



# The Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group review 2023

## Looking back and looking forward

This video records the contributions of SPRAG members who took part in an online discussion. The video features:

Sarah Deeley from CELCIS,  
Karen Eastwood from Harmeny Education Trust,  
Kenny Fleming from The Promise Scotland,  
Craig McCreadie from CELCIS,  
Dr Laura Steckley from the University of Strathclyde,  
Gemma Watson from CELCIS,  
Charlotte Wilson from the Care Inspectorate,  
Derek Wintour from Action for Children.

### [Craig McCreadie, CELCIS](#)

Hi, everyone. Welcome to the Annual Report video for the Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group or SPRAG for short. My name is Craig McCreadie, and I'm a consultant with the Improving Care Experiences team at CELCIS. With me today are a number of members of SPRAG, who will share some of their perspectives and experiences in relation to the work of SPRAG over the past year. To briefly say that the Physical Restraint Action Group is a large network formed from a call to action at the SIRCC conference in 2019, in response to the way restraint was being understood, and talked about in the mainstream press at the time. The work of the group was strengthened by the aspirations of The Promise, which was published the following year. SPRAGs purpose is to co-productively reduce and where possible, eliminate restraint in residential childcare. To start us off, we

are going to think about some just general reflections about the work of SPRAG over the past year. Derek, can I come to you first? Can I ask you to offer some thoughts on your experience have been involved with SPRAG this year?

#### Derek Wintour, Action for Children

I think, most importantly, this year is one of reflection in regards to the achievements that SPRAG has summarised in terms of being able to produce actions from a lot of the discussions and debates that it has been involved in over the last year. And with that, it was also one to think back on and reflect on the celebration of our membership growing to one of a very dynamic and supportive community. That itself was something I believe SPRAG would hopefully achieve, and it has certainly done that.

#### Karen Eastwood, Harmeny Education Trust

But the difference that has made in the place where I work is that we have seen again, another year, a real reduction in the amount of restraints that we've had. And that comes from a number of things, but one of them is our involvement in SPRAG and taking on board things decisions that are made, looking at frameworks that are put forward, helping to reflect on that, and sharing some of the expertise. I really love the way that I brought up - we're looking at physical intervention forms, and what we're doing - and I brought that up at one of the meetings and it was straight away yeah we can have a subgroup on that. So it does lead to real practical ideas of sharing this is what we do is this best practice, what do other people do? How can we get the best of what everybody is doing in Scotland about restraint reduction together, and so we can really focus on what's working well, and that sharing of good ideas, so it's not working in isolation anymore. It's been able to work with others.

#### Charlotte Wilson, Care Inspectorate

In terms of progress that we've made over the last 12 months SPRAG have always been a really helpful group in giving feedback and being involved in any kind of developing areas of practice. You know, when we've developed guidance, people have mentioned, the development of the new notification. At the start of 2022, we launched the new self evaluation tool, which had been developed very much along with SPRAG and had been piloted by SPRAG members, and some of them were involved in the launch of it as well. And this year, we've been reviewing that, and we held some webinars to seek feedback on how people have been using it. And, you know, if they found it useful, and any developments that we need to make on improving that. So we've been working on an updated version. And we've also, through SPRAG, sought out some organisations to provide kind of case study examples as well to support the updated version of the tool, because we found that those real life examples are much more helpful than the Care Inspectorate dictating that, here's a document that everybody should use if people can speak to how that's worked in practice.

### Craig McCreadie, CELCIS

The Promise emphasises the importance of reflective relationship based practice, the Scottish Physical restraint Action Group has identified reflection as a key priority in the aspiration to become a country that does not restrain its children. The rhythm of the work means there may not always be regular safe opportunities to reflect, learn and build solutions and alternatives to restraint. A workforce supported through reflective practice can respond, react and build more supportive loving relationships with children and young people. This knowledge is supporting the development of the Reflection Action Learning Forum approach. RALF is a structured facilitated space that uses reflective processes to challenge and creatively expand members perspectives, and problem solving capabilities.

### Gemma Watson, CELCIS

RALF creates safe facilitated spaces, but really held spaces where people can be open, honest and curious. And at times quite emotional around the topic of restraint. And the role of the trained and skilled facilitator is what makes RALF a really unique, safe space for people to come and be involved in. And being involved in that session alongside Karen and the other facilitators really affirmed for me why SPRAG has been championing this work for such a long time. It was a real light bulb moment for me and I was absolutely delighted that you let me step into that space alongside you Karen and the other facilitators.

### Kenny Fleming, The Promise Scotland Review

The Independent Care Review sets a very high bar for Scotland as a nation that should strive not to restrain his children. That's a high bar. It's a challenging bar. It's a challenging ambition. And but it's worth one seeking to achieve. But as The Independent Care Review also notes that will only be a statement of intent, if it's not fulfilled with action or changes. And what we've heard today is SPRAG is doing these things. As The Promise notes, it's really important to support the workforce, the work that you're taking forward, the way you're doing it is seeking to support and nurture the workforce to make those types of changes in a thoughtful and a trauma informed sort of way. I think that the points we have about collaboration, as our organization, as an organisation is only here to 2030 and has no formal powers, it's really important for us to engage with the experts that are here before us that are here with us, and ultimately will be here after us. And that's our vital thing, that collaborative and convening place where people can come together and can bridge and can share new ideas and can share innovations. That's why

it's really, really important for us. But ultimately, the most important thing is SPRAG is delivering for Scotland, most importantly delivering for Scotland's children.

### Dr Laura Steckley, University of Strathclyde

I think we are faced with challenging decisions about what to prioritise and what to hold off. And that's really hard, because, I'm sure I'm not alone in that I just want to do it all. And I can see the connections between the different parts of the work and how they all are necessary, because this is a really big change that we're working toward. And just to drill down just a little bit like this last year has been a lot of doing, right with the reference to it being an action group. It isn't just a talk shop. And it isn't just about rhetoric, as Derek had said. People turn up because they want it to be better for children and young people. And so, thinking about how SPRAG started was, if you wanted to put it simply, it was to kind of create a space for more thoughtfulness in considering the complexities and the realities that surround residential childcare and, and the place of restraint in that. And that wasn't happening in some of the representations of restraint. And that's probably why that presentation happened. And so, there's a tension between a space for talk shop, for thoughtfulness, and then how that informs the doing. And I think that for me is what we need to keep our eye on going forward. And what we need to do in terms of the knowledge base, which is partly the research, partly imparting a knowledge base, to sharing the expertise that's in the room in a way that then imparts that more comprehensively to the sector.

### Sarah Deeley, CELCIS

Looking to the future, my personal aspiration for the group is that we can influence whole systems, that collectively we show leadership in Scotland's journey to reduce restraint as is SPRAG's vision, and which was later supported by the publication of The Promise in Scotland. In SPRAG, we have people who are leaders at all levels across key areas in Scotland. And all of those people are focusing on what it will take to reduce restraint. This group absolutely have the potential to support and with the right enablers, lead and play a key role in implementing transformational change across residential childcare in Scotland. It's an absolute privilege to be part of.

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