

Children (Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill Out of Court Disposals Task and Finish Group

Swalec Stadium Cardiff, 25 September 2019

Summary of Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welsh Government (WG) welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11 July 2019 were agreed by the group.

3. Update on the Bill

WG provided an update on the Bill and the other Task and Finish groups. WG mentioned that a short 'Bill explainer' video has been produced explaining the background and policy intention of the Bill and this will be circulated to members. This video is available on the WG corporate website in both Welsh and English.

4. Ratify Terms of Reference

Responding to feedback from members of the group at the last meeting, the Terms of Reference were updated. The group ratified the updated Terms of Reference. This is a living document and the section on 'Timings & Key Dates' may need to evolve as the work of the group progresses.

5. Existing Infrastructure for Out of Court Disposal (OCD) Schemes in Wales

An overview of what diversion schemes are in operation in each of the four police forces in Wales was presented. This was put together based on the discussion at the July meeting.

The discussion following the presentation included consideration of the application of any diversion scheme to young people; the current arrangements for referral into diversion schemes and the types of out of court disposals involved; and the guidelines relating to the use of restorative justice in conjunction with some community resolutions.

It was noted that young people under 18 are not eligible for adult diversion schemes, however they may be parents and therefore need to be considered. Youth Justice have well-established diversion schemes and there needs to be tie in with the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales which sets out the guiding principles for young people in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

6. Processes

It was agreed more information on diversion schemes operating across Wales for young people would be required, and that members of the group would consider the overview of diversion schemes presented and provide additional information as

required relating to their own police area to ensure the information about diversion schemes is accurate.

The group considered the diversion process map put together by WG based on the process maps provided by North Wales and Dyfed Powys. These would be circulated so members could highlight any suggested changes to incorporate the detail of processes across the four police force areas. The Crown Prosecution Service agreed to share with WG the assessment form for under-18s who commit an offence.

7. Discussion on Options for Diversion Schemes

At the last meeting options for a diversion scheme were suggested. At this meeting, the group considered the advantages and disadvantages of six options, the sixth option being a combination of options 3 and 5

- Option 1 - National provider, such as a Third Sector organisation, to provide parenting support
- Option 2 - Bespoke diversion scheme could be developed
- Option 3 - Refer into existing diversion schemes such as Women's Pathfinder or Checkpoint
- Option 4 - Refer to existing support such as Families First
- Option 5 - Bespoke course could be developed which would include some element of positive parenting 'education' and anger management
- Option 6 - Combine option 3 and 5.

It was agreed that WG would consider the suitability of existing parenting programmes and share with the group the WG [Parenting Support Guidance](#), which provides detailed information on a wide range of parenting programmes. It was also agreed that the underpinning principles of a diversion scheme would be considered at the next meeting.

8. Closing Remarks and AOB

The next meeting date was agreed for either the middle of December, or January. WG thanked the group for their time and for sharing their expertise.