



south ayrshire
health & social care
partnership

Statutory Mental Health Officer Team

Review of the First Five Months

28th November 2022



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Section One. Overview

1.1. Abbreviated terms in use throughout this report include:

STDC - Short term detention certificate. An STDC allows for a person to be detained in hospital

CTO - Compulsory treatment order. A Compulsory treatment order allows for a person to be detained for up to and including six months in the first instance and if it is still required following this yearly thereafter.

SCR - Social circumstances report. An SCR is generated each time a relevant event happens in mental health legislation, and a statutory report is required within 21 days of the event happening. The relevant event can be a number of different detentions but in general refers to an STDC as outlined in 2 above.

AWI - Adults with incapacity legislation. AWI in general refers to the range of legislative option that are available under the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000. Again in general when referring to AWI it relates to applications for welfare guardianship

AWICC - Adults with incapacity case conference. An adult with incapacity case conference takes place to consider what options are open from the 2000 act to support an adult who lacks capacity.

1.2. The Statutory Mental Health Officer team was established in June 2022 following a review of Mental Health Officer services by a consultant Mental Health Officer Paul Jewitt who reported in March 2022 to the SMT about the need for a statutory Mental Health Officer team. The team was quickly established following this report and service management was put in place, with Sandra Rae helping to support the development of the team. Furthermore, Paul Jewitt remained in a consultative role supporting the team and providing continuity for the staff who would subsequently be appointed to the team.

1.3. There was a significant shortfall in Mental Health Officer services in South Ayrshire and a recognition in the need to modernise the Mental Health Officer service from the SMT. A significant investment has been put in place for the past five months which demonstrates the robust commitment to developing consistent and effective Mental Health Officer service in South Ayrshire.

Section Two. Staffing

2.1. A Mental Health Officer Coordinator, Paul Donnelly, was appointed on 9th June 2022 but officially took up post on 22nd August 2022. The original vision for the team was to tackle the shortfall in Mental Health Officers, with vast majority of Mental Health Officers in South Ayrshire taking on this role on a part time basis as part of the wider remit of their duties in other post. The SMT recognised the need to professionalise the role and have full time workers dedicated to a statutory mental health role. The other aspect of the role was to review current practice and procedures and improve these across AWI and statutory Mental Health Officer work. In addition there are major changes being suggested to mental health law with the review of the current Mental Health Act and Adults with Incapacity Legislation, and the introduction of the national care agency in three years' time.

There is a need to ensure that the appropriate training and support is in place for social work and health staff in understanding the impact of these changes. Senior Practitioner/Mental Health Officers have a central role in providing this support and training.

- 2.2. The remit for any new staff coming into the team was to improve the quality of services, support training and development, and review and improve current practice across teams and services in terms of statutory mental health work. Any new staff being appointed therefore needed to be able to operate at a higher level and take on the role of a senior practitioner. Interviews for new staff began in the middle of June 2022 and crucially as coordinator Paul Donnelly was able to be involved this process to provide cohesion and a strategic vision from the start of the new service. Two additional Senior Practitioners joined the team at the end of June, Lucy Jamieson and Iain Pettigrew. Administration support was added to this at the end of July 2022 and Lynnette Fisher started with the team on 22nd August 2022.
- 2.3. The vision for the team and the breadth of operational and strategic requirements for the service meant that it would be probable that the team would expand and do so relatively quickly. Toward the end of August 2022 an additional two Senior Practitioners joined the service, Stephen Nairne, and Stephen McMullan began work with the statutory Mental Health Officer team on 1st Nov 2022. As the team expanded there was a need to put a Team Leader in place to oversee the development of this new service. Iain Pettigrew was successful in being appointed as Team Leader in September 2022.

An additional two Senior Practitioners, Stewart Simpson, and Karen Sharp have been appointed and will join the team in December 2022. They have a specific remit as Mental Health Officers to address two significant national priorities in supporting front door hospital services and reviewing guardianship orders for people placed on long term or indefinite orders who have learning disabilities.

