

Children's Hearings reform: Improving the Lives of Children in Scotland



The Scottish Government is immensely proud of, and committed to, the Children's Hearings System. It is an integral part of our work to **improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland.**

Welcome to our third newsletter about the reform of the Children's Hearings System. We want to keep you in touch with what the Scottish Government and our partners are doing so read on to find out more about what we've been up to and our future plans.

Working with partners – Strategic Project Board

The Children's Hearings Reforms Strategic Project Board met again on 26 October.

In addition to other items on the agenda, the Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram (chairing), was particularly pleased to hear about the progress being made at each of the working groups (see next item).

For ease of reference, member organisations of the Strategic Project Board are:-

COSLA;
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration;
Children's Panel Chairman's Group;
Children's Panel Advisory Group;
Scottish Association of Children's Panels;
Association of Directors of Social Work;
Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland;
Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council Scotland; and,
National Health Service.

Working groups – first meetings

You will recall that last month we told you that the Strategic Project Board had

agreed to establish some short-life working groups of key partners to look at various aspects of the reform of the system.

To refresh your memories, these groups are looking at the draft Bill as it develops; the operation of the new system and support for those within it; training; implementation issues; and putting the child at the centre of the system.

Each of the 4 working groups have now met at least once and all partners are feeding back that the process has been useful in enabling them to flesh out issues together and discuss the detail of each of the group's remits.

Papers are being organised for the 'virtual' Bill group and will be distributed in the very near future! In the meantime, dates of the next proposed meetings are:-

Implementation – 6 November
Organisational Support – 9 November
Training – 11 November
Child at the Centre – 16 November

Holyrood.....

For those of you unable to make it to the Holyrood conference on reforms to the children's hearings system, the Minister delivered the keynote speech at this

event. Also speaking at that event were our very own Shirley Laing and Denise Swanson. Speeches should be available on the Holyrood website shortly.

By all accounts, partners found the conference helpful in clarifying matters around the draft Bill and wider reforms and the Minister and officials were certainly able to take away some key points from the day.

.....and beyond!

Members of the team have also been out and about meeting panel members at their training events. Denise Swanson and Hazel Crawford spoke to panel members at the Edinburgh based training on 23 October and went to Irvine the next day to meet panel members there.

Feedback from those events suggests that panel members found it a very useful opportunity to clarify understanding on the proposed reforms and gave them a chance to ask questions face to face.

So, panel members in Dundee and Bellshill this weekend (Saturday 31st) will want to note that Denise and Kit Wyeth will be on hand to provide help and guidance! We also intend to have members of the team attending upcoming training events in Dunfermline, Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverary, Glasgow and Cumbernauld.

Finally, some of the team will be attending the National School event in Edinburgh so should anyone want an alternative opportunity to speak to us, they are welcome to do so then.

Working with partners – other engagement

In amongst all of this activity Ministers and officials have continued to hold informal meetings with partners in order to continually progress discussions.

Over the last couple of weeks we have seen first hand how Glasgow operates its Panel and CPAC functions. We have also met the Children's Commissioner, 'Who Cares' Scotland, SCRA, SACP, CPAG, Children 1st, Aberlour, Action for Children, Quarriers, CPCG and the CHTOs.

Revisions to the Bill

Last, but clearly not least, we continue to make revisions to the draft Bill based on the outcome of meetings we're having and the feedback we've been receiving. Many of these changes were highlighted in the Bill progress paper we published in September.

We still plan to introduce the Bill to Parliament early next year and we intend to use a lot of the information coming out of the working groups to inform the development of the Bill and its supporting documentation.

Keep in touch!

Remember that you can reach us by email:-

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Or call us:-

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And you can find out more about the draft Bill on our WebPage:-

www.scotland.gov.uk/childrens-hearings-bill