

Children's Hearings Scotland Board Paper

Agenda Item 1.7

Date of Meeting	21 st November 2011
Paper number	CHS1112-012
Title	National Convener Update for CHS Board
Purpose	The purpose of the paper is for the National Convener to update CHS Board on the work undertaken by her since the last Board meeting.
Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the National Convener Update on her work since the last board meeting.
Recommendations	The Board is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the National Convener Update on her work since the last board meeting
Attachments	Appendix 1 - National Convener Update for CHS Board
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National Convener Update for CHS Board

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the work undertaken by the National Convener since the last board meeting in progress of her statutory functions and to establish CHS, engage with stakeholders and promote the children's panel more generally.

Statutory Functions:

Area Support teams

The consultation closed on 21 October 2011 and responses are posted on the CHS website. A summary report has been produced and will be also be available on the website from 21 November 2011. The consultation document was issued to 173 individuals and bodies and 67 responses (38.5%) were received.

Overall, the responses from local authorities are split into 3 categories: those who supported the proposals in principle subject to further discussions with the National Convener; those who disagreed with the proposals and; those who would like further clarification from the National Convener on a number of issues before making a decision.

The questions raised largely related to roles and responsibilities with the Area Support teams, funding arrangements and negotiation of service level agreements with local authorities for the transfer of adequate administrative support.

The National Convener will address some of the issues raised through the National Standards. A further round of meetings with local authorities is required to get arrangements signed off by the end of January 2012. Arrangements are in hand, starting with a joint meeting with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City and COSLA have agreed to support and facilitate this process. The National Convener is also in touch with Professor George Irving CBE, a long-time colleague, former President of ADSW and Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran and current member of the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, for further advice and assistance.

National Standards

The National Standards – “National Framework for Standards for Scotland's Children's Panel” – will be launched on the website on November 30th and a hard copy will be sent to all panel members and CPAC members as soon as possible thereafter.

The National Convener has set out 8 high level standards in the document with indicators for panel members, AST members, CHS staff and CHS Board (where appropriate), as well as her vision and values for the new national panel. The Board is asked to approve the indicators set out against its name. The document also discusses the functions to be delegated to AST's, as well as the skills, knowledge

and behaviours expected of potential members and detailed specification for each role.

Pre-consultation meetings have taken place with a small group from the Children's Panel Advisory Group (CPAG) and the Children's Panel Chairs Group (CPCG).

Particular thanks are due to Debbie Bayne for her assistance with the preparation of the Standards.

Training

The National Convener continues to work with Tom McNamara and the Children's Hearings Training Units (CHTU) through the National Training Consortium. She contributed to the CHTU away days recently and is in discussion with the units about the shape of training beyond December 2012 and their role in the design and delivery of it. A business case is produced for the National Convener examining the options available for the provision of training beyond December 2012.

The units have submitted all the training materials currently used (handouts and tutor notes) and costings and are currently developing a single core induction programme for the new national panel. The Competence Framework was also revised to assist with the production of the National Standards.

Feedback Loop

The National Convener has held discussions with Michelle Miller (Director of Social Work, City of Edinburgh Council and former President of ADSW), Elliot Jackson (Head of Planning and Strategy, SCRA) and Gary Sutton (Scottish Government, ScotXed), in order to develop the mechanism for feedback to panel members about the implementation of their decisions.

A wealth of data is already available through SCRA and the summary tables of information about Looked After Children produced within Scottish Government. Discussions continue to identify gaps in data, the coming together of SCRA and Scottish Government systems and what, and how, information could be provided to the National Convener and Area Support teams.

The National Convener is of the view that the Feedback Loop has to be realistic and workable and that it would neither to try and provide feedback in terms of outcomes in individual cases coming before the panel.

Independent Legal Advice

The National Convener met with Alan Taylor to prepare the Procedural Rule for the provision of independent legal advice to the panel.

