

**LASWS Children and Families Meeting
Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
on 7 November 2013**

1. Introductions

Attendees:

Anna Aitken (East Ayrshire Council)
Graham Alexander (Falkirk Council)
Jim Brooks (Argyll and Bute Council)
Scott Bryan (North Ayrshire Council)
Heather Carey (East Ayrshire Council)
Wendy Duguid (West Lothian Council)
Carrie Graham (Scottish Government, Statistics) Chair
Kirsten Hilland (Scottish Government, Statistics)
Mandy Houghton (Fife Council)
Kerstin Jorna (Dundee City Council)
Susie Kempself (Glasgow City Council)
Pamela Knott (Aberdeenshire Council)
Denise Macleod (Scottish Government, Statistics) Minutes
Jim McCaffrey (South Ayrshire Council)
Nicola Milne (Moray Council)
Roger Morden (Falkirk Council)
Yvonne Murton (Argyll and Bute Council)
Stuart Osborough (City of Edinburgh Council)
Jacqueline Pender (West Dunbartonshire Council)
Janet Penman (Midlothian Council)
Laura Pugh (North Lanarkshire Council)
Jacqui Small (Renfrewshire Council)
Vicky Wood (Renfrewshire Council)

Apologies:

Gail Abraham (Renfrewshire Council)
Craig Bernard (Moray Council)
Patricia Clapham (East Renfrewshire Council)
Derek Clark (Perth and Kinross Council)
Kathleen Kennedy (Inverclyde Council)
Caroline McConnell (East Dunbartonshire Council)
Matt Mclay (Stirling Council)
Shirley Moore (Aberdeen City Council)
Suzanne Murray (East Lothian Council)
Marie O'Sullivan (Orkney Council)
Isobel Prentice (South Lanarkshire Council)
Margaret Steel (Perth and Kinross Council)

2. Actions from previous meeting

Prior to the meeting, the group were sent a summary of the action points, complete with updates. The minutes were accepted as read. Falkirk asked to discuss legal reasons further which will be included under the children looked after item. There is one outstanding action point as follows which is on hold during the busy period:-

Data Processes - Planned restructure of specification

- **ACTION – ON HOLD:** A database will be developed which will show a different style of data specification. It will show a history of planned variables and be more helpful over time.

3. Disability/Additional Support Needs

Carrie Graham (Scottish Government) explained that in the run-up to the publication of the 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2011-12' (March 2013), her team were contacted by the Equalities team about the data on 'Disability' that had been collected for Child Protection, Looked After Children and Secure Accommodation. From this it emerged that the data collected did not meet the definition of Disability outlined in the Equality (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result:

1. We had to change how we referred to this information (hence renaming that category Additional Support Needs for the publication).
2. We were not meeting the public sector duty to collect information on disability.

Since then, Carrie's team have been investigating what next steps should be taken and have found that the definition of disability used by other parts of the UK (which would tie-in with recommendations from the UK Statistics Authority on comparability) as well as the recommended question offered by the Equality are all very similar. For example the definition in England uses a binary question:

'Does the child/young person have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (Y/N)

ACTION: Carrie said she was waiting for advice from colleagues and would contact LAs in the new year about a recommended new disability question (which will replace the current ASN question). It's important to establish the definition and criteria. This can then be discussed at the May meeting and hopefully introduced for 2015/16.

Carrie also mentioned that it may be possible at some point in the future to link LAC data with health assessment data to reduce burden on LAs. However, some form of a disability question will still be required in LAC. The Data Linkage Centre (NRS) is hoping to build a data warehouse with scope to link to other ID numbers which may also be useful in the future.

4. Children Looked After

2012/13 – Issues?

Kirsten Hilland (Scottish Government) informed the group that the current collection was underway with a final deadline of 29 November. She asked LAs how they were finding this.

Aberdeenshire – are quite far on. Currently waiting on some validation and hoping to submit by deadline.

Moray – are currently concentrating on CP. Will then start CLAS.

Argyll and Bute – Yvonne is quite new in post but happy with how CLAS is progressing. Currently running some validation reports.

Fife – going fine. Using same process as last year.

Falkirk – getting CP out of way first. Done some work on short term placements.

South Ayrshire – progressing?

North Lanarkshire – are running reports and validating. Doing placements and aftercare. Short term placements is complete. Kirsten has been providing data to allow them to validate against last year's data.

Edinburgh – have uploaded main LAC section. Aftercare and short term placements are in progress and looking OK.

West Dunbartonshire – the Care First extract isn't right. Currently concentrating on CP.

Midlothian – have uploaded aftercare. Respite is ready.

Glasgow City – have uploaded CLAS (had problems doing this). Still to do short term placements and aftercare and to validate. Have had issues due to moving to a different version of Care First.

Dundee City – the aftercare section is done. Their main problem is that they are not on one of the main systems. Hoping to do by deadline.

West Lothian – are validating their data.

East Ayrshire – just waiting for aftercare data.

Renfrewshire – problems with legal status (if there are 2 at the same time). Just to add a comment for this. Short term placements are done and ready to upload. For those that are eligible for aftercare but have had no actual involvement, the advice was to use what was the last available information on accommodation.

South Ayrshire – are cleaning data and will re-upload. Aftercare and short term placements are in progress.

Some LAs asked what to do with records that should have been closed in the previous period.

ACTION: For LAs wishing to close episodes still open in the previous period, William Doyle (Scottish Government, ScotXed) will be opening up an updates record for closing episodes. LAs will be notified when this is available.

There was some discussion on how to record young people that were not engaging in aftercare. Economic activity could be provided if the young person was in contact in the last year. Otherwise, this should be recorded as 'not known'. To be in receipt of aftercare services, the young person must have received some form of support within the last 12 months.

