

# Scottish Association of Children's Panels

## 108th Council Meeting

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008

10.00am – 13.00pm

Enterprise House, Stirling

### 108.1 Sederunt and Apologies

M. Easton (Highland), W. Milne (Angus), G. Reoch (Glasgow 5), M. Fawcett (Aberdeenshire), A. McGroarty (Glasgow 3), B. McGugan (Inverclyde), A. Lee (W. Dumbartonshire), G. Adamson (Borders), M. Gaughan (Glasgow 4), A. Philp (Aberdeen City), M. Kirk (Fife), Gordon Watt (part time).

**Apologies:** .McMenemy (N. Ayrshire), K. Perfect (East Dumbartonshire), J. Noble (Argyll & Bute), D. Stalker (Chairman's Rep), P. Maynard (Dumfries & Galloway), B. Burke (Midlothian), M. Stenhouse (Clackmannanshire), S. Panton (S. Lanarkshire), A. MacLeod (Western Isles), L. Benton (N. Lanarkshire).

If you cannot attend, please try and arrange for someone else to come from your area in your place.

### 108.2 Network 100 report.

Group set up to improve communication on the Children's Hearing system. SACP invited to be part of this along with 30 other interested parties. More detail on this will be covered under 108.3.

### 108.3 Discussion with Gordon Watt

There will be a new body created to administer the Children's Hearing System to be in place by Dec 2010. This will affect all current organisations, including SCRA, Safeguarders, CPAC, etc.

The intention is to provide a consistent set of standards across Scotland, involving Training, Expenses, Reporters. The delivery of training might change.

There would have to be clear separation of the tribunal and Reporters to ensure the independent nature of the Reporter's role.

Gordon will work with stakeholders over the next few months and then draft a paper in April. Between May and July it will go to consultation. It will create a new body and there will be some limited legislation. There will not be a new Children's Services Bill. The draft Bill will be created in Jan 09 and there will be a further 3 month consultation with the Bill to parliament in May. It normally takes around 6 months to go through Parliament and therefore will become an Act around Jan 2010. The new body will then be created by appointing directors and a Principal Reporter. The likely set up will have a Chief Executive responsible for the headquarters, staff and administration and a President responsible for appointing Panel Members, training and rotas. Some of this is linked to the Public Sector reform. It is likely this may actually cost some money to implement, but may have a saving to Local Authorities if central Government contribute to funding, e.g. Expenses, training.

There was some discussion throughout Gordon's presentation, e.g. if there is new legislation then perhaps they should consider changing the scenario where

there are Grounds and the children are obviously too young to understand and will have to go to the Sheriff – legislate so that it can go directly. Local, what does it mean in the context of the new body? Is this not just a better management system? Right of appeal? Is this a new structure? Will there be an appeals tribunal? If there is no Panel Chairs, will someone local have responsibility for the rota, training, expenses, etc. Local identity is still a key element and will need to be retained in some way. Gordon was open and put some of the discussion back to us. How will Panel Members views be represented? No decisions have been made yet and there is an opportunity for interested parties to have their say.

Local authorities are likely to be taken out of the equation. There needs to be a firewall between Panel Members, Reporter, the Local Authority and Safeguarders with a perception of independence.

CPAC wouldn't exist the same, The President would need to decide how their function would be carried out in the future.

What will happen to existing groups like the SACP in the meantime, given the work of Network 100 and ongoing activity surrounding this reform? Gordon suggested that we suspend our Business Plan and write officially to Gordon identifying what finances we would need to continue our current operations. If there is to be equality of standards and delivery, how will this be measured and monitored, e.g. training? We could look at other parties being invited to hearing, e.g. Health officials.

Time off work is still a major bone of contention for many panel members and there needs to be a comprehensive set of arrangements to let employers, line managers and supervisors know what is involved in the Hearing System.

It was a very candid, open and fruitful discussion which everyone appreciated and we thanked Gordon for his time to share some of the thoughts being deliberated at this time.

Parenting Order Training and the twenty-eight panel members who have been removed from office as a result of failing to attend. The concerns discussed at December's meeting were put to Gordon who agreed it was unfortunate that Parenting Orders had never been used in Scotland since their introduction. It was suggested that this matter could be taken up with one of the MSPs to look at how the situation had been allowed to happen, what could be done to prevent something similar happening in the future and what criteria needed to be met re training/re-appointment. Mary Fawcett offered to do this.

