



St Helena Government

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2018, AT 10am IN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S CHAMBERS CONFERENCE ROOM.

Mr Dave Honan	Chair	Police (DS)
Ms Christine Cooper	Member	Crown Counsel (AGO)
Ms Stephanie Jones	Member	Team Manager, Children's (CF)
Ms Coral Yon	Member	Salvation Army (CY)
Ms Shirley Wahler	Member	Education (DoE)
Hon Christine Scipio-O'Dean	Member	Children's Champion (CC)
Hon Tony Green	Member	Elected Member (EM)
Ms Tracy Thomas	Member	Housing (TT)
Ms Sherrilee Phillips	Secretary	SG Support Services (SEC)

1. Welcome and Apologies

DS welcomed members of the board to the meeting. Acting Secretary (SEC), who is covering due to the substantive SEC being on overseas leave, was also welcomed.

DS gave apologies for DoH. Members noted the absence of the DoH from a number of meetings. Participation in meeting is essential to have good input into discussion.

Board will write to DoH to convey their disappointment of Health's lack of attendance to meetings.

ACTION: DS

2. Confirmation and Matter Arising from Minutes of Previous Meeting

A new Property Manager is now on island and is tasked with looking at how empty SHG properties can be utilised. His remit is incorporating Education's needs.

Board members discussed how children can be kept in mainstream. DoE has written a paper around a pupil referral unit and was circulated to members at the meeting.

A short term solution to a pupil referral unit is still needed as a priority as there is a Harford Primary pupil with an immediate need. A property at Piccolo hill could potentially be used in the interim.

Paper of recommendation to be written for the need of Education. Recommendation should include what is required.

ACTION: DoE

Disability toilets at PAS have now been installed.

Action points for DoS from last meeting to be carried forward as DoS currently off island. DS will confirm if this had been done.

The previous minutes were confirmed.

A formal letter was to be written to Governor Honan requesting an independent inquiry. Board members were unaware if this letter had been written and sent.

ACTION: DS

3. Essential Updates from Directorates

Housing

TT advised that she has had two referrals from Children's Service. She reported that one of the referrals had been housed. TT also advised that a further family had now been rehoused to permanent dwellings. Emergency accommodation is currently full. A contingency plan is in place in the event that there are emergency referrals. Housing place clients in B&Bs. However, finding B&Bs to take clients is a struggle for the section. TT acknowledged proprietress of the Consulate, Ms.Hazel Wilmot who is always supportive if emergency situations arise.

Education

- DOE advised board of a recent situation that the Directorate had dealt with whereby a new child had presented themselves and the school was were unaware of their needs. On the back of this situation a risk assessment was taken a paper was written. DOE circulated this paper to members at the meeting.

The situation highlighted the need for an early invention group to be set up with a goal of catching all children with additional needs in a timely manner. Through discussion it was established that information sharing is paramount.

Children Services

- Fostering Month has had to be pushed back due to unknown budget queries. This was originally planned for April. However, will now take place in May 2018. Carol George, Acting Director of Safeguarding, has agreed to the delay. The legislation, policy and handbook is in place. There has been some interest although this interest gravitates toward the more permanent option of adoption. The priority for the initiative will be a respite service.
- Children's Services have been working with a family with additional and complex needs
The AGO advised the board and requested the following advised be noted in the minutes:

Time scales for this issue is now beyond legal considerations.

Respite is currently being provided to the family.

No bids to DFID have been made as costs were unknown at the time.

The board with write to the DoS in relation to ensuring timescales are adhered to prevent drift

- CF reported that there were currently no child protection cases being dealt with in her team. This is related to more work centered around early intervention.
- CF relayed a message from Children's Assistant Team, Frankie Gonsalves who advised Safeguarding Level 3 training was successfully delivered to relevant stakeholders on Ascension Island.

Attorney General's Chambers.

- AGO confirmed that the Chambers were currently dealing with one historical case of the state v failure to protect a child.
- AGO is currently involved with the British Oversea Territories. The work they are doing reflects on how courts can make, "the child's voice" centre to court proceedings.

Feedback from Head of the Governor's Office (HOGO)

The board had requested discussion with the HOGO concerning their view on the Deputy Governor resuming the post of Chairperson to this board. DS feedback the following points from the HOGO:

- The Governor's Office were not of the opinion that the Deputy Governor should resume this post. They would however like to have sight of the minutes and be cc'd into any correspondence.
- To be used by the SCB as a vehicle to escalate issues that are considered high priority.
- To be included in any planned training for the board.
- Have strategic oversight to allow effective input to be fed back to the FCO.

