



Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Area Support Team

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 25 October 2022	14:00	Remotely by MS Teams,

Present

Derek Bamma; Craig Campbell; Jacqueline Doherty; Edi Hanley; Jim Melrose; Anne Tucker; Ciara McLean; Ewan McNaught and Marion Robinson.

Chair

D Bamma, Area Convener, presided.

In Attendance

A McNaughton, Senior Committee Services Officer, J Barron, Assistant Committee Services Officer and D Pole, End User Technician (all Finance and Resources).

Also Present

L King, Locality Reporter.

Apologies

Councillor Hughes, J Hay, P Wilson and A McDonald.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated by members prior to the meeting.

1 **Minute of Previous Meeting**

There was submitted the Minute of the previous meeting of Renfrewshire Area Support Team (AST) held on 16 August 2022.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

3 **Report from Area Support and Improvement Partner**

The Area Convener provided a verbal update report on the review being undertaken by the Hearing System Working Group. A summary report on terminology, management and practice and the Promise was expected by mid November.

Sheriff Mackie was assessing the framework for hearings, role of the Reporter and Area Support Teams. Publication of his findings due was in the new year.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 **Locality Reporter Manager Update**

The Locality Reporter Manager provided a verbal update report on local Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) operational arrangements. A member of staff who had been seconded to virtual hearings had returned to the office and would now lead the delivery of virtual hearings at a local level, rather than by the central team who had previously dealt with these meetings. Local administration staff would be trained to carry out virtual hearings.

A National Quality Assurance exercise had commenced and a programme of observing Report practice at hearings was underway. These observations would concentrate on decision making, drafting of grounds, practice at hearings and documentation to be completed by the Reporter. It was highlighted that only the Report would be observed, not Panel members.

The heating at the Glen Lane office had been repaired after panel members had raised concerns about the temperature.

The Area Convener advised that the Sheriff had dismissed two appeals recently in favour of the Panel. A number of appeals were ongoing and the Panel would be advised of feedback sent to the Reporter. The number of appeals were increasing as were the number of face-to-face cases at court.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 **Recruitment Update**

The Area Convener provided a verbal update report, advising that 22 suitable applicants had been selected for interview and 17 had accepted their interview appointments. One candidate would be on holiday until the end of November 2022, and it was hoped that their interview would be conducted via the Teams platform in order to meet the interview completion deadline. Two applicants who provided very

little supporting information were unsuccessful.

It was noted that the Area Convener would contact Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) to ascertain flexibility of deadlines for the completion of interviews for the selection of new Panel members.

As part of the selection process, an information evening would be held on Thursday 27 November 2022. Topics to be covered would include absence from work to attend panel meetings; how the Children's Panel system worked; and panel member expectations. 4 applicants were not available to attend the information evening.

At the event, candidates for selection were to be advised that they must check their emails regularly, respond promptly, and be realistic when determining and advising their availability to attend meetings.

A list of the available interview slots would be issued to members. There had been two cancellations due to lack of accommodation and timing.

The Area Convener intimated that information from CHS had been circulated advising that observers could attend Panel hearings before PVG checks were completed. Members of this AST were not in favour of this approach and highlighted the risks involved.

It was noted that, previously, some applicants had also undertaken training before their references were available. In this respect, the need for regular and timely information about the status of PVG checks and references for each applicant was identified. It was proposed that Renfrewshire Council be requested to confirm who would process applications, monitor the dedicated AST mailbox and provide timely information to the AST and who would cover during absence. This was agreed

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That Renfrewshire Council be requested to confirm who would process applications, monitor the dedicated AST mailbox and provide timely information to the AST and who would cover during absence. This was agreed.

6 Recognition Event 2023

The Area Convener provided a verbal update report advising that the 2022 Recognition Event had been held at the Boarding Housing in Howwood, and had been well attended. It was hoped that the next event in 2023 would be held in the refurbished Paisley Town Hall.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 Arrangements for Future Meetings

There was submitted a report regarding arrangements for future meetings. Since its inception in April 2013, the AST has met on an eight-week cycle, with meetings held on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm.

In this regard, the following dates are proposed for meetings of the AST until December 2023, Tuesday 24 January 2023, Tuesday 21 March 2023, Tuesday 9 May 2023,

Tuesday 20 June 2023, Tuesday 22 August 2023, Tuesday 24 October 2023 and Tuesday 12 December 20

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted, and
- (b) That the meeting dates be approved.

8 Management of Hearings Sub-group

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Hearings Management Sub-group held on 11 October 2022.

The Minute provided updates on sabbaticals; resignations; hearing statistics for the period 2 August to 10 October 2022 including deferred cases, cancelled sessions, extra hearings/sessions, swaps and continuity; pastoral care; and panel member strength. Currently membership stood at 79, with 60 females and 19 males.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

9 Practice and Recruitment Sub-group

The Area Convener provided a verbal update report advising that there were Panel Practice Advisor (PPA) vacancies, It was hoped that the increase of face-to-face meetings being held in November and December 2022 would increase recruitment.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

10 Learning and Development Sub-group

The Area Convener provided a verbal update report advising that there had been no meetings of the Sub-group recently and that following the new recruitment drive a programme of training would be provided. The next in-service training would be held on 14 November 2022 and would cover CSAS and Teams technology. The next training event would be held on February 2023 and cover online safety and child sexual exploitation.

A full day course on Trauma Inform would be attended by two panel members, one in person in Edinburgh and one virtually.

Training would be provided on Inclusivity and LGBTQI+ and it was hoped that CHS would provide training materials.

All new panel members appointed during 2022 had been booked on a course and invited to attend in November 2022. Panel members were encouraged to attend training and refresher training would be available for panel members who have been away for a duration of longer than 12 months.

The Learning Academy would be approached to provide information on the training curriculum which could be delivered face to face and virtually, and if further training was required this could be arranged for panel members.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

11 **AOCB**

There were no issues raised.

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Area Support Team was scheduled for Tuesday 13 December 2022 at 2.00pm in Corporate Room 3 of Renfrewshire House.