

**Appropriate Adult
National Oversight Group
Draft Minutes of Meeting on 23 June 2025, 10:00am-11:30am, via
Microsoft Teams**

Attendees (13)

Sandy Riddell, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (**Chair**)
Catherine Anderson, National Appropriate Adult Coordinator, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
Claire Johnston, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)
Diane Greenaway, The Appropriate Adult Service (TAAS) Ayrshire
Gillian Sandie, Victims & Witnesses Unit, Scottish Government
Kay Newton, Care Inspectorate
Kelly-Marie Smith, North Lanarkshire Council
Laura Clark, Carr Gomm
Laura Hoskins, Community Justice Scotland (CJS)
Leanne Murphy, Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB)
Michael Gough, Victims & Witnesses Unit, Scottish Government
Paul McKee, Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) Network
Richard Thomson, Community Justice Scotland (CJS)

Apologies (10)

Brenda Walker, Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (Iriss)
Callan Curtis, Orkney Islands Council
Franck David, People First Scotland (Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) Network)
Gillian Murdoch, Police Scotland
Jana de Villiers, The State Hospital
Jane Kelly, Care Inspectorate
Neil Gibson, Social Work Scotland (SWS)
Rachel Tatler, Victims & Witnesses Unit, Scottish Government
Stephen Grimason, Police Scotland
Stuart Lewis, Police Strategy and Collaboration Unit, Scottish Government
Tony Bowman, Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland (Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) Network)

1. Welcome/Apologies & Introductions

Catherine noted several apologies (please see Apologies for full details). Sandy welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Review of Action Log

The minutes from the meeting of the Appropriate Adult National Oversight Group on 3 March 2025 were circulated on 2 April with one proposed amendment received. This was the correction of an attendee's organisation. The minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2025 were agreed.

Sandy proposed that in future the agenda include both a review of minutes and an action log.

Catherine stated that there were no follow-up discussions to be had in relation to the actions from the previous meeting.

Action – Catherine to include both a review of minutes and action log on future meeting agendas.

3. Update from National Appropriate Adult Co-ordinator

Catherine provided the following updates:

- Investigations continued regarding the setup of a data collection system to inform any future possible funding review of the Appropriate Adult service. The first meeting of a short life working group (SLWG) on the matter had taken place earlier in June. Much feedback was obtained, including concerns about capacity to collect the proposed data, and the Scottish Government was now considering the matters raised.
- The Scottish Biometrics Commission are hosting a workshop in July with individuals who have communication support needs and experience of the justice system. This is to inform a review of their strategic plan and code of practice. The Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) Network is also involved and helping support this work.
- Inputs and discussion were held with Social Work Scotland's (SWS) Adult Support and Protection (ASP) Strategic Group and the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA).
- COSLA have responded to the Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission call for evidence. The Commission has been established to independently review Scotland's current approach to sentencing and penal policy and provide recommendations to inform action and change. The evidence provided will play a pivotal role in considering how Scotland can achieve an effective, rehabilitative justice system.

Sandy commended the awareness raising efforts and noted that governance structures still required attention. There was much change at present, and the further building of such structures would allow improved information sharing between practitioners and policy makers.

Action – Catherine to continue awareness raising and the building of appropriate and conducive governance structures.

4. Scottish Government Update – National Appropriate Adult Guidance & Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill (Justice Working Group)

The Scottish Government thanked everyone for their contributions to the updated Appropriate Adult Guidance. A final consolidation of comments was almost complete, and it was expected the final draft would be circulated within the next two weeks. This circulation would be to confirm factual accuracy only. It was understood that there would likely be further review of the guidance in future, given the many legislative proposals afoot. However, it was important to publish the guidance now given the large amount of valuable consultation that had been undertaken and the significant amount of time that had passed since the current guidance was published.

The Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence (LDAN) Bill has progressed to policy instruction stage, where policymakers advise what the bill should look to achieve. This would take into consideration findings from a consultation conducted in late 2023. Policy officials are engaging with the Bill team and advised that it is not yet clear what, if any, significant impact the bill would have on the current Appropriate Adult service. The aims of the LDAN Bill are broad and the Appropriate Adult service may not be appropriate vehicle to take them forward. It was understood that should the Appropriate Adult service ultimately be considered to advance the aims of the LDAN Bill then this would be a material change requiring funding and training to be reviewed.

Catherine advised that the Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) Network was also involved in the bill process and may be able to provide an update at the next meeting.

5. Care Inspectorate – QIF Self-Evaluation Update

The Care Inspectorate have recently concluded the Core Assurances review. There was a 100% return rate, with every Appropriate Adult service in Scotland submitting a return. The Care Inspectorate expressed many thanks for everyone's participation. The report was not quite ready for publication, but it would hopefully be released by the end of July. There would be no statistics in the report and no specific Appropriate Adult services identified. Key findings from the review included:

- Although governance arrangements varied between local authorities, all reported strong understanding and confidence in arrangements.
- The Appropriate Adult service was meeting expectations under the legislation.
- Despite varying call handling and data collection systems, the Appropriate Adult service response was very high.

- Training and learning and development was a high priority, and the Scottish Appropriate Adult Network (SAAN) network had provided assistance in this area.
- The review has led to wider quality assurance considerations, as well as highlighting the Appropriate Adult role and its importance within local authorities.

Community Justice Scotland (CJS) queried whether the success of referral partnerships, particularly in light of increasing centralisation of Police Scotland custody suite usage, had featured in the report findings.

The Care Inspectorate confirmed that this had not formed part of the Core Assurances review.

Sandy suggested that CJS discuss the matter with Catherine in case further investigations could be made.

Sandy then proposed that the Appropriate Adult section of the COSLA website could be updated once the report had been published.

The Care Inspectorate was also planning to develop their website in relation to Appropriate Adult content.

Action – CJS to discuss referral partnerships and increasing centralisation of Police Scotland custody suite usage with Catherine.

Action – Catherine to consider updating the Appropriate Adult section of the COSLA website.

6. AOCB/Member Updates

No other business was raised.

7. Date of Next Meeting

After discussion among the group, it was agreed the next meeting should take place in late October or early November 2025 via Microsoft Teams. Catherine would send a poll to members to identify a suitable date.

Action – Catherine to send poll to members to identify a suitable date in October or November 2025 for next meeting.