



# From Act to Practice: Phase 2

**Supporting the implementation of the Children's Hearings  
(Scotland) Act 2011**

**Evaluation report**

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Improving care experiences

## Acknowledgments

The evaluation team recognise that the *From Act to Practice*: Phase 2 programme involved substantial input from staff at both CELCIS and Clan Childlaw; in addition, there were significant inputs from young people from Who Cares? Scotland who shared their experiences and stories in order to maximise the impact of the programme. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of all those involved in delivering the programme.

We also thank all delegates who gave up their time to participate in this evaluation, either by completing an evaluation form or by engaging in an interview with a researcher. We thank staff for their co-operation and patience as we gathered, clarified and confirmed all the necessary data. In particular, we thank members of the administration team who helped us to gather and reflect on data.

We hope that this report will provide valuable information to support future delivery of relevant or associated work.

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**Hundreds of professionals attended the programme seminars – 27 strategic managers, 162 middle-managers and 464 front-line practitioners.**

**The seminars either met or exceeded 75% of participants' expectations in terms of enabling learning from colleagues.**

**"Discussions about practice and different perspectives really provoked good insights into other's roles"  
(Middle -manager participant)**

**Young people's real-life experiences helped to set the context and tone of the seminars; this was valued by professionals.**

**The seminar either mostly or completely suited the needs of 84% of participants.**

**"It increased my knowledge around practice and it was great to refresh my memory through the use of practice samples"  
(Front-line practitioner)**

# 1) Executive summary

## 1.a) Background to *From Act to Practice*

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 was introduced to modernise and strengthen the children's hearings system and deliver better outcomes for children. Clan Childlaw Limited and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) were commissioned to develop and deliver a programme of information seminars to support the implementation of the Act. These were known as *From Act to Practice* and were delivered prior to the Act coming into force. Key findings from this programme indicated the need for a further series of events giving detailed guidance about the Act and offering opportunities for organisations to share good practice. To respond to this, *From Act to Practice 2* (FATP2) was devised. FATP2 was delivered from April to December 2014, i.e. after the Act came into force. The FATP2 programme consisted of a series of 13 half-day events including one symposium for strategic managers, four seminars for middle managers and eight practice development seminars for front-line practitioners. The aims of the programme are detailed in the full report.

## 1.b) Evaluation of FATP2 Programme

Data were collected using various methods including, self-completion questionnaires, an online follow-up questionnaire, semi-structured follow-up telephone interviews and a follow-up questionnaire and focus group with delivery team members<sup>1</sup>. Details of the purpose of evaluation and methods used are given in the full report.

Of the various delegates to the programme a total of 653 professionals were invited to take part in the evaluation. Around 80% of these took part, the majority in survey elements of the research with smaller numbers also completing other methods. A broad range of organisations and professional roles were represented in the sample, participants from local authorities (n= 164, 42%) and Third Sector organisations (n= 127, 33%) made up the largest groups.

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<sup>1</sup> By 'delivery team members' we mean staff from the partner organisations who were responsible for planning, facilitation and delivery of the programme.

## 1.c) Key Findings

### 1.c.i) Fundamental principles of the FATP2 model

A number of key principles or characteristics of the delivery model were identified; these are listed below and described in more detail within the main evaluation report. The full report describes how these principles contributed to the programme's success and we suggest they may be helpful to those considering similar programmes to support implementation of legislation or policy change.

1. Focusing input (minimising resource requirements)
2. Embedding change (using existing networks)
3. Promoting inter-agency working (reflecting the content of the Act)
4. Keeping children and young people at the centre (using input from young people)
5. Focused use of time (condensing content to half-day events)
6. Participatory learning (making participants responsible for their learning)
7. Attention to diverse learning styles (use of different media and approaches)
8. Remaining flexible (flexible and open content, optimising content and delivery)
9. Reflecting on progress (building-in opportunities for delivery team to reflect)

### 1.c.ii) Key lessons learned during delivery

Although the programme and its delivery were considered to be very successful a small number of learning points emerged:

**Achieving the right mix:** A significant amount of resource was needed to ensure that seminars were attended by professionals from a variety of organisations; where this was less successful there was an increased need for active facilitation from the delivery team.

**Delegate expectations:** The format of participatory learning needs to be clearly explained to delegates so that they are ready to engage effectively and are aware of the knowledge required and methods to be used in advance.

**Importance of young people's contributions:** Early learning from strategic managers led to the addition of contributions from young people from Who Cares? Scotland. These helped to keep children and young people at the centre of professionals learning and development.

### 1.c.iii) The impact of the programme

The programme appears to have had a significant positive impact; this is detailed in the main report against the various aims of the programme. The main report also provides more detailed data and feedback from delegates. The key measures below provide an overview of how the delivery was appropriate, effective and had impact on practice.

- 84% (n=432) of all participants indicated the seminars mostly or completely suited their needs.
- 88% (n=449) of all participants indicated the format of the events was mostly or very useful.
- 63% (n=313) of all participants indicated the seminars either met or exceeded their expectations in terms of improving their understanding of the Act.
- 75% (n=373) of all participants indicated the seminars either met or exceeded their expectations in terms of enabling learning from colleagues.
- 81% (n=406) of all participants indicated the seminars either met or exceeded their expectations in terms of providing information on the Act.
- 62% (n=310) of all participants indicated that having attended an event their awareness of the Act had mostly or greatly increased.

The short quotes below provide a flavour of how delegates engaged with the programme and changed their practice as a result:

*[I] liked the input of the information coupled with the discussion group (Symposium participant).*

*It increased my knowledge around practice and it was great to refresh my memory through the use of practice samples (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*It made me more aware of specific amendments (like the relevant person) and things under review (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*Brought to the fore problems other agencies have experienced and the gains from the 2011 Act (Middle-manager participant).*

*I still advocate in the same manner as I used to, but I have a greater understanding of the importance of the child's views. I'm definitely more able to tune into that now (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*I found the group idea positive, in fact was able to gather information and swap practice issues with different organisations involved in the same goal (Middle-manager participant).*

## 1.d) Opportunities for moving forward

The full report details a number of opportunities that have been created as a result of the programme. Throughout the evaluation period emerging findings have been fed back to the delivery team and drafts of the final report have been shared and discussed with them. Based on the evaluation findings and their experiences throughout the programme the delivery team made the following observations about the potential measures for moving forward. Whilst some of these may be actionable by the delivery team, the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) may provide the appropriate forum to consider these issues from a multiagency perspective within their existing key programmes of work.

### *BOX 1. Delivery team's key ideas for moving forward*

- **Complete the top-bottom-top circle:** create regular opportunities for professionals to interact with, and feed information into, strategic management. Potentially further raising the CHIP's profile, enhancing strategic leadership and broadening partnerships with practitioner groups.
- **Further invest in inter-professional practice:** continue to develop and provide opportunities for professionals to; foster relationships, discuss key themes, and learn from each other's knowledge, experiences and expertise. Including by potentially creating or commissioning an ongoing live resource to provide a forum for professionals to share developments, ideas and practice.
- **Promote the FATP2 delivery model:** advocate the FATP2 delivery model as an effective holistic model through which multi-agency learning and development can be delivered.
- **Further use existing FATP materials:** disseminate the materials and tools in the programme delivery for use by a range of managers, practitioners and trainers.
- **Further address emerging key issues:** develop themed resources that address common issues and key skill areas most frequently raised during the programme.



## 2) Overview of the programme

### 2.a) Background

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 was introduced to modernise and strengthen the Children's Hearings system, with the aim of delivering better outcomes for children. Changes introduced by the Act relate to recruitment and management of children's panel members and safeguarders, modernisation of the grounds for referral, clarification of who has rights in respect of the process and changes to increase the transparency of systems and processes. These changes mean that children and their families should be able to participate more effectively in the process, obstacles to the implementation of orders should be removed and systems should become more consistent.

The Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and Clan Childlaw Limited have now delivered two programmes of events to support the implementation of the Act: one before and one after the Act came into force. The objectives of the first programme of events *From Act to Practice: Phase 1 (FATP)* were:

- To increase knowledge of key changes in the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- To raise awareness of preparatory work required for the Act's commencement
- To influence practice to ensure that GIRFEC (getting it right for every child) principles and children's rights are embedded into practice

The FATP events enabled CELCIS and Clan Childlaw to reach out to the sector to gather intelligence on how all parts of the system had prepared for the new legislation, to help them prepare for the changes and to identify what their learning needs were. The evaluation of FATP showed: the format and content of the programme met participants' needs and raised their awareness of the Act. It also showed that learning and materials from the programme were being shared with colleagues who had not attended.

However, it was clear from the evaluation and from the observations made by the Scottish Government and partners, including SCRA and CHS, that there was further and ongoing need in relation to the Act. The needs identified fell into the following areas:

- Providing further support to address key concerns raised by delegates including the definition and status of relevant person(s), issues around pre-hearing panels, advocacy, and the general realities of working with the Act.

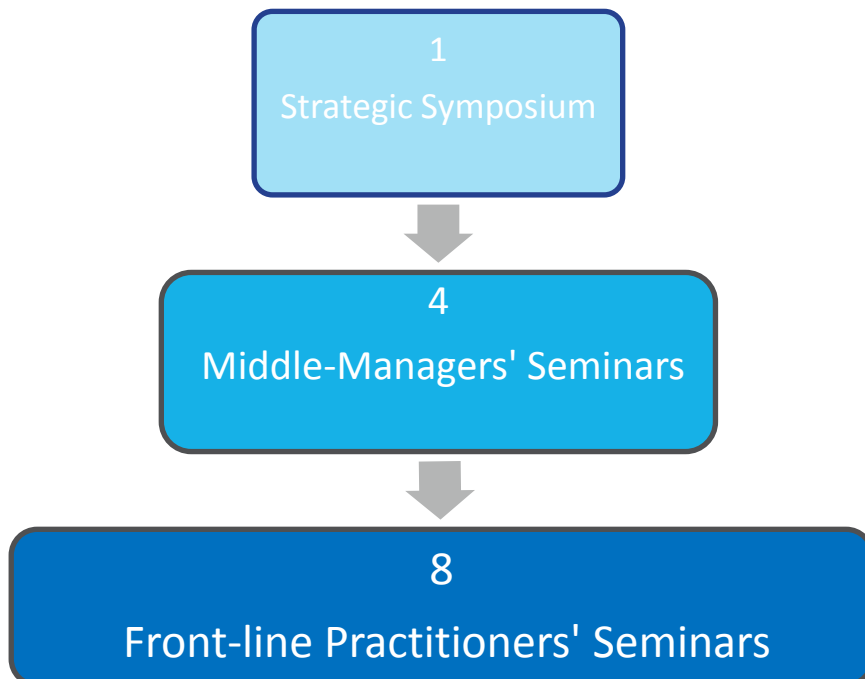
- Promoting the sharing of policy and practice in relation to how different organisations have responded to the Act, including highlighting examples of good practice.
- Identifying and sharing good practice on how to promote and support children’s rights in the Hearings setting.

