

# Word Busting

## 5 young people, 5 professionals across hearings system, facilitated by OHOV

- The work is designed to **prevent misunderstanding, distress or retraumatising of children in the hearings system, through changing the language used.**
- At the heart of the work, Hearings experienced young people and professionals from the hearings system will work together over 2 years to change the language used.
- The work is fully supported by all the key organisations involved in the children's hearings system.

### 1) *What do we want for the future?*

"If the language used in reports, letters and hearings met the needs of children and young people in 5 years' time, what would have changed?"

- We would have some sheets to explain to children what words or terms mean
- Children will have some control over what is discussed in their hearing
- Language will include the child's wishes
- Reports will capture the young person's own chronology
- Positives will be highlighted, not just risks
- The 'right' language will be continuously evaluated
- **Language will be based on strengths- reports should not be written about the avoidance of problems ('no issues')**
- **Easy read reports and letters are standard good practice**
- Reports will be owned by the writer and the person(s) being written about
- We will get rid of irrelevant background information
- Advocacy will be less needed if it is built into the whole system and culture
- We will write about the individual child within the family, not just the family
- Young people will not have to repeat themselves to advocacy workers, just because they are independent
- Young people will be able to choose how they want to express their views
- **Attention will be paid to balance and not just making people feel rubbish**
- Terms will be changed so we don't shorten them or use acronyms
- The profile of great examples of language will be raised and shared widely
- We will get rid of jargon
- **Report and letter authors will write to the child (the whole child)**
- Authors and speakers in the hearings system will understand the power of language
- **Language used in legislation will be accessible and understood (not translated)**

## 2) Solutions in Practice

### What's the idea?

- A word busting tool or app that can be used by adults to influence the language they use in hearings and reports and young people in influencing that practice

### What does it do?

- gives people options to explain words and break down complex terms
- lists words to avoid
- makes people think about the meaning of words
- suggests connotations and alternative words
- provides a glossary, dictionary or word bank
- encourages language to be individualised
- an interactive App could highlight 'busted' words and give young people the chance to highlight words that could trigger or upset them

### What is its goal?

- empower young people
- minimise confusion
- avoid harmful language
- educate professionals and volunteers
- improve understanding, inclusion and participation
- improve decision making
- create a more positive environment
- change the wording of legislation

### Who needs to be involved to make it a reality?

- children and young people, panel members, reporters, social workers, teachers, lawyers, courts, health professionals, care inspectorate, champs boards, residential workers, anyone else who feeds into hearings

### Does it meet its desired aim?

- as long as people are willing to engage, change their attitude and adopt changes
- if language in hearings becomes more kind
- if advocacy for children is sufficient



