

Title:

Children's Advocacy in the Children Hearings System: Expert Reference Group

Overview:

Agenda and Actions: December 2019

Page Information:

Agenda items, actions, and supporting papers for the Communications and Engagement sub-group meeting, held on 11 December in Edinburgh.

1. Items and actions

This note provides an overview of the discussion and key action points from the meeting of the Children Hearings System: Expert Reference Group (ERG) Communications and Engagement sub-group.

The meeting took place in The Melting Pot in Edinburgh on 11 December 2019

2. Welcome and overview

The group included representation from:

Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS)
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)
Social Work Scotland (SWS)
Independent Advocacy Providers – CAPS, Advocard,
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)
Scottish Government (SG)

The group received a working paper setting out communications, engagement and publicity plans. This helped focus discussion on activities to be carried out in advance of the roll-out of the advocacy service. We want to produce a consistent "national" picture, whilst recognising that advocacy providers will have their own communication channels and publicity materials individual to the local authority they work in.

Action

Scottish Government will ensure contributions and ideas are recorded within the action plans.

3. Publicity and awareness

Matters discussed by the group included:

Content in Hearings letters/paperwork/other methods

Information for social workers e.g. for introducing the service to children and young people

Online information – use of websites – CHS, SCRA, SG, Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)?

Clearly defining the ‘advocacy worker’ role and explaining its value, complementary to other existing elements roles/services and balancing expectations

Communications with the Scottish Courts

Raising awareness with children and young people – opportunities and methods

Reaching referral partners social work, schools, police etc.

Branding

Resources/Budget

Guidance needs

Action

Communications and Engagement Strategy will be kept updated with ideas and activities identified to communicate/promote Children’s advocacy provision. Activities to be progressed included:

Information to be added to hearings notification letters issued by Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration.

Amendments to be made to All About Children’s Hearings Leaflet or creation of new leaflet.

Consider the use of infographics which could be on provider information rather than lots of text.

Scope out possibility of creating a “new” dedicated website for children’s advocacy in Children’s Hearings – accessible by children, practitioners, others.

Develop plans to increase engagement with the education sector – both at strategic and local front line levels.

The Communications and Engagement documents will act as a tracking and reviewing tool and regular updates will be invited from ERG members.