We revisit and assess the impact of the programme against these three areas of need in the conclusions of this report.

## 2.b) From Act to Practice: Phase 2

As a result of these identified areas of learning needs, CELCIS and Clan Childlaw were commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop and deliver a response. This aligned with the Scottish Government’s ongoing commitment to modernising the Children’s Hearing system in order to promote greater participation of children, young people and their families throughout their engagement in the process and improve their longer-term outcomes. A series of 13 half-day events were developed and delivered by CELCIS and Clan Childlaw comprising one symposium for strategic managers, four middle-managers’ seminars and eight practice development seminars for front-line practitioners. These events were delivered across mainland Scotland between late April 2014 and December 2014. In addition to this, a seminar for front-line practitioners was delivered to staff in Shetland as part of a staff development day.

Figure 1: Programme structure



Central to the response strategy from CELCIS and Clan Childlaw was their ongoing consultation with the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP). This represents a core body of stakeholders from across Scotland brought together by Scottish Government due to their common interest and commitment to developing and improving the Children's Hearing System. The CHIP consists of an overarching steering group and three key programmes: Generating Evidence and Promoting Improvement, Getting it Right in the Hearings System and Learning and Development in the Hearings System.

### 2.b.i) Programme aims

A small programme delivery team was formed and identified three aims for each of the three stages of the programme. The stated aims were:

#### **Symposium for strategic managers:**

- To provide a forum for key strategic managers to review the changes brought in by the new legislation
- To provide strategic direction on future operational support for best practice under the new legislation
- To secure commitment to the provision of further learning and development required for the new legislation

#### **Seminars for middle-managers:**

- To review new practice under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 against the intended outcomes of the legislation
- To identify areas of practice development required as a result of the new legislation
- To identify support required for them and their practitioners as a result of the new legislation

#### **Practice development seminars for front-line practitioners:**

- To review key areas of new practice as a result of the new legislation
- To inform the development of support for multi-agency practitioners in operating to best practice under the new legislation
- To support the implementation of the new legislation by enabling practice that will achieve best outcomes for children and young people.

These aims provide a useful general understanding of the purpose of the programme and we return to them in the conclusions of this report. However, we note that the aims are quite broad and that specific, measurable objectives were not developed.

## 2.b.ii) Evaluation purpose

Details of the evaluation approach and methods can be found in the Appendix of this report. However, we feel it useful to outline the purposes of the evaluation here as they inform our approach to this report.

The purposes of evaluation were to:

- Facilitate the ongoing development of the programme model
- Test the effectiveness of the delivery model as a means of supporting the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Review the impact of the programme, in particular the extent to which the overall project aims were achieved

Again, we consider each of these in the conclusions to the report.

## 3) Programme structure

### 3.a) The strategic symposium

The FATP2 strategic symposium was delivered as a half-day event in Glasgow. This was the first event in the programme and aimed to ensure the experience and views of strategic leaders influenced the following seminars. The agenda was designed so that delegates were provided with necessary background information from which they could engage in table discussions and identify strategic needs and areas to be taken forward to the middle-manager seminars. Delegates had been provided with prior opportunity to identify which issues related to implementation of the Act which they particularly wanted to cover or clarify and this was incorporated into the agenda along with early impact of the Act.

The agenda included:

- An overview of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 – Robert Marshall, Deputy Director for Care and Justice, Children and Families Directorate, Scottish Government

- Feedback on evaluation of *From Act to Practice* Phase 1 – Rachel Harris, Research Fellow, CELCIS
- An overview of early experiences of implementation of the Act – Malcolm Schaffer, Head of Practice and Policy, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) with Alison Gough, Director of Panel and Area Support, Children’s Hearings Scotland
- Early impact of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011: practitioner and organisational aspects – Jackie Robeson, Solicitor, Clan Childlaw
- Group discussion - Prioritising gaps in the implementation of the Act and areas for development
- Group discussion - Building the seminars for middle-managers and practitioners.

One of the key points identified during the strategic symposium was the need for children and young people to be kept at the centre of the Hearing and therefore at the centre of any discussions or training about Children’s Hearings. The delivery team took this forward and contracted Who Cares? Scotland to be part of the middle-managers’ and front-line practitioners’ seminar programme.

### 3.b) Middle-manager seminars

The middle-manager seminars were delivered as four half-day events in locations across Scotland. This series of seminars focused on sharing information and identifying relevant themes and issues that middle-managers wanted to be included in the front-line practitioner seminars. This was achieved through discussion-based exercises and encouraging multi-disciplinary working. The session was structured around the following topics:

- Putting the legislation in context: input from young people with care experience.
- The vision for change: considering practice against outcomes intended for children and young people
- Identifying areas of practice development required
- Identifying support required for participants and practitioners

The sessions contained minimal directly-delivered content (presentations); rather, participants were engaged with the topics through contributions of the experiences of individuals from Who Cares? Scotland, discussion exercises and mind-mapping exercises. As well as this, the lunch time ‘open space’ offered a further opportunity for multi-agency discussions to take place. Each participant was also given a resource pack which highlighted the key changes brought about by the Act. The outcomes of discussions at the symposium and managers seminars was summarised and shared with a range of partners including distribution of a single page summary for CHIP.

### 3.c) Practitioner seminars

The practitioner seminars were delivered as eight half-day events across Scotland. They brought forward ideas from the strategic symposium and middle-manager seminars. The practitioner seminars sought to combine these themes and issues and provide a space for practitioners to discuss these in relation to their day-to day practice. The agenda included:

- Putting the legislation in context: input from young people with care experience.
- Brief overview of the legislation.
- Discussion: Moving to compulsion
- From the team around the child, to referral to the reporter; the child at the centre; thresholds.
- Establishing the Children’s Hearing: the role of the reporter; establishing grounds; getting the right people to the Hearing.
- Discussion: Working with compulsion
- From Children’s Hearing to care plan: the ongoing role of the team around the child; maintaining engagement; the child at the centre.
- Reviewing the care plan: working effectively with the child and family; planning to maintain improvement.
- Discussion: Moving on from compulsion
- Returning to the Children’s Panel: the role of the Reporter; the role of the Children’s Panel; the child at the centre; maintaining improvement.

The practitioner events used ‘Lucy’s Journey’ a case-study of a young person and their family’s interaction with Children’s hearings. The example used was deliberately open and broad in scope to allow for the diverse practitioners at the seminars to develop the complexities of the case as appropriate and necessary to develop their thinking. The case-study was used in order to promote and facilitate conversation between professionals and ensure focus was maintained. Between discussion exercises, participants were given small updates relating to the changes to the Act and were encouraged to use this within their discussions. The delivery approach used ‘light touch facilitation’ by equipping the participants with enough knowledge and a focus so that they could steer their own discussion as they desired. Following the seminar, a lunch time ‘open space’ provided an opportunity to network and share ideas with other professionals.

Participants were also given a pack of resources to take away which provided greater detail about the changes to the Act. They were able to use these materials to reflect further on the content of the seminar and develop their learning in relation to the Act. They were also encouraged to share the materials with colleagues after the seminar.

### 3.d) Delivery principles

The delivery team for the *From Act to Practice: Phase 2 (FATP2)* programme initially consisted of key staff from CELCIS and Clan Childlaw; they were later supported by Who Cares? Scotland and other partners detailed below. Analysis of interviews and other data gathered for this evaluation shows that the team operated according to a number of intrinsic principles. These underpinned delivery and, whilst they undoubtedly developed as the programme progressed, they did provide a coherent approach across the different elements of the programme. The evaluation identified nine intrinsic principles which characterised the programme:

- 1. Focusing input.** To make best use of limited time and budget, a decision was made that the FATP2 programme would be designed in a way which would minimise the staffing required at events. A partnership from CELCIS, Clan Childlaw, Albi Taylor and latterly Who Cares? Scotland was established, allowing for a broad range of specialist skills and knowledge to be incorporated in an efficient, effective and purposeful manner.
- 2. Embedding change.** Attention was given to identifying and inviting relevant local ‘change agents’<sup>22</sup> at each level to ensure that the programme was deeply embedded as part of the wider context within localities. Key strategic managers were identified and invited to attend the symposium; these attendees were asked to nominate middle-managers within their organisation who would support practitioners to implement the changes. Similarly, delegates at each middle-manager seminar were asked to nominate relevant delegates for the front-line practitioner seminars.
- 3. Promoting inter-agency working.** As the programme content was relevant to a broad range of organisations and professionals, a decision was made that the programme would comprise multi-agency seminars reflecting the context of the Act itself. This then helped to shape the content of the programme and ensure a broad engagement with the agenda set out by the Act.
- 4. Keeping children and young people at the centre.** The early contributions from strategic managers and a growing awareness within the delivery team suggested that a mechanism was needed to ensure that children remained at the centre of discussions. A decision was made to involve Who Cares? Scotland to enable young people with experience of Children’s Hearings to share their perspectives in the remaining seminars.

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<sup>22</sup> People who were likely to be able to facilitate or mandate change to local practice or policy.

5. **Focused use of time.** The delivery team's experience suggested that for this particular programme of events, half-day rather than full-day seminars would be more effective, engaging and appealing to busy delegates. To achieve this it was necessary to ensure that the content was highly focused and that key points were addressed in discussions.

6. **Participatory learning.** The delivery team felt that a move away from a formal didactic 'taught' approach towards discussion-based learning would be most effective. This required participants to take greater ownership of the discussions in the seminars and responsibility for their own learning and development. In order to achieve this, the content of seminars had to be flexible to allow delegates to explore the themes and issues that they identified, but focused enough to address the needs of the group.

