



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Investigation into Consistency in Child
Protection across the CAL Remit:
Volunteer Now Briefing

14 February 2013

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley
Mr David Hilditch
Ms Rosaleen McCorley
Mr Michael McGimpsey
Mr Oliver McMullan

Witnesses:

Ms Sandra Adair	Volunteer Now
Ms Veronica Gray	Volunteer Now

The Chairperson: I welcome Ms Sandra Adair, Volunteer Now's director of policy and capacity building; and Ms Veronica Gray, the organisation's safeguarding manager. Thank you very much for attending the Committee today.

The Committee Clerk: We will need to suspend the meeting for a moment.

Committee suspended.

On resuming —

The Chairperson: I apologise for that. We lost our quorum for a few moments.

Ms Sandra Adair (Volunteer Now): No problem. Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committee. Hopefully, most of you are familiar with the role of Volunteer Now, which is involved in the development and support of supported volunteering across Northern Ireland. Obviously, a lot of volunteers are active within the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) remit, so we have a long history of involvement with the culture, arts and leisure sector, not the least of which is our involvement with the World Police and Fire Games at the moment. I hope, Madam Chairperson, that the interview went well yesterday.

Our involvement in child protection started back in 1996, when a volunteer abused children in his care. As a result of that, the Social Services Inspectorate asked that guidelines be made available for the sector. Those guidelines were known as 'Our Duty to Care' and were principles of good practice for keeping children safe in the voluntary and community sector. Our project, which is also called Our Duty to Care, was established as a result of that in order to implement the guidelines and to help

organisations use them in their various roles. The guidance was designed to suit the needs of all organisations across the sector so that they could use them and tailor them to their own circumstances, needs and activities.

Using that guidance, we developed minimum standards that were endorsed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and recognised as the minimum standards that organisations need to have in place in order to keep children safe. The sorts of things we are talking about are: having a policy statement from the outset to say that you are committed to safeguarding; providing effective recruitment, selection and management of staff and volunteers; dealing with concerns about abuse; knowing to whom and how to report suspected abuse or an allegation of abuse; setting out the sorts of behaviour that you expect when people are working with children and young people; and the general safety and management of activities.

Through Volunteer Now and the Our Duty to Care programme, we provide training, information and support across the sector. Our Duty to Care has become quite an important source of support. It is useful to pick up on some of the issues that were raised earlier. Our Duty to Care and Getting It Right are used in the Republic of Ireland and have been tailored to meet the needs in the South. England has also taken and tailored Our Duty to Care. Obviously, across Northern Ireland, the trusts, the councils and the Departments have used and are using Our Duty to Care. As you heard, the child protection in sport unit standards were based on Our Duty to Care as well.

We have developed a suite of training modules to try to meet the needs of the range of people working with children and young people. The range of roles is substantial. Some people have very limited contact, while others have a lot of contact. Of course, there are management committees and designated officers, so it covers the whole range. We have brochures with us that outline the sorts of modules that we have created. Disability and the whole issue of inclusion have been brought through all of those modules. We had a separate module on involving children with disabilities but, since then, we have made sure that the whole issue of inclusion is brought through in all our training.

As you know, the sector is huge and is very diverse. The DCAL family alone is huge. We found very early on that we could not meet the demand and that we would not be able to do it alone. We developed what became known as a cascade partnership initiative where we worked with the statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector — so the trusts, councils and the education sector were involved — to set up partnerships, and we trained trainers in those organisations to go out and provide free local training to groups that needed it. Those trainers are subject to quality assurance and are kept up to date on changes in legislation, so there is consistency in training across those partnerships. Through that and information support, we reckon that we target about 6,500 people a year, and, obviously, more people can be contacted.

In respect of your specific DCAL remit, we are very familiar with the child protection in sport unit. We work very closely with it, and you know the sorts of things that it does. In respect of arts and culture, we have provided guidance and support to a range of organisations, from small silver bands to larger organisations that have lots of staff and volunteers. We deal with a lot of queries. We have provided tailored training and, because funders require organisations to have certain policies and procedures in place, we find that they come to our door, looking for help.

A number of years ago, we did a comprehensive piece of work with the Arts Council in which we worked with the groups that it funds to look at training and an overarching policy for the arts sector, and to bring them up to speed on what legislation was in place at that time. We developed arts-specific guidance for that sector, looking at the range of issues pertinent to it at that time. That was a particularly useful piece of work that we led with the Arts Council, and we know that safeguarding practice was changed as a result. The issue now, of course, is that things have moved on substantially. Obviously, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 has brought about many changes to practices, and the implications of that for organisations are just starting to filter through.

In respect of the increasing use of technology, you have already identified that you are interested in the whole area of social media, and the changes in that alone over the past few years and in how we communicate and work with children and young people are substantial.

