

Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Date: 22/10/2014

Venue: Conference Room 24 – Ty Hywel, National Assembly for Wales

Chair: Christine Chapman AM

Delegates present:

Ben Ford (Write to Freedom)

Charlie Cable (SOVA)

Chris Powles (Pembrokeshire Youth)

Christine Mathias (Pembrokeshire LA)

Corin Morgan-Armstrong (HMP Parc)

Danielle Rayner (IOM)

Elaine Speyer (Minutes)

Emma Reed (CSOF Service)

Eve Wilmott (MA Student)

Jack Stanley (Peter Hain Office)

Jo Mulcahy (PACT)

Jocelyn Davies staff member

Karen Rees (Barnardo's Cymru)

Laura O'Keefe (VCS Cardiff)

Laura Tranter (Barnardo's Cymru)

Lindsey Pudge (Barnardo's Cymru)

Margaret Gardner (FASO)

Nicky Sturgess-Webb (Vale of Glamorgan LA)

Robert Jones (Wales Governance Centre)

Robin Lewis (Christine Chapman staff)

Sam Clutton (Barnardo's Cymru)

Sara Steele (VCS Cardiff)

Shamshi Ahmed (SOVA)

Sian Thomas (Member's Research)

Tim Ruscoe (Barnardo's Cymru)

Tony Kirk (NOMS)

Trish Woodhouse (PACT)

Vicki Evans (Christine Chapman staff)

Yvonne Rodgers (Barnardo's Cymru)

Zoe Lancelott (RCT Education)

Apologies:

Gaynor Davies (RCT)

Aled Roberts AM

Jenny Rathbone AM

Jessica Joyce (MA Student)

Julie Morgan AM

Suzy Davies AM

Mohammad Asghar AM

Olwen Richards (Anglesey LA)

Paul Lewis (CCfW)

1. Welcome & Introduction

Christine Chapman AM welcomed delegates to the meeting and set out the statistics on the number of children affected by parental imprisonment in Wales, which is estimated to be 200,000. It is also estimated that there are 500,000 prison visits, made by these children and young people per year which equates to 10,000 per week, which is equivalent to the population of 39 primary school. HMP Parc in Bridgend receives 2,000 visits by children and young people per year. Awareness of the children affected by parental imprisonment and the impact of this is limited in many schools and so this is often remains a hidden issue. The purpose of the Cross Party Group is to raise the profile of the issue and to share current good practice.

2 Education, Wellbeing & Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment

Dr. Sam Clutton from Barnardo's Cymru discussed the policy context and the impact of parental imprisonment on educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people. Welsh Government have made a clear commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and this includes right to an education that allows all children and young people to fulfill their potential. The impact of parental imprisonment and associated issues such as poverty impact negatively on educational engagement and outcomes for these children. Reducing the current gap in educational attainment between children and young people and raising attainment overall is at the centre of current education policy in Wales. There is clear evidence from Estyn that supporting pupil well-being supports better attainment. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has said in his latest annual report that while he

welcomes the focus on pupil attainment this must not be at the expense of pupil. Supporting the well-being of pupils affected by parental imprisonment will help them to realize their rights to an education and to attain, this in turn will help to protect them against increased risks of offending behaviour as they grow.

3 Invisible Walls Accord: Working with schools

Corin Morgan-Armstrong from HMP Parc discussed the work of the prison around education for children affected by parental imprisonment, including the Invisible Walls Accord. He described how having a parent in prison can affect children's education significantly, and looked at the correlation between what happens at school, youth offending and being imprisoned as an adult. Within Parc Prison there has been a focus on education for children affected by parental imprisonment this has included, parent teacher evenings, homework club, Duke of Edinburgh training for dads, literacy groups for young parents with literacy problems and their children and many other types of evidence based family engagement which involves the whole family coming together. This has been proven to reduce re-offending rates and changes the predetermined outcomes for these children.

