

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**11th Meeting, 2012
Tuesday 20 November 2012**

Present:

Craig Spence, Chair

Alastair Hamilton, Deputy Chair

Linda Watt, Board member

Brian Baverstock, Board member

Andrew Thin, Board member

Also present:

Bernadette Monaghan, National Convener/CEO, CHS

Alison Gough, Director of Panel and Area Support, CHS

Fiona Greig, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, CHS

Lesley Taylor, Communications and Engagement Officer, CHS

Franck David, Implementation Officer (minute taker), CHS

Kit Wyeth, Head of the Children's Hearings Team, The Scottish Government

The meeting opened at 10.45 am.

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The Board agreed to approve the minutes of the public meeting of 17 September 2012 subject to a number of minor amendments.

3 Action log

The Board reviewed the action log and agreed to note it.

4 National Convener/Chief Executive (NC/CE) & Director of Panel and Area Support update

The NC/CE updated the Board on the work she had done since the last Board meeting on 17 September.

Area Support Teams

The National Convener reported that the establishment of 22 Area Support Teams

had been agreed in principle with 10 Partnership Agreements already signed off.

Further, following the application and interview for the roles of Area Conveners (ACs) and Depute Area Conveners (DACs), appointments had now been made to 18 Area Support Teams, including Aberdeen City, Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde, Western Isles, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The National Convener conveyed her thanks to Alastair Hamilton for the time he had dedicated during the interview process.

Further, the National Convener said that she was delighted to confirm that the rate of positive responses from panel members agreeing to transfer to the national panel was 97%. The Board echoed the NC's thanks to the panel community.

Training

The National Convener outlined the timeline of the procurement exercise currently being undertaken to identify training providers who will deliver the national curriculum to panel members and AST members. Further, the National Convener provided assurance to the Board that the training would meet panel members' needs.

Feedback Loop

The National Convener reported that productive discussions had taken place with the President of ADSW and the Convener of the ADSW Children and Families Standing Committee with a view to drawing up and agreeing a form of words to set out a common understanding of what constitutes "implementation" of compulsory supervision orders. The next stage would be to set up a reference group to review and develop the draft agreement. There was a degree of concern about how CHS could ensure that it would collect the best possible quality of information on children who were subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders. In answer to the question as to why the National Convener would only report Phase 1 in 2014/15, it was explained that this was necessary to gather data to provide information to the ASTs.

National Panel

The Director of Panel and Area Support gave a presentation on "Building the Children's Panel". The Director said that it was essential to have a sufficient numbers of experienced panel members in place in each AST area in order to have a functioning Children's Panel in place for Go-live. Further, that it was necessary to have an effective support in place for panel members via the ASTs including: all the necessary systems for rota management and managing expenses effectively, access to advice, having adequate arrangements to ensure that panel members were equipped to practice in hearings under the 1995 Act as well as the 2011 Act.

The Director added that, in relation to the transfer to the national panel, a

communications plan was in place to keep Panel Chairs and CPACs informed about the response rates and that as of 9th November, 1999 panel members had agreed to transfer and 96 had not. This amounted to a 5% decline rate out of the 2,283 panel members currently serving. Further, a follow-up letter from the National Convener to those panel members who had not responded would be issued in the forthcoming weeks. The Director added that only a very small percentage of panel members had put forward their concerns about the implications of the 2011 Act as the reason for not transferring to the national panel.

In relation to the establishment of ASTs, the Director reported that over 40 interviews had taken place with a consistent and fair process used throughout. The Phase 4 recruitment round had started on 20th November for all remaining areas. Further, the Director and the Panel and Area Support Officer had had initial meetings with ACs and DACs designate and it was expected that a clear picture of their number across the country would emerge by Christmas. The Director emphasised the importance of the AST development workshops that would take place in January and February.

Turning to the conversion training, the Director said that a contingency plan would be developed to deal with the possible resignation of panel members following the training. The training itself would take the form of one full day face-to-face event as well as a pre-meeting.

The Director announced that, in relation to transition and savings, the Scottish Government was undertaking work on secondary legislation whilst SCRA was initiating planning in respect of hearings which will take place under the 1995 Act.

The Board agreed to note the National Convener/Chief Executive and the Director of Panel and Area Support update.

5 Chair update

The Chair reported that he had had fruitful engagements with panel members through the North Lanarkshire panel training evening, the Children's Panel Long Service Award and the Children's Panel Chair's Group.

In terms of internal engagement, the Chair said that he had attended a very useful staff training/awareness session with Who Cares? Scotland, a Board policy seminar and had been involved in an engagement workshop with other Board members.

Turning to external engagements, the Chair said he had been pleased to attend meetings with the following organisations/individuals: NDPB Chairs, Carole Wilkinson (SCRA Chair), Councillor Cree (Convener of Moray Council), Councillor Crockett (Leader of Aberdeen City Council), Scottish Leaders Forum Conference (the next topic would be Children and Early Years) and the Institute of Directors' annual conference.

The Chair also reported that he had attended the following: meeting of the Children's Hearings Implementation Programme Board with the Minister for Children & Young People, meeting with Robert Marshall, Deputy Director Care & Justice at the Scottish Government around the recruitment process for CHS Board members, and several other meetings with Scottish Government officials.

The Chair thanked Alastair Hamilton and Linda Watt for attending the PRAM event on 16/17 November. Mr Hamilton gave feedback from the event at which a number of CHS staff led theme-based workshops e.g. "Getting Online for Go-Live" and "National Standards, what does it mean for you?". The feedback from the panel community had been excellent in terms of CHS' staff dedication, enthusiasm and knowledge in running these successful workshops.

