

Consultation Questionnaire

Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the purpose of a National Confidential Forum?

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments Glasgow City Council Social Work Services welcomes the establishment of a forum to give adult survivors abused in residential care as children an opportunity to be heard. Within Glasgow we have a specific service for childhood/adult victims of sexual abuse and have experience of working with adult survivors who were abused while in the care of the local authority/other child care organisations.

In addition we have a specific senior officer who has responsibility of co-ordinating all historical abuse allegations. This worker has had direct contact with adults who have come forward to tell about their abuse experiences as children while in the care of the local authority and child care organisations.

From our experience in Glasgow such a forum would give adult survivors a positive forum to talk about their experiences.

Q2. Do you agree or disagree that the Forum should operate independently from Government?

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments

Many of the adults that social work services have come in to contact with have issues with regard to "authority figures" for a range of valid reasons. This means that they find it hard to trust such bodies and may feel reluctant to engage with a forum if this sat within the Government.

Victims of abuse may find it easier to engage with the Forum if it is seen not be a Government body.

Q3. Should the Forum

(a) be integrated into another public body ?

Agree Disagree No preference

(b) be a separate unit within another public body?

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments

It is uncertain how such a forum would sit within another public body, and it is hard to comment when it is unclear which public body could host such a forum. The forum's credibility may be enhanced if this were to be a separate entity.

Q4. Do you agree or disagree that all adults who were placed in residential care by the State should be eligible to take part in the National Confidential Forum?

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments

The forum should be for all abuse survivors of in care abuse. For those adults whose experiences were positive while in the care of the local authority, it may be useful to gather this information to gain a balanced overview of residential child care at that time. However, colleagues who attended a Time to Heard session previously indicated that adults who had not been abused whilst in local authority care were significantly impacted by victims accounts, and for survivors it was hard to hear how others had been treated when their experiences had been abusive.

Indeed, this may only add to the victims feelings that this was their fault. This concern was expressed at the TTBH event.

Q5. Do you agree or disagree that the process should be the same for all participants, regardless of whether they regard themselves as survivors of abuse in residential childcare?

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments

As commented above

Q6. Do you agree or disagree that people who were in the following types of residential care should be included:

- residential schools and children's homes
- residential educational provision for children with special needs
- long-stay hospital provision for children with acute medical and/or mental health needs
- secure accommodation

Agree Disagree No preference

Comments

Glasgow would agree that adults in all of the above settings should be given the opportunity to be heard.

However, we do have some concern that foster care is not considered within this context, although the document suggests that this may be a 2nd phase of the Forum's work.

From our experience in Glasgow we know that there is a huge impact, particularly as children are often removed from their own abusive families to be safe with a foster family, only to be abused again. A significant issue for young people can also be the opportunity to be told about the abuse.

Q7. What other support do you consider that participants would benefit from before, during and after the Forum?

Comments

Support for people in such situations is vital. However, it has to be recognised that many will not have good family support and this cannot be relied upon. Lack of good support is often an issue for survivors. The national forum should have the responsibility of directing abuse survivors to appropriate services/supports. We should not assume that abuse survivors have support, this needs to be actively checked.

Workers attending the TTBH session commented that the impact on survivors during the session was overwhelming. The long term impact of abuse has to be recognised and the support offered accordingly. For some people, attending the forum may be the first time they have talked about their abuse and their awareness of the impact on their lives may just start at this point. Therefore, it is essential that supports are made available for all survivors involved in the forum.

Q8. Do you think that the participants should be protected from legal action in connection with their work for the Forum?

Yes No No preference

Comments

Adults will participate in a process if they are fearful that their involvement could result in legal action. However, at the outset it has to be made clear that if information is shared that suggests that someone may be a risk of harm, then this information may require to be disclosed to ensure the safety and well-being of that individual and to prevent further abuse in the future.

It is unclear why an individual would need to be protected from legal action, unless they had committed an offence. If this relates to the behaviours of individuals as children, this is likely to be a very difficult area to give clear guidance.

Q9. Do you think there are any barriers that would prevent people who are eligible to take part in the Forum from participating?

Yes No

Comments

Q10. Do you wish to add any additional points about the Forum?

Yes No

Comments

We note that in the definition of child abuse, verbal abuse is missing and this can be just as harmful as the other forms of abuse

Support to survivors in rural areas is an issue and needs to be considered within the context of the forum

Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction

The public sector duties require the Scottish Government pay “due regard” to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic.

These three requirements apply across the “protected characteristics” of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.

In effect, this means that equality considerations are integrated into all the functions and policies of Scottish Government Directorates and Agencies.

A key part of those duties is to impact assess all our policies to ensure that we do not inadvertently create a negative impact for equality groups and also that we actively seek the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

The Aim of the National Confidential Forum

The aim of the National Confidential Forum is to give adults who spent time in residential care as children the opportunity to talk about their experiences.

In this section of the consultation questions we are particularly interested in finding out your views on whether the National Confidential Forum meets the needs of the following groups:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion and Belief

Your responses to the questions will help us to carry out a full equality impact assessment for a National Confidential Forum.

Questions

1. Do you think the creation of a National Confidential Forum will have a disproportionately negatively impact on particular groups of people in our target audience?

Yes No

Comments

No, however, the potential is there for a negative impact if support is not integral to the process

2. Do you think the creation of a National Confidential Forum will have a positive impact on particular groups of people in our target audience?

Yes No

Comments

With the proper support, the forum could be very beneficial for many survivors

3. What negative impacts do you think the National Confidential Forum will have on a particular group?

Comments

Potential negative would be where individuals felt pressured in to participating in the forum for a variety of reasons.

Also if people are not clear about the purpose of the forum they may see it as a therapeutic forum and this could have a negative impact

4. What positive impacts do you think the National Confidential Forum will have on a particular group?

Comments

The forum has the potential to be positive for a range of adult abuse survivors as this will give them the opportunity to have their abuse experiences validated

5. What changes would you suggest to reduce any negative impact you have identified?

Comments

Support, preparation and clear information is vital

6. What changes would you suggest to enhance any positive impacts you have identified?

Comments

Adults require to be treated with respect, listened to, the process should be stress free and survivor centred

7. Are there any significant issues we need to consider in relation to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion and Belief?

Comments

Adult survivors of childhood abuse should be viewed as an individual, rather than a survivor of institutional abuse