7. **Attention to diverse learning styles.** In order to engage diverse individuals effectively within a discussion-based programme, substantial effort was made to ensure that the programme used different learning models. Examples included; the input of real-life experiences from young people from Who Cares? Scotland, the use of 'Lucy's Journey' a visual timeline of a young person's interactions with the Hearing system, table cards with comments from parents and carers about their experiences of the Children's Hearings, resource packs with information about the Act and activities such as mind-mapping, group discussion and various exercises.

8. **Remaining flexible.** The content of the seminars was allowed to evolve and be informed by what was, and was not, working. This was essential given the intention that the strategic symposium would feed into the seminars and likewise the middle-mangers seminars would feed into the practitioner seminars. To ensure focus and sufficient coverage of content as well as flexibility, the delivery team identified key structural points which would frame each of the seminars.

9. **Reflecting on progress.** Time was taken by the delivery team to reflect on the process after each seminar. In this way they were able to reassess what was and was not working. This allowed the team to adapt and refine their delivery and facilitation of the programme as required.

In addition to these nine intrinsic delivery principles, the delivery team met when appropriate with the CHIP, Scottish Government, Children's Hearings Scotland, The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Who Cares? Scotland, ensuring that the programme developed in consultation with the key partner organisations. Various wider contacts and networks and connections were also utilised to share information, this was facilitated by team members' involvement with CHIP groups and other forums. These relationships remain, and are expected to be paramount in carrying forward the outputs of this evaluation.



## 4) Feedback on the different elements of the programme

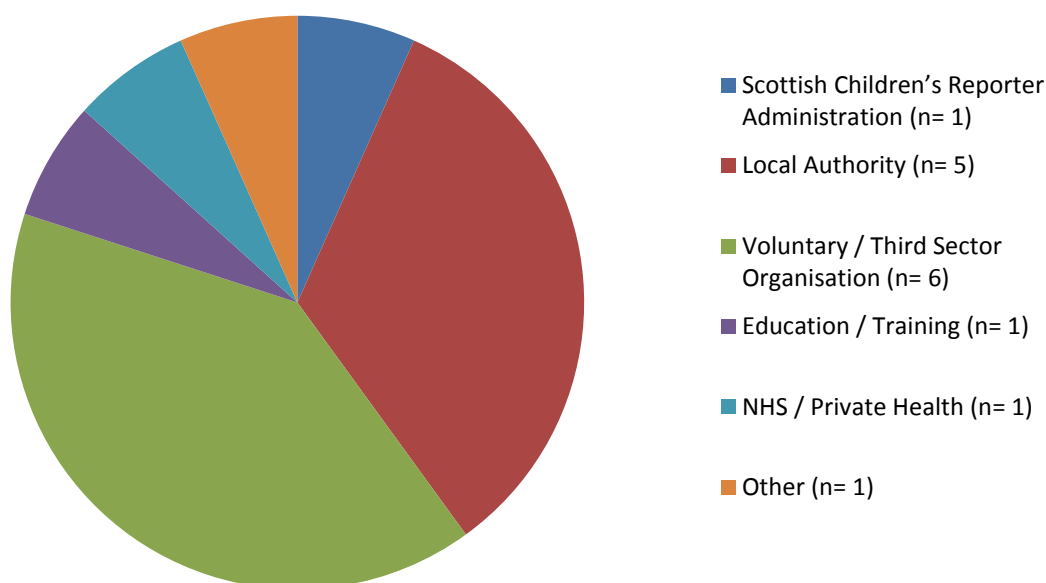
In this section we explore the results of feedback questionnaires, follow-up questionnaires, follow-up interviews, reflections from members of the delivery team and relevant findings from other strands of the evaluation. For each component, we examine issues related to attendance and content and format.

### 4.a) Strategic symposium

#### 4.a.i) Attendance

In total, 27 strategic managers attended the symposium; of these, 15 (56%) chose to respond to the evaluation questionnaire presented on the day.

Figure 2: Organisation or sector (respondents at strategic symposium) (n= 15)



The largest single group of participants came from within the third sector (n=6, 40%); this was followed by those from local authorities (n=5, 33%). This coincided with the observations of the delivery team who noted that there were differing levels of participation across organisation types:

*There was also a difference in the buy-in across agencies to this symposium with attendance from health and police particularly low (Delivery team member).*

The delivery team noted the value of having representatives from the voluntary (third) sector and the private sector present at the symposium given the direct contact many of them have with children, young people and their families:

*The inclusion of [other sectors] was very positive... this group of agencies have not always been involved in this type of programme. Representatives... seemed to be more focused on children and families and had broader approaches to work (Delivery team member).*

The delivery team noted there were significant challenges in securing participation and achieving a level of representation from different organisations at the event. To achieve this required a considerable amount of time, effort and resource:

*The event was not seen as a priority to many and it was hard to keep the level of representation to the required level of leader. (Delivery team member).*

Members of the delivery team felt that despite considerable efforts and some success, the optimal levels of participation were not completely achieved, and it was felt that this restricted the discussions that took place:

*Overall despite great efforts to achieve better attendance, tight timescales worked against being able to improve on this (Delivery team member).*

*I think email invitations followed by phone contact, although time consuming, worked well as an approach (Delivery team member).*

#### 4.a.ii) Content and format of the session

Questionnaire participants were asked to indicate to what extent the format of the symposium suited their needs. The results were very positive; for the majority of participants the format mostly suited (n=10, 67%) or completely suited their needs (n=3, 20%).

Participants' comments about the format indicated that combining the delivery of information with the opportunity to have discussions was particularly well-received:

*Liked the input of the information coupled with the discussion group (Symposium participant).*

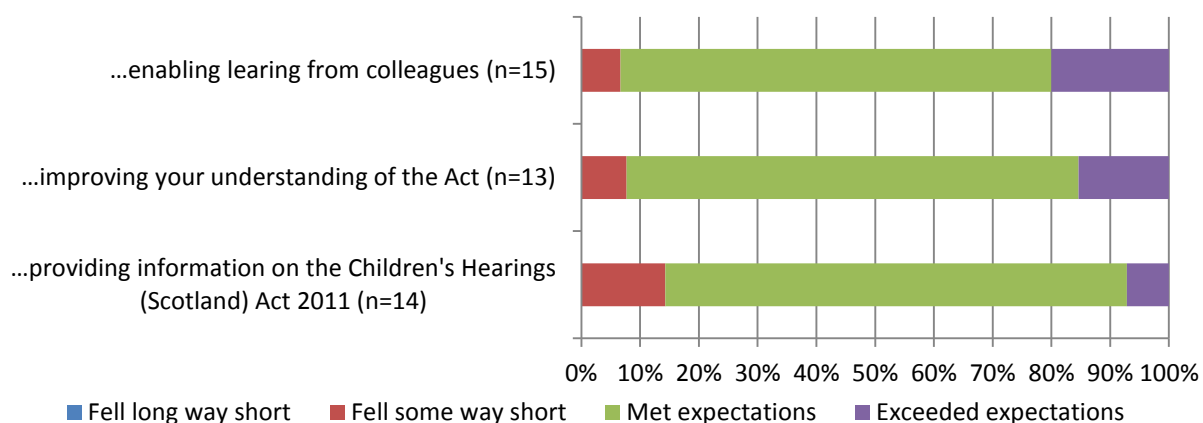
*A good mix[ed] session, listening and talking (Symposium participant).*

Similarly the majority of the participants found the content of the event to be mostly useful (n=10, 71%)<sup>3</sup>. There were three participants (21% of responses) who found the symposium less useful. One of these participants, a representative from health services, noted that the timing of the symposium limited its use to them:

*[It was] too late in the process. [The] health role not seen as of value. Health [was] not in the position to fully engage. [A] specific seminar for health would be an objective (Symposium participant).*

Participants were also asked to comment on whether the session had met their expectations in a number of specific areas. Again the results were highly positive, with the majority of participants feeling that their expectations had been met or exceeded (Figure 3).

Figure 3: How well did the event meet your expectations in terms of...



Participants were then asked, having attended the symposium, how much their awareness of issues related to the Act had increased; 86% (n=12 of 14 responses) indicated that their awareness had increased. When asked to identify the key learning points they had taken from the symposium, the participants' responses commonly included:

- Greater understanding of the local impact of the Act
- Key principles of the Act
- Knowledge and understanding shared at table discussions
- Common concerns and difficulties

<sup>3</sup> One participant chose not to respond to this question, therefore, in total, 14 participants responded to this question.

At the end of the seminar, strategic managers were asked to identify ‘change agents’ from within their organisations to be nominated as delegates to the middle-manager seminars. The response to this request was variable. Whilst some participants were ready to nominate managers within their organisations, many were not:

*One task they were set was to nominate key middle-managers for the next set of seminars and this appeared to be done in a patchy manner with many of the attendees applying independently of the nominee process (Delivery team member).*

The delivery team had presumed that all those attending the strategy seminar would already have relatively detailed knowledge of the Act and have reflected on how it would impact on their organisation. This was not the case. As a consequence, the delegates, and subsequently the delivery team, found it more challenging than expected to pinpoint the key themes and issues to take forward:

*Those attending did provide some strategic direction on operational support but there was difficulty in having the right person there who understood the area within their broader remit. The agencies already most involved, tended to dominate the thinking (Delivery team member).*

*The strategic input was useful to the middle-manager events. Some input was provided for this but the attendance and the limited knowledge of some of the participants affected this aim (Delivery team member).*

Whilst the delivery team tended to reflect critically on this, we feel that it should not distract from the fact that the participants’ comments indicated that the symposium was well-received and successful in securing strategic engagement with the Act.

