

**LASWS Children and Families Meeting  
Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh  
on 28 November 2017**

**1. Introductions**

*Attendees:*

Gail Abraham (Renfrewshire)	Samantha Page-Wood (Aberdeen)
Alan Adam (Argyll and Bute)	Janet Penman (Midlothian)
Graham Alexander (Falkirk)	Laura Pugh (North Lanarkshire)
Gail Baxter (Inverclyde)	Stuart Singleton (North Ayrshire)
Wendy Duguid (West Lothian)	Jacqui Small (Renfrewshire)
Sharon Fry (Dumfries and Galloway)	Janice Smith (Glasgow)
Fiona Hare (East Lothian)	Sandy Sneddon (Clackmannanshire)
Stacey Ironside (Aberdeenshire)	Margaret Steel (Perth and Kinross)
Julia Johnson (Stirling)	Jennie Syme (Clackmannanshire)
Susie Kempself (Glasgow)	
Nicola Lockerbie (Dumfries & Galloway)	Celia MacIntyre (Scottish Govt, Statistics) <i>Chair</i>
Claire Loftus (South Lanarkshire)	Lucy Freem (Scottish Govt, Statistics)
Caroline McConnell (East Dunbartonshire)	<i>Minutes</i>
Fiona McDonald (East Ayrshire)	Stewart McIntosh (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Susan McGrory (West Dunbartonshire)	Graeme Oliver (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Kelly Maxwell-Brown (West Dunbartonshire)	Keith McFerran (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Nicola Milne (Moray)	Craig Gilbert (Scottish Govt, Looked After Children)
Shirley Moore (Aberdeenshire)	Micky Anderson, (CELCIS)
Stuart Osborough (City of Edinburgh)	
George Maldonado (Highland) (at VC follow-up meeting for remote LAs)	Helen Whincup (Stirling University)
	Megan Yates (Glasgow University)

*Apologies:*

Allan Clark (Argyll & Bute)  
 Graeme Alexander (Falkirk)  
 Linda Cusworth (York University)  
 George Maldonado (Highlands)  
 Kelly Maxwell-Brown (West Dunbartonshire)  
 Carolyn Younie (Scottish Government)

## 2. Actions from previous meeting

Action 1 – Done . Child Protection Improvement Programme (CPIP) reports be sent out after meeting. <https://blogs.gov.scot/child-protection-improvement-programme/>

Action 2 – Done. C&F Stats scheduled an earlier deadline (20th Oct), but the ‘normal’ deadline (3rd Nov) was retained.

Action3 – Ongoing. C&F Stats to investigate whether current agreements cover postcodes or similar data.

Action 4 Ongoing. C&F Stats to request information from LAs on how easy providing postcode would be based on a clear definition.

Action 5 –Ongoing. C&F Stats to produce example analysis based on postcodes

Actions 6 – Ongoing. C&F Stats to consider whether additional validation is needed for over-18s to make sure they are correctly included. This will be considered as part of the validation for the 2016/17 collection.

## 3. Children Looked After

There were a number of queries from LAs about how to record permanence data, and some unexpected errors appearing in submissions. It was noted that there is lack of consistency between local authorities in terms of which dates they record. Micky Anderson introduced the context and background to the collection.

The issues identified include

- inconsistency of approach to recording information
- inclusion of kinship care children
- confusion on which date to use for potential adoptions
- the collection of the permanence data may be an extra burden to local authorities who already have a performance framework
- there is a potential burden associated with this collection as the information is not readily available.
- collection of data on 16-18 year olds in care placements on permanence orders as not valid i.e. not in care.

**Action** – Scottish Government to clarify the use of the data collected for 2016/17, and consider issues highlighted.

### 2016/17

There are 12 submissions in progress, 16 approved, 4 initialised as of 28<sup>th</sup> November.

Chasing up late responses starts today, and we have noted requests for deadline extensions for 5 areas, which have been accepted.

The following reasons were identified for delays in returns.

- Uploading data to ProcXed is sometimes slow, and in particular at later points in the day. Stewart McIntosh advised anyone with major issues to contact him to advice.
- New data items (permanence) caused some delays.

Other data issues raised were:

- Foster care placement type (interim/permanent) is causing issues as it is not always clear how to classify as changes over time, and the collection retrospectively is burdensome. Scottish government will investigate previous advice on this data item.
- Comment that current disability data collected is potentially too crude, and noted that the plan was to review this.

## **2017/18 & 2018/19**

There were a number of issues raised in relation to the collection of data from Children's Hearings. LAs expressed strong concerns about the feasibility of this process. A number of local authorities noted that the move to collect the data as part of CLAS would require changes to computer systems which were not currently planned, and that the extension to collect this data from all young people on supervision orders would not be able to be resourced currently. Kinship orders are not looked after children – and therefore not covered in CLAS collection.