#### 108.4 **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

107<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting minutes: Proposed: Angela McGroarty Seconded: George Reoch.

#### **108.5 Matters Arising and correspondence**

Margaret Easton has looked into a new laptop and selected an appropriate Dell model for under £500.

GIRFEC – There will be roadshows held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth and Aberdeen. Details to follow.

#### **108.6 Chair's Report**

Child Law UK/TACT meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January was not attended as it was arranged at short notice. A Press Release was issued explaining how this organisation is attempting to get all parties to discuss the issues surrounding children's lives. They are trying to get an Edinburgh location for Scottish meetings of this organisation.

#### **108.7 Constitution**

Angela McGroarty, Ann Lee, and George Reoch are due to step down from their current roles in line with the constitution. The discussion was opened so people could consider if they were interested in any of the positions due to be vacated.

There were two main options discussed, i.e. everyone to consider whether they would be willing to stand, and if so, make their intentions known in writing. The other option was to change the constitution to allow people to stay in the positions longer. This would need to be done in writing in advance of the AGM for all to vote on. There was mixed views on whether this was a good idea.

#### **108.8 Pre-service packs**

There are 553 new panel members currently in pre-service training and they will all be issued with SACP pre-service packs towards the end of the course. SACP members are required to help complete the packs and put them in envelopes.

#### **108.9 Treasurer's Report**

Margaret Gaughan indicated that we have enough funds to cover SACP activities through the financial year end, including the new computer and the 2008 SACP pre-service packs for new panel members.

Margaret Gaughan will provide a forecast of how much money we have and how much we will need for the coming year at the next meeting.

Conferences: approval should be sought prior to attending a conference, including conference fees, travelling expenses, loss of earnings, etc.

#### **108.10 Consultations**

Three consultations are due.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2007,  
CONSULTATION ON SECONDARY LEGISLATION

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN REGULATIONS

FORENSIC LEGISLATION

It was discussed that we should try and encourage panel members and more SACP Reps to respond, so we have an input which provides a wider response. It is important to respond, even if it is to say that it is not relevant for our organisation.

#### **108.11 Press Secretary's Report and Website update**

Press reports:- The press has been full of articles about children and the Hearing system, particularly about Network 100. There were also articles on ultrasonic alarms to keep teenagers away from areas and that tagging will be rolled out across Scotland after a successful pilot. There were good examples of how tagging can work as a better option to secure accommodation.

Website:- The website is up to date with only two recent reports to be added, i.e. National School and Restorative Justice conference. It also contains photographs from the SACP Christmas 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner.

There was a suggestion that perhaps we could put a fun quiz on the website in conjunction with the Children's Hearing Training Unit.

Encourage panel members to access the website and use it to contact the SACP.

#### **108.12 Conference Reports and future events**

Conferences were displayed for all to see at the meeting. Some examples:-

4<sup>th</sup> March – Trauma & Recovery – Beyond childhood trauma – recovery and adaptation after overwhelming stress.

3 day Conference – Children in Scotland – Erskine Bridge Hotel.

13<sup>th</sup> March – Growing up in rural Scotland – Rural family matters.

Full day – Children in Scotland – Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

21<sup>st</sup> April – Leading by values in education – Managing by Kibble Education & Care Centre.

Full Day - Children in Scotland – Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew.

30<sup>th</sup> April– Working it Out – Developing the children sector workforce.  
Examines the reform agenda for all those working with children & young people across Scotland. Full Day - Children in Scotland – Edinburgh

15<sup>th</sup> May – Children’s Mental Health - Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

If there are any that people want to attend. Let Aileen know at [aileen-p@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aileen-p@hotmail.co.uk)

108.13 A.G.M.

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June – Venues discussed were Pitlochry, Perth, Aviemore, but no decision was made. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

**107.14 AOCB**

Nothing raised.

**107.15 Key points for Feedback.**

- Gordon Watt’s update.
- Network 100 / GIRFEC Learning community – SACP invited to attend – 30 interested parties.
- Pre-service packs.
- Consultations – contributions required.
- Tagging – to be rolled out across Scotland.
- Website updated.

**Date of next meeting:-**

19th April in Stirling.