



Area Convener Liaison Group (ACLG)

Briefing

Wednesday 19 June 2019

Please find enclosed updates and information within this briefing on areas affecting the CHS community both from internal and external sources.

Please do share and disseminate to your AST colleagues and Panel Members, as appropriate.

Please contact CHS directly if you should wish to discuss any area in greater detail.

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1. Networks and Forums:

Panel Practice Advisers (PPAs) Forum

The next Forum will take place on Tuesday 2 July 2019. The agenda will cover the development of the digital Practice and Procedure Manual. Laura Conachan, as Community Projects Lead, will provide an overview of the changes being made and what PPAs need to be attentive to when observing the practice and behaviours within a Hearing.

Updates will also be provided around the development of the digital observation form; and, on the review of the complaints procedure and development work in this area.

The PPA forum continues to provide a valuable space by which PPAs are able to learn the various change activities that are happening across CHS and allows an opportunity to debate any impact these may have on the role.

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Names: Ian Campbell, Community Projects Lead

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Retention and Recruitment Reference Group (RRRG)

The RRRG comprises colleagues from within Area Support Teams (ASTs) whose role is integral to the operational decision making, planning and implementation of recruitment, retention and reappointment processes for the Panel community.

We aim to have a mix of experience and roles, balancing continuity with introducing other members of the community who bring new ideas and perspectives to the RRRG. Annually we revise the Terms of Reference to ensure that the Group remains relevant and on target, emphasising the specific responsibility of all RRRG members to feedback to, and provide input from, their own ASTs. The review of the Terms always provides an opportunity to refresh membership and ensure all ASTs are represented. The group meets four times per year, at CHS in Edinburgh, with smaller working groups meeting as required, reporting to the RRRG.

Before we move towards the search for new Panel Members, I would appreciate if you could just confirm that the AST representative is still willing, available and appropriate to attend the meetings of this vital advisory group.

CHS Contact details:

Name: Catherine Goodfellow, Recruitment & Retention Lead

Contact number: 0131 244 8250

Email: catherine.goodfellow@chs.gsi.gov.uk

2. Community Survey

The Community Survey closed on Sunday 9 June.

The provisional total number of responses is 1270, meaning a response rate of 42% was achieved. This is a strong performance for a volunteer satisfaction survey.

Cleaning, processing, and analysis of the data is now taking place. The results of the survey will be available in early July and will be presented at a national level and broken down by AST.

Presentation and discussion of the results will take place at the September ACLG.

Contact details:

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3. Practice Update

Development of Practice and Procedure Manual

We are now in the second stage of development of our online Practice and Procedure Manual. The content has been tested with members of the CHS community and feedback from Panel Members has been very positive. A small working group is helping create the Manual and has approved the proposed format and design. We are now working on the digital user aspects of the Manual with our CHS creative designer, David Taylor. The digital PPM will be fully operational and launched in September 2019.

Managing Attendance in the Hearings Room

In May a very productive workshop, with Panel Members, Reporters and representatives from Social Work Scotland and a City of Edinburgh primary school, met to discuss the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) position paper on Managing Attendance at Hearings developed in September 2017.

This paper proposes some changes Children's Reporters' practice which will have implications for Panel Members management of Children's Hearings. The key change is that Reporters will bring only participants with a statutory right to attend a Children's Hearing into the hearing room at the outset. All other people who attend the hearing centre will remain outside until the chair of the Children's Hearing, in consultation with their Panel Member colleagues, invite them in to contribute to discussion. The workshop participants broadly welcomed this, as likely to reduce the number of people in the hearing at any one time, but there are practical implications which need to be addressed before this new practice is introduced. We will test what is needed to make this approach work.

Code of Conduct

Everyone affected by decisions of Panel members is entitled to rely on high standards of conduct and integrity in the Children's Panel. The CHS Board wants to make clearer what is expected of every member of our community. We have consulted with the Judicial Officer for Scotland and reviewed Codes of Conduct which apply to legal decision-makers in a range of court and tribunal settings in different areas. We are preparing a draft Code of Conduct for the Children's Panel which reflects our unique contribution to Scotland's legal system. We want to hear from you what you think this should include.

Review of Hearings Management Group

The Hearings Management Group has been in place since CHS was established and has fulfilled a number of important functions during that period. We are now working with SCRA to refresh the remit, the workplan and membership of this standing group to make sure it is up to date and of practical use to the whole children's hearings system.

We held a small seminar in May with all our partners including SCRA, Social Work Scotland, Children 1st and Scottish Government to think about what changes to the group might be helpful. We will bring proposals to ACLG for discussion.

Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019

The Scottish Parliament debated the Bill to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland to 12 years at Stage 3 on 7 May 2019 and the Act was passed. This means that after implementation, which may be as early as September, no children under 12 will be referred to Children's Hearings on offence grounds. New arrangements will be put in place for police investigations and interviews of under 12s who have been involved in harmful or dangerous behaviours.

Disclosure, in later life, of information about such behaviour can only be made with the permission of an independent reviewer. We plan to introduce an online training module to inform the CHS community about the new legislation and how this will affect the hearings system.

