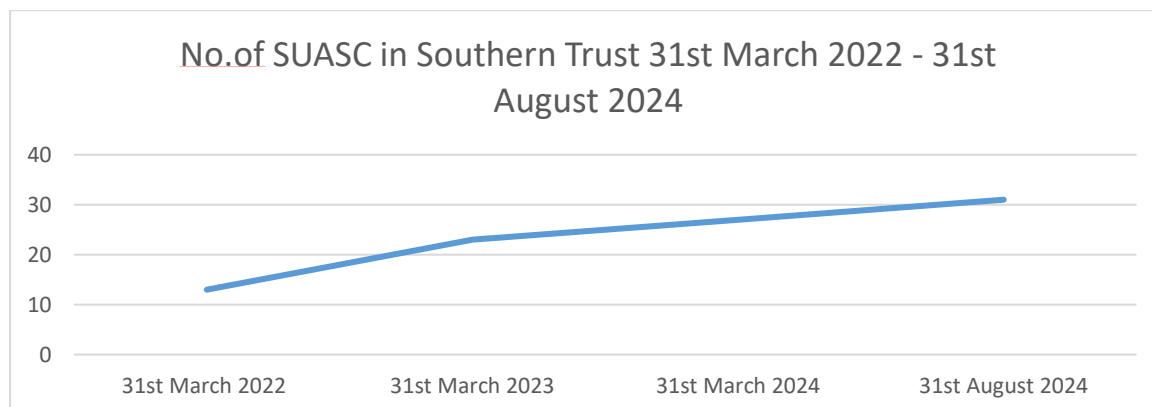
In addition to the above schemes, which are generally planned and with Government oversight and support, there has been the increasing phenomenon of Asylum Seekers entering the UK and Ireland on an unplanned basis. This has been an emerging and developing situation in Northern Ireland over recent years.

Asylum seekers have been relocated from other areas of NI where they first presented as asylum seekers and were accommodated in contingency arrangements. These individuals are initially housed in designated hotel accommodation and then will be supported to secure temporary accommodation for the duration of their asylum application. Initially, all asylum seekers who came to Northern Ireland, were accommodated in Belfast, however due to the increase in the numbers of people seeking asylum in NI, the other four Trust areas have committed to provide initial accommodation.

Cumulatively, the Southern Trust has the largest number of ethnic minority families within Northern Ireland. Within this population, there are individuals who do not have the necessary documentation/meet the criteria to obtain settlement status. These individuals and their families have no recourse to public funds and are unable to access routine healthcare and other public services, such as housing. This is an increasing population, and there has been an increase in the numbers of individuals who have been deported due to their settlement status. As a result, there has been an emerging trend of families who do not want to be known to public services, including health and social care services. This creates a risk, particularly for children and vulnerable adults, which is a growing cause for concern.

Separated And Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (SUASC)

In 2021 a regional rota came into operation to ensure the equal distribution of cases of SUASC across the five Trusts. Prior to this most of these cases were managed within BHSCT, who were primarily responsible for meeting the care and accommodation needs of this cohort of young people. The majority of the young people meeting this definition are spontaneous arrivals into Northern Ireland, with the highest presentation originating from Somalia. At present the SHSCT respond to the regional rota approximately every 3.5 weeks, accommodating three young people per cycle. Each young person under the age of 18 who presents seeking asylum is afforded Looked After Child status and will have an assessment of need undertaken by a Social Worker within the 14 Plus service.



If at the point of arrival a place is available within Aran House, the regional assessment centre, the young people are placed there. However, usually the young people are placed in Supported Lodgings (STAY) with experienced hosts dedicated to working

with SUASC for a period of up to twelve weeks, allowing time for completion of the Pathway Needs Assessment.

From the point of arrival, a multi-agency/multi professional approach is implemented to meet the immediate and arising needs of the young person. When accommodation is in place, the focus moves onto to addressing any immediate health needs, religious and cultural needs, and education/training needs, which is often a priority from the young person's perspective.

All young people are immediately referred to the Children In Care Nurse Specialist who makes onward referrals to Northern Ireland New Entrant Service (NINES) and TB Screening. A consultation is held with the 14 Plus Primary Mental Health Worker within Scaffold (Looked After Child therapeutic service) to consider the young person's needs through a trauma informed lens. A referral is made to the education and employability team for the development of an Education/Training Plan. With the increasing number of SUASC, coupled with increasing numbers of children in care, waiting times to access services are ever increasing. However, within SHSCT, the 14 Plus service's "one stop shop" offers timely access to a range of support services.