I ask the Committee to really think about the whole area of vulnerable adults. I know that your investigation is focused on children and young people, but the area of vulnerable adults is growing, and they deserve the same right to protection as children and young people. With the success of the Our Duty to Care project, the Department asked us to mirror that, and we have since developed standards, information, guidance and training on the back of that. If we have learned anything from

the Savile case, it is that opportunistic offenders will take every opportunity to abuse anybody of any age. Anybody of any age can be groomed. There are people who put themselves in positions of trust and then abuse that trust. As a result, people may be afraid to report or to tell on that person, and there are huge issues around that. I ask the Committee to think about the whole area of safeguarding, not just one area.

I want to comment on some of your terms of reference and quickly look at just a couple of recommendations in relation to those. You talk about looking at structures and existing systems. Through the Our Duty to Care guidance and the Getting it Right standards, there are structures out there, such as the Keeping Safe initiatives. They are not in all trust areas, and we would certainly like that to be developed, because we are interested in consistency and making sure that, no matter where you are, you can get consistent and accurate information about how to keep children and vulnerable adults safe.

There are providers out there, and some of them are providing sector-specific information, but we are interested in making sure that there is consistency, quality and agreement about what it is that people need to know. Sometimes, people get hung up on whether somebody in a particular role should go for a three-hour, four-hour or six-hour training programme. For us, it is not about that. It is about deciding what it is that someone needs to know in a specific role to keep children safe. We ask you to work with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, which at the moment is developing a training strategy and training framework. For us, it is key to try to get that consistency across the sector.

You also asked about the systems in place in relation to the sports sector. We commend the child protection in sport unit to you. There is consistency of standards, because it bases its information on Getting it Right. The fact that it has a dedicated worker and project is excellent for the sports sector.

I want to mention one issue that is really useful, and that is Clubmark, which was spoken about in the last session. The protection of children and vulnerable adults (PoCVA) legislation in 2007 had a clause in it for accreditation of non-regulated childcare organisations. Unfortunately, as you rightly say, legislation changes. The safeguarding vulnerable groups legislation came in very quickly on the back of that, and that clause was no more, as such. We had worked with the Department to pilot what we call a charter mark — a Kitemark — for organisations that met the minimum standards. That is a visible sign to parents that the organisation has invested in safeguarding and has policies and procedures in place. We recommend that it might be time to think about that again, not just for the DCAL family but across the whole sector, and to look at some form of recognised accreditation or charter mark for organisations that have the standards in place.

You also mentioned exemplars and benchmarks. Again, Our Duty to Care and Getting it Right are there as benchmarks and exemplars. We need to recommend that those are promoted across the Province and are seen as the standards. That, again, goes back to information and consistency. There is an issue with keeping it up to date. The legislation has changed in respect of disclosure and services, obviously making big changes. That has reduced the pre-employment vetting to proportionate and common-sense levels, and we welcome that in terms of reducing bureaucracy, but it creates a greater need for effective recruitment and selection measures. If you look at Soham, Little Ted's nursery or any of those tragedies, if the building block of recruitment and selection had been in place, some of those things might not have happened. It is important that organisations really understand what they need to have in place. Also, with social media changing — we welcome the fact that the Safeguarding Board recognises social media and the internet as one of its priorities and is looking at multiagency strategies — we need to make sure that that information is getting out on the ground. As a recommendation, it is maybe the time, given all those changes, to map exactly which groups need help within the DCAL remit, and to audit their needs, find out exactly what they are struggling with and whether they know that the guidance is there. If they need more help with social media and keeping children safe on the internet, we need to look at that, and, on the back of that, put in some resources and support to ensure that they get the training support that they require so that their needs, issues and challenges are addressed in a co-ordinated way.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much; that was comprehensive. Thank you for sharing with us some recommendations; it has given us food for thought. Could you tell us more about the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the changes that has brought about?

Ms Veronica Gray (Volunteer Now): The Protection of Freedoms Act amended the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. Since September last year, there have been several key changes through a reduction in the scope of posts that now fall into regulated activity. We now have new definitions of regulated activity. By definition, those are posts for which employers

must carry out a pre-employment check with enhanced disclosure through the barred-list check with Access NI. The basis for that is that it is an offence for an employer to knowingly employ a barred person in regulated activity, and, therefore, the check is essential. As Sandra said, we welcome a more proportionate and common-sense approach to pre-employment vetting. We have long tried to support the sector in raising awareness that vetting is neither a tick-box exercise nor the final point of safeguarding, but is one part of the overall picture. The Protection of Freedoms Act has had a significant impact for organisations in understanding the new definitions of regulated activity and, for those posts that no longer meet that definition, the eligibility that they may have in law to carry out and enhance disclosure without a barred-list check may have changed. Indeed, some posts are not eligible for that enhanced-level checking at all. That is where, as an organisation, we have some concerns about potential safeguarding gaps for service users.

