

REPORT

Item No: 6

SUBJECT:	Mental Health Officers
TO:	IJB Performance, Finance and Audit Sub-Committee
Lead Officer for Report:	Ross McGuffie, Interim Chief Officer
Author(s) of Report	Interim Head of Adult Social Work
DATE:	19.02.19

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This paper is coming to the IJB Sub Committee

For approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For endorsement	<input type="checkbox"/>	To note	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2. ROUTE TO THE IJB Sub Committee

This paper has been:

Prepared	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reviewed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2.1 The paper was prepared by the Interim Head of Adult Social Work.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The IJB Sub Committee is asked to;

- Note the content of the report
- Note the actions highlighted in the report that will require further work with
- Note that the development of the MHO role will feature further in the Mental Health Strategy

4. BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

4.0.1 Social Workers (Mental Health), (MHOs) are professionally registered and experienced social workers, who have successfully undergone Additional postgraduate training to undertake statutory duties in working with people who have a “mental disorder” as defined by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003 (Mental Health Act).

4.0.2 Only qualified social workers can undertake this prescribed role, which includes safeguarding the rights of people who need to be treated for mental disorder in hospital, including the State Hospital, under compulsion: carrying out assessments and implementing care plans for people with complex mental health needs.

4.0.3 Section 32 of the Mental Health Act requires local authorities to employ sufficient Mental Health Officers to meet the council’s statutory obligation. At the present time North

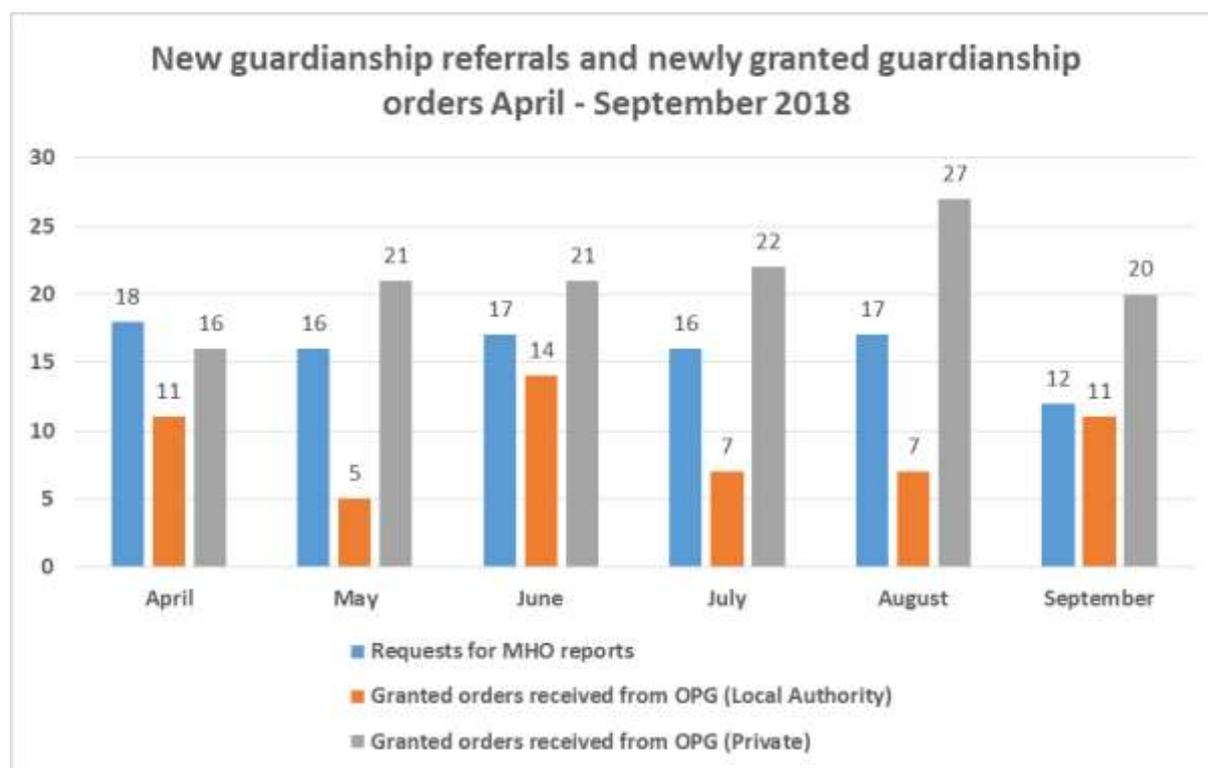
Lanarkshire, similarly to most Scottish Local authorities, continues to find it a challenge to meet these legal requirements.

