

**Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership Meeting
Tuesday 12th September 2023**

Note of Meeting

Attendees:

Ian Donaldson, SG, Chair (ID)	Craig Milne, SG (CM)
Lisa Bennett, SCRA (LB)	Fiona Muir, HSCP (FM)
Cheryl Clark, COPFS (CC)	Paul Mulvanny, SCRA (PM)
Liz Cuschieri, SLAB (LC)	Susan Orr, Social Work Scotland (SO)
Julie Duncan, SG (JD)	Chloe Riddell, The Promise (CR)
Fiona Dyer, CYCJ (FD)	Hazel Robertson, SWS (HR)
Bryan Evans, Children 1st (BE)	Nick Rougvie, SG (NR)
Alistair Hogg, SCRA (AH)	Pam Semple, SG (PS)
Neil Hunter, SCRA (NH)	John Urquhart, COSLA (JU)
Elliot Jackson, CHS (EJ)	Carol Wassell, CHS (CW)
Janine McCullough, Education Scotland (JM)	Leah Wilkie, SG, Secretariat (LW)
Caren McLean, CELCIS (CMc)	Helen Etchells, SCRA (HE)
Karen Head, NSPCC (KH)	Gordon Main, OHOV (GM)
Emma Wilson, SG (EW)	

Apologies:

Tom McNamara
 Elaine Adams
 Selwyn McCausland
 Alison Todd
 Tamar Jamieson
 Kate Ramsden
 Lynne McNiven
 Janine McCulloch
 Andrew Alexander
 Stephen Bermingham

Agenda Item	Action Points
<p>1. Welcome and apologies</p> <p>ID welcomed CHIP partners to the group, Apologies were noted.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Points</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, and the actions from the previous meeting were reviewed.</p>	

<p>3. Progress Since Publication – Annex B</p> <p>EW – ran through a number of things that SG have been working on since the report was published. The SG is working on a response from Government by the end of the year. High level policy analysis has been undertaken, and a wide policy network built up across government to coordinate our response. Numbering and thematic grouping of the recommendations has been worked on with partners which can be shared with CHIP members. An in-depth policy analysis is underway across a wide range of government teams, including workshops with priority areas, looking to make connections appropriately and reduce duplication.</p> <p>The Promise Scotland have submitted evidence including financial analysis of the recommendations, and the SG has started consideration of that material. Currently looking at recommendations that do not have a legal implication and what can be implemented faster. Officials from youth justice and children’s hearings have met with different external stakeholders and would be happy to meet with any groups/colleagues of CHIP who may be interested in talking through the recommendations further. The SG is very interested to hear from colleagues about reflections and what your organisation has been doing since the report was published.</p> <p>NH welcomed the very considered cross-policy and cross-organisational approach. Knowing how much work has gone on across the summer, this should be reassuring for partners that we’re not standing still. SCRA are actively engaged, looking at the recommendations thoroughly and agree the coded system has been really helpful.</p> <p>JU advised there is no formally agreed position at COSLA on the report as of yet. On 6th October COSLA’s Children and Young People Board will meet to consider the report and agree their position on the report.</p> <p>EJ advised that the SG team and others have done good work since the report was published. He reminded colleagues that the report had landed reasonably well with the panel community - although there are clearly points where views diverge. Sheriff Mackie attended a webinar with a large number of volunteers, and the feedback has been very positive. He encourage colleagues to engage Sheriff Mackie to help as he is always willing to do so.</p> <p>CW – agree with what everyone else has said. As we go through each of the recommendations and what individual organisations can do however all partners need to work together to deliver the recommendations.</p>	<p>Action 1 – SG to share the coding document immediately, and look at sharing thematic groupings when appropriate.</p>
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<p>ID was keen that we try to keep two streams of thought. The recommendations do hang together, and we do need to see them as a package intended to take the system in a particular direction. On the other hand, we want to take forward the recommendations we can on a timescale that doesn't depend on the trickiest recommendations.</p> <p>EW informed members we have a workshop planned with strategic colleagues to look at chapter 1 of the recommendations for the whole system. Sequencing is essential and we will be mindful of this as we move forward.</p> <p>BE advised that Children 1st have been doing work around children's rights over a number of years. The new Practice Standards have explicitly linked to the UNCRC to help Safeguarders understand rights in relation to their role. Looking at training elements, they have developed trauma informed practice training and rights training. There will be times where organisations can link up and do things together, but there will also be times where we need more individualised approaches. Children 1st are linking with CHS and SCRA to see where they can join up. In the report, there are recommendations around Safeguarders and specialism. It would be really useful to look at what evidence there is that the recommendations would be more helpful. There are other specialisms that Safeguarders can bring in, and it's a question of how we can quantify their specialism and when it is most effective to bring it in to proceedings.</p> <p>LB discussed the sequencing of the work. It's very tempting to want to get into the bigger recommendations, but we need to take the time to plan. There is a lot we can get on with now, and having this focus on sequencing gives us that time to do the things we can link to ongoing work, or that can be tackled in the short term. Mapping work directly to the recommendations will help us to demonstrate progress towards implementation. By the next CHIP it would be good to demonstrate tangible progress.</p>	<p>Action 2 – Next CHIP agenda to include an item on specific progress on the shorter term practice and procedure recommendations.</p>
<p>4. Establishment of The Redesign Board – Annex C</p> <p>ID outlined the Scottish Government's agreed approach to governance and oversight of the Redesign work through the Children's Hearings Redesign Board.</p> <p>CHIP was, and would remain, the first point of advice and oversight of the improvement agenda for the hearings system. There were however specific statutory responsibilities in the report that fell on certain bodies. Ministers would need assurance and advice from both. The SG proposal was that CHIP would continue in its present role. However there would also be a need for a smaller group to provide assurance specifically on organisational responsibilities and reporting to democratically accountable representatives in councils and in parliament.</p>	