4 Implementing a Local Education Authority approach to supporting CAPI in education

Zoe Lancelott, Head of Engagement and Participation for Rhondda Cynon Taf education authority discussed how they have embedded an approach which recognises and supports the needs of children affected by parental imprisonment alongside other vulnerable groups. Using tools such as the Invisible Walls Accord and the Handbook for schools which has been produced by Barnardo's Cymru, they have engaged schools across the area. They have translated the needs of these children into a language schools use on daily basis to understand the impact on pupil learning and their data sets. Estyn places emphasis on well-being, which has helped schools to see the how they could work with this group. RCT have placed CAPI within their strategic action plan as well as the operational delivery plans of the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the SEETs Team. Zoe discussed the difficulties experienced in finding data, with schools not realising there are children affected by these issues attending their school. The handbook for schools, which has been sent out to all schools in the LEA area has helped with this. From September a well-being notification form has been put in place to support the collection of data in relation to vulnerable groups and the building of new data sets for the vulnerability profiling process. Vulnerability profiling is RCT's approach to identification of those at risk of disengaging from learning, which currently uses Education, Children's Services and Police data. CAPI is one of the new data sets being built for inclusion in this process. This will help schools to identify pupils whose ability to engage in learning is negatively impacted upon by their membership of a vulnerable group, rather than focusing on the vulnerability itself.

5 Barnardo's Cymru Handbook for schools & Community Support for Offenders' Families (CSOF) work with education

Emma Reed, a project worker for the Barnardo's Cymru CSOF service, discussed the work which Barnardo's Cymru delivers with Children Affected by Parental Imprisonment. The CSOF service works alongside offender management and currently covers Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, this has expanded to include Bridgend & Neath Port Talbot. Barnardo's are also partners with HMP Parc in the Invisible Walls Wales service. HMP Parc also have a new visitors centre where 2 Barnardo's Cymru staff will be based. Emma also discussed CAPI Talkback

which is a series of participation events for children who use the service to have their voices heard. Emma provided a case study which showed the value of the work which the CSOF service had undertaken with a family and engagement in education for the child. The approach has helped to reduce stigma for children as well as opening up a form of communication if they feel like they need advice or support. Emma provided an example of a school where within one day of a poster from the resource pack being put up at the school, two children arrived at the door to say “that’s my dad”. Training also helps to reduce stigma. CSOF have developed a workshop for young people to create empathy with their peers and are delivering this to pupils in schools.

6 Questions & answers

Q: Margaret Gardner (FASO): What support is there for sex offenders’ families?

A: Emma Reed (Barnardo's CSOF): CSOF does work with families where a family member is in prison for sexual offences. The emotional impact and issues such as stigma are often even greater in these cases and the partner and children left in the community need support to cope. Risk assessments in relation to each case would shape the nature of work undertaken in terms of whether contact was appropriate or not etc. Emma then provided a case example of a family in these circumstances that CSOF has supported.

A: Jo Mulcahy (PACT): PACT has a family worker based at HMP Usk/Prescoed which houses prisoners who have committed sexual offences. PACT works to support affected families.

A: Corin Morgan-Armstrong (HMP Parc): Corin explained that in a former role he had worked directly with prisoners who have committed sexual offences. Corin suggested that prisoners who have committed sexual offences are least likely to have family contact following their offence but where it is possible to support family work in a safe way it was important to do so as there are clear links between continued family contact and reduced risks of re-offending. Corin said that this was an emotive issue but each case needed to be looked at on an individual basis.

Q: Robert Jones (Wales Governance Centre): How consistent is the approach to supporting CAPI children in schools across Wales – is RCT leading the way or is there a similar picture elsewhere?

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): All LEA’s in Wales are working on addressing pupil well-being and a lot of work is taking place though different authorities are developing their own ways of supporting pupil well-being.

A: Sam Clutton (Barnardo’s Cymru): RCT is leading the way in relation to the issue of pupil well-being for CAPI children, not aware of any other areas who have integrated CAPI into their pupil well-being strategy and action planning in a systematic way.