4.1 Current demand on Mental Health Officers

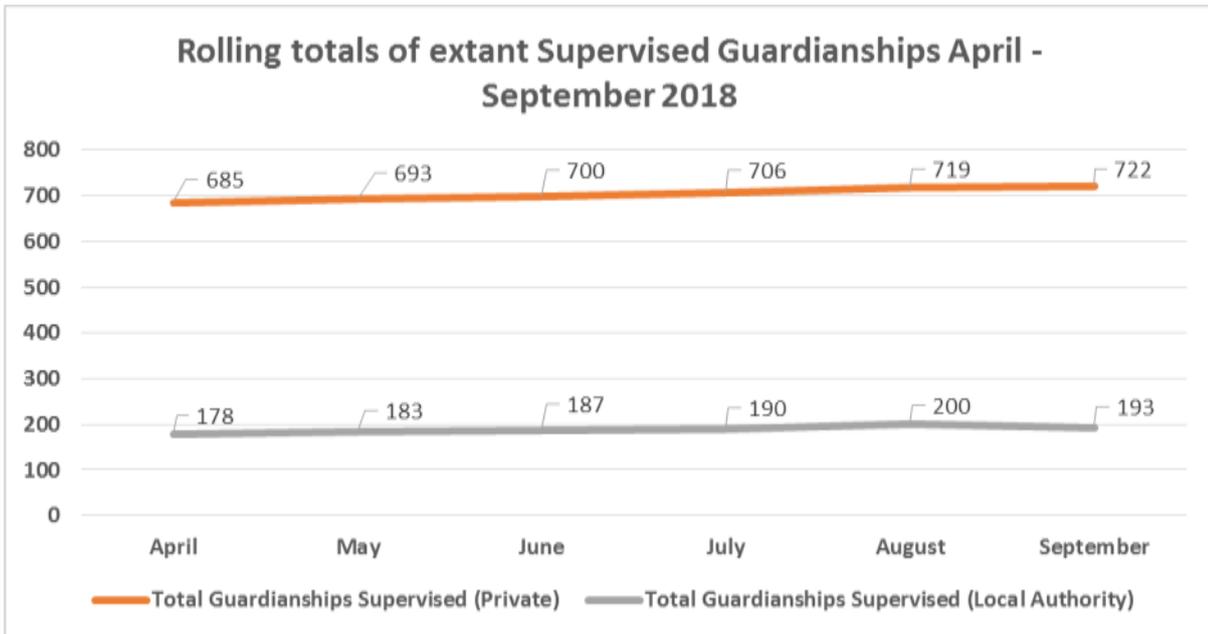
4.1.1 The statutory duties that MHOs are employed to undertake continues to increase year on year, as a result of the implementation of the Mental Health Act, the most recent Mental Welfare Commission Adults with Incapacity Statistical Monitoring report (MWC, September 2018) confirms that, for the period 2017-18, the total number of guardianship applications (private and local authority incl.) granted by each local authority area was 233 for North Lanarkshire. This was the third highest nationally, with only Glasgow City Council (435) and Fife Council (260) undertaking more. This represents a 27% increase on the previous year and a 301% increase since 2008-09.

4.1.2 The data in the chart below shows the number of new referrals received (across all localities) from private solicitors and also intra-disciplinary referrals from other social work staff, council solicitors or from the Sheriff Court, on a month by month basis, each of which will require allocation of a MHO to complete a statutory report. Only MHOs can make these applications.