<p>It would be important that that group should be very transparent – it should publish its papers, it should provide regular updates on its work to CHIP, and should liaise regularly with interested partners.</p> <p>NH reflected the need for accountability to local government and central government. It was critical that the balance between the work of bodies, local authorities and central government was linked. We needed to have the right decision making structure, and implementation structure. He was keen to see a continuity in relationship with OHOV, given the established relationships and contribution to work to date.</p>	
<p>5. Engagement with young people</p> <p>GM gave an update from an Our Hearings, Our Voice perspective on how we could potentially engage with young people as we respond to the report and move into the next phase of work. Transparency and scrutiny as we move towards implementation is key. How do we build the relationship between the redesign board and OHOV, learning from what we've done so far? Looking at those aspects where the young people have a clear interest in engaging, there are clear lessons and ways we can proceed.</p> <p>BE is grateful for the work of OHOV, and emphasised it is important to think about what the perspective will be from the children currently in the system. He wants to think specifically about the idea of creating a safe space for them to provide views and for them to feel like their views are being taken seriously.</p> <p>FM agreed children's voices and participation are very important particularly including the wider voice of the young people who are more disengaged. Lots of conversations have already happened and this information is already out there so we need to tap into this.</p> <p>EW reflected the fact that we've discussed where Scottish Government can use pre-existing information, and also considering when it's the right time to seek views</p>	
<p>6. Principles of the Hearings System – Annex D</p> <p>NR reflected on how this links to broader discussions on shared responsibilities across lots of partners. There are early plans to compile a single source of information where people can go to understand the guiding principles of the Hearings System and the roles of the parties within. This will be a shared responsibility and will provide clarity of information for professionals and the public. It will offer a consistency of language and will improve the communication and accessibility. All the information is already out there but it needs to be in a central location that is easy to read and navigate. Elaine has suggested we can host it</p>	

<p>on the CHIP website. The portal will be for everyone, professional practitioners but also children and families who need more information.</p> <p>CR reflected that the recommendation that this work links to is about ensuring that everyone is clear about what a transformed, inquisitorial Children’s Hearings System would look like and how children and families can access their rights in the new system. While it is great that Scottish Government colleagues are looking at this new portal there were also questions about the time and resource it would need to continually keep this updated and how to ensure the vision/ reality of the transformed Hearings System is reflected as it develops. In terms of sequencing, the view of The Promise Scotland is that this might be an area that could be worked on later as the transformation gets further underway, rather than as an initial starting point.</p> <p>NR agreed it was not a starting point but part of the broad approach regarding the recommendations.</p>	
<p>7. SG Updates</p> <p>ID – noted three parliamentary events taking place in the subsequent couple of weeks which might be of interest to CHIP members.</p>	
<p>8. AOB</p> <p>No points raised.</p>	
<p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next CHIP scheduled for Tuesday 12th December.</p>	