## 4.b) Middle-manager seminars

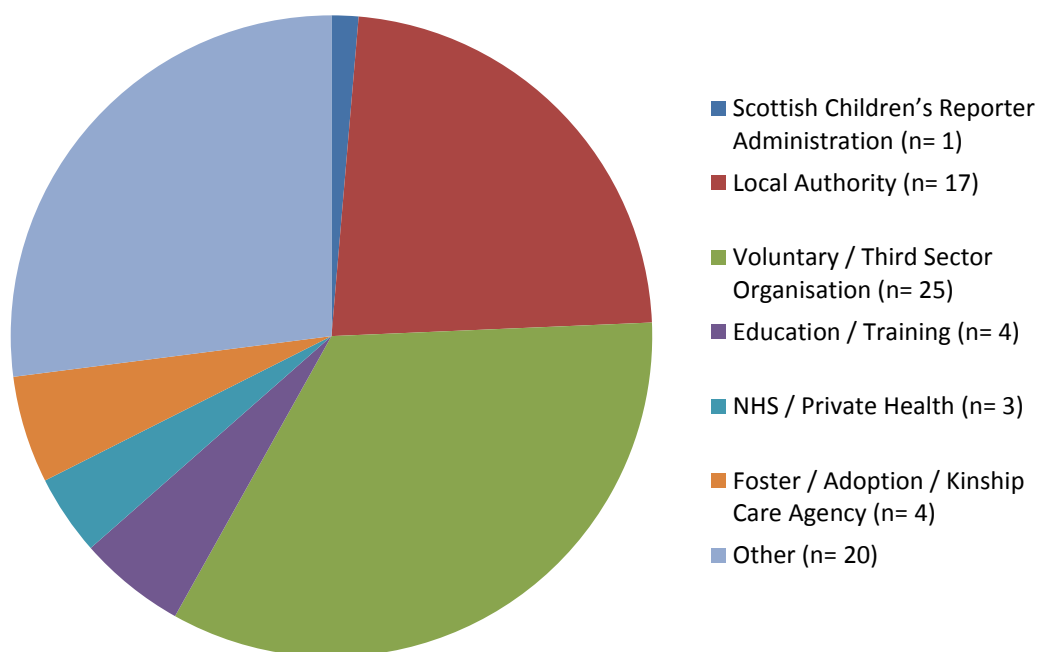
### 4.b.i) Attendance

Four middle-manager seminars were held across Scotland. In total these attracted 162 delegates. Of these, 116 people completed the evaluation questionnaires (72%). Appendix B shows the number of delegates at each seminar.

Participants completing the questionnaire were asked to identify which organisation they worked for. Figure 4 shows that the largest group of participants (n=41, 39%) came from voluntary and

third sector organisations, with a smaller representation from local authorities (n=24, 23%). The participants were also given the option to select ‘other’ followed by a written response to identify which sector they came from. Twenty-three participants (22%) selected ‘other’; their responses indicated that most were either children’s panel members or were working for a private residential service.

**Figure 4: Organisation (respondents from Middle-Managers’ seminars) (n= 74)**



#### 4.b.ii) Content and format of the session

When asked to what extent the format of the event suited their needs, most middle-manager participants indicated that it had suited them mostly (n=49, 43%) or completely (n=36, 32%)<sup>4</sup>.

A quarter of participants (25%) were less affirmative, 25 (22%) indicated that it was slightly suited and three (3%) indicated that it did not suit their needs at all. When asked to identify why the seminar did or did not suit their needs, most participants offered positive comments, with many indicating that the seminars offered a good opportunity to meet with professionals from other agencies:

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<sup>4</sup> Three participants chose not to respond to this question leaving a total response rate of n=113.

*Really useful to work with representatives from other agencies, their experiences/views of the role of particular agency involvement in support of the young people (Middle-manager participant).*

Several participants also commented that the seminars provided the opportunity for knowledge, experiences and shared challenges surrounding the Act to be discussed amongst professionals in an informal manner:

*Through directed discussion we could share views and formulate potential solutions while learning (Middle-manager participant).*

*Brought to the fore problems other agencies have experienced and the gains from the 2011 Act (Middle-manager participant).*

The interactive and discursive elements of the format were particularly welcomed by a number of participants:

*Very interactive and thought provoking (Middle-manager participant).*

*I found the group idea positive, in fact was able to gather information and swap practice issues with different organisations involved in the same goal (Middle-manager participant).*

*Able to talk to lots of others from different perspectives to build up a fuller understanding (Middle-manager participant).*

The format of the seminars helped participants to bridge the gap between policy and practice:

*Discussion about practice and different perspectives really provoked good insights into other's roles (Middle-manager participant).*

*As a newly appointed policy officer with background as middle-manager, it was helpful to be reminded of how practitioners and managers can best learn from and use policy/legislative developments (Middle-manager participant).*

*Good discussion around practice relevant to work with Hearing System (Middle-manager participant).*

For the small number of participants who had found the format less suitable, comments indicated that the programme was not sufficiently focused for them with some indicating they had anticipated that there would be more directly delivered information about the Act:

*Not focused enough - lacked direction and therefore focus (Middle-manager participant).*

*I found it a little bit unfocused... (Middle-manager participant).*

*I was expecting a fuller brief on the implementation of Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act across Scotland prior to discussion (Middle-manager participant).*

During the delivery of the middle-manager seminars, the team became aware of highly differing levels of knowledge and understanding around the Act. Although some variation in knowledge and understanding had been anticipated, and planned for, the extent of variation became more apparent at the point of delivery. As the programme progressed, delivery team members noted that some participants had anticipated that the programme would have had a larger proportion of directly taught content rather than being primarily discussion-based. To address this, pre-prepared hand-outs outlining the principles of the Act and the changes it brought about were distributed prior to subsequent seminars, and advertisements about the programme were altered in order to give greater clarity to the purpose, aims and approach of the seminars:

*The introduction was changed slightly after the first event to provide more information and context. The original plan of having nominees identified by strategic participants at the strategic event had not completely followed through, so more information was needed. After each event the team developing and delivering reviewed comments and discussed changes needed. This helped reflection and improvements as the programme progressed. Again, some people were keen to be reminded of the changes of the Act and a hand-out was provided, subsequently in advance of the day (Delivery team member).*

One participant in one of the middle-manager seminars observed that the format was less successful for them due to the right people not being present at their seminar:

*The right people, e.g. social work managers and education managers, were not at the seminar in great enough numbers to make the exercise meaningful (Middle-manager participant).*

This was also something that the delivery team reflected on. Although great efforts were taken to ensure that there was a broad representation of professions from a variety of organisations, attendance in some areas was less strategically driven than had been planned and was largely dependent on who wished to attend:

*There appeared to be regional variation in the attendance from different agencies, for example, more middle-managers from CHS attending in some areas, and this had a significant impact on group discussions at each event (Delivery team member).*

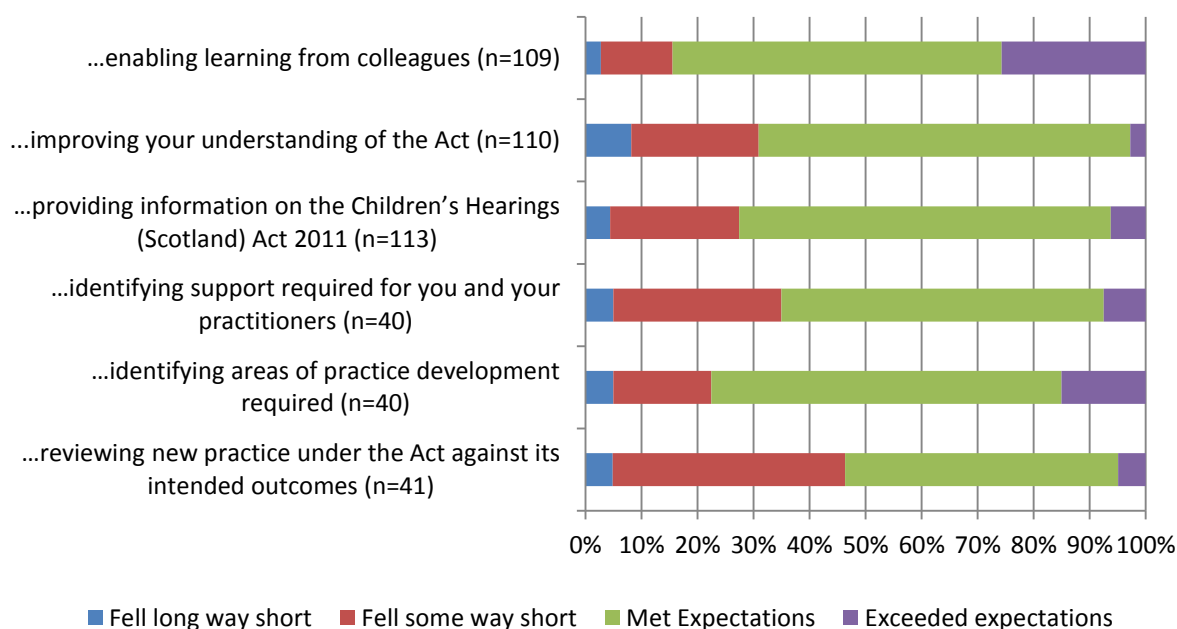
*I believe the middle-manager seminars were effective in meeting intended aims, although the interaction varied across the country (Delivery team member).*

The delivery team also highlighted the challenge of managing outspoken or dominant participants within a multi-agency training session, having noted this particularly during the middle-manager seminars. At times delivery team members were aware of some participants challenging others in

relation to their practice as well as dominating discussions. The facilitators managed this concern by encouraging other participants to speak up during discussion opportunities; this minimised any negative impact.

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which the seminar met their expectations in three areas: learning from colleagues, understanding the Act and proving information. At one of the seminars, participants were also asked to rate how well their expectations were met in relation to an additional three elements: identifying support required for you and your practitioners, identifying areas of practice development required, and reviewing new practice under the Act against its intended outcomes. Most participants provided positive responses (Figure 5):

Figure 5: How well did the event meet your expectations in terms of...



It is apparent that all elements met with the majority of participants' expectations. It is notable that the element that participants most frequently identified as being where the seminar exceeded expectations was in enabling learning from colleagues (n=28, 26%). Participant comments also reinforce this, suggesting that the opportunity to meet with other middle-managers was highly beneficial. The flexible, discussion-based structure of the programme allowed time for participants to raise and identify common challenges, share examples of good practice and talk openly with colleagues.

Overall 76 participants (69%) noted that the seminar met or exceeded their expectation in relation to improving their understanding of the Act; however, there were nine participants (8%) who



ranked the seminar as falling a long way short and a further 25 participants (23%) who felt the seminar fell some way short in this area. Further analysis showed that most of these participants had attended two particular seminars from the four provided, suggesting that these two events were less successful than others. This could be for a number of reasons, in particular, the balance of delegates and the fact that young people were not present at one of these two events.

