

Scottish Children's Reporters Administration National Partnership Forum
Minute of meeting held 27 November 2018



SCOTTISH
CHILDREN'S REPORTER
ADMINISTRATION

Present –

Alistair Hogg – Senior Operational Manager
Paul Harkness – Glasgow Locality Reporter Manager
Neil Hunter – Principal Reporter/ Chief Executive
Fergus Dougal – Branch Secretary
Emma Phillips – UNISON Scotland
Lynn Hobbs – UNISON Steward/ Reporter
Susan Deery – Head of Human Resources

1. Apologies

Monica Sweeney
Adele McCormick
Jim McClafferty
Ross McKenzie
Tom Philliben

2. Minutes previous meeting – Accurate

3. Matters arising

- a) Unacceptable Actions – Paper has been finalised
- b) Fergus Dougal confirmed as partnership representative on IG leads group.

4. Branch membership update

Sarah Russel appointed UNISON representative for SE and Fiona Farquar appointed for Highlands. Cover for Ayrshire is yet to be set. FD stated that training courses will run for SCRA employees to encourage membership growth.

Training courses for both members and non-members of UNISON will include.

- Dementia care
- Autism

EP also noted the Care Inspectorate will offer course spaces out to SCRA employees when appropriate. SD will follow this up.

5. Facility time for Stewards

FD outlined stewards more recently unable to attend branch meetings due to short term staffing issues within localities. FD/SD will develop a briefing sheet for managers outlining the benefits of working in partnership and the attendance at

meeting for stewards. Meeting dates will be set further in advance to allow stewards to plan ahead.

ACTION- Set meeting dates further in advance

6. Temporary Contracts and Secondments

Although FD raised concerns over members' unsettlement of temporary contracts and secondments SD advised that 5% of the organisation are on temporary contracts which is considerably less than previous years and was an acceptable level of fixed term working. The main reason for fixed term working is internal/external secondments. Agreed that UNISON/SCRA would monitor this via HR Sub Group.

7. Staff Survey

NH circulated results of the 2018 staff survey and a breakdown of each question was given. The results of the staff survey will be presented to the board in December 2018. The overall analysis of the survey were that things are going in the right direction. It was noted that a drop in "Managers Support" may be an issue for staff. A combated discussion was held on the importance of having more meaningful supervision sessions between managers and staff, perhaps moving away from formal settings to more day to day communication regarding work load and providing some structure to staff. Managers will also be able to record supervision sessions on itrent. Role break down of the outcomes of the health and wellbeing survey will be sent to UNISON.

ACTION – locality and role breakdown of health and wellbeing survey analysis to UNISON (SD)

8. Work Loading support and allocation strategy

Over the past years SCRA have been able to develop a better work load balance for staff. FD highlighted issues regarding staff being asked to cover work in other localities which on the face of it may be less time sensitive work than the individuals own work. This has been particularly the case for cross Locality assistance. Staff may not understand the context behind being asked to complete tasks but managers will be aware of the background and should be able to communicate that. Work load is visible and moveable due to the case management system. An ongoing resource allocation systems is in place across SCRA which makes it easier to monitor and break down resources against needs.

9. CHIP Update

SCRA continues to work with partner agencies to deliver the better hearings national workstream. The main focus is to improve children and young people's experiences, support them to participate more fully, make reports more relevant to the children's hearing system, improving the recording of hearing decisions and a clearer understanding of why decisions have been made. NH gave an update on the CHIP including Better Hearings and learning and development. He noted that

there was no real appetite for changes to the blueprint but that some process was being made. NH also provided an update on the Independent Care Review.

10. Digital Update

NH gave verbal update on progress which has been made with Digital delivery. Alpha phase of development has now finished and is going through digital first assessment standards. All staff are encouraged to engage with updates of the system as they become available.

11. Health, Wellbeing & Staff Survey Group Update

Although the most recent health and wellbeing group was postponed to a later date SD discussed the proposal to develop Mindfulness Champions in localities. This course will commence at the end of January 2019 with staff feeling the benefit of guided meditations and relaxation techniques by mid year.

12. Equalities Network Update

Heading into 2019 the equalities network will continue focus on

- protected characteristics
- care experienced young people
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Mainstreaming and Progress Report

13. HR Sub Group Update

SD gave an update on areas the HR sub group are focusing on which included

- Updating Maximising attendance policy.
- Dignity at work – Clarity around behaviours.
- Changes on itrent regarding bereavement leave.
- Guidance for managers on covering court work.
- Working with Hays to facilitate job evaluations.

EP raised concerns around the non-transparent processes used by hays when evaluating job descriptions This was noted and assurances given on the recent health check and plans to support committee members going forward.

14. Financial Update

Ross MacKenzie was unable to attend today – but provided a written update to NH

- Having reported a potential £120k overspend earlier this year, at the five month stage budget holders forecasts suggested a break even revenue position for 2018/19 thanks to diligent resource management by budget holders. Latest forecasts are suggesting it may be possible to target an underspend to carry forward and support 2019/20 budget pressures, after allowing for the additional cost of this year's pay award.

- LMTs and Head Office teams are submitting their budget returns this week (w/c 26 Nov), and a first draft of the 2019/20 revenue budget will go to EMT in early December.
- EMT are preparing for a number of funding scenarios from SG, including “published budget” (£21.3m) and “flat cash” (£22.8m, this year’s funding). Talks with SG officials and Ministers around SCRA’s needs are continuing.
- Current forecasts for the Digital programme and Property capital are largely on budget.

EP offered UNISON’s support in representation to SG/Ministers in relation to SCRA’s budgetary position.

15. New Risks

Other than financial position of SCRA – which is well assessed, no new risks identified.

16. Date of Next Meeting

- 19 February 2019
- 21 May 2019
- 27th August 2019
- 20th November 2019