



CYPSP Children, Young People and Offending Sub-Group
Minutes of meeting held on 12th August 2016
YJA Waring Street, Belfast

Present:

Declan McGeown	YJA (Chair)
Maurice Leeson	HSCB
Alison Foster	HSCNI
Michael Heaney	YJA
Eithne McElroy	PBNI
Donnie Sweeney	NIACRO
Michelle Janes	Barnardos
Paula Rodgers	Include Youth
Anne Marie McClure	Opportunity Youth
Jim Wharton	YJA (minutes)

Apologies:

Colm Walsh	EXTERN
Mark Dennison	PSNI

Declan asked for a round of introductions.

All present agreed that the minutes of the last meeting in October 2015 were an accurate reflection of what took place.

Declan gave an account of developments since the October meeting, explaining that he has had high level discussion with our new Minister Claire Sugden and found her and her team very engaged and passionate in their commitment to their new roles, particularly in regard to young people.

Declan will have further meetings with the Minister regarding the way forward for children in the Justice system. Declan stated that things would become clearer once the Programme for Government was finalised which he anticipates will be around the end of the year / beginning of 2017.

Declan's initial impression is that the Minister and her colleagues understand and agree with the importance of co-operation between agencies and early intervention.

Declan briefly spoke about:

Children's Strategy – due to go out for consultation in Autumn;

Co-Operation Act; and

Outcomes Based Accountability.

There followed discussion regarding Woodlands and Lakeland and the aspiration that a closer working between the two facilities in the future based on an emphasis on health/welfare rather than detention was actively being considered.

There was discussion around the age of criminal responsibility. Several commented on the need to endeavour to change public opinion by way of a PR exercise which would give greater detail re: the consequences of any change. It was generally felt that changing the age of responsibility would present a challenge. The Minister's mind is not yet known in regard to this.

Paula welcomed the Scoping Study but voiced her sense of frustration at the inability to engage due to the lack of detail at this stage re: what is to happen and asked about a timeline for wider consultation. Declan stated that it was difficult to anticipate – hopefully post Autumn.

Maurice asked if our previously developed Map of Young Person's Journey through the Justice System was still relevant and was there a need to update this. Members asked for copies of this to be e-mailed and Maurice stated that this would be done.

There was discussion initiated by Anne-Marie around young people at risk of suicide and this was extended to include those at risk from paramilitaries. It was suggested that there should be a section of Woodlands/Lakewood specifically for such young people.

Declan summarised the envisaged timeline re: the alignment of the Scoping Study to government direction and the need to touch base with the Children's Commissioner as we progress same.

Maurice gave an update on EITP and there followed discussion around various EI initiatives. Discussion also around difficulty with identifying those young people who need to be targeted.

Donnie also mentioned the sense of a lack of protocols within schools in flagging up the children of prisoners as being young people potentially at risk.

Declan suggested that the next meeting of the CYPO should look at Early Intervention. If anyone has further ideas for items for the agenda they should contact Jim.

AOB

Paula alerted the meeting to the coming Include Youth conference scheduled to be held at Queen's University on 5th October.

Next Meeting

Possibly around late October, or early November to tie in with progress on the Scoping Study.