



Renfrewshire
Area Support Team

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Area Support Team

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 26 October 2021	14:00	Remotely by MS Teams,

Present

Eileen Anderson; Derek Bramma; Annemarie Currie; Craig Campbell, Jacqueline Doherty; Edi Hanley; Alex MacDonald; Hannah McCulloch; Ewan McNaught; Jim Melrose; Marion Robinson; Angela Stevenson and Alison Thompson.

Chair

D Bramma, Area Convener, presided.

Also Present

L King, Locality Reporter Manager and P Wilson, Area Support and Improvement Partner (Children's Hearings Scotland).

In Attendance

P Shiach and C MacDonald, (both Senior Committee Services Officers), and D Pole End User Technician (all Finance and Resources).

Apology

J Hay.

Declarations of Interest

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

Additional Items

The Area Convener indicated that there were three additional items which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Area Convener, being of the opinion that the items which were dealt with at items 4, 15 and 16 of the agenda were competent and relevant, authorised their consideration.

Order of Business

In order to facilitate the business of the meeting Item the Convener proposed that item 10 of the agenda be considered before item 3. This was agreed.

1 Minute of Previous Meeting

There was submitted the Minute of the previous meeting of Renfrewshire Area Support Team (AST) held on 17 August 2021.

The Locality Reporter Manager indicated that under Item 5, line three, face-to-face Hearings should be amended to read “virtual Hearings”

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved subject to an amendment under item 5 line three that “face-to-face Hearings” be amended to read “virtual Hearings”.

2 Matters Arising

DECIDED: It was noted that there were no matters arising from the Minute of the previous meeting.

3 Area Plan Progress

There was submitted a presentation by the Area Support and Improvement Partner relative to progress with the Area Plan.

The presentation provided information in relation to progress in quarter 2, (July to September) which related to the embedding of the digital programme and supporting Panel Members.

For quarter 3 (October to December) the presentation provided information on the feedback loop, Children and Young Peoples menu of options for attendance; Children and young people attendance; the PPA aide memoire; a review of the Hearing Practice proforma and aide memoire; the improvement project; decisions and reasons; PPA feedback. The Area Support & Improvement Partner then asked for questions or comments on the first part of the presentation

The Area Convener indicated that in terms of the aide memoire, a section on advocacy be introduced to indicate whether a child had or had not accepted advocacy with this included as part of the reasons for a decision.

The Area Support and Improvement then continued with her presentation providing information on the CHS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Draft Strategy, highlighting the themes of Communication and engagement; training, development and support; and recruitment and retention.

The Area Convener advised that the Area Improvement Plan would be a standing item on future AST meeting agendas and that any suggestions for improvement would be welcomed.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.

4 **Locality Reporter Manager - Update**

The Locality Reporter Manager provided an update of staffing indicating that training was being undertaken for the current week on new national processes and as a result, no hearings had been scheduled during this period, with the processes being implemented during the week commencing 8 November 2021.

She advised that at the fortnightly meetings with the Area Convener, the Area Support and Improvement Partner, the Lead Panel Representative and the Rota Manager, she had indicated that some data protection issues had arisen in terms of Panel Members remaining logged onto the various systems after they had left the building and asked that Panel Members be reminded to log out of the system when using the equipment in Glen Lane.

In terms of staffing, the Locality Reporter Manager indicated that front office staffing was being affected by long term illness which had resulted in some instances of Hearings being cancelled and Panel Member and PPAs not being advised, or not receiving papers within the agreed timescales. She indicated that new procedures were in place to try and ensure that this did not reoccur.

In terms of availability of private spaces for Panel Members the Locality Reporter Manager indicated that discussions had taken place between both Locality Reporter Managers and members of the AST where assurances were given that private and secure spaces would be available for Panel Members for pre and post panel discussions.

The Locality Reporter Manager was then heard in answer to questions from members on the report.

The Area Convener indicated that in terms of tables in the Hearing Rooms an impasse had been reached and opened the discussion to AST members.

The Area Support and Improvement Partner indicated that she would raise the issue at her forthcoming meeting with CHS. However, she indicated that she saw no impediment to Panel Members having the current hearing room tables at the side of their chairs.

The Area Convener requested that the Area Support Team be appraised of any proposals for the refurbishment of Glen Lane prior to them being finalised. The Locality Reporter Manager indicated that it had previously agreed that this would be done through discussions with both the Area Convener and the Area Support and Improvement Partner, and that plans would be shared when available.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 **Hearings Management Sub-group**

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Hearings Management Sub-group held on 12 October 2021.

The Minute provided updated information in relation to sabbaticals; resignations; hearing statistics for the period for the period 11 August to 11 October 2021 including deferred and cancelled sessions, secure hearings, additional hearings; swaps and continuity hearings; pastoral care; and panel member strength which indicated that there were currently 86 panel members 62 female and 24 male panel members; of this number there were currently 75 Panel members available for rota scheduling, made up of 54 females and 21 males

The Lead Panel representatives were then heard in answer to questions on various issues highlighted in the Minute.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

6 Learning and Development Sub-group

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Learning & Development Sub-group held on 7 October 2021.

The Minute provided information relative to mandatory training; pre-service update; in-service update; and Management of Hearings training.

The Learning and Development Co-ordinator provided updates on training which would be undertaken over the next few months.