Contact details:

Names: Laura Conachan, Community Projects Lead

Jackie McRae, Practice and Partnerships Lead

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4. Communications: CHS Community E-Newsletter

To bring all national team announcements together in one place we have previously discussed launching a CHS community newsletter.

The aim is both to reduce the number of emails that the CHS community is receiving from us, and to more regularly update and flag key pieces of news and training courses available to the community.

The plan is to launch the newsletter at the end of July. It will feature a mix of news, ranging from regular practice updates, Learning Academy updates, a monthly focus on different ASTs (news coming from your area) to recruitment, data protection and national team updates.

We hope that this monthly e-newsletter will compliment those areas who currently issue newsletters to the CHS community in their area. We would like to hear your feedback and thoughts.

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5. Digital update – User Engagement

Development of our new digital systems continues. Throughout 2019 the focus has been on Business Owners liaising with the Digital Bank and wider community to encourage volunteers to come forward to contribute to the development of the digital system and the testing of functionality once it has been developed. (To join the digital bank, contact: laura.nelson@chs.gsi.gov.uk).

Feedback from volunteers who participated in testing of the expenses module was really positive all noting how useful they found the experience and it really helps us to make sure the system we are building is user-focussed. This is an exciting and busy time and we would ask that you encourage as many of your local community to join the Digital Bank as possible to help us on this journey. There is no fixed time commitment, and activities available range from in-person sessions and workshops to remote-testing activities and surveys.

Contact details:

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6. 2019 Panel Member Re-appointment

It is thanks to the work of the Area Support Team members that by May 2019, 218 Panel Members were confirmed in their role for a further three years. This was an intense period over the last six months for all involved: in co-ordinating meetings, undertaking reviews and completing the necessary documentation to ensure that the National Convener was able to re-appoint 188 Panel Members, with 30 Panel Members receiving conditional offers of re-appointment. The conditional re-appointment letters in May are mainly regarding completion of the Professional Development Award.

For those due to complete their current three year appointment by 24 June 2019, CHS is currently reviewing recommendations, assessing those not being recommended or those who require a conditional re-appointment letter. Appointment letters will start to be received from the week commencing 17 June 2019.

As agreed by the Short Life Working Group on Chairing, those who have been appointed on a 'subject to' basis, will be reviewed quarterly with the Learning Academy and ASTs to determine the progress made by these Panel Members.

Twelve months have been allocated to fulfil these condition with a further six months to ensure that Panel Members are fully active, including the chairing of hearings.

2020 Volunteer Management

Twinned with an ongoing review of the overall re-appointment process and the introduction of a CHS digital platform, from 2020 the management of the re-appointment process will be underpinned by the new digital module of Volunteer Management.

Alongside other digital developments there will now the opportunity to maintain an online record of the activity of, and interactions with, a Panel Member, all in one place. This includes: the number of hearings undertaken, the number of learning opportunities engaged with, the number of observations and outcomes – as well as a record of the support, reviews and meetings held with the Panel Member.

This will allow a greater emphasis on conducting regular review opportunities which focus on recognising and valuing the contribution of Panel Members, offering support if required and give the chance to hear feedback from Panel Members directly during the appointment period. With an effective volunteer management model, already existing in a number of ASTs, regular opportunities for a structured, direct contact between ASTs and Panel Members will continue to contribute towards ensuring a quality volunteer Panel Member experience.

As a result of the more structured volunteer centred engagement and with the agile nature of the digital system, flexibility will be built into the system to conduct and record review meetings either annually, mid-way through appointment and just prior to the end of the three year appointment - lessening the administrative burden on ASTs and removing the focus of one 're-appointment' meeting towards the end of the three year appointment.

The module is currently being developed involving members of the Panel Member community and feedback and views would be welcomed as we continue to test and progress with this module.

CHS Contact details:

Name: Catherine Goodfellow, Recruitment & Retention Lead

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7. 2018 Panel Member Recruitment Update

May 2019 saw 430 new Panel Members join the Children's Panel community.

Appointment letters and certificates were issued by 18 May allowing Panel Members to be added to the local rotas from 3 June 2019.

As highlighted at both the Retention and Recruitment Reference Group (RRRG), 516 applicants were confirmed as trainees. The analysis of Panel Member appointment over the last six years since CHS was established shows a trend of an approximate 15-20% withdrawal rate between the letter of confirmation as a trainee to the actual completion of Pre Service training and appointment as a Panel Member.

The 2018 campaign did not generate the targeted number of males either locally or nationally. The numbers of young people increased slightly although did not meet the desired target set by CHS.

This year we again have set ambitious targets to attract: 38% men and 12% young people to be appointed as Panel Members. As we collate the numbers ASTs are seeking for 2019, we are targeting through our campaign development, marketing and promotions, men in a more concerted way to fulfil the percentage of male Panel Members required for ASTs.

CHS Contact details:

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Please do contact any of CHS National Team for either further information on any of the above or with any suggestions to continue to improve support to our children and young people and our Panel Community.



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