A: Corin (HMP Parc): Reiterated that point reflecting on the fact that the other authorities that the Invisible Walls Wales Accord had contact with were often positive in engaging on the issue but had not integrated CAPI as a vulnerable group into their strategy in the way RCT has.

Q: Chris Powles (Pembrokeshire Youth Service): How is the issue of confidentiality and information sharing managed – is it possible for prisons to share information directly with LEAs/schools?

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): The vulnerability profiling that RCT undertake involves capturing the information that is available about a child and using this to provide the school with an indication of additional need for that child (traffic light system:

red/amber/green). Schools are not provided with any confidential information that informs the vulnerability profile outcome, we use the Privacy Notice issued by schools to support the use of data sets which states: 'we will share information if it is in the interests of pupil well-being'.

A: Corin (HMP Parc): Prisons cannot share that information in relation to individuals with schools without consent because of data protection. However part of the aim of the Accord work, such as posters inviting children to speak to a single point of contact for CAPI was that children would identify themselves.

Q: Yvonne Rodgers (Barnardo's): *The vulnerability profiling work in RCT that Zoe has set out has huge potential and any recommendations that come out of the CPG should give consideration to disseminating information about the approach.*

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): The system has taken 6 years to develop and does provide a new approach- the lessons are being shared through networks and the consortia.

Q: Robin Lewis (Christine Chapman AM Support Staff): *What is the role for school governors in terms of taking forward this agenda?*

A: Corin Morgan-Armstrong (HMP Parc): Awareness raising with school governors is crucial and I would encourage school governors to come into the prison and see the work that is going on so that they can better understand the issues facing children.

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): School governors have to undertake mandatory data management training, the vulnerability profiling work has been included in this training and this also provides for awareness raising about the vulnerable groups such as CAPI.

A: Emma Reed (Barnardo's CSOF): CSOF provides training to schools, including training for school governors. The timing of training and availability of attendees is an issue so the service has started to offer flexible 'twilight' sessions so that people can attend after their working day.

Q: Laura Okeefe (Cardiff Volunteer Centre): *Is there any scope for a workshop to be developed to be rolled out into PSE lessons involving IWW to teach pupils themselves?*

A: Emma Reed (Barnardo's CSOF): At CSOF, we have developed a workshop for pupils to increase empathy and understanding, with the aim to reduce stigma.

Q: Karen Rees. *Is there any scope for fitting it into teacher training programmes?*

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): It is difficult because the teacher training programme is already packed –there are so many issues to cover – the same is true of the PSE curriculum; however raising awareness through training and through the wellbeing agenda can work.

Q: Jo Mulcahy (PACT): *In Caerphilly & Wrexham they have a student assistance programme which has children at the heart. Is that something that is running in RCT?*

A: Zoe Lancelott (RCT): I'm not sure that is something that we have considered, but am happy to look into it. Any suggestions are gratefully received.

A: Emma Reed (Barnardo's CSOF): I have been trained to develop this programme and I am aware it is being widely used throughout Caerphilly, but less so throughout other local authorities.

Sam Clutton ended the session by inviting the panel to provide their key messages:

Corin Morgan-Armstrong (HMP Parc): Reiterated the opportunity for prison visits to work differently, which is such a huge opportunity to engage with schools, however there is still a lot of work to do. It is fair to say Parc are somewhat further along than others. But there are a lot of schools in Wales & England which the children of our prisoners attend and we need to keep working on engaging with them.

Emma Reed (Barnardo's CSOF): The voice of the family is so important; you need a lot of input and emotional support for family to engage with education. Also the handbook is a fantastic resource for schools.

Zoe Lancelott (RCT): The Local Education Authority has a responsibility to support schools to engage in the framework, which they might initially be afraid of. However it is possible for local authorities to do this seamlessly. It is hugely important to take away the stigma around this issue.