6 Performance Management Report – Quarter Two

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented the report and informed the Board that it had been considered by the Risk and Audit Management committee at its meeting on 6 November 2012. Although the report was still being developed, it was used to inform the accountability meetings with the Scottish Government. It would also be used as both the primary tool to manage CHS' performance over all business areas, and a communication tool to update panel members on CHS' progress and activities.

A number of areas were showing no activity which was explained by CHS not reporting on these yet e.g. "No. of upheld complaints about hearings", "% of panel members completing identified training needs". The annex in the report on "business plan update" was designed to give the Board and the minister assurance on how the organisation was delivering outcomes against business plan activities.

A Board member asked for an update on the process to sign off Partnership Agreements with local authorities and Kit Wyeth answered that an agreement in principle had been reached for all ASTs. The Board member added that the change of the Go-Live date had created new challenges for instance, an underspend which is a reflection of the budget not having been re-profiled after the new Go-Live date. This was echoed by another Board member who also commented on the format of the report, which was excellent.

The Director said that CHS is engaged in discussions with the Scottish Government Sponsor Team in respect of the budget rephasing.

The Board agreed to note the Performance Management Report – Quarter Two.

7 Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report 2011-12

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services introduced the committee's annual report. The latter described the work undertaken during the period from 15 July 2011 to 31 March 2012 and also provided assurance to the Accountable Officer that the committee was monitoring CHS' activities. The report had been

approved by the committee at its meeting on 27 September.

The Board agreed to note the Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report.

8 Minutes of the Audit and Risk Management committee (ARMC) meeting

The Chair of the committee emphasised the importance of embedding risk management in the organisation as well as of focusing on the risks associated with panel members and ASTs in terms of where risks begin and end. The Chair of the Committee reiterated a point made at a previous meeting that CHS and SCRA should develop a protocol to identify and address joint risks. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services said that such opportunity would exist through the existing liaison meetings and that CHS Implementation Officer had started taking this forward.

The Chair of the committee said that at its next meeting, the ARMC would start interrogating specific risks i.e. the risks surrounding the introduction of the new expenses scheme. This had been endorsed by the committee at a previous meeting. Further, he added that in October, CHS' Internal Auditors had reviewed the risk management arrangements and had produced a report which reflected positively on CHS risk management framework and the way it has been embedded in the organisation. Two control objectives were green and three were yellow. The report summarised a number of good practices and highlighted areas which, if improved, would strengthen risk management arrangements e.g. defining the Board's risk appetite. On the latter point, the Chair of the committee said that there are challenges in looking beyond June 2013 and that at the last committee meeting, a member had asked the internal auditors whether they would be available to support CHS in that area. This had been confirmed and a provisional date of the first quarter of 2013 had been envisaged.

The Board agreed to note the minutes of the last meeting of the Audit and Risk Management committee.

9 CHS Research Programme 2012/13 and 2014/15

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services outlined the plans for the research programme.

The first project, "Children and young people's views and experiences of Children's Hearings – a summary report", will be a desk based project aimed at pulling together findings from twenty-six relevant research reports. The output of this review will be a report summarising the views and experiences of children and young people who have attended a children's hearing. The report will primarily focus on their contact with panel members and their views on their participation. It was anticipated that the report would be produced by the end of December 2012.

The second project, “Employer support for panel members“, is a small scale project to establish panel member employment patterns and the identity of who panel members’ employers are. The project will attempt to gain an understanding of panel members’ views of the level of support offered to them by their employers and ascertain what form this support takes. Once panel member employers have been identified, the Performance and Research Officer and the Research Assistant will carry out a piece of research in February with a sample of identified employers.

The third project, “Children and families survey 2012” is joint with SCRA and will consist a national survey with children, young people, families and carers in hearing centres across the nine localities. This survey is a follow up to the Children and Families survey carried out by SCRA in 2008 and will investigate the experiences, expectations and opinions of around 900 children, young people and parents and carers involved in the Hearings System.

The fourth project, “Qualitative research with children and families” is also joint with SCRA. A procurement exercise for this project will start before the end of the year and the research should be concluded in March 2013.

The fifth project, “Baseline surveys for the CHS performance management framework”, will create a suite of surveys (primarily online) for internal use.

The sixth project, “Panel members views and experiences of IT provision”, will investigate panel members views and experiences of IT, and explore areas such as access to IT, levels of IT literacy and appetite for more functions being delivered through the use of IT. The panel member survey will be piloted and conducted in 2012/13.

The last project, “Information provided to hearings”, is also joint with SCRA and will investigate the quantity and quality of information provided for Children’s Hearings and to what extent this supports good decision making. The concept for this project arose from findings of SCRA’s report published on 12 November 2012: *Children on Supervision Requirements for Five or More Years – Decisions and Outcomes*.

Several Board members said that the research programme would lay the foundations for a coherent support to panel members and would improve outcomes for children. A Board member said in relation to the last project that it would be helpful to identify whether safeguarders could be part of that research.

A Board member asked whether a specific piece of work was needed to measure the effectiveness of the whole system, best practice, success/failure. The National Convener said that CHS had responsibility for supporting panel members in terms of outcome and would be looking into this.

The Board positively endorsed and agreed to note the CHS Research Programme 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution. The next Board meeting will be on 30 January 2013. Venue to be announced.

The meeting closed at 12.16 pm.