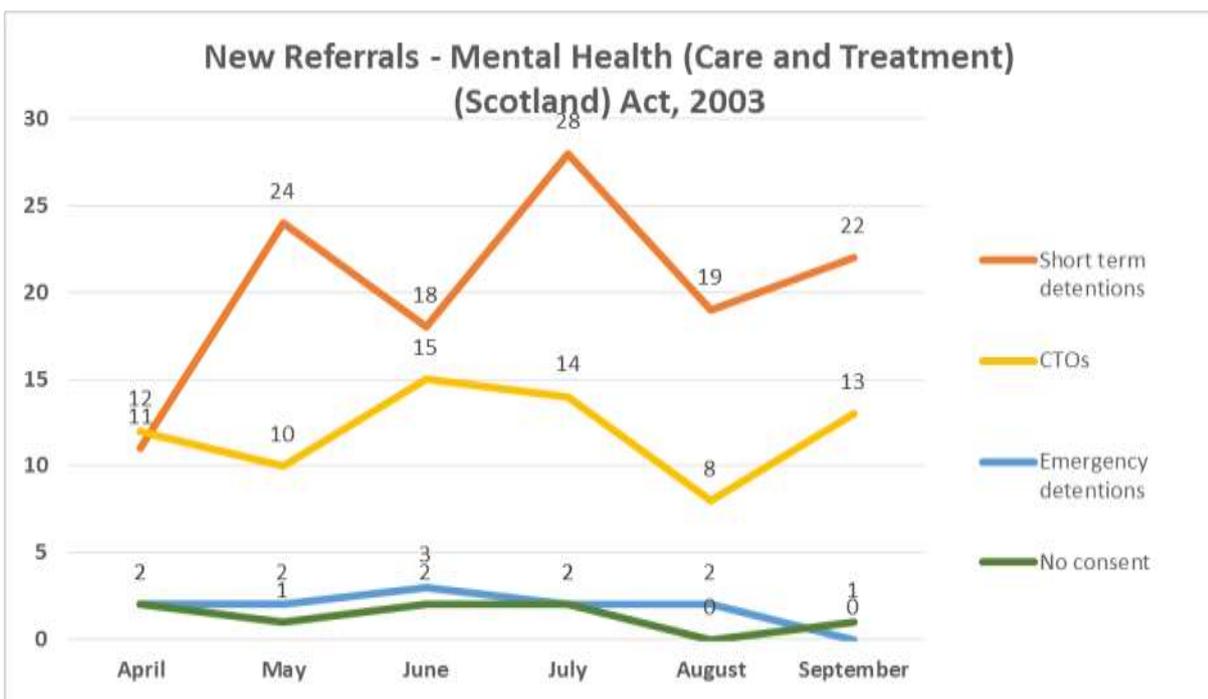
4.1.3 Additionally, the number of new orders granted (for adults living across all NLC localities) and requiring a first review and allocation of a Supervising Officer, is also shown.



4.1.4 In addition to new guardianship referrals, MHOs are also responsible for supervising existing orders. Guardianship orders are typically granted for a 3 – 5 year period and, if powers continue to be required a renewal will be made, requiring a MHO report and initial renewal meeting, once granted. Decreases in local authority numbers would usually indicate that a service user may have died; their family may have applied for renewal, or no powers are needed on a continued basis.



4.1.5 Further demand on the MHOs is shown below with new pieces of statutory MHO work resulting from requests for assessment for consent to detention under emergency detention, short term detention and compulsory treatment orders for the period April – September 2018, month by month. As can be seen, there is some mirroring of activity between each type of order for some months, which would be expected as individuals may be further detained for longer periods after the initial order (usually STDC) is put in place. There are many more STDCs agreed than other orders as this is the least restrictive means by which an individual can access treatment, advocacy and appeal against detention. When this order is granted it requires a Mental Health Officer to complete a Social Circumstances (background) Report for the Mental Welfare Commission and Registered Medical Officer. The total number of emergency detentions sought during working hours (EDC) where no MHO consent was requested totalled 7.



