

**Meeting of the In-care Abuse Survivors Sub-Group of the Adult Survivors
of Childhood Sexual Abuse Reference Group**

**Monday 25th June 2007 11-1pm
Marine Crescent Glasgow**

Present:

Gary Westwater	(Chair) - Co founder of INCLUDEM
Heather Gray	Who Cares Scotland- Director
Moyra Hawthorn	Scottish Institute of Residential Childcare
Helen Holland	Reference Group
Chris Daly	Reference Group – Petitioner to Scottish Parliament
Harry Aitken	Independent
Jackie Brock	Scottish Executive -
Carolyn Wales	Scottish Executive (minute)
Jeannie Hunter	Scottish Executive – Community Care, Health Department
Annie MacDonald	Professional Adviser to National Reference Group

Apologies:

Alex Davidson	ADSW.
Martin Henry	Reference Group
Carol Wilson	Reference Group
David Whelan	FBGA

1. Introductions made and various introductory comments raised:

Gary provided background on his role with INCLUDEM and Save the Children

A. Files and records of Individuals

- Concerns raised that files have disappeared; no consistent storage or they have been destroyed. Not knowing what has happened to these files is extremely frustrating.
- Survivors think that the missing files could provide answers as to why they were put into care. They feel this has led to a lack of identity. Siblings were separated and many have still not been reunited. It makes it impossible to trace a family's health history.

B. The ongoing issues for in-care survivors

- Has there been progress in the last 40 years? The recent publicity about Kerelaw suggests not.

- Are care workers who abuse moving from one home to another?
- Who is taking responsibility? Are the institutions accountable for past abuse of children?
- Jackie will report back on response by Scottish Government to Kerelaw situation
- Might be a corporate Parenting Strategy

C. Time Bar

- It was emphasised that it could be years before people admit to this having happened.
- This can often come to the surface after alcohol and drug abuse has taken place. Insurance companies – not allowing Care Homes to apologies for issues from the past. Justice for those who have been abused

D. Awareness of the work of the reference group and the sub-group

- Concern that the new Government must be kept aware of the work of these groups. Jeannie, Jackie and Anne set out the various ways progress was being reported to Ministers. Anne reminded the group of the continuing interest of the cross-Party group on childhood sexual abuse.

2A Jeannie Hunter was invited to provide a progress update of the Survivor Scotland strategy

- Copies of the National strategy were circulated
- £2m development fund for individuals to take forward. Any additional funds would be considered as part of the Spending review decisions
- Conference was held in February 2007
- The Expert Reference Group is required to consider one of the recommendations in the Lady Cosgrove report on preventative work for those at risk of offending
- **The website** is being set up and should be launched within the next couple of months. This will contain links to other websites, all types of abuse research, events and training. Help lines will also be available for victims' families

2B Jackie updated the group on additional issues

- Scottish Law Commission –Its report on time bar towards the end of 2007. Jackie suggested the possibility of someone from SLC to come along to one of the groups' meetings. Agreed that we need someone to understand the perspective of survivors as it will relate to the SLCs report.

- Independent review is due for completion in Sept 2007. We have spoken to Tom Shaw about the possibility of attending one of the sub groups. Tom is in principle keen to attend but this will be subject to progress with the completion of this review.
- In response to Kerelaw, Ministers have written to all local authorities and independent residential establishments reminding them of their legal obligation to provide for the safety and protection of children in their care.
- Moyra advised that SIRCC is keen to share existing research and archival materials with the Group. Consent of individuals for sharing this information needs to be confirmed.

3. Given the sensitivity and confidentiality of the issues that were likely to be discussed by the Group, the following ground rules were agreed

- Respect for each other's views even when we may disagree
- Listening to each other with courtesy
- Respecting the privacy and personal circumstances of members of the group.
- Publicising (e.g. on the Scottish Executive website) only those matters agreed as part of the minute of the meeting
- Items of a very sensitive nature will not be included in the minutes
- Minutes will be sent out by Carolyn and these should be within two weeks of the meeting. They will not be circulated more widely by any member of the group until the minutes of the meeting are agreed by the sub-group at its subsequent meeting
- It was agreed that general and in principle issues and matters for discussion could be raised with others outside the group; however, it must be made clear that this is just to assist consideration and discussion at a meeting of the sub-group. No comments should be attributed to any member of the group unless and until they are explicitly recorded in the agreed minute.

4. Gary invited members of the group to state the achievements they want from this group:

A number of matters were discussed. In conclusion, it was agreed that the Group wanted to develop practical, realistic proposals that will make a real difference to survivors who need help and support

A specific proposal was for a framework for Scotland which fits within the wider approach of the Expert Reference Group. This would achieve a system which is open and available to everyone regardless of what type of abuse they had suffered while in care. It should also be available to family members who need support. Specific requirements are

- Appropriate and expert advice and support for reporting abuse was essential – including legal, if necessary.
- **One door approach** was crucial, services are out there but people are not aware of them
- **Harry agreed to circulate proposals (to be included in the papers for the meeting), subject to agreement by FBGA**

5. The remit of the group was agreed:

- to review the needs of in-care abuse survivors for support and information
- to evaluate the availability, accessibility and appropriateness of existing support services
- to identify the gaps in provision
- to recommend to the reference group proposals for improving existing services
- to recommend to the reference group proposals for filling gaps in services

It was also agreed that three other areas of work should be progressed

- Develop improvements for accessing the files and records of children who have been in care
- Develop and make available a knowledge base on in-care abuse
- Inviting providers and institutions to contribute to the sub-group's proposals. A future meeting could invite such organisations to hear the progress they have made and identify where further work is required.

6. AOB

Due to time constraints, discussion on the future work programme and timetable were deferred to the next meeting. Annie agreed to support the development of part of the remit by co-ordinating the information already gathered on relevant organisations and the services they provide as part of the Survivor Scotland strategy.

The importance of providing information linked to the Survivor Scotland website was agreed. We also noted the need to provide information to those who do not have access to the internet

It was agreed that the remit could not extend to campaigning. Nevertheless, it is of course the right of individuals and groups outside the Scottish Executive to campaign as they consider appropriate on in-care abuse matters.

Meetings will be held on the last Monday of the month. The next meeting will take place on **Monday the 30th July at Marine Crescent Glasgow**. The agenda and papers will be sent out prior to this meeting.