2013/14 and 2014/15 – Update

The data specifications were finalised and available on the ScotXed website.

For 2015/16, it was thought that the only change would be to the disability/Additional Support Needs question.

Falkirk enquired if the legal reason categories were set in stone. Carrie said there was flexibility with regards to how they are labelled, although the structure was fixed. They also enquired if a legal expert had been involved given that there was a new act in place. Carrie commented that policy colleagues with expertise in this area had been involved in the re-draft. However, the Scottish Government did have lawyers who could look at these categories although this may not reflect the social work aspect. In the meantime, the existing categories are to continue to be used (the code concept has not changed). There followed further discussion on legal reasons and Carrie proposed that LAs and the Scottish Government work collectively to create guidance on this to assist with interpretation and the various situations that could arise.

ACTION: Carrie to contact the Solicitors Office about the legal reason categories.

ACTION: Carrie to set up a CAB Group to look at legal reasons

Aftercare Local Authority Level Comparator Tool

Kirsten has created an aftercare local authority level comparator tool as some LAs had requested this. It is along the same lines as the ones currently available for CLAS and CP and will include numbers eligible and receiving aftercare, by economic activity, with a pathway plan and with a pathway co-ordinator. It was hoped this would be available soon.

Fife enquired if this information would sit alone or will show as a natural progression from children being looked after. It is currently separate but would be interesting to look at now that there is four years' data.

ACTION: Kirsten has already built a longitudinal dataset (this information was included in the Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children publication). There is potential to include some information on aftercare and this will be looked into.

Edinburgh enquired if the issue of differences in the interpretation of eligible and in receipt of aftercare services would be addressed and if there were checks in place to

see if these were reasonable numbers. There followed discussion around the definition of aftercare - this is compulsory until age 19 years old and then discretionary beyond that until 21 years old. Some LAs provide discretionary aftercare until 21 years old for any young person accommodated at the point of ceasing to be looked after (i.e. Fife) and some LAs don't include after 19 years of age (i.e. Renfrewshire). Steps need to be taken to improve consistency particularly if an LA level comparator tool is to be made available. This tool will be useful in highlighting any issues.

ACTION: Carrie's team to look at guidance on aftercare services and issues with systems. They will contact LAs in due course.

5. Child Protection

2012/13 – Issues?

Some LAs are finding it difficult to provide individual level information on Case Conferences. They felt that de-registrations and those on the child protection register were the most important figures and knew that these are correct.

Edinburgh said that with Swift, the CP process was easy. However, it seems that with other systems there is an issue with time lags for Case Conferences. Some LAs noted that the quality assurance of investigations and Case Conferences had improved their data. However, for other LAs, this had opened up data quality issues.

ACTION: Carrie suggested that, as this is the first year of being fully individual level, the variety of experiences be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTION: A paper on frequently asked questions had been circulated prior to the meeting (paper 3.1) but if LAs wanted anything added to this, they should contact the Statistics team.

In addition, a paper on technical issues was circulated at the meeting which Raymond Buckley (Scottish Government, ScotXed) discussed with the Group. There followed some discussion on these issues.

Carrie asked LAs to let her know if anything was not clear in the Guidance Notes so that this could be fixed for the following year. She thanked LAs for doing this. As this is the first year of individual level, next year's should be better.

ACTION: North Lanarkshire asked if the guidance notes could be in the correct order. It was also thought that having the code lists in the guidance notes would be helpful. Carrie to amend.

The revised deadline for CP is now 15 November due to issues with ProcXed. LAs reported on their current situation:-

Glasgow City – will not meet deadline and will need until the end of the month.

North Ayrshire – have the raw data and will put into the template. There is some follow-up action required.

Renfrewshire – are nearly there. However, there are some areas of concern so won't get in on time.

East Ayrshire – are having upload issues. They also asked for more summary tables.

At the previous meeting, LAs had agreed the current summary table reports and requested no further summaries. However, LAs said they needed certain key figures to agree their data and felt it would be useful to have similar aggregate tables to what they had last year.

ACTION: Carrie looking into what was provided previously as aggregate CP tables and asked to create extra summary tables on the following:-

- Categories of abuse
- Age categories

In addition, it was thought that it might be useful to include the following in the publication:-

- Length of time on register
- Children who appear on the register over the year.

ACTION: Any LAs requiring the additional summary tables noted above are to contact Carrie.

ACTION: Carrie to include any additional summary tables for the next year.

LAs were asked to refer to Raymond's Technical Issues note for further information on current issues with the summary table reports.

Edinburgh – had issues with cause for concern that resulted in registration at the point of de-registration and were having to batch clear these errors.

ACTION: Carrie to look into whether this de-registration error is a problem with the system and, if so, will adjust for next year.

7. AOB

Frequency of meetings

Carrie proposed that, as November is a busy period, the Group meet annually in May. The group agreed to meeting annually and that CAB could be used as a forum for consulting on issues out with this.

Edinburgh mentioned they had been asked to complete an annual return on the Children's Hearing System – this was an individual return similar to the LAC return.

ACTION: Stuart Osborough (Edinburgh) to forward this Children's Hearing return on to Carrie as she had not heard of this and would look further into this.

6. Data Access Agreements

Ailie Clarkson (Scottish Government, ScotXed), who is the Data Access Officer, came along to inform the Group of future developments to the Data Access Agreements procedure. There would be a new template which would comply with the Code of Practice set out by the Information Commission. This wouldn't differ much

to the current version but would ask for additional information within Annex C on data sharing and security. This needed to be very clear. It was also hoped that once an agreement was in place, a new one would only be required every 3 to 5 years (although reviews would have to take place annually). The aim was to make the changes by the new year.

8. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be arranged for May 2014.