The Area Convener advised that J Leckie , formerly one of the Learning & Development Co-ordinators had resigned as a Panel Member. He indicated that membership of the groups would be revisited in the coming weeks with a view to filling posts as they become vacant.

A Macdonald updated the position in terms of the number of Panel Members who had yet to complete the siblings and advocacy training courses.

C Campbell advised that he had undertaken a reappointment interview with a Panel Member, and that the Panel Member in question was unavailable for training evenings on Monday evenings. The Panel Member had asked whether consideration could be given to training dates being changed from Mondays, and if not, could the training materials be available on-line.

The Area Convener indicated that the Monday dates had been accommodation led, and that a number of virtual events could be added to the virtual training calendar. He also indicated discussions were on-going with CHS in relation to scoping the recording face to face sessions and adding these to the online platform.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

7 Practice and Recruitment Sub-group

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Practice and Recruitment Sub-group held 7 October 2021.

The Minute provide information on observations on observations; comments from the Panel Member Chair; support for Inverclyde PPAs; Re-appointment interviews; CSAS feedback and the PPA forum.

The Depute Area Convener was then heard in answer to questions from members on the Minute.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

8 **Better Hearings Renfrewshire**

There was submitted the Minute of the Renfrewshire Better Hearings meeting held on 27 October 2021.

The Minute provided updates on the Better Hearings Action Plan; keeping the number of attendees at a Hearing at a minimum; and quality assurance of referrals.

A Stevenson requested that the issue of Panel Members being invited last into virtual Hearing be raised with CHS and cited an example of her concerns. The Area Support and Improvement Partner undertook to raise the issue with CHS. The Area Convener also requested that issues with RAHVI be raised with CHS.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Minute be noted; and

(b) That the issues highlighted be raised by the Area Support and Improvement Partner with CHS.

9 **COP26 Arrangements**

The Area Convener provided an update on Police Scotland activity in terms of COP 26 arrangements and the potential affect on Children's Panel Hearings.

H indicated that discussions had taken place between AST members and the Locality Reporter Managers and two dates – 6 and 13 November – had been identified for standby Hearings for custody cases. Panel Members had been identified to be on standby from 1.00pm onwards on those dates.

The Locality Reporter Manager indicated that it was not anticipated that there would be many custody hearings during the period.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

10 **Capacity**

The Area Support and Improvement Partner advised that a number of Area Support areas had been sharing panel members as a result of capacity issues. She indicated that CHS were attempting to formulate a plan to ensure that all areas could fulfil their rota obligations. It had been noted that Panel Member sharing had become more prevalent over the past eight months. She indicated that nationally, there was no capacity issue, but these figures do not reflect the position locally, and that some Panel Members were undertaking four or five Hearings a month and others were undertaking one hearing due to this issue. The position was likely to become more acute towards the end of the emergency legislation period. CHS were looking at a model where a supply of Panel Members could be available to assist areas where capacity issues were prevalent.

CHS were looking at four hubs within Scotland where Panel Members could be “borrowed” to assist were required. A pilot scheme was being introduced in South West Scotland and further information would be submitted to a future meeting of the AST.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

11 Lead Panel Representative

The Area Convener advised that E Hanley had indicated his intention to step down as Lead Panel Representative in 2022. In terms of succession planning, A Stevenson had been appointed joint Lead Panel Representative to ensure a smooth transition when E Hanley resigned in September 2022.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

12 Devolved Funding

The Clerk advised that there had been no significant expenditure on the Devolved Funding budget during the current financial year, and that the budget stood at £2357.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

13 Clerking Services

The Clerk advised the AST of the current procedures and timescales in relation to obtaining hard copies of correspondence for Panel Members. He further indicated that in terms of the forthcoming Local Government that was not anticipated that there would be any issues in term of capacity and support for the AST.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

14 Recognition Event

The Area Convener advised that following discussions on various forums, there was an appetite to resume Panel Member Recognition Events, and he proposed that the feasibility of such an event be investigated with a possible date for the event proposed as the end of January 2022.

DECIDED: That the possibility of a Recognition Event be explored and a report submitted to the next meeting of the AST.

15 Craig Bilsland

The Area Convener updated the position with regard former panel member Craig Bilsland who had not engaged with either the Area Convener, Lead Panel Representative or Rota Manager for a considerable period of time. As a result of this non-engagement, Mr Bilsland had not been recommended for reappointment as a panel member.

Subsequently Mr Bilsland had indicated that he wished to remain a Panel Member.

Following discussion, the Area Support Team agreed that the course of action open to Mr Bilsland would be to apply for membership of the Children’s Panel during the forthcoming recruitment campaign.

C Campbell proposed that Mr Bilsland be afforded one further opportunity to engage with the AST prior to a final decision being taken

DECIDED: That it remained open to Mr Bilsland to apply for Panel Membership during the forthcoming Panel Member Recruitment campaign.

16 **Rhiannan Dock**

The Area Convener referred to Rhiannan Dock who had not engaged with the AST in terms of PPA training and indicated that there was a Panel Member applicant who had not been able to continue her application due to a conflict of interest but had expressed an interest in becoming a PPA.

DECIDED: That the individual on the PPA waiting list be approached to confirm her interest in filling the PPA vacancy.

17 **Date of Next Meeting**

DECIDED: Members noted that the next meeting of the AST was scheduled for Tuesday 14 December 2021 at 2.00 pm.