

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Area Support Team

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 15 June 2021	14:00	Remotely by MS Teams,

PRESENT

Derek Bramma; Annemarie Currie; Edi Hanley; Jacqueline Doherty; Hannah McCulloch; Ewan McNaught; Jim Melrose; Marion Robinson; Councillor John Shaw 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, Senior Committee Services Officer and K O'Neill, Assistant Committee Services Officer (both Finance and Resources).

APOLOGIES

E Anderson and C Campbell.

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 two 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 11 and 12 of the agenda was competent and relevant, authorised their consideration.

1 MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 MATTERS ARISING

Panel member Recruitment

The Area Convener advised that a further trainee had withdrawn from training, leaving 19 trainees remaining.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

3 RENFREWSHIRE AREA PLAN APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

There was submitted a report by Children's Hearings Scotland relative to the Renfrewshire Area Plan April 2021-March 2022.

The Plan set out the main actions for the Renfrewshire Area for the period April 2021 to March 2022. The Plan had been developed by the AST and the wider volunteer community to allow it to set short and medium term priorities in a time of rapid and unpredictable change. The Plan would be reviewed regularly and revised to take account of developments in the wider environment.

The report advised that the Plan would be revised and updated to include the Improvement Aims as part of the CHA Promise Programme currently being developed by CHS to reflect the major improvement-focussed priorities within each of the CHS Corporate Plan Strategic Themes.

The Plan provided details of the four CHS Corporate Plan Strategic Themes 2020-2023; information relative to Devolved Funding; and the eight main focus areas of work to reflect current priorities.

The Area Support and Improvement Partner provided AST members with more detail in relation to the Plan and was heard in answer to questions thereon.

In terms of progress and review milestones within the Plan, the Area Convener referred to quarter 4 and the requirement to recruit a care-experienced young person onto the Area Support Team, and how this would be achieved

A Currie suggested that this action be moved to quarter 3 to allow sufficient time for training prior to the next Panel Member recruitment exercise which was anticipated to take place in January 2022. The Area Convener indicated that this issue would be

discussed at the forthcoming Area Conveners' meeting, however if recruitment was scheduled for January 2022, it would be advantageous to move this action into quarter 3.

Discussion followed on the best method of identifying a pool of candidates from which to select a care-experienced young person and the possibility of recruiting through the Young Persons Champions Board.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 **CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) ACT CHANGES AST PROMOTION TOOLKIT**

There was submitted a report by Children's Hearings Scotland relative to changes to the Children (Scotland) Act which were due to come into force on 26 July 2021, and the AST Promotional toolkit.

The report detailed the timetable for implementation; background for Area Support Teams; local and national communications planner; local engagement articles; messaging for Area Support Teams to use within their local community; and an FAQ section on sibling contact.

The Area Support and Improvement Partner provided AST members with more detail in relation to the Toolkit and emphasised the need for AST members to check their emails and AST pages for information which would be updated regularly prior to the implementation date. The Area Support and Improvement Partner was then heard in answer to questions thereon.

Discussion followed on the challenges in ensuring Panel Members regularly checked their emails in relation to the changes, and on communication strategy generally. The Area Convener suggested that a short term Communications working group be established to consider these challenges. This group would consist of the Area Convener, Area Support and Improvement Partner, the Rota Manager and the Digital Champions.

The Area Support and Improvement Partner indicated that consideration should also be given to letters being posted to Panel Members, as the information which was being circulated was of vital importance and that it be emphasised to Panel Members that they are required to access this information.

A Stevenson indicated that previously she received information on which Panel Members had accessed emails and Teams and requested that this practice be re-instated. The Area Support and Improvement Partner undertook to supply this prior to the first meeting of the Communications Working Group.

DECIDED:

(a) That a short term Communications working group consisting of the Area Convener, Area Support and Improvement Partner, the Rota Manager and the Digital Champions be established to consider challenges in communication with Panel Members;

(b) That letters be posted to Panel Members, emphasising the need to access emails and Teams as the information which was being circulated was of vital importance;

(c) That the Area Support and Improvement Partner re-instate the practice of supplying

the Digital Champions with information on which Panel Members had accessed emails and Teams; and

(d) That the report be otherwise noted.

5 RENFREWSHIRE BETTER HEARINGS GROUP

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Better Hearings Group held on 19 May 2021.