- 2.4. Therefore the team currently has the following composition:

- One Mental Health Officer Coordinator full time
- One team Leader full time.
- Five Senior practitioners/Mental Health Officers fulltime
- One Admin support full time

This has resulted in a significant increase in resource and has already led to a range of improvements in services and supports to the existing Mental Health Officer group and the wider social work service. There are an additional 245 hours of operational support offered to the Mental Health Officer service each week with an additional 35-hour administration support. This large investment will lift the amount of Mental Health Officer hours being dedicated to frontline Mental Health Officer tasks be a very long way from where is currently sits at 4 hours per 10K of the population. It will be of note to see this change in the figures for 2022/2023 from the SCCC in their annual report on Mental Health Officer services across Scotland.

Section Three. Developing the New Team

3.1. A five-part plan was put in place in September 2022 which gave an oversight of the strategy and approach of the team in completing statutory Mental Health Officer work:

- Part 1 - Provides a strategic overview and links Paul Jewitt's review with the ongoing development of the team.
- Part 2 - Service specification outlining the aims and objectives of the team. Including a clear operational procedure.
- Part 3 - Operational procedure for the team. This is an addendum to the service specification. It provides a robust and transparent operational procedure.
- Part 4 - Developing the Senior Practitioner role and the wider support to social work and health staff both in understanding Mental Health Officer services but using Senior Practitioners as central to the requirement to have a career pathway in mental health and grow our own Mental Health Officers.
- Part 5 - Monitoring, evaluation, and review of the statutory Mental Health Officer team. Including regular audit of the team and Mental Health Officer service.

This 5-part plan gives a cohesive and consistent approach to the development of the new service and is clear about the direction of travel for the statutory Mental Health Officer team.

3.2. The team very much remains in the developmental stage with additional staff joining in December and new approaches to work being examined to support colleagues across the HSCP. This is balanced against the real practical gains the team has made so far in supporting statutory work across teams.

Section Four. Practical Benefits of the Statutory Mental Health Officer Team

- 4.1. A new Rota for daytime Mental Health Officer services has been developed which provides a consistent MHO service with continuity in support for service users and carers. A dedicated Mental Health Officer is on duty each day and if required to give consent to detention that Mental Health Officer will remain involved with supporting that service user across their journey with mental health services. Likewise AWICC meetings are being allocated from the new Rota with the proviso that if an application for a welfare guardianship order is needed that the same Mental Health Officer who attended the meeting will follow this process through to its natural conclusion. Thus there is a consistent person at all times in the journey of the service user in being subject to statutory measures. The new Rota started on 1st November 2022 and is working consistently well.
- 4.2. A Significant number of Compulsory Treatment Order (CTO) cases have now been transferred from the existing part time Mental Health Officer group into the statutory team. As part of the operating procedure a six weekly contact programme is now in place to visit and support these individuals. A number of cases remained to be transferred from colleagues in the CMHT and this is happening in the first week of December 2022. The entire CTO caseload for South Ayrshire will be managed by the statutory team. In addition colleagues who are operating as part time Mental Health Officers and are allocated work from the rota which needs a CTO application will complete this application but six weeks post application the case will be transferred to a colleague in the statutory team. Therefore this gives continuity to the service users and supports our Mental Health Officer colleagues who have jobs in other locations and teams and so won't have on going CTO work to complete. It will assist them in managing workloads and remaining as part of the service. It maintains Mental Health Officer professional standards and practice without undue burden of mental health caseload.
- 4.3. A range of practical materials have been put in place to support service users and carers when they require the support of statutory intervention. Mental Health Officer packs have been devised for service users which include information on named persons, advanced statements, MWC, the process of detention, the role of the Mental Health Officer and wider information about services and supports available in the community including advocacy. This provides a professional oversight of the role of the Mental Health Officer and is of significant benefit to users and carers. Service users are often in a very distressed situation when a statutory intervention is being suggested and this information about the supports available to them can help them reflect on their situation and empower them in understanding their rights to supports and services. The packs have been distributed to Mental Health Officers across the teams and are in wide use. They will continue to be used and help build the professional role of the Mental Health Officers in statutory mental health work. Mental Health Officer packs can be made available to anyone who wants to see them.
- 4.4. Mental Health Officer forums have been put in place with dates for the forum being provided throughout the year until year end 2023. This will give Mental Health Officers an opportunity to come to gather and explore current practice and get professional support and training from colleagues and others.
In addition mentoring sessions have been developed for each Mental Health Officer with the part time Mental Health Officers having mentoring sessions with the Mental Health Officer Coordinator. These sessions have been set up for the next year.

