

PE1548/O

Scottish Child Protection Committees Chairs' Forum Letter of 3 July 2015

Restraint and seclusion of disabled children in school

The ministerial working group on child met from May 2012 until May 2014 when as a culmination of its work it launched a toolkit – “Child Protection and Disability – for all who work in children and family and disability services”.

<http://withscotland.org/exchanging-training-resources>

The toolkit comprised: additional notes for the National Guidance on Child Protection on protecting disabled children, training resources for managers and practitioners and a research study.

The working group was not consulted specifically about the use of restraint in schools or other establishments. Generally it sought, through its toolkit, to increase understanding and improve professional practice by raising awareness of the substantially greater risk of abuse to disabled children (which is well established as being 3/4 times more likely than other children) and draw attention to some of the particular circumstances which put disabled children at such risk. The inappropriate use of restraint was highlighted as one such particular risk in both the guidance notes and the training resources.

I will raise these issues with the Scottish Child Protection Committees Chairs Forum and feel sure they will support the petitioners' view that there should be urgent consideration given by Scottish Government to the development of guidance for schools and the establishment of an appropriate form of inspection.

Whilst the working group has now ceased to meet, it has been succeeded by a child protection and disability network run by WithScotland, - <http://www.talkwithscotland.org/group/child-protection-and-disability-network> which is cross-professional and comprises practitioners from across Scotland. The network's aims are to continue to increase understanding and build professional practice. I am sure the network would be a useful resource for spreading knowledge about any new guidance for schools which should result from this petition.

Anne Houston
Chair