



**Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership Meeting  
Tuesday 15 December 2020**

**Note of Meeting**

<p><b>Attendees:</b>          Lesley Sheppard (SG) - Chair – <b>LS</b>          Tom McNamara (SG) – <b>TM</b>          Iain Fitheridge (SG) - <b>IF</b>          Julie Duncan (SG) - <b>JD</b>          John Urquhart (COSLA) – <b>JU</b>          Elaine Adams (CHIP L&amp;D lead) – <b>EA</b>          Janine McCullough (Education Scotland)– <b>JMcC</b>          Jacqui Dunbar (OHOV) – <b>JD</b>          Elliot Jackson (CHS) – <b>EJ</b>          Jackie McRae (CHS) – <b>JMcR</b>          Bryan Evans (Children 1<sup>st</sup>) – <b>BE</b>          Lisa Bennett (SCRA) <b>LB</b>          Helen Etchells (SCRA) - <b>HE</b>          Liz Cuschieri (SLAB) – <b>LC</b>          Neil Hunter (SCRA) – <b>NH</b>          Colin Convery (Police Scotland) - <b>CC</b>          Fiona Dyer (CYCJ) - <b>FD</b>          Kyrsten Buist (COPFS) - <b>KB</b>          Marie-Louise Fox (SLAB) - <b>MF</b>          Alistair Hogg (SCRA) - <b>AH</b>          Suzanne Orr (SWS) – <b>SO</b>          Carol Wassell (CHS) – <b>CW</b>          Aileen Nicol (CELSIS) - <b>AN</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies:</b>          Craig Milne (SG)          Sheriff Susan Craig (Judiciary)          Eilidh Graham (SCTS)</p>
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Agenda Item	Action Points
<p><b>1. Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>The <b>Chair</b> welcomed CHIP partners to the reconvened group, apologies were noted and brief introductions made.</p>	
<p><b>Chair's reflections and opening remarks</b></p> <p>The <b>Chair</b> provided some personal reflections as she re-integrates back into her role having been re-deployed on Covid related work for 7 months. <b>LS</b> noted the amazing amount and quality of work carried out by all to recover children's hearings in the time she had been away. There were still considerable challenges ahead but should not lose what has already been achieved by close, constructive collaboration.</p>	

Recovery Planning

The Chair noted that the Recovery Plan had been adopted and reflected that in this next phase it would be crucial to have the strategic oversight of CHIP whilst retaining the focus and agility of the weekly Children's Hearings Covid Recovery Group (CHCRG).

TM – Children's Hearings recovery had been accorded priority by Scottish Ministers in "*Scotland Routemap through and out of the Crisis*" published in May 2020. This led to an ambitious programme with a blend of virtual, hybrid and face-to-face hearings which continued to reflect the expectations and approaches of the full range of the 'Kilbrandon disciplines and professions'. The CHCRG had sought input into their weekly meeting from others – partners, service users and observers. Across Autumn 2020, the recovery plan developed and the CHCRG appreciated commentary and support from all partners on its production. We now have a plan that demonstrates recovery can be achieved by around end 2021. Lessons were learnt throughout taking on board children and families experiences, operational pressures and constraints, staff and volunteer morale/ capacity – all in the context of the CSAS digital transformation. The work Plan has now been formalised alongside a strengthening of already close relationships of key organisations involved. In particular around the outstanding collaborative effort and commitment towards delivery of the emergency legislation required to assist recovery.

Group comments on work to date:

AH - CHCRG experience had reinforced the exceptional collaboration in working through the challenges to achieving the recovery plan.

JU – setting up of group helpful, and the regular weekly rhythm had allowed COSLA Board to make decisions with confidence on the basis of up-to-date information.

CW – echoed others' remarks about a great coming together, recognising and taking cognisance of voice, the Promise, Commissioner's Office etc. also crucial.

BE – glad to be reassured that voice and experience would continue to be integrated and mainstreamed in the plan's further development.

The Chair raised how best to engage with clear pathways and lines between CHCRG and strategic CHIP - ensuring the reporting arrangements were clear and the scope of each phase of recovery proposals had clear authority.

A Group discussion followed on the current architecture, including ensuring that Better Hearings and the Our Hearings Our Voice 40 Calls to Action were reflected in content and implementation of recovery plan. Another dimension was the need for core national priorities to communicate effectively and reciprocally with local structures. CHIP and CHCRG needed to hear local stories, experiences and voices.

