

105th Council Meeting

Saturday, June 9th 2007

10.30a.m – 15.00p.m.

**Hilton Hotel
Dundee**

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Scottish Association of Children's Panels

105th Council Meeting

Saturday 9th June 2007

10.00am – 13.00pm

Hilton Hotel, Dundee

105.1 Sederunt and Apologies

P.Maynard (Dumfries & Galloway), A. McGroarty (Glasgow 3), M. Easton (Highland), M. Fawcett (Aberdeenshire), B. McGugan (Inverclyde), A. Lee (W. Dumbartonshire), G.Adamson (Borders), G.Reoch (Glasgow 5), M.Gaughan (Glasgow 4), W.Milne (Angus), S.McMenemy (N.Ayrshire), L.Benton (N.Lanarkshire), A.Philp(Aberdeen City).

Apologies: R.Graham, (Dundee), B.Burke (Midlothian), M.Stenhouse (Clackmannanshire), S.Panton (S.Lanarkshire), A.MacLeod (Western Isles), K.Perfect (East Dumbartonshire), J.Noble (Argyll & Bute), D.Stalker (Chairman's Rep).

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

105.2 Minutes of Previous Meetings

104th Council Meeting minutes approved:- Gordon Adamson (proposed), George Reoch (seconded).

105.3 Matters Arising and correspondence

Unallocated Cases –Margaret provided an update on the response from Local Authorities on the number of cases where there is no allocated Social Worker. 4 areas have not responded, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Shetland, and West Dunbartonshire. SACP members will contact the relevant person in their area that have not responded, in an attempt to get an answer. The areas who have responded, indicate the majority of children have allocated Social Workers. The letters were addressed to Head of Service. Margaret will send the consolidated summary to SEED to highlight the situation.

Margaret to follow up on actions from the last meeting.

105.4 Issues raised by panel members

i. Correspondence from Ian Fulton, Glasgow East.

Input on 'Time off to attend hearing', 'Appeal procedure', and some other issues. Plan is to pass some of Ian's comments (with his permission) to Gordon Watt.

ii. Time off to attend hearings

Mary Fawcett has asked her panel members for feedback regarding this subject and she has received a considerable response. Other areas to send a similar letter (Mary to provide a copy for everyone).

iii. Written reasons to be written out in full for each child. Willie Milne, Angus. Different practice in each area. Some areas write the reasons for every child, other areas write for one child and refer to this on the other children(s) reasons.

Additional copies are typed for each child and included in the papers for future hearings. Margaret to highlight this to SCRA for clarification on what the practice should be.

iv. Hand written versus typed reasons

Glasgow have gone back to hand written reasons to alleviate work load pressures on support staff. This was supposed to be a two week period, but the practice is ongoing. North Ayrshire are still working with hand written reasons. The Best Practice is for reasons to be typed. Margaret to highlight this to SCRA.

v. Pre-service packs

Positive feedback from panel members in response to this pack. Quite a number of database forms have been sent from all over Scotland due to this pack.

105.5 Correspondence

Letter from Gordon Watt on a review of SCRA. A response is required on various issues related to SCRA and the Hearing System as soon as possible. Everyone to read the requirements posted on the web or via the handout at this meeting and send a response to Ann and Margaret by Monday 11th June.

Subject raised by Angela, from the training unit, where relating to how Reporters are operating at hearings. Some of them are influencing hearings on how they are run and what decisions are made. There is a fear that panel members are being de-skilled because the advice given are at odds with the training being provided.

There is a concern that the Reporters have a different agenda at times.

e.g. do you really need an early review?, contact considerations, interjecting/interfering, conflicting messages.

Often the Reporters are turning up only 5 minutes before a hearing or late.

Some of this discussion, should be fed back via the SCRA consultation request.

105.6 Chairman's Report

Child Law UK. Plan for them to merge with TACT and operated as a sub-group. Ann provided feedback on this and supplied written reports on both organisations. This will help Child Law UK with administration and their financial stability.

Mention of some relevant conferences coming up.

Business Plan has been submitted and we are awaiting a response from Lyn Phillips. Everyone complimented and thanked Ann for pulling this together.

105.7 Treasurer's Report

We do not have any money left in the accounts in line with what SEED had asked for, i.e. not to carry over money from one year to the next. We have requested money to be provided in advance to cover upcoming expenses.

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

105.8 Press Secretary's Report and Website update

Press reports:-

Prison Officers brought in to establishments at Children's request to set guidelines
Mock abductions to be set up at a cost of £1.7m to prepare children

Website up to date with all reports.

Forum discussed, but not practical as administration would be too cumbersome.

A post box might be an idea and this will be discussed with the web site designer
to understand if this is possible.

105.9 Membership Secretary report

Mary provided a brief update on this and agreed to contact some people who have
not been coming to meetings to clarify their position.

105.10 Conference Reports and future events

1/2nd Nov – Peebles

105.11 AOCB

SCRA consultation response – Paul Maynard raised a point on this subject.

105.12 Key points for Feedback.

All SACP Reps to ask for input from their areas - points to be raised, questions, best
practice for the next meeting?

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operating at hearings. Some of them are influencing hearings on how they are run and
what decisions are made. There is a fear that panel members are being de-skilled because
the advice given are at odds with the training being provided. There is a concern that the
Reporters have a different agenda at times.

e.g. do you really need an early review?, contact considerations, interjecting/interfering,
conflicting messages.

Often the Reporters are turning up only 5 minutes before a hearing or late.

Some of this discussion, should be fed back via the SCRA consultation request.

Membership progress and Website.

Summary of Actions

Letter from Gordon Watt on a review of SCRA. A response is required on various issues
related to SCRA and the Hearing System as soon as possible. Everyone to read the
requirements posted on the web or via the handout at this meeting and send a response to
Ann and Margaret by Monday 11th June.

Margaret will send the consolidated summary of Unallocated Social Workers to SEED to
highlight the situation.

Margaret to forward Ian Fulton's correspondence to Gordon Watt, after Angela has agreed that Ian is okay with that.

A post box might be useful for the Website in stead of a forum. George/Margaret will discuss with the web site designer to understand if this is possible.

Time off to attend hearings:- Other area Reps to send a similar letter (Mary Fawcett to provide a copy for everyone of what she sent) and ask for feedback.

Margaret to follow-up with Alison Wright from SCRA;

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, not being communicated effectively.
- Social Background Reports not available in time.
- Appointment of a Safeguarder versus substantive decision.
- Written reasons for every child – is this necessary?
- Hand written reasons versus typed reasons – typed is best practice.

Some areas are having problems with Reporters, e.g. do you really need an early review, contact considerations, interjecting/interfering, conflicting messages, turning up late for Hearing or only arrive 5 minutes before. Each Rep to ask their panel members if they are experiencing such issues.

Mary Fawcett to contact the people who have not been coming to meetings to clarify their position.

Date of next meeting:-

11th Aug (Executive Meeting) in Stirling

15th September (full council meeting) in Stirling