

08th September 2021

Attendees

Evidence Group members:

- Leon Feinstein, Evidence Group Chair
- Paul Bywaters, Evidence Group
- Lisa Harker, Evidence Group
- Dez Holmes, Evidence Group
- Janet Kay, Experts by Experience Board & Evidence Group
- Geraldine Macdonald, Evidence Group
- John Simmonds, Evidence Group
- Oliver Southwick, Evidence Group
- Karen Broadhurst, Evidence Group
- Haroon Chowdry, Evidence Group
- Donald Forrester, Evidence Group

Review Team:

- Josh MacAlister, Chair
- Duncan Dunlop, Independent Adviser to the Review
- Analysis and Research Team Lead
- Engagement Team Lead
- Evidence Group Secretariat
- Review Team Members

Observing:

- What Works for Children's Social Care representative

Apologies:

- Chris Wild, Experts by Experience Board & Evidence Group

Agenda Item 1: Minutes & Freedom of Information requests (10mins)

- The group were informed that an FOI has been raised for minutes of these meetings and we are currently working through the legislation to publish them. We will be releasing the minutes, but we will be anonymising them, so nothing is attributed back to individual group members. Going forward, we will use a different format and we will have a standardised template.
- Group members to send any comments on the accuracy of draft July meeting minutes which would be signed off in this meeting by close of play tomorrow so that the team can make any amendments on Friday.

- We have four actions still live and they are captured in the spreadsheet circulated in advance.

Discussion

- The group welcomed transparency of the minutes and encourage blogs to uphold this and make everyone aware of thinking.
- One of the outstanding actions was regarding sharing the draft evidence summaries. What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) has carried out on behalf of the review. The review team will share draft summaries.
- No further comments on minutes.

Actions

- Group members to send comments on previous minutes by Thursday. (4.1)
- Review team to share draft evidence summaries with the group. (4.2)

Agenda Item 2: Reflections from previous meeting with the groups (60mins)

- The chair asked how Evidence Group members found the joint session with the Expert by Experience members and Design Group members?

Discussion

- There is a good conversation to have on how we make the policy dilemmas discussed at the meeting more public and the group welcomed the conversations.
- It was great to hear the range of views and the group would favour having similar meetings in future.
- There are challenges of doing reform, this can be controversial with complex conversations. Being more transparent is a great step to building trust.
- There is a concern that the review will be promoting further privatisation. (Karen to share child of north report, the cost and burdens). We must look at the unintended consequences and the deep concerns (not likely to be the terrain of recommendations).
- Would welcome working groups on more focussed areas so members have time to share their thoughts.
- We need meaningful change not over ambitious change.
- Impressed with how the review team are balancing different workstreams, stakeholders and everything else.
- Let's always go back to the experience of children and not get lost in structural change.
- Children and families' voices are the heart of the review, and we should keep this in mind. We can't let the loudest voices dominate; all perspectives are equally important.
- We mustn't be overly focused on those who may feel negatively about the review irrespective of the team's intentions and actions. However, we must not 'lump in' all critique

from all quarters with this perspective, and we must not perceive all critique as unjustified or unhelpful. People's strength of feeling about the Review reflects the importance of the issues being discussed. Where concerns are related to a perceived lack of transparency, it is our collective responsibility to offer greater transparency.

- The group discussion was very helpful, particularly the points about balancing rights. We should look at how mental health do this and how we offer support and balance rights.
- We should have another session with the other groups towards the end of the year.
- As a group, we should identify what the gaps are in the evidence.
- The review team will consider the best way forward to organise group sessions on specific workstrands and be in touch with more detail.
- Social work continued professional development and training was discussed, and the need to review this to ensure social workers are equipped to do their job effectively without leading to burnout. This includes social workers time, as they often feel disappointed when their time is not spent with families as this is their passion.
- How would structural changes affect social workers time? We should look at how we can help social workers understand how they can be flexible in their role.

Actions

- Karen to share 'child of the north' report when finalised. (4.3)
- Review team to consider future joint group sessions. (4.4)
- Leon to convene a small group discussion on gaps in evidence (4,5)

Agenda Item 3: Feedback on the Case for Change questions (10mins)

- Sam shared slides on the case for change feedback and gave a high-level summary of feedback read so far. The feedback form closed on the 13th August and had over 300 responses but we have also received feedback through engagement work. We are going through this in thorough detail and then will look to publish findings from the feedback. This will be shared with the group.

Agenda item 4: Discussion on the review workstrands (30mins)

- Sam provided a brief update on the workstrands below:
 - Local area visits
 - Ethnography
 - WWCS work
 - Data workstrand

- Costings work
- Systems thinking
- Engagement work

The review would like to publish some standalone annexes with the outputs from all of the different workstrands and evidence gathering so people can see how the recommendations were informed.

Discussion

- Local area visits: The group was content on the overall method and approach; however, care must be taken when presenting the findings. How is the local area visits workstrand thinking about power dynamics? Will they be able to be honest, or will they feel need to put on a show?
- Ethnography: We must address the pitfalls in communication and ensure the language is appropriate. The group discussed the best description of the workstrand referred to as ethnography and agreed Spotlights on Families. This should be checked with the EbyE group. As the outputs are likely to be emotive and powerful but will only reflect a small number of families' experiences, the outputs should be presented very carefully.
- WWCS work: Review team to send the draft evidence summaries and rapid reviews.
- Data workstrand: A meeting on data would be helpful, Karen has helpful input to provide on this. Review team to set up separate meeting on this and can invite the full group along so they can attend if they wish to come.
- Systems thinking: Welcome that the review is engaging with other government departments as part of the systems thinking work.
- Engagement: Consider how we bring engagement work to the Evidence Group for consideration because of the research element.
- The opportunity to provide detailed feedback and influence is by being involved in the working groups so we encourage people to join and attend those.
- If there are specific topics you are interested in, we can set up one-to-one calls.
- Next meeting, we will pick 3 work strands to go into detail.
- The group welcome opportunities to comment and be involved on the work.

Actions

- Review team to check 'Spotlight on Families' wording with the Expert by Experience Board. (4.6)
- Review team & Leon to consider 3 workstrands to discuss in detail at the next meeting. (4.7)
- Group members to get in touch if they wish to be more involved on a workstrand/area of work. (4.8)



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Agenda item 5: Discussion on groups proposal (see separate word document) and how the group would like to be involved in the rest of the review (10mins)

- Agreed that the review team will share the proposal again with the group and have a follow up conversation on this in the interests have time.

Actions:

- Review team to share proposal again via email. (4.9)

Agenda Item 6: AOB

- Leon and Josh thanked the Group for joining and the meeting was drawn to a close.
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