Those asked to rate the additional three questions predominantly felt that the seminar met (63%, n=25) or exceeded (15%, n=6) their expectations in relation to identifying areas of practice development required. Similarly the seminars met (58%, n=23) or exceeded (8%, n=3) participants' expectations in relation to identifying support required for themselves and their practitioners. It will be seen that close to half (n=17, 42%) of these participants felt that the seminar fell some way short in reviewing new practice under the Act against the intended outcomes; this may potentially be related to the timing of the programme and the fact that new practice is still developing and being embedded.

All participants were asked, having attended the event, to what extent their awareness of the Act had increased<sup>5</sup>; 78% (n=88) felt their awareness had increased to some extent and 11 participants (10%) felt that their awareness had greatly increased. There were 13 participants (12%) who felt that the seminar did not increase their awareness at all. This degree of variability is most likely due to participants' prior knowledge, with some already being relatively knowledgeable and others having more scope for learning.

When asked to write in their key learning points from the seminar, the most commonly identified points for middle-managers were:

- A need to increase multi-agency working
- Learning from the knowledge and experiences of professionals from other organisations
- The need for ongoing training
- Focus on keeping children and young people at the centre
- The need for better communication and preparation with children and young people throughout the Hearing process
- Greater focus on involving young people and their voices in the process
- A need for better access to advocacy services for young people and their families
- Linking knowledge and practice

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<sup>5</sup> Four participants chose not to respond to this question giving a response rate of n=112.

Participants were asked to think about how they would be able to apply their key learning points<sup>6</sup>. The results show that participant felt the seminars had substantial impact. The majority of participants (n=57, 54%) intended to apply these learning points and encourage their colleagues to consider them as well. Additionally, 25% of participants (n=26) intended to apply these learning points more widely in their job. In total only four participants (4%) noted that they would not be able to apply any of their key learning points.

Overall the majority of participants found the seminar to be either very useful (n=43, 37%) or mostly useful (n=45, 39%). A much smaller proportion of participants found the seminar slightly useful (n=23, 20%) and only 4% of participants found the seminar not useful at all (n=5).

One of the aims of the middle-manager seminars was to identify areas of practice development and support needed for middle-managers and practitioners as a result of the new legislation. It is apparent that the seminars did succeed in this regard. The issues identified were sometimes part of a broader longstanding picture of what needed to be addressed by the systems involved; as such they were not necessarily considered to be amenable to changes brought about by the Act. This seems to indicate wider learning and development needs in relation to Children's Hearings:

*Consistent themes emerged from middle-managers in relation to areas of practice development and support required for practitioners. The range and quality of evidence provided to decision-makers in the system was identified as needing to improve. This was not solely in the form of reports but also verbal presentation and consistency of workers. Time and priority given to building relationships between professionals and children and families and across agencies was seen as vital. Also, the need to meaningfully include children and their families in decision making was seen as a priority by the majority attending. Many managers felt this was prevented by current practices which needed to change. I do not feel there was any clear evidence that the new legislation was influencing this as many of these issues felt like longstanding issues which clearly pre-dated the legislation (Delivery team member).*

## 4.c) Practitioner seminars

### 4.c.i) Attendance

Over the series of eight practitioner seminars there were a total of 464 attendees. In addition to the eight formal practitioner events, a similar practitioner programme was delivered to staff in

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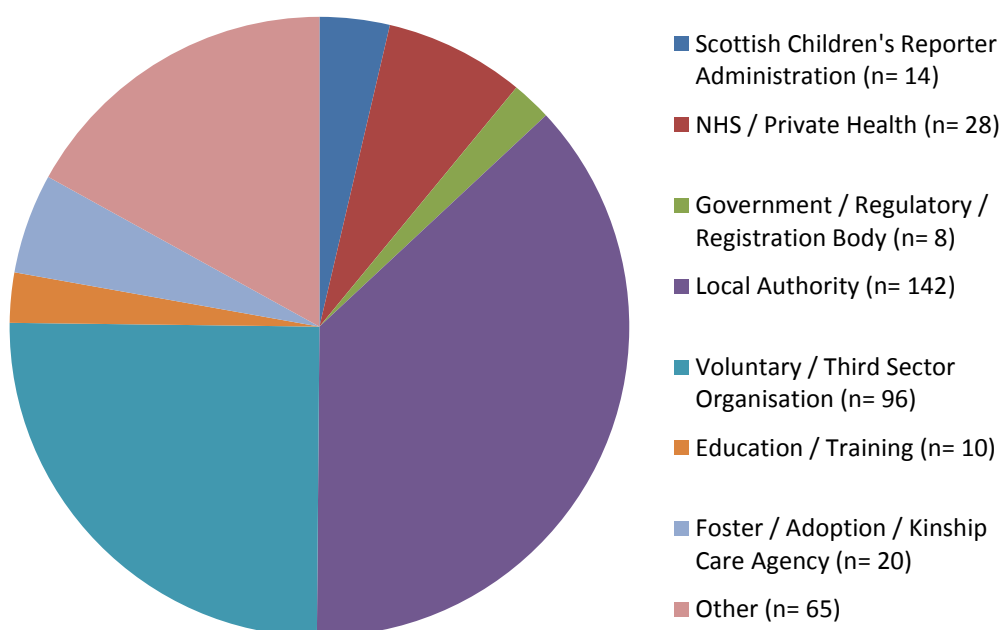
<sup>6</sup> Ten participants chose not to respond to this questions, leaving a total response rate of n=106.

Shetland as part of a wider programme of training. Evaluations of this seminar have been included within this evaluation (see Appendix B for participant breakdown by seminar).

The practitioner questionnaire received an 84% (n=388) response rate. Practitioners were asked what organisation they worked for. Figure 6 illustrates that the largest group of participants worked within local authorities (n=142, 37%) and that this was followed by those from the voluntary and third sector (n=96, 25%). Participants were also given the option of selecting 'other', 65 participants (17%) chose this response and around half of these participants indicated that they were Children's Panel Members.

Overall the data indicate that the programme attracted practitioners from a range of professional backgrounds. If this is then broken down into the eight individual seminars, it is evident that in some instances there was a disproportionately larger representation from certain organisations at some of the seminars. For example, at one practitioner seminar more than half of the participants worked for a local authority (n=24, 59%).

**Figure 6: Organisation (respondents at front-line practitioner seminars) (n=383)**



Non-attendance by registered delegates at many of the seminars was anticipated and countered by greatly over-subscribing the seminars. This reduced the numbers of practitioners on waiting lists and ensured that the seminars were well attended; however, this approach limited the ability of the delivery team to strategically control the balance of participants attending:

*I thought non-attendance by registrants for some of the events was disappointing, particularly because most of the later events were fully booked. We oversubscribed some of the later events which helped to counteract this a bit (Delivery team member).*

The reasons for non-attendance are unclear: one participant in a follow-up contact suggested that the programme was not widely known about:

*I initially heard of the seminar through a training officer, but there were many people who didn't know about the seminar who would have liked to attend. There should possibly be broader contact with relevant bodies to prevent the cronyism that appears to take place when people are picked to attend these events. The events should be made more accessible (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

#### 4.c.ii) Content and format of the seminars

High levels of satisfaction with the content and format were found. For the majority of participants the format of the seminar mostly suited their learning needs (n=204, 53%) and for a further 36% of participants the format of the seminar completely suited their learning needs (n=140).

Similarly, in the follow-up questionnaire most participants either agreed (n=28, 55%) or strongly agreed (n=5, 10%) that the seminar had been helpful in providing the opportunity to review key areas of new practice that have arisen from the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (n=28, 55%)<sup>7</sup>. A smaller number either disagreed (n=8, 16%) or strongly disagreed (n=3, 6%) that the seminar had been helpful.

When asked for an explanation about why the format did or did not suit their learning needs, many of the participants indicated that the use of physical materials and hand-outs rather than electronic presentations was very helpful:

*The packs were great and will be useful to share with colleagues and team members (Front-line practitioner participant).*

*There were very good visuals around the walls and linking with other agencies and authorities (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

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<sup>7</sup> Nine participants chose not to respond to this question, therefore there was a total response rate of n=51.

The follow-up interviews highlighted that participants had already utilised the materials and the knowledge they gained at the seminar and in many cases had shared this with colleagues:

*I kept the folder and have read through it again (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*I have spread the information around the organisation and shared the stuff that was given to me (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

There was some explanation given as to why the format was less suitable for a small proportion of participants (n=41, 11%). Several participants indicated that some of the content of the day was too basic and therefore did not effectively reflect their day-to-day practice contexts:

*Wasn't sure what to expect, was good, helpful if a little basic in terms of the complexities we manage day to day (Front-line practitioner participant).*

*I remember that I felt it didn't quite hit the nail on the head and that there was an underlying lesson to be learned that was missed due to it not being in-depth enough. It felt like it missed the point and I was left wondering what I had really learned. However, I did enjoy the course and it really was one of the better ones I've attended, I just felt it could have been more in-depth (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

There were mixed opinions about the length of the session; some participants indicated that having the seminar as a half day was an appropriate amount of time, whereas other comments suggested that there was not enough time given to each stage of the event:

*I think the whole event was far too rushed and didn't in the end do justice to the scope of the issues we were considering (Front-line practitioner participant).*

*There was a lot of information given, at times it felt a bit rushed especially the case discussions and therefore a bit disjointed (Front-line practitioner participant).*

Some comments suggested that the seminar content was of less relevance to certain groups, in this case children's panel members, given that their interaction with children, young people and their families comes later, at the point of the Hearing:

*The subjects being discussed were mainly before it comes to a panel hearing, so more relevant to other professionals (Front-line practitioner participant).*

However, several practitioners from other disciplines commented on the value of having children's panel members present at the discussion:

*Very useful to have discussed with panel members and see their perspective (Front-line practitioner participant).*

Overall, comments from all types of participant noted that the opportunity to interact and discuss themes and issues with professionals from across agencies was useful to their learning:

*Useful discussion with colleagues from other sectors gave a new perspective on issues (Front-line practitioner participant).*

Similarly the input from young people was appreciated:

*Really enjoyed hearing from the boys experiences of the system for them. The rest was really not in my learning needs. Thank you anyway for the opportunity to network with others; that was good (Front-line practitioner participant).*

A follow-up interview participant commented that the programme model supported and encouraged discussion:

*There was a good variety of input from different organisations, like Who Cares? and there was a good mix of practicality and theory mixed with current research and changes in practice. Initially, the round table interactions were a bit of a challenge, but the exercises helped with that (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

One of the associated challenges of having a discussion-based programme was the suitability of the venues for holding small and large group discussions. Where the appropriate AV equipment was not available, this often made engagement from hearing-impaired individuals challenging and consequently limited their access; this was acknowledged by the delivery team:

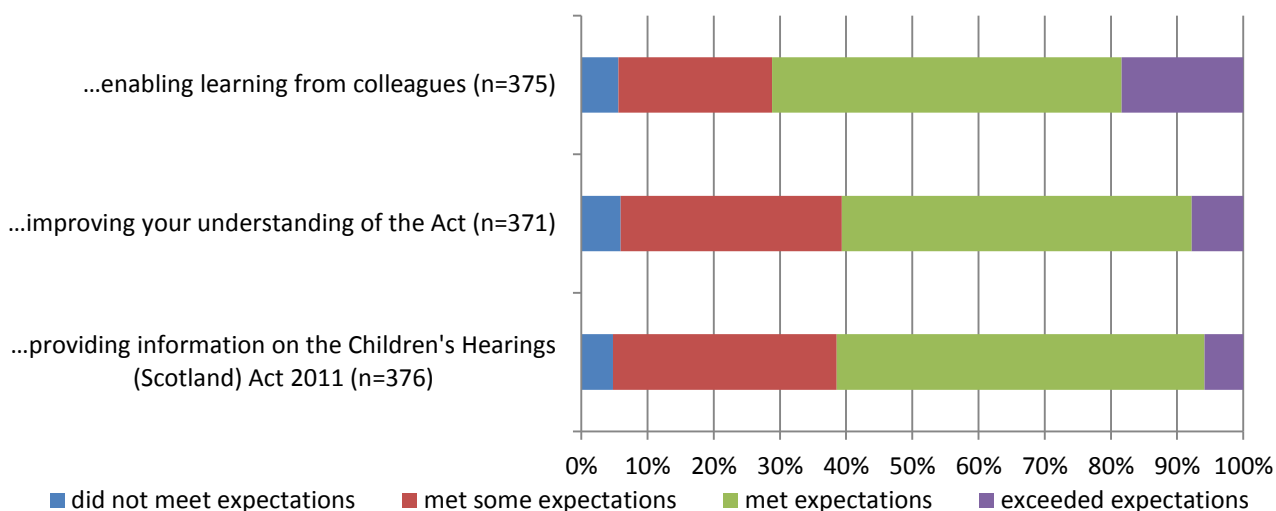
*If I was organizing a future event which was discussion-based I would include the hire of professional AV equipment for all events as some of the systems [that] venues provided were substandard and this did impact on group discussions. We wouldn't have been able to provide this in the quote for FATP2 though because we didn't realize at that stage that the event would be so discussion-based (Delivery team member).*

When asked to rate how effectively the seminar met their expectations in relation to three elements, a similar pattern to the middle-managers appeared. Participants' expectations were especially well met in terms of 'enabling learning from colleagues': the majority of participants stated that this element met (n=198, 53%) or exceeded (n=69, 18%) their expectations. As with the middle-manager seminar feedback, the positive response to enabling learning from colleagues indicates that participants particularly appreciated the opportunity to have detailed discussions with a range of colleagues and professionals, to explore issues that they were encountering in relation to the Act.

The other elements were also well received by the majority of participants. For example, in relation to improving their understanding of the Act, 196 (53%) participants indicated that the

seminars had met their expectations and 29 (8%) stated that it has exceeded expectations. Likewise, in relation to providing information on the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, 209 (56%) participants indicated that their expectations were met and a further 22 (6%) that they had been exceeded<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 7: How well did the event meet your expectations in terms of...



The element that least effectively met participants’ expectations was improving their understanding of the Act. There were 22 (6%) participants who stated that the seminar did not meet their expectations in relation to this and 124 (33%) for whom the seminar met only some of their expectations. Likewise, 18 (5%) participants indicated that the seminars did not meet their expectations in terms of providing information on the Act, and 127 (34%) participants stated that the seminar only met some of their expectations in this area.

Importantly, the follow-up interviews indicated that some participants were prompted or empowered to seek further information as a result of the seminar:

<sup>8</sup> Participants were also given the option to indicate that they had no expectation in relation to these elements; these cases were small in number and were removed from Figure 7.

*I enjoyed the training, it made me think about the Act a lot more and I printed out a copy for staff to read as well so the knowledge base around it has increased due to the course (Front-line practitioner participant).*

*It did make me do further reading on the Act. Reading the Act again and reading further background papers to update my knowledge. I also spoke to social workers to make sure they understood and were following the correct procedures (Front-line practitioner participant).*

Participants were asked, having attended the event, to what extent their awareness of the Act had increased. Out of 371 participants who chose to respond to this question, the majority of participants felt that their awareness had increased (n=189, 51%) or greatly increased (n=58, 16%). Twenty-nine percent (n=109) of participants felt that their awareness had slightly increased and only 4% (n=15) that there had been no increase in their awareness of the Act.

Follow-up interviews also indicated that participants' awareness and knowledge in relation to some key issues had improved as a result of attending the seminar:

*It increased my knowledge around practice and it was great to refresh my memory through the use of practice samples (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*It made me more aware of specific amendments (like the relevant person) and things under review (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

Participants were also asked to identify the key learning points that they took from the seminar. The most frequently identified key learning points were:

- Greater understanding and awareness in relation to relevant persons and their rights
- The first-hand experiences of the care leavers
- The importance of being child-focused and keeping children at the centre of the process
- The importance of preparing a young person before the hearing
- The role of voluntary agencies in supporting individuals during the process
- The importance of children's rights in the process
- Hearing the perspectives of other professionals
- Greater awareness of the changes brought about by the Act

There were 357 participants who chose to respond when asked how they would be able to apply these key learning points. Their responses suggest that the programme had significant impact for them. The largest group of these participants intended to apply these learning points and encourage their colleagues to consider them as well (n=164, 46%). A further 34% (n=123) of participants intended to apply their learning points more widely in their job and 18% (n=63) indicated that they intended to apply their learning points in a small aspect of their job. Notably,



across the whole series, there were only seven participants (2%) who felt it would not be possible to apply their key learning to their practice.

Overall, when asked how useful they had found the seminar, most participants found it either useful (n=179 from 382, 47%) or very useful (n=171, 45%). Together with the clear gains in knowledge, this is encouraging.

Follow-up interviews suggested that the seminar programme had fitted with the wider picture of organisational change in relation to the Act:

*There are changes all the time to meet practice direction requirements. We constantly evolve and change due to new legislation. For example, there is new legislation being released today which relates to the CHS and we will change our practices to meet these changes. (Front-line practitioner, follow-up).*

#### 4.c.iii) Identifying impact on practice

It is interesting that in follow-up interviews and questionnaires practitioners found it difficult to specify how they had changed their practice. From their discussions and descriptions it became clear that the seminars had encouraged them to think in different ways and give consideration to all parties present and involved in the Hearing process:

*There were no real changes in my practice but it did help to support my existing knowledge. (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*There have been no direct differences on my practice but I will think more carefully about those involved in the whole process (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

Importantly, these changes in mind-set included giving more consideration to young people's involvement and inclusion in the process:

*I still advocate in the same manner as I used to, but I have a greater understanding of the importance of the child's views. I'm definitely more able to tune into that now (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

*We've now started to explain the process as we go along a lot more and informing the young person and parents and carers to make sure they understand what the changes in the Act actually mean to them practically (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

So, although participants did not portray these issues as 'changes to practice', we would suggest there are clear and positive changes to ways of working which are attributable to FATP2. The following quote provides an example of this:

*A lot of the time it is only the social workers that are spoken to during the Hearings process. For example, Health workers are never spoken to; because of the seminar, I now ensure that I include everyone around the table. If they have taken the time to be there and written a report then they should be heard. I am aware that everybody should be considered as their view matters (Front-line practitioner at follow-up).*

Participants were then asked if attending the seminar had had any impact on their confidence in relation to the changes to their practice brought about by the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. Just below half of participants felt there had been no change to their confidence in relation to their practice (n=24, 47%), around a third felt that the seminar had helped them feel a little more confident (n=16, 31%) and a fifth felt much more confident in relation to their practice (n=10, 20%). This means that at follow-up, more than half of participants felt they had been more confident about practice changes as a result of attending the seminars.

For one participant, an increase in their confidence in relation to the Act had allowed them to be more confident in asking for additional help from elsewhere:

*I have become more confident in my approach during the process. For example, I am more confident around the legal aspects of the process like when asking for contact and I'm more likely to ask the reporter for help (Front-line practitioner at follow-up participant).*

When asked if they were aware of the development of policies, procedures or guidance documents related to the Act, just below half of participants were not aware of any (n=18, 46%); however, more than a third were aware of new policies, procedures and guidance (n=15, 38%) and some organisations were reported to be in the process of developing these (n=5, 13%).

One example of the resources now being developed by organisations related to ensuring that children and young people are supported through the process, thus echoing a key focus of the programme:

*We've also been talking about putting together packs for early visits that could be used as pre-hearing information and how this could be used with young people to help inform them of the process better. We have been working with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration around this and they have been to speak with us (Front-line practitioner at follow-up participant).*

In terms of changes introduced by the Act itself, follow-up questionnaires indicated:

- No significant changes to professional role for most participants
- Acknowledgement of the increased impact on carers as relevant person
- Increase of legal representation at the hearings

- An increase in appeals, making the process more time-consuming and delaying decisions
- Greater focus on achieving permanency
- Greater flexibility available in decision-making, report-writing and the language applicable.

