

HEARINGS MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

AGENDA

Minutes of Meeting 1st December 2021

Virtual @ 10:00AM

1. Apologies

Lesley King; Angela Mitchell - Angela asked that her thanks be passed on to all for their patience and understanding following recent challenges with the changes in systems, procedures and staff.

2. Sabbatical

There are currently 6 panel members off rota, 5 females and one male (who will be active until end of December) as a result of being on sabbatical or not responding to communications, and one who is awaiting chromebook before she can return.

3. Resignations

1 Female

4. Hearing Stats - period 12th October - 30th November 2021

- Deferred Cases - Seven virtual cases deferred; one to appoint a safeguarder; three no social work reports available; two awaiting grounds to be established; one due to technical difficulties with accessing papers.

Five face to face deferred - One Relevant Person had tested positive for Covid; three no social work reports available; one for a further assessment to be completed

- Cancelled Sessions - Five virtual sessions in October; November six cancelled virtual sessions. For face to face hearings there was one for October and one for November.

- Secure Hearings - None
- Extra Hearings/Sessions - None

- Swaps - Four swaps in total

- Continuity - one request
- One panel member provided for East Renfrewshire
- Two standby sessions not required for 6th and 13th November; COP26

5. Pastoral Care

No additional support being required at this time.

6. Panel Member Strength

Eighty four panel members, of which sixty one are female and twenty three are male. Currently there are seventy eight panel members who are available for rota scheduling, this is made up of fifty six females and twenty two males.

7.AOCB

For noting: November scheduling was one week shorter than normal as a week had been dropped due to staff training within SCRA.

Edi advised that it had been raised at another meeting, where Leslie had been in attendance, about the panel having chairs returned to the wall which now contains the mural. It was previously positioned there for egress for panel members in the event of any risks to them, the current layout does not provide the same option. It was agreed by Leslie that SCRA could revisit the layout, once the current one way system is no longer in use. The current system allows for the families and other attendees to exit the door which would have been the previous egress for panel members, and as such, returning to that position currently could potentially place panel members at more risk.

Edi advised that a panel chair had contacted him to enquire on the decision around scheduling of cases. There had been three cases allocated to the session, two cases which were clearly recommendations for CSO to be terminated, and one case which was much more challenging, as a result the panel had felt that the first two cases had finished quickly and there was some waiting time between these sessions. The third case, unfortunately ran on for some time and combined with the time taken to complete the ROP, the panel did not leave until late. The panel had raised if the more challenging case should have been scheduled first. Discussion between members today had differing views, with some seeing the need to schedule as last hearing to avoid any run into other

cases, others not in agreement and with views that there may be scope to reduce the time allocated to green cases to avoid unnecessary waiting time between and bring forward schedule. SCRA discussion to clarify current scheduling system.

Enquiry was made about the possibility of a coat stand being provided for the hearing room, currently panel members hang their coats outside the hearing room, but for security purposes would prefer not to. It was felt that having coats hanging over chairs or placed on the floor would not only be unhygienic, but unprofessional looking. In addition the current season is likely to result in wet outerwear, which if placed on furniture is likely to damage or mark seating. Cleaning wipes could be left out and the last person to use, would wipe down the coat stand

An inquiry from a panel member on the need or reason for the large coffee table which has been placed in the hearing room, it is felt that this may be seen as a barrier and it does not appear to be currently in use.

Following ongoing discussions between SCRA and CHS regarding the use of CHS provided telescopic tables for panel members, agreement has been reached that the room will remain in the current layout, but the tables supplied by CHS/AST, will be available and should panel members wish to use them, they can ask on arrival and the tables will be swapped out. Edi has raised concerns about the need for additional space to place papers for other cases and any drinks, water etc. The feedback from children and young people previously is that having two tables could be seen as a barrier between panel members and other participants. Prior to COVID and changes to the panel room, panel members only had access to one white table. To be fully clarified on process before communication to panel community is made on use of the tables/stands.

Panel members will now be asked to use the restroom facilities in the main reception area, as these will also be used by families and other visitors to the premises, the AST would appreciate having clarification of the current cleaning schedule/regimine for this area and the panel room as some comments have been passed to Edi that areas are not always as expected.

The AST had received a request, from social work management, seeking additional information and clarification on a hearing which took place in October. Separate decisions had been taken for two older children, against sw recommendation, whilst two younger children had the care plan supported. The investigation has concluded with some learning outcomes identified in terms of scheduling of multiple sibling hearings, the number of participants and the impact on panel members mentally and ensuring that ROP are reflective of full verbal discussion/reasons & decisions; the need for a good practice ROP aide memoir to ensure that all relevant information is included in ROP, i.e. consideration

to all views and what those views were; correct wording for legal tests when used to make decisions and how test is met. Feedback will be provided to the relevant social work department and any learning outcomes shared with the panel community once formalised.

A positive feedback and congratulations email was received from Johnstone Social Work thanking three panel members and the children's reporter for their handling of a very complicated case, involving review of the order, advice to the sheriff, termination of contact and an early review, which took place in October. Social Work asked that the panel and reporter were thanked for their preparation and handling of the case. "There was a lot to consider and a lot to cover. All aspects of the hearing were covered thoroughly and with careful consideration. I really appreciated how they approached the task at hand. We got a fair outcome and the child's plan was able to move on."

Thanks have been passed to the relevant panel members and reporter. It is nice to have some positive feedback to end on a good note.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 12th January 2022 Virtual at 10:00am