It has become apparent that many of the young people have experienced significant childhood trauma and have fled their country of origin for their own personal safety, for example to escape arranged marriage, threats to kill, persecution or war. Many have lost one or both parents and others are left to wonder if their parents are alive, as contact with them has often been lost. One common aspiration of the young people coming to Northern Ireland is to access Higher Education.

The Southern Trust have observed positive outcomes for this cohort of young people in relation to engagement in education and training. The 14 Plus service work closely with the Children and Young Peoples Directorate Employability service to develop bespoke education plans for these young people.

The continued upward trajectory in relation to SUASC has resulted in significant challenges for the Southern Trust in relation to being able to provide appropriate accommodation options. The 14 Plus service has continued to work to develop accommodation options in conjunction with Estates services and a number of vacant Trust properties have been converted to living facilities. There has been a continued focus on recruitment of STAY Supported Lodgings hosts.

As a result of their lived experience, SUASC tend to excel when it comes to independent living and are mostly assessed as suitable for transition accommodation given the levels of independent living skills they display. With a high number of young people wishing to live in Belfast, the Trust has developed a strong link with TARASIS housing to expand the portfolio of transition accommodation. When transitioning a bespoke support plan for each young person is developed, and each young person is allocated a staff member from 14 Plus Community Living Team for support with tenancy. These plans are kept under review at Child In Care meetings.

Stemming from Local Planning Partnership Meetings with the Housing Executive and related stakeholders, a significant development has been the joint working between the 14 Plus service and NIHE to develop "a flipping process". Once the young person's tenancy is ready, i.e a young person has been granted asylum and turned eighteen years of age, rather than having to leave their TARASIS property, which until now has been funded by the Trust, the 14 Plus Staff works with NIHE to transfer the property to NIHE. This enables the young person to remain as a tenant in the property. This approach has had a significant impact on reducing youth homelessness.

The SUASC is financially supported by the Home Office.

Trust initiatives- responding to the need

Northern Ireland New Entrants Service (NINES)

NINES is an evidence-based Nurse led service for new entrants into Northern Ireland. It is an introduction to health and social care for people new to the country, ensuring that they get an initial health check and an explanation of how the health system in NI works. A variety of clinics are held to support the health and wellbeing of new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The service aims to support all new entrants by offering a health assessment, screening, health education and supports individuals to register with a GP.

The team work closely with colleagues in primary care to support new entrants to register with a local GP. In addition, there is close working with the Trust's Respiratory Team, Hepatology and GUM services. There has been a recent increase in the number of people accessing the service who have no settlement status, and as result no recourse to public funds. NINES will complete a health assessment and if required signpost for additional supports.

This service was established approximately 10 years ago when the landscape in respect of New Arrivals looked very different. Currently, the service is significantly under resourced and unable to meet demand. This has been escalated to the commissioner, however there are no current proposals to extent this key support service.

Specialist Nurse role

Public health nursing plays a vital role in assessing the needs and vulnerabilities of these families. Ethnic minority families are visited by a Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN), school nurse or health visitor within the first 2 weeks of notification of arrival to the Trust area. A family health assessment is completed to assess the needs of the whole family. The needs of the family can often be very complex. There is a particular concern for those families with no right of settlement status and therefore no entitlement to public funds. This can result in families living in poverty, with no access to routine health care and services.

Children born in the UK (in these circumstances) have the same immigration status as their parents, therefore are unable to register with a GP and access routine health care and vaccinations. Public health nursing has recently offered vaccinations to these children and their families. There are increasing safeguarding concerns within this population, primarily related to their Settlement status and lack of access to key services. Public health nursing collaborates closely with safeguarding nurses, Gateway teams and Family Intervention Teams to provide support to these families, to minimise risk and ensure the safety of the children.

Within public health nursing, there is a specialist nurse who co-coordinates arrivals of ethnic minority, asylum seeker and refugee families within the Trust. The Specialist Nurse receives information from the Home Office regarding the arrival of families to the Trust locality and participates in regional multi agency planning meetings in respect of same. A system is in place whereby the Specialist Nurse receives a weekly database from MEARS (agency contracted by the Home Office to source emergency accommodation at the point of arrival and dispersal), After the initial contact by the

Specialist Nurse, families are allocated to public health nursing staff. The Specialist Nurse attends families with more complex needs, such as safeguarding or health concerns, including families with complex needs and no access to public funds.

