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# Update for CHIP

## 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Please find below an update on our work since the last CHIP meeting in February.

### **First Board Meeting of the year:**

We held our first Board Meeting of 2020 on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, one week before we moved into lockdown. The young people were understandably distracted by the evolving situation however were pleased to be able to come together. One Board Member chose not to travel due to concerns about the virus, however joined us by Live Link for a part of the day. The meeting focused developing their areas of work for 2020 along with a session exploring children and young people's digital rights. The digital rights session enabled us to co-produce the User Agreement for our new private online platform (see more details below).

### **Recruitment of new Development Worker's post:**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> the March we advertised a new qualified Project Development Worker post (temporary for 12 months). This new post would replace the Project Worker post which ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

The closing date was the 26<sup>th</sup> of March and interviews were scheduled for Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of April and Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. However recruitment has been postponed at present and will resume once the restrictions have been lifted.

### **Supporting young people during the Covid-19 pandemic:**

Like many, Our Hearings, Our Voice has adapted to working in new ways to support the young people involved in the Board during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since lockdown began, we have established and maintained weekly telephone contact with each of the Board Members (11 young people aged 13-19) and have been working with them to identify any specific needs that we could help with.

We have tailored our support accordingly, but has included:

- 🎬 Created and sent a short film that we (all staff who attend the Board Meetings and have worked with OHOV so far) made to let them know we were thinking of them.



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- 👤 Providing suggestions around mental health, (relaxation, anxiety/depression, sleep patterns, exercise, and managing emotions).
- 👤 signposting them to support services, online and other resources.
- 👤 sending children's social story books about Covid-19 to the young people as a few of them have little brothers and sisters that are finding it difficult to understand why they can't see them.
- 👤 providing data to support online family time (contact).
- 👤 providing food for a young person who's local shops were empty due to panic buying.
- 👤 running PE with Joe sessions twice a week in a small WhatsApp group to support a young person who is struggling with their mental health.

Whilst it could be suggested that these approaches are not within our remit, I return to the foundations of our work, which are based on relational practice and trauma informed practice. During the current crisis, we recognise the impact of the pandemic on everyone's health and well-being, alongside the importance of the relationships we have with the young people on the Board. I have considered that where there is an unmet need (sometimes due to not being able to get in touch with statutory services) we, as Corporate Parents, should and indeed must do what we can to fulfil these needs. This in turns builds greater trust and helps the young people understand that we are interested in them as people, and not just as Board Members who can help improve the Children's Hearings System. To date, we have managed to maintain the full participation of 11 out of 12 Board Members in the Board.

### **Launched our private online platform:**

Over the last six to nine months, I've been working on setting up a private online communications platform for working with the Board Members out with Board Meetings. The pandemic, and subsequent lockdown has brought into sharp focus the need to have different ways to communicate with each other. So over the last 6 weeks I've managed to finalise the processes and we successfully launched the OHOV BAND platform with Board Members on Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of April.

The platform has a wide range of interactive and engaging functions including polls, Live Streaming, sign ups, posting group challenges, files, photos, videos, GIFS etc., group chats and calls (all protected so the young people don't share any of their details with each other etc.)



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In this first week of using the platform, we have seen all young people engage with it in a positive way. We consider this will be a key tool in our work going forward. I have written a detailed paper about the processes we have developed to protect the young people's confidentiality and digital rights and have begun to share this with some colleagues in the field. The write up is available for anyone who is interested in finding out more.

### **Board Members give SCRA & CHS feedback about Vscene technology for virtual Hearings:**

As the Children's Hearings System has had to rapidly move to an online solution to carry out Hearings, five Board Members have been involved in testing the Vscene technology. We have pulled together a short report and have provided the young people's insightful feedback to SCRA and CHS. We hope this feedback will help to shape future developments of the Virtual Hearings approach.

### **Evaluation of OHOV:**

Further to the paper presented at the last CHIP meeting in February, I have provided Gillian Henderson with the requests from CELCIS. These have been agreed and will be included (with the exception of an event) in the evaluation process. Due to timescales slipping for feedback from CHIP along with the current crisis, the original timeframe will need to be reviewed. I will update CHIP on progress in future updates.

### **Next (and future) Board Meeting(s):**

We are due to have our next Board Meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of June and it was going to involve an overnight stay for everyone. Obviously given the current circumstances, we are unable to go ahead with an in-person Board Meeting. At present, we intend to have some kind of virtual gathering, however are still exploring the most suitable platform to enable this. Given the current Scottish Government guidelines and Framework for Decisions, I am anticipating that we will need to look at reframing how we carry out Board business for the foreseeable future. Again I will look to update CHIP partners as our thinking and plans develop in this area.

**Compiled by Jacqui Dunbar, OHOV Project Lead**