We would note that some areas of practice are more amenable to change than others. As part of the follow-up questionnaire, participants were given a list of the broad areas where the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 introduced changes. Participants were then asked to choose up to three areas of practice change that had been easiest for their organisation to address and up to three that had been most difficult. Appendix C shows the results for this question. In particular, the area of practice change that practitioners most frequently identified as being easiest to address was in relation to obtaining the views of the child (n=18). Additionally, changes to pre-hearing panels (n=14) and to the relevant person (n=23) were also frequently selected as being broad areas of change that participants' organisations had found easiest to address. Conversely, the areas of change identified as having been the most difficult to address were non-disclosure of information (n=13), legal representation (n=13) and issues related to contact (n=10).

## 5) Discussions and conclusions

The purposes of the evaluation were to:

- Facilitate the ongoing development of the programme model
- Describe and test the effectiveness of the delivery model as a means of supporting the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Review the impact of the programme, in particular the extent to which the overall project aims were achieved

We consider each area in turn, focusing mainly on the second and third (summative) areas of effectiveness and impact.

### 5.a) Facilitating ongoing development

The programme team met frequently throughout the programme and the evaluators were involved in many of these discussions. Feedback forms were scrutinised, and emerging and interim findings were presented to inform programme development. These inputs were welcomed by the delivery team. We feel this formative purpose was successfully addressed and it is not discussed further here.

## 5.b) The effectiveness of the delivery model

The first summative purpose was to assess the effectiveness of the delivery model. Here we discuss the key principles of the delivery model and important delivery lessons learned. It is our hope that these sections will be of value to others considering similar delivery approaches.

### 5.b.i) Fundamental principles of the FATP2 model

A number of key principles or characteristics of the delivery model became apparent during this evaluation. These are described in more detail earlier in the report and listed briefly here:

1. Focusing input (minimising resource requirements)
2. Embedding change (using existing networks)
3. Promoting inter-agency working (reflecting the content of the Act)
4. Keeping children and young people at the centre (using input from young people)
5. Focused use of time (condensing content to half-day events)
6. Participatory learning (making participants responsible for their learning)
7. Attention to diverse learning styles (use of different media and approaches)
8. Remaining flexible (flexible and open content, optimising content and delivery)
9. Reflecting on progress (building-in opportunities for delivery team to reflect)

These principles would clearly not be relevant or applicable to all training programmes, but it does seem that they contributed to the success of this programme and may be helpful to those considering similar programmes to support implementation of legislation or policy change.

### 5.b.ii) Important lessons learned applying the model

Many of the lessons learned focused on participatory learning. The delivery model had to address a number of challenges. In the context of the introduction of the Act, FATP2 was part of a wider implementation effort and needed to complement the ongoing work being done within

organisations. The main way in which this was achieved was by allowing delegates to share this work and emerging good practice with other professions. The programme content was deliberately open, providing the opportunity for professionals to add the complexities that they encounter as appropriate. Whilst it was not 'content-free' the FATP2 programme provided flexibility for delegates to shape the story and progress their own learning relating to developments in their area. To achieve this, the delivery team had to overcome two main challenges:

- Achieving the right mix: the middle-manager seminars attracted a slightly narrower range of audience members than had been hoped and as a result discussions had fewer perspectives and required more active facilitation. Also, managers were not always ready to nominate delegates for practitioner seminars which meant that identifying a suitable mix of delegates required additional effort and time. Although this seems to have been largely achieved, it required additional effort, and different or additional strategies may be required in future, such as providing managers with a number of invitation cards for them to take away and issue to relevant staff enabling them to book on to the session.
- Delegate expectations: it was clear that a small number of participants were unfamiliar with discussion-based training programmes which rely on participants' input. Participants collectively needed to have sufficient basic knowledge at the start and a willingness to share and explore the issues together. Whilst this was explained to delegates at the start of each seminar, it may be helpful to be more explicit about this earlier in the process, so that participants know what to expect and are prepared to engage in this way. For example, pre-reading materials were issued in later seminars and changes were made to promotional materials.

The other significant lesson learned was the importance of young people's input. This was achieved by inviting them to share their real-life experiences. This importantly set the context and tone for the seminars and helped to connect the professions to a child-centred focus. The inputs complemented the other components of the day and motivated delegates:

*The input from the young people at the start of the event was critical in ensuring that people were 'woken up' to the reality of the task and it helped people look to how solutions could be found rather than just moaning about things. Participants owned the issues and seemed more ready to listen to others who were or had dealt with issues (Delivery team member).*

*Excellent contribution from young people who reminded us why we were here and very much helped focus the discussions (Middle-manager participant).*

*Felt having a live experience was an excellent beginning as it set the scene and had me thinking about the young person immediately (Middle-manager participant).*

The delivery team acknowledged the importance of having the Who Cares? Scotland young people present and the appropriateness of this for the programme; however, they were also acutely aware that this approach could become tokenistic if this type of input did not make a difference to subsequent outcomes. This was also emphasised by a participant:

*I really liked the seminar. The round table sessions and the young people's views were great. However, I had heard the young people speak a few times before; this didn't mean their stories were any less powerful, but it made me wonder why they were using the same young people all the time (Front-line practitioner participant).*

By including Who Cares? Scotland, the team ensured that the young people involved were supported to experience their input as part of their ongoing development. Alternative modes of delivery such as a recorded video may be possible, and may reduce the burden on a small number of young people. However, these may be less effective than a live presence.

## 5.c) The impact of the programme

The second summative purpose of the evaluation was to review the impact of the programme. Here we summarise the impacts of the programme against the stated aims, the original needs which led to the FATP2 programme, and then consider impact in terms of scale and scope, fit with other initiatives and opportunities created.

### 5.c.i) Impact against programme aims

We begin our consideration of impact by revisiting the stated aims of the programme. There were three aims for each of the three stages of the programme:

#### **Symposium for strategic managers:**

- To provide a forum for key strategic managers to review the changes brought in by the new legislation
- To provide strategic direction on future operational support for best practice under the new legislation
- To secure commitment to the provision of further learning and development required for the new legislation

It is clear that the programme succeeded in bringing together strategic managers to review the changes and consider these issues. There was commitment and input to further learning at different stages, most obviously by the recommendation that a mechanism should be found to

remind future delegates that children need to be at the centre of all discussions. Service changes related to the Act were already underway and the strategic manager's symposium provided a timely forum for the exchange of information. This suggests that information from the symposium could be integrated into ongoing developments. Further time would need to pass before assessing the longer-term strategic commitment to operational support and to learning and development beyond the programme. Given the high level of integration, it would be challenging to evaluate all of the longer-term impacts of FATP2.

#### **Seminars for middle-managers:**

- To review new practice under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 against the intended outcomes of the legislation
- To identify areas of practice development required as a result of the new legislation
- To identify support required for them and their practitioners as a result of the new legislation

The programme structure allowed for relevant themes to be identified and then integrated into the programme content. The delivery model provided a space in which attention could be given to the changes occurring as a result of the Act and consequently an opportunity to shape understanding and practice in relation to this. In this way the programme complemented the ongoing work being done within organisations and in particular supported the sharing of this work and the developments of good practice being made with other professions. The FATP2 programme provided an appropriate forum for professionals to shape and progress their own learning and development in relation to key elements of the Act.

#### **Practice development seminars for front-line practitioners:**

- To review key areas of new practice as a result of the new legislation
- To inform the development of support for multi-agency practitioners in operating to best practice under the new legislation
- To support the implementation of the new legislation by enabling practice that will achieve best outcomes for children and young people.

The FATP2 programme encouraged and fostered greater understanding of the multitude of professional roles interacting with the Act, and supported multi-agency working. The programme developed and consolidated professional thinking on key changes in relation to the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. Table discussions and exercises were designed to engage participants in conversations from their professional standpoint, whilst reflecting on the standpoints of other professions and professionals. The delivery model allowed practitioners to

develop their understanding of how they could support each other by sharing knowledge and practice experiences.

### 5.c.ii) Impact against identified areas of need

Here we consider the contributions the FATP2 programme has made to addressing the needs which were identified before the programme was devised. There were three areas of need:

- Providing further support to address key concerns raised by delegates, including the definition and status of relevant person(s), issues around pre-hearing panels, advocacy, and the general realities of working with the Act.

Delegates' comments suggest that the programme provided many opportunities to discuss these issues further. Many delegates were able to clarify their understanding of key issues and how the Act would improve practice. However, these are complex issues that will take time to resolve before solutions can become fully embedded. The programme made an important contribution to this.

- Promoting the sharing of policy and practice in relation to the way in which different organisations have responded to the Act, including highlighting examples of good practice.

The evidence gathered in the evaluation shows that the FATP2 programme was highly successful in addressing this need. Many delegates commented on the learning they gained from their discussions with others from different organisations. We note that further examples of good practice will emerge as time passes (see discussion below under *Opportunities*).

- Identifying and sharing good practice on how to promote and support children's rights in the Hearings setting.

Again, the programme was highly successful in this regard. This success is attributed by members of the delivery team and delegates to the live inputs from young people. This 'device' moved delegates and reminded them of the need to keep the child at the centre of discussions. The young people's stories also provided examples of when systems had worked well or less well. Their inputs were supplemented by other relevant materials and information which helped to retain a children's rights focus and enabled delegates to share their own practice in this regard.



### 5.c.iii) Scale and scope of changes

The FATP2 programme was delivered to large numbers of professionals and managers from a wide range of organisations and sectors. This included 27 strategic-level managers, 162 mid-level managers and 464 front-line practitioners of different kinds. The overwhelming majority of these people reported that the programme had been useful to them and had met or exceeded their expectations. Additionally, there is evidence that materials from the programme have been shared with delegates' colleagues and other staff.

This information has proved timely for organisations who are undergoing changes in response to the Act, and the evaluation report has highlighted some of the impacts that these people report. The issues which emerge as having the greatest short-term impact are changes to thinking, knowledge, confidence, attitudes and skills. Given the relatively large scale of attendance, these important shifts will underpin and inform the ongoing changes to procedure and practice across the sector. At follow-up, delegates are beginning to report changes in their approach.