**AP1** - BE and TM to connect offline on how Children 1<sup>st</sup> can use intelligence from their services to amplify voice in the recovery process

**AP2** - Secretariat to clarify how members of CHIP should feed in to CHCRG and how reporting arrangements will work

<p>Hearings being held outside normal times and places would remain as options. <b>EJ</b> referred to the critical importance of protecting gains realised through the innovations made necessary by the 2020 pandemic experience - they offered some real opportunities for the future development of hearings.</p> <p><b>TM</b> suggested that CHCRG would submit monthly highlight reports, quarterly reviews of progress and requests for fresh authorisation for each new iteration of the recovery plan. Where possible, these would be married with the bi-monthly reporting to Parliament on the use of the emergency legislation. A practical governance and reporting proposal would be submitted to CHIP partners.</p>	
<p><b>Age of Referral Analysis Report</b>  <b>TM</b> confirmed that the analysis of the consultation on the age of referral had been published the previous week. There was a clear steer from a significant majority of respondents in respect of all under 18s being able to be referred irrespective of the grounds. There were clear links to the contents of the Promise and the aims of the Cross System Planning Group chaired by <b>NH</b>. Analysis is insightful and provides a framework for action. Next challenge is to operationalise the findings and SG will work with partners to develop a forward plan for Ministerial sign off.</p> <p><b>NH</b> provided a short brief on the work of the Cross System Group which has been profiling the potential referrals, capacity and skills of workforce, development needs, alternative compulsory supervision measures whilst not losing the integrity of the hearings system's offer. A need had been identified to close some gaps in support for victims when compared to the commitments made by the criminal justice system. <b>NH</b> agreed to share a wider paper that was issued to the Youth Justice Improvement Board (YJIB).</p> <p>Group comments on the analysis included: being very taken with opportunities for co-produced learning and development resources. A wide ranging discussion followed on the issues raised by the report, including the capacity of practitioners, the need for a system wide response, building public confidence, use of language and the potential for greater use of restorative approaches.</p>	<p><b>AP3 - NH</b> to send 16/17 year old paper produced for YJIB to secretariat</p> <p><b>AP4 - TM</b> to share draft Youth Justice Action Plan with the group</p> <p><b>AP5 - Secretariat</b> to agree ways to ensure appropriate links and information sharing across CHIP and YJIB</p> <p><b>AP6 - TM</b> to do further work on plans for implementation taking into account CHIP discussion. Will reintroduce issue at future meeting.</p>
<p><b>Role of CHIP</b>  The <b>Chair</b> asked for thoughts on the role of CHIP in the short term and more medium term and reflected on the need to map out key work ahead. She had identified a need for clear strategy and sequencing which is coherent with the work of other related groups.</p>	<p><b>AP7 - Secretariat</b> to consider whether new members to be invited on group</p> <p><b>AP8 - Secretariat</b> to schedule in CHIP</p>

<p>There was general agreement through discussion to build on the success of the CHCRG linking work with Better Hearings, the Promise and incorporating voice throughout with OHOV.</p> <p>Suggestions received on invites to widen the CHIP community – representations from Mental Health, advocacy, CP Committees, and the Promise.</p> <p>CHIP agreed to alter the timetable for re-invigorating activity with 3 x bi-monthly rather than quarterly meetings - with a review after 6 months</p>	<p>meetings for February, April and June before returning to a quarterly cycle</p>
<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>Our Hearings, Our Voice</b> The <b>Chair</b> formally offered recognition of the outstanding contribution made by Jacqui Dunbar during her period in office which has sadly come to a close as she moves to an exciting new opportunity. CHIP members provided personal thanks to Jacqui.</p> <p><b>AH</b> confirmed that options are being considered on the way forward for OHOV and a paper would be provided at the next CHIP for wider discussion.</p> <p><b>Winter support funding</b> The <b>Chair</b> confirmed that an additional £8.5 million had been identified to support hearings recovery throughout this winter period. £8 million has been allocated to local authorities to support and assist social work with the consequences of Covid with a focus on social work support for hearings recovery. The remaining £0.5 million has been allocated to CHIP towards particular projects/focus pieces of work that could aid children's hearings recovery. Further details on a proposed approach to £0.5m prioritisation and disbursement would be circulated before the end of the year.</p> <p><b>Advocacy</b> <b>TM</b> – confirmed that the national advocacy service went live on 21 November. He offered thanks to all partners for their support in seeing this important scheme launched. Good feedback to date, and it was encouraging to see practice and procedure issues being raised and resolved.</p> <p><b>Extension of secondment – Learning and Development</b> <b>TM</b> confirmed that the L&amp;D post would be extended for a further 2 years with <b>EH</b> continuing to cover the role. <b>TM</b> particularly highlighted <b>EH's</b> excellent personal contribution to the CHCRG and the evolution of her role.</p>	<p><b>AP9</b> - AH options paper for next OHOV meeting</p> <p><b>AP10</b> - <b>TM</b> to send information about winter support package funding</p>



Children's Hearings  
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<p><b>Restorative Justice and Contextual Safeguarding</b> JMCR provided an overview of work being taking forward on restorative justice and contextual safeguarding and two groups that were currently looking at this. Members were invited to get in touch with Jackie for further information on these groups.</p>	<p><b>AP11 - JMCR</b> to send information and contact details for the groups to CHIP secretariat</p>
<p><b>Future Meetings</b> Dates for February, April and June to be confirmed.</p>	<p><b>AP12 - SG</b> to circulate dates</p>