All Mental Health Officers in South Ayrshire now have access to mentoring and support with professional supervision and access to training and guidance through the MHO forum. Each Mental Health Officer has been asked to keep diary sheets about their work and once completed this work will be collated and will form part of an annual report by the coordinator for the service.

- 4.5. Three Mental Health Officer candidates have been placed on the Mental Health Officer programme from South Ayrshire this year. Each one of them has a practice assessor (PA) from the statutory Mental Health Officer team. Given that all the Mental Health Officers in the statutory team are operating at a Senior Practitioner (SP) grade they will all support the development of candidates on the programme over the coming years. Part 4 of the plan for the new service talks about the role of SPs in supporting candidates on to and through the MHO programme and it is a central tenant of the team to support South Ayrshire in growing their own Mental Health Officers. There is some additional work to be done with colleagues in locality teams in promoting the role of Mental Health Officer and establishing more comprehensive support for the career progression for individuals who want to work within mental health and learning disability services.
- 4.6. As part of the evaluation of the progress of the statutory Mental Health Officer team statistical information will be gathered month on month to reflect the work the team is doing and give an overview of all the statutory work of the service thus far. Again this will support a quality overview of the work of the team in an annual report. However this process has begun and the first report of the statutory work of the Mental Health Officer service was delivered in November 2022 - reporting on the Month of October 2022. It also provided a backdrop to the statutory work across South Ayrshire for the past two years which will assist us in measuring any improvements as we progress over the coming months and years. These statistics and the background report have been shared widely with colleagues and can be made available to anyone who wants to see them. This process will continue month on month.
- 4.7. In the first five months of the statutory Mental Health Officer team there have been significant issues with recording and ensuring that Mental Health Officers are operating to a standard recording method for all relevant events that they are involved in as Mental Health Officers. Recording is patchy in many instances both in terms of relevant events under the Mental Health Act and AWI legislation and in general about service user and carers needs. Since the new team has been developed a new system for capturing all relevant reports has been developed on teams and is managed by our admin Lynnette Fisher. All Social Circumstance Reports (SCR's), Compulsory treatment Orders (CTO) applications and Adults with Incapacity (AWI) paperwork will be kept centrally on a client file on teams for individuals. There has been significant work carried out by the statutory team to promote this approach and it will continue to be promoted in the coming months and years. In using the main social work recording system to capture mental health work, CareFirst, there is much work to be done in terms of mental health and AWI work, and how and when a relevant event is recorded. The team is beginning to standardise recording and support colleagues to report events more clearly in a consistent manner. The continuing work of the statutory team and coordinator in reviewing CareFirst and teams through audit will assist in this process. Currently SCR numbers are very low in South Ayrshire and a separate spreadsheet has been developed to ensure that each SCR is completed and if it is not, the reason why not. Regular audits will begin in April 2023 and will report back progress in these areas.