4.2 Current MHO Staffing

4.2.1 The deployment of MHOs across North Lanarkshire includes mental health settings, management and strategy posts and other operational settings such as Children & Families Teams. MHOs do not undertake statutory work relating to the Mental Health Act exclusively but will in addition undertake statutory duties of Adult Protection as well as work with people with complex care through the Self Directed Support Act.

LOCALITY	CMHT SP/MHO	CMHT SSW	Other MHO	Other Manager	Other	TOTALS
Airdrie	3	1	1	1		6
Bellshill	2	1		2		5
Coatbridge	3 (1 vacancy)	1	1	1		6
North	4	1		3		8
Motherwell	2 (1 vacancy)	1				3
Wishaw	3 (1 vacancy)	1		1		5
HQ			6 (sessional)		2	6
SWES			1			1
TOTALS	18	6	7	8	2	40

4.2.2 The 6 sessional MHOs agreed by the IJB in 2016 have successfully enhanced the staffing complement of MHOs. They offer the opportunity to recruit and retain highly experienced and skilled MHOs who are not looking for full time or permanent positions but to engage more flexibly to complement a work life balance. This opportunity continues to attract suitably qualified staff.

4.2.3 As a result of constant new demand for statutory reports, local authority responsibility for the supervision of private guardians has been shared with qualified social workers in community care settings. While this has worked well in some localities, in others these tasks are in direct competition with demand for other assessments and/or care management and SDS interventions.

4.2.4 Advertising campaigns targeting MHOs specifically have sought to attract staff to North Lanarkshire but the modest success of this approach demonstrates the short number of MHOs nationally.

4.3 Key Actions Recommended to Recruit and Retain MHOs

4.3.1 MHOs are required across 24 hours of the day. The out of hours (OOH) rota is administered through the Social Work Emergency Service. MHO participation on this rota is currently organised on an opt-in basis, with a basic flat rate payment. It is proposed that a benchmarking exercise continues to compare pay rates for MHOs across other local authority areas.

- A review of payments out of hours is recommended
- A review of payment to Mental Health Officers
- Provide a progress report in 3 months

4.3.2 To date, North Lanarkshire has recruited internal applications for the MHO programme which is provided through a collaboration between the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow Caledonian University and the West of Scotland Learning Network. The number of social workers seeking to undertake the training has not kept in line with the demands on the service. In 2017 for example, no applications for the training were received.

- Develop posts which attract external Social Workers who would be attracted to work in North Lanarkshire with commitment to place them on the MHO training

- Bring forward proposals to increase the number of people both internally and externally by to undertake the MHO training

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 A number of key actions have been recommended in the report which are summarised below:

- Continue the sessional Mental Health Officer Posts
- Undertake a review of payments out of hours is recommended
- Undertake a review of payment to Mental Health Officers
- Develop posts which attract external Social Workers who would be attracted to work in North Lanarkshire with commitment to place them on the MHO training
- Bring forward proposals to increase the number of people both internally and externally undertaking the MHO training

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 NATIONAL OUTCOMES

The Mental Health Officer role meets the statutory requirements of the Mental Health Act which meet all 9 national outcomes, in particular 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7.

6.2 ASSOCIATED MEASURE(S)

No further measures.

6.3 FINANCIAL

The financial implications for the actions recommended in the report will be reflected through the Mental Health Strategy.

6.4 PEOPLE

Strengthening the MHO role within North Lanarkshire will impact positively on existing staff who feel the pressure of meeting competing statutory requirements within agreed timescales.

6.5 INEQUALITIES

Increasing the number of MHOs improves access to the right support, at the right time for people who are significantly disadvantaged through their mental ill-health.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

8. APPENDICES

Nil



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CHIEF ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER (or Depute)

Members seeking further information about any aspect of this report, please contact Ross McGuffie on telephone number 01698 858 119.