

## **Who Cares? Scotland**

### **Response to Questions from FBGA**

#### **General Comments**

Who Cares? Scotland (WC?S) is formally constituted as a Children's Rights Organisation providing independent advocacy for children who are looked after and accommodated. The provision of an integrated service for Adult Institutional Abuse Survivors would require a formal constitutional change for WC?S.

The formal approval of this would be through the Board of Directors who have been contacted in relation to their initial views.

WC?S would want to consider the option of providing an integrated service for adult abuse survivors, taking into account the funding, constitutional changes and infrastructure changes that would be required to support this. WC?S would want to give consideration to the development of a specialist structure to support the proposed range of services to provide any integrated service for adult abuse survivors its own identity.

#### **Values and Principles**

The aims and values that are fundamental to WC?S would be consistent with those required to provide an integrated service for adult institutional abuse survivors. i.e. enabling, campaigning, inclusive, challenging, open and honest, independent. It is recognised however that there would need to be further development of the aims and values to give the integrated service for adult abuse survivors its own identity.

#### **Financial Framework**

WC?S would advocate that the development of such a service would require to be centrally funded over a defined contractual period. Services need to be available long term- an issue echoed in the recent Fife report. The service specification would require to be specific in terms of the range of services to be provided and the outcomes to be achieved while recognising the fluctuating and long term needs of survivors. The balance of a national service and local service commissioning needs to be addressed. The issue of capacity building requires to be central to this with regular review of funding and service direction which is informed by users of the service as well as partners. The financial framework would require to reflect the need for fundamental infrastructure development to ensure the best outcomes for those using the service and ensure that these are achievable. There would be significant resource implications for the development of a service which is encompassing such a diverse range of elements and careful consideration given to whether this should sit with one service provider or more and whether there are options for partnership working with other providers. The issue of better co-ordination of

services and the balance of local and national commissioning needs to be considered to avoid duplication of effort..

### **FBGA Proposals**

WC?S considers the outline framework provided by FBGA to be comprehensive. The framework includes all the key elements of:

- Comprehensive legal support, including preparation and support for survivors before and after court.
- National Perspective in terms of direct links to policy makers and aligning outcomes with policy.
- Advice and support for victims and their families.
- National Helpline to ensure single point of entry for support and access to other specialist services.
- Campaigning element for change and service improvements and future policy direction.
- Continued safe-guarding role in residential settings across Scotland.
- Evidence based practice and supporting the development and research and the establishment of a database of good practice.
- Challenging views and attitudes in relation to adult abuse survivors (potentially with a range of key partners).
- Awareness raising and training

We would want to be clear about the references to 'all health and social components'. There would need to be consideration given to the interface between WC?S current service provision- which supports up to the age of 25 and the adult abuse survivors service. There would need to be a clear distinction between these two service elements. There is no reference to support mechanisms from agencies which have provided residential childcare. It may be that this is an area that needs to be explored further in terms of the overall range of services available. The SIRCC paper by Moyra Hawthorn stated 'Best practice indicates that agencies should be as supportive to survivors as possible while recognising that the investigative process might be drawn out.....' and 'It is clear that some aspects of the support process could be facilitated by agencies sensitive to the survivors experiences.'

### **Next Steps**

WC?S considers it appropriate that the sub-group debates and develops the proposals in the context of its agreed aims.

The proposed national framework identifies the range of services needed to address the needs of adult abuse survivors- the key elements being: identifying gaps, and considering single points of access for specialist advice and support the range of options that need to be available to survivors. It is important that these elements are considered within a realistic financial framework and that the sub-group supports and endorses this through its work. The framework also echoes the outcomes of the recent Fife enquiry which included the following recommendations by survivors:

- The need for survivors to see reports and access records.
- Outwith hours support- someone who is accessible
- People having choices about who to tell about the abuse
- The need to speak to someone independent.

WC?S requires to look at the constitutional implications of developing an integrated service for adult abuse survivors. We are fully committed to ensuring that adult abuse survivors are involved in service development and review- our current board consists of a 50:50 split of adults and children. We consider this to be good practice and are committed to ensuring that service provision reflects what service users value.

We would consider that fuller discussions to look at improving networks and the co-ordination of existing services, looking at the role of existing agencies together with consideration of the proposed national framework to be a sound starting point for the sub-group. The proposals tackle most of the key strategic issues and other than the issues highlighted, represent significant benefits in approach in terms of national funding, the range of services to be offered and the clear strategic focus which remains survivor centred.

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