Section Five. Future Work of the Team

- 5.1. There is a action note in place which gives an overview of the plan for the team for the next year. Again anyone who wants copies of this can contact the Mental Health Officer coordinator who will provide them with it. However, the next major step for the statutory team will be to review the AWI procedures for South Ayrshire starting in Jan 2023. I would hope to be able to use this review as a test for change in introducing Supported (SDM) and autonomous (ADM) decision making as a pilot project. It would be too great a challenge to introduce SDM and ADM to the Mental Health Act now. The legislation is very strong and would not lend itself easily to attempting to introduce SMD and ADM at the moment to practice. This will require significant changes to the law in time. However, SDM and ADM could easily be introduced to local authority requests to consider using AWI legislation. Again, this could not be done with private applications because the requests for such an application is generated by law through a solicitor in the first instance so applying these principles to it would need to include all solicitors and medics. Far too comprehensive currently to work into a pilot situation.
- 5.2. Built into this pilot will be the roles of the two more Senior Practitioners to join the service in December 2022, Karen Sharp, and Stewart Simpson. Karen has been asked to develop a specific role in exploring the use of AWI as part of the hospital discharge process, and Stewart has been asked to look at Guardianship reviews for people with learning disabilities. Both areas will lend themselves to be part of this pilot process and would assist in making the new procedures operate more effectively and in line with the principles supported by Scott for SDM and ADM testing. The wider statutory Mental Health Officer team will also be involved in this process, and it will include training and support for colleagues in the Mental Health Officer service, locality teams, advocacy services and possibly health and medical staff depending on how wide ranging the pilot is. All test for change would happen within current legislation and procedures and are likely to enhance our understanding of the change process and the move to SDM/ADM when it is legislated by Scottish Government.
- 5.3. There is a strong need to support colleagues in locality teams in recognising the need for AWICC meetings and in carrying out the role of supervising officers as social workers. The statutory Mental Health Officer service has already offered wider support to colleagues right across social work services and will continue to do so. However as part of the review of AWI procedures more effective training and support needs to be made available to colleagues in these teams and services.
- 5.4. This is an evolving and changing team. The aim of the service to begin with is to be consistent and provide continuity for service users, carers and other professionals when they need to use a Mental Health Officer service. As time progresses and we get more feedback from audit, statistics, surveys and wider user group and professional forums we need to be able to respond to these suggestions and make changes which will move us from being a consistent service to striving for excellence. By the time we reach the annual report in December 2023 the statutory team would want to be providing not just a consistent service but an excellent one and this will hopefully be reflected in our evidence for the development of the service.

Section Six. Maintaining Clear Strategies

- 6.1. The first five months of developing the statutory Mental Health Officer team have been about linking local and national strategy with the operational demands of a new service to providing a comprehensive Mental Health Officer team that can respond to statutory demands. A clear strategy is in place for the team which is very much linked to the operational procedure and the Senior Practitioners in the team have begun to make inroads to improving the Mental Health Officer service. Much has been put in place to link the strategy and operation of the team: A five-point plan to implement the team and progress change, new recording systems, improved professional standards, clear signalling of how the team will function, practical benefits, MHO packs and standards, and the promotion of the Mental Health Officer service through training, mentoring and forums. Comprehensive statistics and a solid base for audit, reflection and change.
- 6.2. The next six months will be about broadening the strategic approach. There is a need to join the work done so far to improving links with colleagues in locality teams and raising the standards of AWI procedures and meetings across the HSCP. Having a Mental Health Officer at every AWI meeting will help do this. There is a need to improve the role of the supervising officer and supporting this in more effective training/review of existing services to people subject to guardianship orders. We need to assist in specific way through supporting the process of discharge from hospital and AWI, and in reviewing the needs of some of our most vulnerable service users in the learning disability service. Then we need to promote the national agenda for change and work alongside our colleagues from the Mental Welfare Commission in improving Mental Health Officer services and implementing some of the changes from the Scott review.
- 6.3. All the while these ideas, strategies and changes must be underpinned by solid recording and reporting, and always maintaining a consistent service and approach to user and carer needs. Importantly our audits need to be good and provide good evidence. Regular reporting from statistics on the number and range of interventions, work that Mental Health Officers are doing, and any feedback from users, carers and other professionals must be included in this process. If these practical steps are in place then the raising of standards for the Mental Health Officer service will be much more effective and happen at a consistent rated demonstrating improvement at every stage of our progress.