### 5.c.iv) Fit with other initiatives

The FATP2 programme was not the only relevant learning experienced by these delegates. For example, during the follow-up questionnaire, when asked what kinds of training or learning relating to the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 they had completed, a proportion of participants stated that they had attended *From Act to Practice* Phase 1 (n=39, 65%). Some participants had also developed learning around the Act by reading relevant materials (n=30, 50%), or through discussions with peers (n=27, 45%). Forty percent of participants had attended training provided by their organisation (n=24) but only 10 (17%) participants had attended formal training provided by another organisation. Only one participant (2%) had been involved in no training or learning relating to the Act. Comments indicate that the programme had often motivated this further study and frequently informed the local discussions, and therefore should be seen as an important part of wider developments. These issues are likely to be ongoing for many delegates, and further specific or tailored training may be required:

*I think the CHS need to think about the goals and aims they would like to achieve. There have been electronic developments in the system, which is great, but there should be seminars about how this will be implemented, how they will progress and what they want to achieve (Front-line practitioner, follow-up).*

### 5.c.v) Opportunities created

One further indication of the programme's impact is that it has advanced the agenda and opened up a number of opportunities which could be further exploited. Throughout the evaluation period emerging findings were shared and discussed with the delivery team along with drafts of the final report. Based on these findings, the following observations and opportunities have been identified. We recognise that this would require further resources but suggest that these opportunities could be incorporated within the three key programmes aligned to the CHIP in order to ensure they have the impact intended. These new opportunities include:

**Completing the top-bottom-top circle:** The structure of the programme was uni-directional, in that information was fed from senior managers to middle-managers and then to practitioners. In the course of the programme, information was gathered from all levels. It would therefore be possible to feed back in the opposite direction (bottom-up). In addition to this, creating regular opportunities for professionals to interact with, and feed information into the CHIP could potentially further raise their profile, enhance strategic leadership and broaden partnerships. This in turn could help to facilitate ongoing direction and support within practitioner networks in line with the key programmes of the CHIP.

**Further invest in inter-professional practice :** The programme identified many 'live issues' and many examples of 'developing practice'. Providing opportunities for professionals to foster relationships, discuss key themes, and learn from each other's knowledge, experiences and expertise could ensure this legacy continues. Further benefit may come through the provision of an ongoing forum for sharing developments and emerging good practice, for example, by providing a newsletter or commissioning a web resource through which delegates could continue to share ideas and practice.

**Promote the FATP2 delivery model:** The programme identified nine key principles that contributed to its overall success and impact. Given this, it is appropriate to suggest that the FATP2 delivery model is a successful example of developing and delivering a holistic programme of multi-agency training. This model may be useful to others considering similar programmes to support the implementation of legislation or policy change, and should be promoted as such.

**Further use of existing FATP2 materials:** Materials and tools relevant to the Act have been developed and have proved useful to managers and practitioners in promoting their understanding and practice. These materials, including 'Lucy's Journey' could be actively marketed or disseminated for use by a range of managers, practitioners and trainers.

**Further address emerging key issues:** Themed seminars or other themed resources could be developed which address some of the issues and key skill areas that were most frequently raised during the programme. These might include: the definition and status of relevant person(s), implications for foster carers, issues around pre-hearing panels, issues related to advocacy and preparation for participation and the realities of working with the Act.

## 6) Appendices

### 6.a) Appendix A: About the evaluation

In this section we outline the purpose and methods of this evaluation. Readers requiring more information or copies of the instruments used are welcome to contact CELCIS.

#### 6.a.i) Purpose

The evaluation had formative and summative aims. The formative aims were achieved in the main through the ongoing evaluation, self-evaluation and team discussion as the programme developed and processes were refined. The summative aims were achieved mainly through the analysis of feedback from participants and the delivery team, and this is reported in this document.

This evaluation aimed to:

- Facilitate the ongoing development of the programme model
- Test the effectiveness of the delivery model as a means of supporting the implementation of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011
- Review the impact of the programme, in particular the extent to which the overall project aims were achieved

#### 6.a.ii) Method

The evaluation was based on data collected through a combination of methods, including:

- Self-completion questionnaires administered with participants at each of the three phases after each of the seminars. A breakdown of the number of questionnaire responses by event and location can be seen in Appendix A.
- An electronic follow-up self-completion questionnaire was distributed one to three months after attendance to roughly 434 front-line practitioner participants, and received 60 responses (14%).
- Semi-structured follow-up telephone interviews with middle-managers and front-line practitioner participants. These took place between two and six months after attendance. In total roughly 74 practitioners who attended the programme of events were contacted; from these a total of 14 chose to participate in a follow-up interview.

- An electronic self-completion reflective questionnaire with delivery team members<sup>9</sup> followed by a reflective focus group discussion. Of the four delivery team members, three participated in the follow-up questionnaire and all four attended the focus group discussion along with a senior manager who provided a strategic overview of the programme.
- Researchers participating in and observing various seminars and training activities.

The data collected through the self-completion questionnaire forms in Qualtrics were exported into Microsoft Excel 2010 for analysis; textual responses were transcribed, or noted and analysed thematically. In the main, the findings are reported thematically and results from different strands were integrated.

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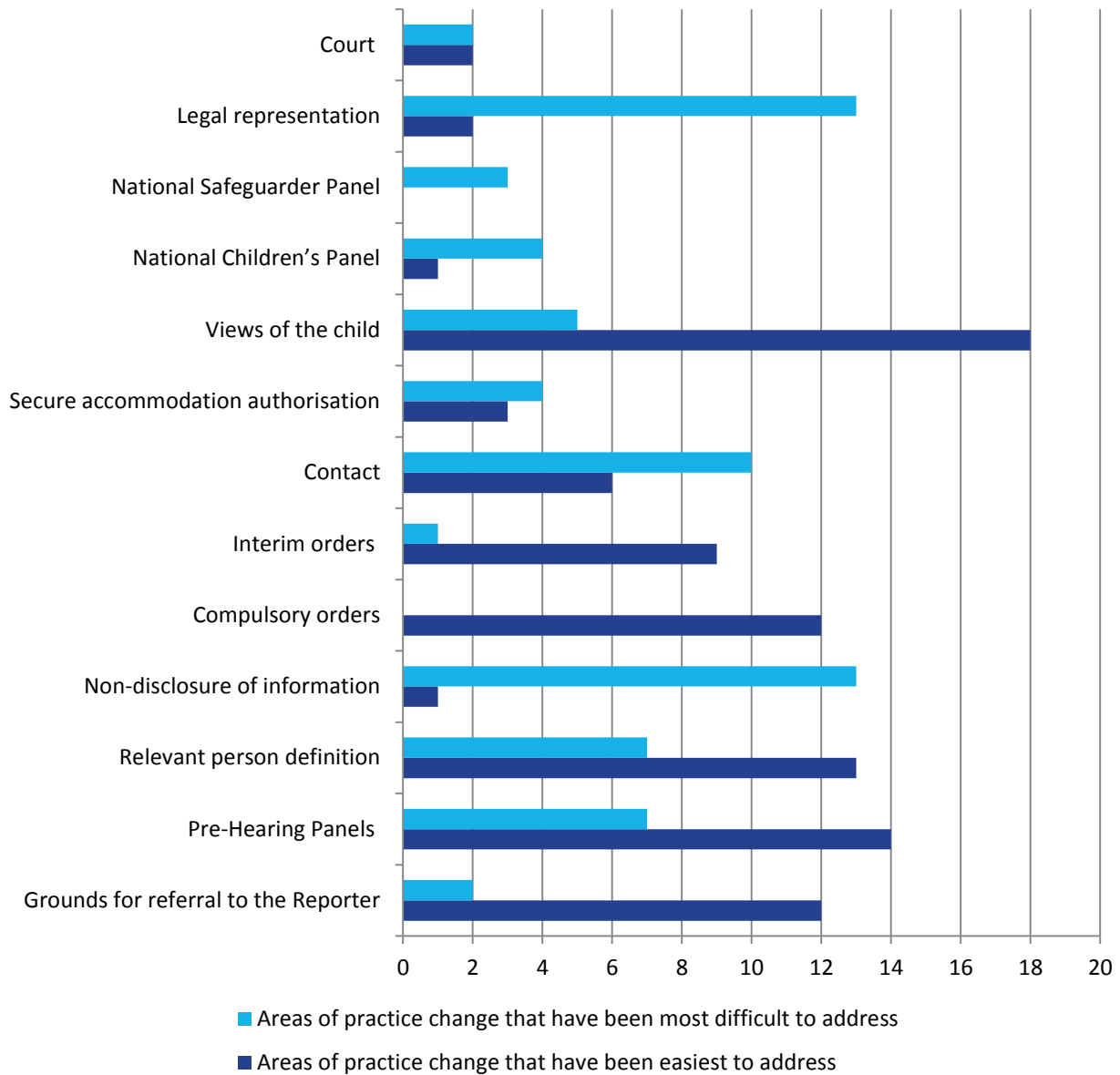
<sup>9</sup> By 'delivery team members' we mean staff from the partner organisations who were responsible for planning, facilitation and delivery of the programme.

## 6.b) Appendix B: Participation numbers

| Event                            | Location   | Date of Seminar | Number of attendees | Number of questionnaire responses |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Strategic Seminar                | Glasgow    | 07.05.14        | 27                  | 15                                |
|                                  |            |                 |                     |                                   |
| Middle-managers Seminars         | Glasgow    | 22.05.14        | 32                  | 25                                |
|                                  | Aberdeen   | 29.05.14        | 22                  | 13                                |
|                                  | Perth      | 18.06.14        | 40                  | 36                                |
|                                  | Edinburgh  | 26.06.14        | 68                  | 42                                |
| Totals                           |            |                 | 162                 | 116                               |
| Front-line practitioner seminars | Glasgow    | 02.09.14        | 53                  | 49                                |
|                                  | Livingston | 16.09.14        | 54                  | 46                                |
|                                  | Aberdeen   | 23.09.14        | 52                  | 41                                |
|                                  | Perth      | 29.10.14        | 61                  | 58                                |
|                                  | Motherwell | 05.11.14        | 60                  | 52                                |
|                                  | Ayr        | 12.11.14        | 40                  | 34                                |
|                                  | Dumbarton  | 25.11.14        | 58                  | 55                                |
|                                  | Shetland   | 27.11.14        | 30                  | 6                                 |
|                                  | Edinburgh  | 02.12.14        | 56                  | 47                                |
| Totals                           |            |                 | 464                 | 388                               |

## 6.c) Appendix C: areas most difficult or easy to address

Figure 8: Easiest and most difficult areas of practice change to address



## About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.

## For more information

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