These were points were discussed with Sara Crawford, Children's Hearings Scotland, following the meeting.

## **4. Child Protection**

### **2016/17**

Most submissions this year were on time, and early returns gave the extra processing time which was useful, especially with new staff. It was agreed that this would become usual practice, as long as it remains optional. There was no comments that it had resulted in extra burden.

'Other' is getting used more frequently as a cause for concern. An example of this is the use when the concern relates to financial aspects. There was a discussion of how some authorities are using the variable to identify both concern and underlying causes e.g. not just neglect on its own, but in conjunction with another category. LAs agreed that they found the system of multiple causes of concern useful and more accurate than the old system.

It was suggested that there could be 2 different kinds of neglect to reflect this financial/other split, or that we could remove the option to record neglect as the sole concern, as it is too broad.

Action: Discuss neglect recording with Policy team.

#### Clarification of escalation procedure.

Currently the head of unit sends an email roughly two weeks after the deadline. There was agreement that local authorities would where possible provide advance notice of lateness to help our planning of collections and validation, as is done for CLAS.

5. Presentation from Permanently Progressing project (University of York and Stirling University) Slides circulated with minutes
6. Presentation on Children Looked After longitudinal data (Megan Yates, Glasgow University)
7. Other updates and plans for next steps with longitudinal data.

Discussion of longitudinal data. C&F have been progressing work to develop a longitudinal file using individual annual extracts. In the process of doing this, some inconsistencies have been identified between annual snapshots including placements which are not closed, and also changes to placement dates. Celia requested volunteer local authorities to work with to identify the best way to deal with these changes in the data. Paper attached to outline plans for developments.

#### Update on data linkage study regarding looked after children and usage of unscheduled health care

The small-scale study "Meeting the health needs of looked after children in Scotland: an exploratory study" involving linkage of data from Children Looked After Scotland (CLAS) return and data from different health datasets regarding the use of unscheduled health care is progressing. Four local authorities have agreed in principle to participate, whose anonymity will be kept as part of the requirements for usage of such data. The research team are currently seeking the ethical and access approval through submission to different panels governing the use and matching of administrative data. The hope is to begin the study properly at the beginning of 2018, contingent upon all approvals being in place. If you would like any more information, contact Fiona Mitchell at CELCIS directly on [Fiona.mitchell@strath.ac.uk](mailto:Fiona.mitchell@strath.ac.uk)

#### Discussion on data requirement for evaluation of Family Nurse Partnership.

Justine Menzies from Scottish Government, Children and Families Analysis is undertaking a large scale data linkage study that links routine data sets to evaluate the The Family Nurse Partnership(FNP). This includes a large number of health and educational datasets and social work data on looked after children and child protection.

FNP is an evidence based, licensed programme delivered to young (<19) first time mothers from early pregnancy until their child reaches two<sup>1</sup>. As part of the licence agreement

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/maternal-and-child-health/family-nurse-partnership/>

Scottish Government must undertake an evaluation of FNP in Scotland. To do this we have gained approval to conduct a data linkage study using a natural experiment approach.. All approvals for the study have been granted and the data linkage has begun, however it became apparent that it was not possible to link the LAC and CP datasets as they do not hold identifiers required to link to the FNP study or health data as the unique identifier (SCN) is not provided for children under 6 years.

There was a discussion about the feasibility of gathering additional information e.g. postcode. Some local authorities suggested exploring the possibility of gathering Community Health Index for these children as they are more commonly held on their systems. A number of authorities commented that the postcode would not be so useful as it include a number of children, and some children have a large number of postcodes.

**Action:** Scottish Government to circulate a paper describing the FNP study and the request to be considered by the local authority.

## **8. Child Protection Improvement Program (CPIP)**

Celia is working on part of the CPIP action plan, working with CELCIS and Care Inspectorate to data to develop 'minimum dataset' to be used by Child Protection Committees and also in joint inspections of vulnerable children services. Aim is to use measures that are already collected so shouldn't lead to changes in collections in the short term.

LAs expressed interest in re-registration and investigation data being published. This had previously been collected, but that there are issues with using local authority data when there is no central child protection register and so a move from an authority may miss a re-registration.

## **9. AOB**

- Continuing care for children over 18 – guidance sought. Continuing care is currently recorded as a destination, meaning we lose sight of individuals until they appear in aftercare returns whenever they leave care. LAs expressed concern that the current method of recording continuing care after age 16 (as a destination) has a danger of missing recording of individuals in continuing care, or recording the same care pathway in multiple ways, or missing out on recording positive/negative outcomes after continuing care
- SCN collection remains difficult. LAs requested that system validations in future should not show errors for missing SCNs as missing SCNs can often not be found.

## **10.**

### **Date of next meeting**

Proposed for 14<sup>th</sup> May in Atlantic Quay (Glasgow), room to be confirmed.

