

**LASWS Children and Families Meeting
Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
on 11 May 2017**

1. Introductions

Attendees:

Gail Abraham (Renfrewshire)	Jacqueline Pender (West Dunbartonshire)
Graham Alexander (Falkirk)	Janet Penman (Midlothian)
Zeenat Alvi (Fife)	Laura Pugh (North Lanarkshire)
Jim Brooks (Argyll and Bute)	Stuart Singleton (North Ayrshire)
Jacquie Clapperton (Fife)	Jacqui Small (Renfrewshire)
Wendy Duguid (West Lothian)	Janice Smith (Glasgow)
Fiona Hare (East Lothian)	Sandy Sneddon (Clackmannanshire)
Neil Howieson (Inverclyde)	Margaret Steel (Perth and Kinross)
Stacey Ironside (Aberdeenshire)	Celia MacIntyre (Scottish Govt, Statistics) <i>Chair</i>
Gillian Johnston (Stirling)	Ian Volante (Scottish Govt, Statistics) <i>Minutes</i>
Kerstin Jorna (Dundee)	Andrew Morgan (Scottish Govt, Statistics)
Susan McGrory (West Dunbartonshire)	Stewart McIntosh (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Kelly Maxwell-Brown (West Dunbartonshire)	Katerina Munro (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Caroline McConnell (East Dunbartonshire)	Keith McFerran (Scottish Government, ScotXed)
Nicola Milne (Moray)	Katherine Hudson (Scottish Govt, Child Protection)
Stuart Osborough (City of Edinburgh)	Micky Anderson, (CELCIS)

Apologies:

Allan Adam (Argyll & Bute)
Gail Baxter (Inverclyde)
Fiona McDonald (East Ayrshire)
Isobel Prentice (South Lanarkshire)
Beth Reader (Angus)
Mareen Vernon (Dumfries and Galloway)

2. Actions from the previous meeting

Action 1 – ongoing.

Action 2 - done.

Action 3 – The report of the Child Protection Improvement programme report is linked under item 4. An update will be provided by email on plans to progress the workstrand on Data and Evidence when they are confirmed.

Action 4 – ongoing.

Action 5 – time series data on disability was converted to same format as newest data. Not a perfect solution, but reasonably comparable, with care.

Actions 6-7 – done with these minutes

Action 8 – done

Action 9 – current solution is to match new entrants to aftercare collection to those not appearing as receiving continuing care any longer.

Action 10 – ongoing.

Action 11 – done.

Action 12 – done – directed P&K to [CLAS privacy notice](#) in first instance. Discussions are ongoing as to whether further information is required.

3. Data development

- 1) National Improvement Framework: We're hoping to include some data on this in June's EOLAC publication, although there may also be a fuller release of data later in the year.
- 2) Secondary release of longitudinal LAC data: We are hoping to make more progress on this in the near future, and there will be a student working on this data over the summer.
- 3) Dental project: the academic-led project to link LAC data to dental records is currently awaiting confirmation of publication date from a journal.
- 4) Dashboard project: The work to create an online dashboard to replace the Excel comparator tools is being led by CELCIS, and they are currently organising staff internally to deliver this work as part wider strands of data work.
- 5) Disability categories: Louise Hill at CELCIS investigated this and produced a short paper on the relevant issues. If we wish to (re)introduce a detailed disability question again, then we need to develop a set of categories that are consistent with equalities legislation and also with questions used in other sectors. However, there are different solutions to this problem, and further work is required to decide how to proceed.
- 6) Data linkage: The data linkage project was part of an ADRC funded study. 'Meeting the health needs of looked after children in Scotland'. The social work lead for this was Janice McGhee from University of Edinburgh. She has now retired and the lead will now be Fiona Mitchell, CELCIS. A meeting has been arranged for 31st May to discuss progressing this project, and I will be able to feedback after that if there is a request to work with other local authorities.
- 7) Future of areas of work which will impact on plans for statistical analysis in relation to vulnerable children include the Child Protection Improvement programme, which has a data and evidence strand; support for the Care review which has just started. In the light of this, I will be reviewing progress with the LAC data strategy and modifying it to reflect these priorities. Aim to do this by summer.
- 8) Code of Practice. The UK Statistics Authority Office for Statistics Regulation (previously the Monitoring and Assessment team) are launching a revised Code of Practice. The implications of this for us will be clearer soon, but it is unlikely that they are going to embark on a large scale set of assessments (hugely time consuming). As part of meeting the Code, we need to ensure we are meeting user needs, and so we are considering holding a user meeting where we will understand uses of data on vulnerable children, and provide updates on the work we have been doing. There is also a tool kit which has been developed to help producers quality assure the administrative data used in publications. We will consider how this can be used for our collections.

Code of Practice Stocktake

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/publication-of-the-stocktake-of-the-code-of-practice-exposure-draft-report/>

4. Child protection

CPIP: The Child Protection Improvement Programme was announced in February 2016 by the Cabinet Secretary. Nine work streams reported to ministers in March 2017 and recommendations were accepted. We're now into the delivery phase of these recommendations. Some of the more relevant ones include the establishment of a leadership group this month to help CP committees to work more consistently, and to reduce duplication of effort and to share best practice.

Inspections: Care Inspectorate is to develop a new regime on inspections with an increased focus on the most vulnerable.

There is a strategic development programme which has plans to increase analytical capacity, and to create a data hub in conjunction with CELCIS who have two new staff working on this.

The thoughts of LAs on how they use data locally, and how their needs can be met are welcome.

Engagement with CPPs will take place over the next few months.

ACTION 1: CPIP reports to be sent out.

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/03/6005>

2015/16

This year's collection went very well, and any problems with matching registrations from year to year have been eliminated. This ensures good quality data.