An example of such cases is a family within the Trust who had no entitlement to public funds, however the father in the family had a terminal illness. The Specialist Nurse worked with a range of agencies to ensure the family received appropriate support, ensuring the safety and well-being of the child was paramount. This involved close work with safeguarding nurses, Gateway team and palliative care social worker to provide support to this family.

The Specialist Nurse also works closely with asylum seeker and refugee families, identifying needs and advocating for their rights and entitlements. Recently work has included supporting a family within the Trust who had been the victim of hate crime, which escalated to acts of violence resulting in the family being moved to a place of safety in another Trust. The Specialist Nurse worked closely with PSNI, Mears, safeguarding nurses and social services to ensure this family was moved to an appropriate place of safety.

The specialist nurse for ethnic minorities provides a supportive role to all members of public health nursing team and other disciplines, offering advice and support when working with families from all ethnic backgrounds. The Specialist Nurse is identifying common issues/trends, eg she has recently identified a number of young pregnant women within the Roma community in the Trust. In response to this, the Specialist Nurse and Safeguarding Nurse Specialist, with advice and support from social services, are reviewing supports available to these females and considering any potential concerns regarding trafficking and exploitation.

Previously, whilst working with Ukrainian refugees within the assistance centres, the Specialist Nurse became aware of potential exploitation and trafficking concerns. These concerns were escalated to relevant Safeguarding teams, including the Trust's Adult Safeguarding team and PSNI, which resulted in a meeting with the PSNI Human Trafficking and Exploitation team and an associated action plan was agreed.

Promoting Wellbeing Service- supporting a community response

Within Mental Health & Disability services and Adult Community Services, over the past 12 months, there have been increasing challenges in relation to service provision for those without 'settled' status. Settled status is a legal term and gives people the right to free health care. The guidance relating to the provision of social care is limited. There are currently a small number of identified cases. These are highly complex cases which require intensive input from key workers to navigate support from other organisations, in meeting the needs of the service user. Hospital discharge and entitlement to critical need services is a major challenge and staff have to balance the demands of discharge and the risks to service users who are homeless and /or have no family support.

In response to the increasing need to support the migrant population the Trust has developed a range of community based responses, led by the Inequalities and Inclusion Co-ordinator, in partnership with social work colleagues within the Multi-disciplinary GP Federation teams.

The Inequalities and Inclusion Coordinator is a strategic role responsible for supporting participation, partnership working, community capacity building and self-help by

Travellers, Ethnic Minorities and Migrant communities across the Southern Trust. Embedding community development approaches to health and wellbeing and social inclusion within these communities to address inequalities is core to this role. The Inequalities and Inclusion Coordinator Chairs the Traveller Action Group in the Southern Trust, Co-Chair of the Regional Traveller Health and Wellbeing Forum and also the Southern Outcomes sub-group for Minority Ethnic communities. This is a critical role in developing knowledge in respect of unmet need and emerging challenges being faced by Ethnic Minorities.

- **Cultural competency**

The Trust's Inequalities and Inclusion Co-ordinator has led on the development of an e-learning Cultural Competency framework and booklet resource which aims to enable all HSC staff to access 4 training modules, accompanied with key messages and animations for staff to begin or progress their cultural competency journey. This is an interactive, introductory training aimed at those supporting people from diverse cultural communities in their workplace and includes a suite of resources.

- **Translation devices**

Through a partnership with the SW service in MDT GP federation there is a plan to pilot use of digital translation devices across different sites in the SHSCT, including Emergency Departments. The impact of language barriers and accessing services are some of the key issues affecting the health and social wellbeing of many people from minority ethnic backgrounds. These devices will go some way to making services more inclusive and accessible, breaking down barriers and enhancing access to supports in a timely manner.

- **Community Inclusion worker**

To further enhance community inclusion work, in particular for people seeking international protection, the PWB team now have a temporary inclusion worker in post until 31st March 2025. Multiple community projects/programmes are underway, bringing communities together, building connections, relationships and integration in local areas in order that people have a sense of belonging and are able to access resources and supports.

