

Time to be Heard Sixth Advisory Group Meeting, TTBH, Glasgow
16 December 2010

Minutes

Present:

Tom Shaw - Chair
Dr Anne Carpenter - Commissioner
Kathleen Marshall - Commissioner
Bob Balfour - Care Leavers Association
Margo Dymock - ADSW
Moyra Hawthorn - SIRCC
Debbie Stewart - Education through Care Scotland
Sue Moody - Scottish Government

Apologies:

Pauline Boyce, Who Cares Scotland
Helen Holland - ICSSS Monitoring Group

1. Welcome and Thanks

Tom Shaw welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the Advisory Group. He thanked members for their contribution to the development of Time to be Heard. He explained that papers tabled at the meeting should be returned to the SurvivorScotland team at the end of the meeting as they contained confidential material that would be included in the TTBH Report.

2. Minutes of 5th meeting held on 29 July 2010

The Minutes were approved subject to one change already indicated by Bob. Sue apologised that this amendment (at item 5.3) had not been included in the draft minute circulated to members before the meeting.

3. Update on Time to be Heard

Tom provided an update on Time to be Heard, noting that 98 people had taken part. He and the Commissioners underlined the fact that a flexible, adaptable approach in working with participants had proved essential. People needed to be given time to decide whether they wanted to take part and to be offered the chance to come back if they wished. In fact only one person did so but others sent in additional material after the hearing. It was also clear that the arrangements for hearings needed to be flexible to enable people to feel at ease. He noted that no one asked to hear their taped evidence or to view a transcript.

The Chair and Commissioners emphasised the dignity, humanity and concern not to hurt others that the participants showed and found the experience of hearing the participants' accounts very uplifting. Often they were speaking about very private, painful experiences and in some cases they had not shared these experiences with anyone previously. The resilience shown by many of the participants in the face of adversity and their ability to make successful lives were noteworthy. Tom, Kathleen and Anne also noted the strong sense that people were reflecting their experiences honestly and fully. This was confirmed in many cases because the accounts of different participants who had been in care at the same time corroborated each other.

4. Process Review

Sue circulated a note on the results of the 5 different aspects of the process review already agreed with the Group (feedback from participants, feedback from the Chair, Commissioners and TTBH Team, feedback from ICSSS and other support agencies, data taken from application forms and daily debriefs, costs) and indicated that Quarriers had also been asked to describe the impact of TTBH on them. She noted the high response rate from participants, with 2/3rds completing a feedback form. She also spoke about the overwhelmingly positive responses from participants and their gratitude to the Chair, Commissioners and TTBH team for the sensitivity and kindness shown to them.

Moyra outlined the results from 8 of the 12 interviews conducted with participants. They were very similar to the feedback questionnaires but with some additional information on issues such as preparation for appearing at TTBH, survivor identity, the impact of involvement in TTBH and messages for the future.

5. Restorative Justice Toolkit

Bob took members through an interim report prepared by Sacro. It showed that 15 people out of a possible 85 UK residents had approached Sacro about taking part in the pilot. Ten people were engaged in the process, one had withdrawn and four were considering the option. Sacro noted that timescales for dealing with RJ interventions with this group of survivors were longer than those applying in victim-offender mediation. There are to be some amendments to the Toolkit to make it more flexible. The previous extensive experience and additional training of facilitators had proved essential.

6. Preparation for publication of the Report

Tom indicated that the Report would probably reflect each of the decades (from the 1930s to the 1980s) separately, using the participants' own words as much as possible. The Report will be published early in February and members will be sent copies.

Sue advised that the SurvivorScotland Team had been engaging with survivor support organisations and with service providers to encourage them to think about the possible implications of the Report for their work.

Members noted that a small number of survivors from a limited number of institutions have carried the demanding responsibility for raising the profile of and speaking for other survivors. Efforts needed to be made to involve a broader base of survivors in future developments. Sue indicated that thought was being given to that by the SurvivorScotland Team. It is envisaged that a number of events will be held shortly after publication of the Report so that survivors, other former residents and other stakeholders can contribute. The SurvivorScotland Team also hopes to use the same approach as the one used on the A and A Consultation which enabled us (by working with support organisations and in small or one-to-one groups) to obtain the views of more than 19 in-care survivors.