

Minute of Meeting

Sheriff Principal and Sheriffs of North Strathclyde Sheriffdom and Chief Social Work Officers

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 25 November 2016	14:00	Paisley Sheriff Court, St James Street, Paisley,

PRESENT

Sheriff Principal Murray, Sheriff Hamilton, (Greenock), Sheriff McDonald (Kilmarnock), Sheriff Pender (Dumbarton), P MacLeod, A Scott and P Shiach (all Renfrewshire Council), J Hunter (North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority), and J Murray (South West Scotland Community Justice Authority), D MacRitchie (North Ayrshire Council), L Gaff (East Renfrewshire Council), A Howard (Inverclyde Council N Firth (Argyll, Bute and Dunbartonshire Criminal Justice Partnership); T Halpin and F McKinnon (both SACRO) and K Ritchie (Scottish Children's Reporters Administration).

CHAIR

Sheriff Principal D L Murray presided.

APOLOGIES

Sheriff Spy (Paisley), L Long (Argyll & Bute Council), K Rocks (East Renfrewshire Council), S Taylor (East Ayrshire Council), I Colvin and S Brown (both North Ayrshire Council) B Moore and S McAlees (both Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership) J Irvine (West Dunbartonshire Council), and D Hawthorn (Renfrewshire Council).

1 MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

There was submitted the Minute of meeting between the Sheriff Principal, Sheriffs of North Strathclyde Sheriffdom and Directors of Social Work/Community Justice Authorities held on 13 May 2016.

In relation to item 6 of the Minute relating to Child Protection Orders it was noted that this item should have referred to item 9 of the Minute of the meeting held on 4 December 2016.

It relation to the same item it was noted that orders should be raised in the area where the child is likely to reside

DECIDED: That, subject to the amendments noted above, the Minute be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Criminal Justice Scotland - Funding

P MacLeod provided an update in relation to Criminal Justice Scotland, indicating that K McCluskey had been appointed as the Chief Executive of the new body. He advised that he had been in contact with the Chief Executive and was seeking a meeting at which he would raise issues relating to funding, workload pressures and other items. Early discussions would take place with regard to items previously discussed at the meetings of the Sheriff Principal and Sheriffs of North Strathclyde Sheriffdom and Directors of Social Work/Community Justice Authorities.

(b) Penal Policy Improvement Project

A Scott provided an update in relation to the Penal Policy Improvement Project advised that work was ongoing, particularly in relation to savings, and this information had been submitted to the Scottish Government. She indicated that £93,000 of savings in terms of female offenders had been identified.

A Scott also indicated that further information would be submitted to members when available.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

3 COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITIES

There was submitted a joint report by the Chief Officers, North Strathclyde Community Justice Authority and South West Scotland Community Justice Authority providing an update on the work of the Authorities.

The report provided information on the NSCJA additional grant which had been allocated in two tranches to support community services for women and to support community services; the appointment of the Chief Executive and Convener of Community Justice Scotland in September 2016; the closure of NSCJA; the new model for Community Justice; women in the justice system; and community sentencing.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDERS

There were submitted reports by the constituent local authorities relative to the Community Payback Orders Annual Reports for the financial year 2015/16.

The reports provided information on types of unpaid work and activities which had been carried out; the total number of unpaid hours completed during the year; information and examples that helped demonstrate how communities benefitted from unpaid work; and attendance rates at these sessions.

The various Partnership Managers were then heard in answer to questions on the reports, particularly in relation to the increase in orders from Dumbarton, attendance statistics, the definition of “other activities” and links to employability.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

5 CHILD PROTECTION ORDERS

Under reference to item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Group held on 13 May 2016 further discussion took place concerning the need to contact interested parties when presenting emergency CPOs at Sheriff Court.

K Ritchie raised concerns in relation to the participation of parents when a CPO was being sought; and the question of enforcement where the CPO is granted in the area where the child was at the time as jurisdiction lay with where the child principally resided.

The Director of Children’s Services (Renfrewshire Council) indicated that Social Workers would welcome CPOs being determined in the Sheriff Court where the child normally resided. The main issue was that it would assist Social Workers if CPPs were granted where the child was habitually resident.

Sheriff Principal Murray indicated that for clarification CPOs should be sought where the child was likely to reside.

DECIDED:

(a) That the information be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that the Sheriff Principal had indicated that for clarification CPOs should be sought where the child was likely to reside.

6 SACRO BAIL SUPERVISION PROGRESS REPORT

T Halpin provided an update in relation to the SACRO bail supervision service.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.

7 SCHEDULE 2 MENTAL HEALTH REPORTS

Discussion took place with regard to complaints in terms of delays in MHOs producing mental health reports for AWI applications and renewals.

It was indicated that statute required the reports to be completed within 30 days however reports were not being provided within that timescale. In some areas there

was a waiting list for reports, and in some instances reports were being provided 6 months after being requested.

N Firth advised that he had raised the issue in West Dunbartonshire and had been advised that there were a number of issues but that the consensus was that the relevant legislation required to be reviewed.

The Director of Children's Services (Renfrewshire Council) indicated that the issue related to resources and demand levels; and with the MHOs. He advised that resources had been doubled in Renfrewshire however the issue had not been fully addressed. There were also issues around the role of solicitors in the process. He undertook to submit a report to a future meeting on the steps involved in the process and the involvement of the bar association.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Director of Children's Services (Renfrewshire Council) submit a report to a future meeting on the steps involved in the provision of Schedule 2 Mental Health reports and the involvement of the bar association; and

(b) That the information be otherwise noted.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The group considered arrangements for the next meeting of the group.

DECIDED:

(a) That the next meeting of this group be held on Friday 19 May 2017 at 2.00 p.m. within Paisley Sheriff Court, St James Street, Paisley; and

(b) That any further items to be considered be notified to Committee Services, Renfrewshire Council.