2016/17

New cause for concern (Forced or dangerous labour) is being introduced this year. The new concerns last year didn't appear to cause any great problems, hopefully this one will be the same.

There was a proposal to move the CP deadline two weeks earlier to account for the balance of work between CP and LAC – numbers are smaller in CP, and now that it has bedded in, the workload has settled to a known level. Some LAs have different people working on each collection, so an earlier deadline would not be helpful. A mixed approach was agreed, to be followed with additional consultation on what works best.

ACTION 2: C&F Stats to schedule an earlier deadline (20th Oct) and will resource extra validation at this time, but the 'normal' deadline (3rd Nov) will be retained. Views will also be requested more formally on this point.

2017/18

No changes are scheduled this year due to the CPIP.

2018/19

We have a proposal to collect postcode data from this year. It would provide more granular detail on CP registrations, and may allow comparisons to e.g. levels of deprivation – some work has been done on this in a recent four-nations study by the Nuffield Foundation.

Main points made on the issues with this idea:

- A partial postcode would need to be used to reduce the possibility of identification of individuals.
- The address isn't always up to date, and we need to be clear exactly which address should be used. Changes of address are difficult to track, sometimes only the original one is recorded, and many children live outside their 'parent' LA. Families often split after child protection measures are implemented. Maybe best to use the address at the point of registration – likely to be a reasonably consistent definition.
- Using less than a full postcode can mask the true granularity in some areas.
- Do current data sharing agreements cover data of this type?
- There's less of an issue with postcode for CP than for LAC.
- Collecting postcode is not difficult from a system point of view, as long as what we want to collect is well defined.
- Caroline suggested that it's worth trying, Nicola pointed out the issues with the SIMD in rural areas.

Currently no agreement on inclusion of postcode – further consultation required.

ACTION 3: C&F Stats to investigate whether current agreements cover postcodes or similar data.

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

ACTION 5: C&F Stats to produce example analysis based on postcodes

Micky Anderson provided an update on the PACE programme. Slides attached.

5. Children Looked After

2015/16

The collection was generally smooth this year, and the new escalation system for late returns was used in one case, and that team is working to improve its procedures with regard to data returns. There were a couple of niggles relating to the changes from school-leaving age and from 21-26 in aftercare which hadn't been consistently applied and so caused confusion, but these are hopefully all fixed now.

2016/17

The new collection involves a couple of new sections this year. Foster placement type, which we agreed at the November meeting wasn't going to be collected after all. It was mentioned at the time that it is something that the Care Inspectorate might still be interested in, so please collect it if possible. The other section is the one on permanence – it is reported that there is a mixed state of readiness to provide this data. Please provide what you can, and quality and capacity will hopefully improve in future years. Proposed deadline, 24th Nov – this is the same day as last year, and was agreed.

It was noted that we are only asking for data on permanence away from home at the moment, and that it would be useful to include permanence at home in the future.

2017/18

We finally ironed out in November where to include continuing care, and this appears as a destination along with kinship care orders. Children in secure accommodation are also to have their hearings information recorded.

2018/19

There was a proposal to collect 'edge of care' data. The policy team need to know how effective part 12 of the 2014 Act is, and if it's being used correctly. This would involve collecting data on all children who are currently receiving support/have an allocated worker, but are not currently LAC or CP. This would be a number of any children during the year who'd been in this position, preferably with an identifier and basic demographic information – enough to see whether they'd subsequently become formally looked after or on the CP register. The dates of these occurrences would also be useful.

Main points made regarding this proposal were:

- 1) This is maybe beyond the scope of this collection, and is also difficult to define. A particular quality needs to be identified to ensure consistency of reporting.
- 2) There are a number of reasons that social workers are assigned to children, sometimes for short-term reasons, and they aren't necessarily at risk.
- 3) A child's plan might be useful to create a baseline of risk, but these can be inconsistent.

No agreement to include edge of care data in 2018/19.

AOB:

There was a question regarding the inclusion of people aged 18 or over as LAC – some authorities always remove LAC status from anyone reaching 18 years old, but some include them at later ages as disabilities may entail this help being retained, or in some cases, section 25 orders can persist.

- There was a brief discussion of the topics which were of most interest to the LASWS members. Being made aware of policy initiatives of relevance.
- Discussions with local authority contacts on areas of common interest.

- Highlighting priorities for forthcoming work.
- Opens up communication channels.

ACTION 6: C&F Stats to consider whether additional validation is needed for over-18s to make sure they are correctly included.

6. Date of next meeting

28th November – Edinburgh. No available rooms in Glasgow.

7. Feedback Loop discussion – addendum to meeting with Boyd McAdam and Tony McIlvaney (SCRA)

The National Convener invited the data collectors to submit their proposals for how the data collection for 2018/19 can meet the minimum requirements set out by CHS and reinforced by the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

In terms of background, the group advised that:

- A number of local Authorities had not yet made the changes to their management information systems requested in 2013, and are still struggling to provide the current suite of data for all children subject to supervision in their area.
- The approaches being taken to the “wellbeing assessment” of individuals across the country is not all compliant with the statutory guidance. Different approaches are being developed for the reporting of wellbeing outcomes at a collective level as part of the planning and reporting cycle established under the 2014 Act. Providing a consistent national picture on the back of this would be challenging if at all possible.
- The contracts for at least 25 of the local authorities’ management information systems is due for renewal in the next year and the procurement processes will soon be underway. The LASWS forum does not have the power to require that additional data is included in the specification for the renewal of their case management systems.

The recommendations of the group to the National Convener were as follows:

- The LASWS cannot undertake to deliver any additions to the data set in the near future.
- Instead, SCRA should be invited to provide more data around the measures attached to the CSO.
- A case sampling approach may be more feasible than a quantitative data collection and should be explored in the interim.