

Scottish Borders Council

This inspection was carried out by Communities Scotland under section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Our purpose in inspection is to provide an independent external assessment of the effectiveness of homelessness service delivery and make recommendations to help improvement. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of Performance Standards. The inspection of Scottish Borders Council took place in June 2007. The inspection covered Homelessness Services only. We awarded the following grade:

Homelessness	C	Fair	Some strengths, but with many areas where improvement is required or with a small number of significant weaknesses
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Inspection Findings

The context within which the homelessness service is delivered is relevant and important. The report identifies this in detail. Scottish Borders Council is the sixth largest council in Scotland and the service is delivered from an office in Jedburgh, with appointments offered in an additional five decentralised locations across the area.

The Council transferred its houses to a registered social landlord in March 2003. It acknowledges that it did not give sufficient priority to its remaining statutory housing and homelessness functions due to the need to deal with two very significant service challenges within other services. The Council carried out a major restructuring of the service in 2006 and it has begun to implement a programme of improvements to the homelessness service.

In 2005/06 the Council experienced an increase of 23% in the number of people applying to it for assistance under the Homeless Persons legislation. Since 2003/04, the number of people assessed by the Council as in priority need and unintentionally homeless has been significantly below the national figure. The Council is aware that this presents it with a challenge in how it will meet the 2012 target for the abolition of priority need and it is considering the options available.

There is increased demand for social rented housing in Scottish Borders, and this places increased pressure on the private rented sector. This sector represents 11.5% and is significantly higher than the national figure. The Council has recognised this and has progressed plans to lease additional properties to assist in the supply of temporary accommodation for homeless households.

Key Strengths are:

- strong corporate commitment to the improvement of the homelessness service;
- completion of comprehensive service restructure;
- delivery of a regular, customer focused service to a number of decentralised locations;
- evidence of recent improvements to operational performance;
- introduction of a range of initiatives to help prevention of homelessness;
- well developed relationships with some key partners; and
- a structured and joint commitment with NHS Borders to address the health needs of homeless people.

Key areas for improvement are:

- management of the section 5 protocol and the securing of permanent accommodation for homeless applicants;
- implementing a performance management system for operational services;
- development of a recording and monitoring framework for advice and assistance, including the out of hours and the prevention services;
- continuation of the staff training programme to improve the assessment process and decision making process;
- developing how service user views are gathered and used;
- ensuring that the service is effectively publicised; and
- developing public reporting.

Next steps

Scottish Borders Council should produce an improvement plan to show how it intends to respond to our findings within 8 weeks of the publication of this report. The plan will be agreed with us.

How to get more information and contact details

If you would like to see Scottish Borders Council's improvement plan, or find out how it plans to respond to the findings of this inspection, you should contact:

NAME: Cathie Fancy

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The full report is on our website at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk .
The summary can also be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5162 or email Janette Campbell.

اپنی کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبان میں اس دستاویز کے ترجمے کے بارے میں معلومات کیلئے برائے مہربانی
جینٹ کیمبل Janette Campbell کو 0131 479 5162 پر فون کریں یا اس پتے پر ای میل کریں

janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk

如果索取這文件的翻譯版本，請致電 **Janette Campbell**
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আপনার সম্প্রদায়ের ভাষায় এই দলিলপত্রের অনুবাদের জন্য জ্যানিট ক্যাম্পবেল-কে 0131 479 5162 নম্বরে
ফোন করবেন অথবা janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল
করবেন।

لمزيد من المعلومات عن ترجمة هذا المستند الى لغة جاليتكم، الرجاء الإتصال بـ:
Janette Campbell على رقم الهاتف 0131 479 5162. أو عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني على
التالى: janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Panal eadar-theangachaidh

Faodar am pàipear seo eadar-theangachadh le iarratas gu do chànan coimhearsnachd. Cur fios gu Seònaid Caimbeul, Conaltradh, Coimhearsnachdan na h-Alba, àireamh fòn, 0131 479 5162 no air post-d, Janette Campbell.

Zespół tłumaczy

Na życzenie, niniejszy dokument zostanie przetłumaczony na język mający zastosowanie w danej społeczności. Prosimy o kontakt z Janette Campbell, Komunikacja, Społeczności Szkockie, nr telefonu, 0131 479 5162 lub drogą mailową na adres: Janette Campbell.