- **CYPSP Ethnic minority sub-group.**

To date 3 pilots of ESOL/intense English language support for pupils attending secondary school who have limited or no English have been established. These pilots have been successful, with substantial learning and recommendations. This has been shared with the Education Authority who have taken on board the findings at a regional level and continue to work with schools to promote best learning outcomes for pupils.

A co-produced, multi-lingual letter template has been developed to accompany outgoing letters to people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The short message will alert the recipient to not ignore the letter. This resource is supported by language identification posters and "I need an interpreter" card.

- **Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS)**

DASS have facilitated domestic abuse awareness sessions to individuals from five ethnic minority groups, in partnership with Vibe Armagh, SHSCT Promoting Well-being Team and Women's Aid. The aim of the sessions is to increase awareness of domestic abuse and the specialised support services available to victims. These sessions were bespoke to the service groups, facilitated in an informal and familiar setting in order to help aid engagement and build trust amongst 'hard to reach groups'.

DASS continues to provide networking opportunities amongst ethnic minority groups through engagement sessions with service users and professionals, as well as developing information leaflets in a range of languages and is available on a range of platforms. DASS have also been invited to deliver training to the Trust's Interpreting Service regarding domestic abuse, promoting early intervention and prevention strategies among staff working with ethnic minority groups.

- **Mental Health toolkit**

Work is ongoing regionally to update the Mental Health toolkit for ethnic minorities.

- **PPI regional group**

The PPI regional group is seeking to engage with people seeking international protection. The Leadership centre has been commissioned to undertake the analysis and report of this work. Each Trust will work with or support community groups to facilitate engagement sessions. The study is particularly keen to hear perspectives from women and young people.

South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP)

STEP have been providing support to the Ethnic Minority community in Mid Ulster since 1997, with a particular focus on providing support and empowering people from the Travelling Community and ethnic minority backgrounds. The ethos of STEP is to contribute to building a rights based, participative, peaceful and prosperous society which provides equality of access and opportunity, embraces diversity and respects difference.

A range of community inclusion work continues across localities, in partnership with Community Development colleagues and support staff working closely with, and supporting groups in intercultural programmes, such as NI Hyatt's Muslim celebration event, supported by ABC council and other organisations.

Other community inclusion work

Work is ongoing in relation to supporting "undocumented migrants". Significant efforts have been made across services to gain trust and build relationships. Significant progress has been made in relation to developing our understanding of the marginalisation, exploitation and the health and social wellbeing inequalities being experienced. NINES and specialist nurse for minority ethnic communities, community pharmacy, local community groups, sporting organisations, charities and STEP & CIP who have expertise in dealing with immigration issues were all engaged and provide outreach support to members of the community affected.

CONCLUSION

This report to Trust Board demonstrates the commitment of the Social Work profession across all Directorates to fulfil their statutory duties despite the ongoing challenges in relation to staff recruitment and retention, and increasing demand across Social Work services.

It is important to note key demographic metrics reflected in increasing numbers of Looked after Children, increased Adult Safeguarding activity, referrals to Mental Health services and to family support services.

There is evidence of increased complexity at the point of presentation for both adults and children which requires skilled, timely and expert interventions. Overall, as evidenced in improved compliance with Statutory Functions and other performance metrics, the Southern Trust's social work and social care service continues to perform effectively. However, it is important to emphasise, significant challenges remain in relation to workforce availability and associated high vacancies rates, which limits capacity to proactively deliver targeted and consistent preventative services.

This report has also provided an outline of the changing demographics in this Trust locality which is reflective of trends throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom. Migration brings many opportunities, including cultural diversity, economic benefits in relation to supporting key sectors in respect of available workforce (crucially including the Health Service) and associated increased economic activity.

However, as evidenced in this report there are also key challenges for Health and Social Care, first and foremost safeguarding and social challenges for the individuals and families concerned. Therefore, it is essential to have in place an appropriately resourced service infrastructure across the lifespan, and for innovation and development to remain a priority in proactively responding to need.

Geo Political world events will continue to generate circumstances generating mass movements of populations/people which will manifest in continued and increased presentations of New Arrivals to these islands. It is therefore essential that service delivery organisations, health and social care Commissioners and relevant strategists collaborate on an ongoing basis in planning for the needs of this population.

Colm McCafferty

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