The Minute provided information on previous work in relation to the Renfrewshire Charter; Hearing preparation guidelines; IA's; keeping the number of attendees at a Hearing to a minimum; tackling delay at court; advocacy; and quality assurance of referrals, particularly referral screening groups.

DECIDED: That the Minute be noted.

6 RENFREWSHIRE BETTER HEARINGS ACTION PLAN – MAY 2021

There was submitted a report by the Area Convener relative to the Renfrewshire Better Hearings Action Plan.

The Action Plan detailed three areas for improvement; ownership of these areas; timescales; and the measures of success.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 LOCALITY REPORTER MANAGER - UPDATE

The Locality Reporter Manager provide an update on the return of staff to Glen Lane indicating that staff were now present, albeit on a limited basis, five days per week. Full time Reporters were in the office two days per week and the service remained limited.

The Reporter also provided updates on staffing; face to face Hearings; Paisley Sheriff Court, which was conducting most of its business by telephone conference or written submissions; training; and changes to information in relation to siblings and contact.

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

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

8 HEARINGS MANAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Hearings Management Sub-group held on 10 June 2021.

The Minute provided updated information in relation to sabbaticals; resignations; hearing statistics for the period 5 May to 10 June 2021 including deferred and cancelled cases, secure hearings, additional hearings; swaps and continuity hearings; pastoral care; panel member strength which indicated that there were currently 73 panel members 51 female and 22 male panel members; emergency legislation; and discussions with SCRA on the issue of invitations, when there has been a change to the rota. The main issue raised by panel members related to not receiving the V-Scene invitations.

The Lead Panel Representative referred to concerns that Panel Members had raised in relation to refreshments between Hearings, given the length of time Hearings were taking. the Area Convener indicated that he had raised this issue with Children's Hearings Scotland at the National Recovery and Renewal Group under Panel Member general wellbeing issues. He advised that Panel Member wellbeing was a high priority on the current CHS agenda and a national strategy was being pursued.

Discussion then took place on mandatory training and it was reiterated that this training should be completed by the end of June 2021, with Panel Members being made aware of the sanctions should this not be completed by that time.

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

DECIDED: That the Minute be otherwise approved.

9 **PRACTICE AND RECRUITMENT SUB-GROUP**

The Depute Area Convener updated the AST with regard to the meeting of the Practice and Recruitment Sub-group held on 24 May 2021.

He indicated that the last sub-group meeting had discussed issues in relation to observations. He intimated that there were three objectives namely PPA's returning to hearings; introduction of the two new PPAs; and testing the electronic observation form. It was anticipated that these observations would be a training exercise during June with no feedback to Panel Members as the intention was to benefit the PPAs in the first instance, with full observations returning in September.

He advised that there had been issues with the digital form, chrome books and vscene.

A programme of five training days had originally been put in place however this had been reduced to four days. The new PPAs would be partnered by an experienced PPA as a buddy.

Discussion also took place in relation to observations being arranged for trainee Panel Members and it was agreed that these should take place during August.

DECIDED:

(a) That observations be arranged for trainee Panel Members during August; and

(b) That the update be noted.

SIDERUNT

J Melrose and P Wilson left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

10 **REVIEW OF AST COMPOSITION AND AREAS OF WORK**

The Areas Convener advised that while the Sub-groups were in place, it had been some time since the AST structure and areas of work had been reviewed and sought the views of the AST thereon. He indicated that he intended to raise the issue at the training session which would take place later in the evening.

DECIDED: That the issue be raised at the training session to be held later in the

evening with a view to encouraging Panel Members to take an active role in the work of the AST.

11 **TEAMS CHAMPION MEETING**

A Stevenson provided an update relative to the Teams Champions meeting held on 2 June 2021.

She provided information on various changes to the Teams channels; that the user guide would be refreshed for ease of use; monthly drop-in sessions offering one-to-one support; and that the local administrators would have the ability to remove chats from channels to free capacity.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

12 **APPOINTMENT OF AREA CONVENER**

The Area Convener indicated that his term of office would end on 24 June 2021. He advised that in terms of the CHS process, he had been invited to attend a re-appointment interview with the National Convener during the week commencing 21 June 2021.

DECIDED: That the information be noted.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

DECIDED: Members noted that the next meeting of the AST was scheduled for Tuesday 17 August 2021 at 2.00 pm