

Date: 31 August 2018

For immediate release

2017 Mental Health Officers' Report published today

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) published the 2017 Mental Health Officers' Report today. The statistics show the number of mental health officers (MHO) has increased by 3.2% to 745 in December 2017. Despite this more local authorities reported a shortfall in MHO provision.

Lorraine Gray, SSSC Chief Executive said: 'It is good to see the increase in the number of practising MHOs to 745 and that 60 trainees achieved the MHO Award in 2017.

'However more local authorities are reporting a shortfall in MHOs this year and it is significant that across the whole of Scotland the equivalent of 41 workers doing full time MHO work are needed to fill the gap.'

Key points from this year's MHO report

- The number of practising MHOs has increased by 3.2% from 722 in December 2016 to 745 in December 2017.
- The estimated average hours worked by MHOs on MHO duties in 2017 dropped from 17 hours per week to 16 hours.
- The number of practising social workers (ie main grade social workers and senior social workers) working as MHOs remained constant at 10.4% between 2016 and 2017.
- There was an increase in the number of authorities with 22 reporting a shortfall in MHOs. The total additional hours per week required to address shortfalls increased by 14% from 2016 to around 1,470 hours a week in 2017. Assuming an average full time working week is 36 hours, about 41 extra full time exclusive MHOs would be required across Scotland to fully address this reported shortfall.
- Almost 96% of MHOs were based in their local Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in December 2017, compared with 67% in 2016.
- As in 2016 the number of trainees who achieved the MHO Award in 2017 (60) was above the average seen in recent years (52).

The data in the report will help inform work on recommendations six and seven of the [National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan Part 2](#).

The report is based on administrative data collected by the SSSC directly from local authorities as part of the annual local authority social work services survey (LASWS).

It gives a picture of:

- the number of practising MHOs in post at 4 December 2017, excluding long-term absentees
- MHO trainees, leavers, vacancies and staffing shortfalls
- some key aspects of the work carried out by MHOs in Scotland.

ENDS

Notes to the editor

Download the 2017 Mental Health Officers Report here <https://data.sssc.uk.com/data-publications/23-mental-health-officers-reports/179-mental-health-officers-scotland-report-2017>. This is the sixth annual report on the Mental Health Officer (MHO) workforce published by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The reports are National Statistics publications having been assessed and approved by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA).

SSSC Chief Executive Lorraine Gray is available for interview today to discuss the issues raised in the report.

Media enquiries

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Background

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the regulator for the social service workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

We:

- publish the national codes of practice for people working in social services and their employers
- register people working in social services and make sure they adhere to our codes of practice

- promote and regulate the learning and development of the social service workforce
- are the national lead for workforce development and planning for social services in Scotland.

We publish data and official statistics on the social service workforce. Our data underpins our workforce planning and development role and government, local authorities, health and social care partnerships, employers and others use it in national and local workforce planning.

Find out more about us at:

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