A trainee solicitor, Lisa Marshall, who is also a panel member, has been offered a six month secondment with CHS starting in February 2012 to assist the National Convener with the development of arrangements for this function.

Work to establish CHS

Board members will be aware of the outcome of the first tranche of recruitment for staff.

Along with the National Convener, Debbie Bayne and Ravinder Carothers, 4 new members of staff have been given the opportunity to attend the forthcoming Scottish Government “Practice, Reform and Modernisation” seminar for panel members.

The National Convener would like to thank Alistair Hamilton and Brian Baverstock for their assistance with recruitment of the two directors and Ravinder Carothers for his work to put CHS corporate / shared services in place.

Work with Children’s Hearing’s Team and Scottish Government

The National Convener continues to attend Programme Board and Project Management meetings.

She also contributes to various internal policy making groups:

- Implementation Reference Group (IRG): previously Implementation Working Group;
- Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership: members of CHIP from a variety of organisations are drawing up outcomes to measure the impact of the Children’s Hearings system;
- Voice of the Child Working Group: provision of (needs-led) advocacy support to children and young people in hearings;
- Youth Justice Team: ongoing meetings about the “Whole Systems Approach”, to keep 15 to 17 year olds within the Hearings system and out of the adult criminal justice system and to promote alternatives to secure care
- Positive meeting with the Minister.

Engagement with Stakeholders

Panel Community:

- Attended Dumfries panel member in-service training
- Pre-consultation meetings with representatives of CPAG and CPCG
- Discussions with training units
- Attended Publicity Working Group to design materials and plan for the 2012 panel member recruitment campaign
- Met with Edinburgh panel chairs re AST’s and National Standards
- Attended the Children’s Panel Long Service Awards.

SCRA:

- M.O.U in place for shared services

- Six weekly cycle of meetings with Principal Reporter in place and M.O.U for working arrangements drawn up for Board to approve
- Joint research programme in place: decision-making in hearings and appeals sampling in progress
- Joint national standards for the management of hearings to be developed between January to March 2012
- Joint meeting with sponsor team on regulations: number and complexity / opportunities for simplification; workability of “relevant person” / contact regulations; non-disclosure; information sharing powers
- Attended recent SCRA Board meeting
- Contributing to the Individual Participation in Hearings Group and production of DVD / materials for young people
- Presentation to the SCRA annual staff event
- Recruitment of young people as modern apprentices to observe and report on panel member communication and engagement with young people in hearings.

Other Stakeholders:

- National Convener invited to join the Scottish Tribunals Forum
- Initial discussion with the Care Inspectorate re the feasibility of independent, external validation / inspection of the hearings process
- Ongoing work with COSLA
- National Convener invited to join the Looked After children Strategic Improvement Group (LACSIG) and its Workforce Hub which has identified panel member training as a priority for the coming year.

Events, Conferences and Seminars

Since the last Board meeting the National Convener attended:

- The Apex Scotland Annual Lecture: “Storing Up Trouble: Children in the Justice System – Are we making things worse?”, by Tam Baillie, Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People
- The Sacro Annual Lecture: Compassion and Justice”, given by Terry Waite, CBE
- The 10th Kilbrandon Lecture and dinner: “Kilbrandon’s Vision: Healthier Lives, Better Futures”, by Sir Harry Burns, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland
- ADSW biennial Criminal Justice Conference
- Families Outside 20th Anniversary Conference: conference focused on the impact on children of having a family member in prison and children’s rights
- Scottish Association for the Study of Offending (SASO), 42nd Annual Conference: “The Impact of Europe on Criminal Justice in Scotland”; included keynote address by Carole Wilkinson, SCRA Chair: “Welfare and Rights at the Heart of the Children’s Hearings System”
- Action for Children: Roots of Empathy event
- Circle (Supporting families in Scotland): 5th anniversary event
- Includem: Expert Panel event: “Evidence for a Better Life”.