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Newsletter no.14 - August 2011

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 14th 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.

1. New Minister and message from the team

Some of you may already know that, following May's election, we have a new Minister for Children and Young People. Angela Constance has taken over the role from Adam Ingram. Ms Constance has previously served on West Lothian's CPAC and also has a background in social work services.

2. Implementation of the 2011 Act

The annex to this newsletter provides a summary of the work that the team is undertaking, with the help of our partners, to implement the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act").

The Minister has recently confirmed that we are to work to a target of September 2012 for implementation of the 2011 Act. We believe that this pragmatic approach allows the time we need for development and to ensure that the system is ready for the introduction of these changes. This target date does not apply to the advocacy provisions which will be brought in at a later date.

This means that the existing Children's Hearings system will continue to operate under the terms of the Children (Scotland) 1995 Act until September 2012. At the point of go-live children's hearings will begin to operate under the provisions of the 2011 Act and supporting legislation (new procedural rules for example). The new structures that the 2011 Act provides for will also come into force which means that at the point of go-live area support teams will be responsible for supporting the new national Children's Panel, replacing Children's Panel Advisory Committees. Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and the National Convener will also assume their full functions from September 2012.

3. Implementation programme

The implementation programme itself has 10 projects which are set out in the annex. The work of the Children's Hearings team over the past few months, including establishing CHS, has been driven by these projects.

A programme board is monitoring and reviewing project progress on a monthly basis.

4. CHS/National Convener work

The National Convener has a wide range of tasks to undertake as part of the structural change and role and functions projects and is heavily involved in much of the work set out at the section 2 bullet points above. Key to this is the consultation on area support teams which is open until 21 October 2011. You can read more here <http://www.chscotland.gov.uk>.

You might want to note that Bernadette will be consulting on a range of other topics over the coming months so keep an eye out for announcements if you want to have your say. She plans to consult on the role and functions of AST members, national standards and panel member expenses.

Finally, a number of you attended the first Board meeting of CHS on 15 July in Perth. You can read more news relating

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to CHS and the National Convener here <http://chscotland.org/news.asp> .

A summary of the key dates and tasks involved in delivering the necessary structural and procedural changes has been set out below. This incorporates both the work of the Scottish Government and the National Convener and Children's Hearings Scotland. Of course, the suggested dates for achieving these milestones are rough guides to the timelines we are aiming to work to so could still change.

MILESTONE	CONSULTATION	DELIVERY DEADLINE
Decide on panel members expenses level	Autumn 2011	Decision made winter 2011
Decision on final AST structures	Summer 2011	Decision made winter 2011
Training of AST members	N/A	Spring/summer 2012
Establish national standards	Winter 2011	Decision made spring 2012
Recruitment campaign	N/A	Spanning spring and summer 2012
Conversion training for existing panel members	N/A	Summer 2012
Training for new panel members	N/A	Summer/autumn 2012
New procedural rules in place	Autumn/winter 2011	Finalised by Parliament by summer 2012 ready for panel member training
New safeguarder arrangements in place	Autumn/winter 2011	Finalised by Parliament by summer 2012, to come into force for go-live
Establish ASTs/CPACs no longer in operation	N/A	ASTs ready to assume functions in September 2012
National children's panel in place/panel members transfer to national panel	Spring 2012	Panel members ready to serve on national panel by September 2012
Go live date	N/A	September 2012
New training contractual and curriculum arrangements in place	N/A	from go-live
Fully establish CHS	N/A	Autumn 2012

You will note that project 9 is Supporting the Existing System. The Children's Hearings team would like to take the opportunity to remind you that, whilst we are working hard to implement the new arrangements, it is crucial that we continue to support the existing system and all those who work within it. We still want to support you under the existing arrangements. So if you want to speak to us or have any comments, concerns or questions you would like answered please do continue to get in touch! Contact details are at the end of this newsletter and our roles and responsibilities have been summarised at the annex.

5. Engagement events

We have a few events coming up that we would like to share with you: a long service recognition event will take place on 29 September at the Radisson Blu hotel in Edinburgh; and the biennial Kilbrandon lecture will take place on 7 November at the University of Glasgow and will feature Sir Harry Burns as its keynote speaker.

We are also making arrangements to hold two further events.

One will be an event at the end of November targeted specifically at panel members providing information and training workshops covering a range of themes following which attendees would be expected to disseminate their learning to local colleagues. Another event will be arranged for early next year targeted at CPAC members as we approach the transition between the existing and future systems.

We will be in touch soon with more information on these events.

6. Working with partners

The Minister has decided that the Strategic Project Board (SPB) will no longer convene. The SPB made a hugely valuable contribution to the passage of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Bill but the bulk of the work now requires to be delivered at a more detailed level. We would like to thank all SPB members for their time and effort over the period that the SPB convened.

The Implementation working group has now become the Implementation Reference Group and last met on 2 August. This group will now meet quarterly and will provide input and advice on papers arising from the implementation programme prior to their publication. Membership of this group has not changed.

The Voice of the Child sub-group last met in June where it continued to discuss advocacy support for the Children's Hearings system as a priority topic. The group will meet again in August.

Membership of the working groups can be found via the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/c-h-bill/ProjBrd>

Keep in touch!

Remember that you can reach us by e-mail: chbillteam@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post: -

Children's Hearings Reform Team, Scottish Government

2-B (North), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Or call us on 0131 244 5409.

ANNEX

Children's Hearings Team activity 2011-2012

10 projects have been identified to implement the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 and deliver the children's hearing reform programme and to maintain support for the system. The projects and project managers are:

1. Structural change - Kit Wyeth
2. Safeguarders - Iain Fitheridge
3. Children's experience - Hazel Crawford
4. Youth Justice - Daniel Kleinberg (Youth Justice Team)
5. Procedural rules - Iain Fitheridge
6. Secondary legislation - Iain Fitheridge
7. Section 104 order - Ingrid Roberts
8. Training - Tom McNamara
9. Supporting the existing system - Tom McNamara
10. National Convener role and functions - Kit Wyeth

Key Responsibilities

Kit Wyeth: team leader, management and oversight of the children's hearings reform programme, projects 1 and 10 (working with the National Convener).

Tom McNamara: SCRA and CHS sponsorship, children's hearings training, projects 8 and 9.

Eleanor Manson: Panelpal, guidance and framework documents, partner group liaison, public appointments to CHS and SCRA.

Agnes Rennick: Panel member appointments and re-appointments, advice on complaints, court rules

Isabelle Jacobsen: team finance, CPAC appointments and re-appointments, The Communicator, CHTO support and secretariat, long service event

Hazel Crawford: project management of reform programme, advocacy in the hearings system, general legal issues, project 3.

Iain Fitheridge: Safeguarders, procedural rules, secondary legislation under the CH Act, projects 2, 5 and 6

Ingrid Roberts: UK legislation (s104 Order), legal representation scheme, legal aid, project 7.

Alison Carmichael: working group secretariat, newsletter, child friendly information, panel member practice and modernisation event

Gillian McTavish: Legal representation scheme payments, administrative support

Suzanne Allan: Administrative support

Alan Taylor (on secondment from Queen Margaret University): Procedural rules - development of policy and legislation, ad hoc support on other hearings policy issues

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