Through discussion a number of members were of an opposing view and the general consensus of the board viewed the role of the HOGO as having an integral role to play as Chairperson of the Board. Members felt the HOGO would add a balance to the team. They would also be a more independent vehicle with a different and another addition to the Boards' expertise. If the HOGO returns, this would also accurately reflect the original terms of reference of the Board, where it was intended that the HOGO be the Chair.

DS put this to a vote and the Board unanimously agreed to the HOGO's return as Chairperson to the Board. The Board acknowledge the good work of the DoS who has been a natural Chairperson and his recent news of his early departure from his post later this year presented a good opportunity to make the change. The Board will write to the HOGO to confirm its decision.

ACTION: DS

4. Self-Audit in Preparation for FCO Visit

DS advised that Directorates are to provide an overview of where they are.

ACTION: ALL

Terms of Reference to be recirculated to members.

ACTION: CC

Directorates to do a quick check of the WASS actions to confirm completion

ACTION: AII

AGO to follow up on meeting outcome

ACTION: AGO

Directorates to do self-audit.

ACTION: ALL

Circulate self-audit forms to all.

ACTION: SEC

5. Cannabis Use

Possession at Prince Andrew School is a concern and what support can the SCB members provide their colleagues in Education.

DS advised members of a recent case.

As a deterrent measure, drug dogs will be taken into PAS regularly and random bag searches will be conducted by the teachers. DoE advised the Board that staff would be protected by the ordinance, which advises that bag searches are allowed if weapon or drugs are a concern.

CC advised that the Education Board had raised concerns about the Community receiving this negatively. The Board discussed how this negativity could be reduced or addressed and agree for letter to be written to all parents of PAS students advising of random bag search and the presence of the drugs dogs.

ACTION: DoE

Members discussed whether Councilor's were able to put out a joint message to the public around drug use.

DoE discussed her approach with pupils were taking up overseas employment overseas was the centre of her approach. In the DoE's opinion, highlighting the barriers that a criminal record placed on them. This could affect them later in life if they wanted to live abroad.

CC shared that the Police Force were in a position to do more, when visibly enforcing laws around cannabis possession. She also explained that we should not be seen to strongly enforce policing of drug possession with the youth, but that a great effort is also needed to focus on the adults making cannabis accessible to pupils and students in the education system.

Discussion moved to what help Health could provide and it was noted that perhaps a more proactive approach in educating the community in this subject would help.

ACTION: DoE/DS

6. Any Other Business

- **Bullying**

Is there a problem of bullying among our school aged children?

This question was put to the Board. DoE advised that there had been a number of reports of bullying which centered around three groups of children;

- Pupils/Student returning to island
- TC Children who bring their culture to the island
- Locals

DoE advised Education is using a standardized survey which monitors school age children from of three and upwards. The Survey will determine any patterns that emerge and will be rated, Red, Amber and Green. Despite the rate the DoE shared it was important that they work with all parents.

DoE confirmed that one child had been withdrawn from school which is widely acknowledged as a case of bullying however it was confirmed by the parents to be incorrect.

The general feedback from DoE confirmed that bullying was not a persistent problem on island

- **Allocation of Housing – is the current system working?**

This agenda item was brought to the table by the CF who discussed whether the current allocation process of Landlord Housing worked. TT advised that currently the allocation was a joint effort of herself, the Housing Assistant and the ERND Director. TT felt there needed to be further independent support on this. CF to explore and take forward.

ACTION: CF

- **Regulations Changes**

AGO advised of a regulation change that deals with how the Children's Residential Home is run. This related to restricted reports of communication with the children. The AGO reported these reports needed to go to someone and suggested whether the board wished this to go to the Children's Champion. She further advised that the CC role was not a formal role and therefore the board has two options available to them:

- Formalize the role of CC and make this a permanent role. This would require an amendment to the regulations.

- Or these report could come to the SCB.

The Board would wish the role of CC to be formalized in Legislation. Draft "Terms of Reference" to be circulated to board members.

ACTION: CC

AGO will confirm the board's decision to SCBS

ACTION: AGO

AGO advised that legislation to locally register Cape Town born babies to St Helenian parents medevac'd due to pregnancy complications had been approved.

The next meeting will be held on 31 May 2018.