The Chairperson: Could you give us examples of some posts that no longer meet the criteria?

Ms Gray: In the children's workforce, supervised activity is no longer considered regulated activity. That is teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision, and while the intention is to give local managers the flexibility to implement adequate supervision of workers to ensure the protection of children, that is a very complex challenge for some voluntary and community sector organisations that maybe are not set up and do not have the infrastructure to develop that. So there is a support need for those organisations. Other posts have come out of regulated activity in the adult safeguarding world. As an organisation, we offer a befriending project, whereby volunteers go into the homes of quite vulnerable people or socially isolated people, and that is not within the scope of regulated activity. There is a safeguarding issue with that.

The Chairperson: What are the dangers with that?

Ms Gray: That potential offenders will use those opportunities to seek access to vulnerable people, such as children, young people and adults, right across the board, and that offenders who are malicious and devious will find opportunities to exploit those potential loopholes.

The Chairperson: Does chaperoning fall under the same remit? Are befriending and chaperoning regarded in the same way? People chaperone young people or children.

Ms Gray: Like mentoring? Mentoring happens frequently with young people on a one-to-one basis, and that is regulated activity. Some organisations may struggle with the new arrangements because there are very different definitions of regulated activity with children and adults, and any organisation working across the spectrum will have to start to understand two definitions as opposed to just one. Mentoring a child is regulated activity, but befriending an adult is not.

Ms Adair: It puts the emphasis back on the surrounding practice, such as good recruitment and selection, and good management and support of the staff member or the volunteer.

The Chairperson: We have received a number of briefings to date. Obviously, we have spoken with the Department, which is very focused on those organisations that receive funding through its arm's-length bodies. As we are very aware, a huge amount of activity is taken on outside of those bodies that receive funding directly from the likes of the Arts Council. You mentioned that you have carried out work with the Arts Council, which was successful. Obviously, things have changed. What is your current relationship with the Arts Council?

Ms Adair: We work closely and keep in touch with it to try to keep it up to date and exchange information. As I said, some of those groups will come to us on an individual basis, but work that we did through the Arts Council was a structured piece of work involving all the groups that it funded. Examples like that can be replicated, because things move on so quickly.

The Chairperson: There are obviously groups that the Arts Council fund that may then fund other groups. You are talking about a cascading partnership, and I was just wondering whether the guidance in place with the Arts Council would follow down through the whole funding stream and whether it sees itself as having a responsibility for those groups that are at the very bottom of that chain.

Ms Adair: It is up to the Arts Council and bodies like that to decide how their structures can deal with that. At Volunteer Now, we do a lot of outreach and engagement work to try to reach the very small

organisations that need the practice and support. Those organisations could be completely volunteer led and have absolutely no staff, so the issue is trying to reach the whole range of organisations, because there are groups out there that are not affiliated and are struggling on their own. You will find sometimes with those groups, going back to the whole parent issue, that they are the result of parents who have seen a need, have established a service and want to go out and do something to make a difference. There is something that we need to do around promotion in making sure that everybody knows what there is out there on how to keep children safe. If parents know what is out there, they will look for it when they are placing their children in those dance classes, music schools or whatever. Also, the people who are setting those activities up, maybe in a voluntary capacity, will be more safeguarding aware and will know what they need to put in place, or at least know who they can go to in order to get that help.

The Chairperson: Very often, those practices are in place to protect the provider of the service.

Ms Adair: Absolutely, and it is very much about protecting the volunteer as well. We do not want to put anything in place that puts up barriers to volunteering and will prevent people from coming forward. It is very much about how you communicate and talk to people to make sure that they see that those measures are about protecting them.

The Chairperson: As a volunteering organisation, have you found that, with the changes in legislation, and so on, there has been a reluctance on the part of some people to get involved in volunteering because they find the whole process very bureaucratic?

Ms Adair: Our evidence does not show that. Anecdotally, you will always meet someone who says that they had a problem with an Access NI check and is not going to go through that again. However, we did some research recently with over-50s, asking them whether going through an Access NI check would put them off coming forward. The result was that 20% said that it would not bother them, and 20% said that it was an issue for them. There were other issues higher up the list than that. In 1997, when we did research, only about 4% to 5% of people said that bureaucracy would put them off volunteering.

People volunteer for many different reasons. For example, they may have a passion for something or they may want to make a difference in a certain area. Those people will try to soldier on, do what they have to do and take on board whatever procedures are there, because they are choosing to volunteer. We have been involved in Lord Hodgson's red tape inquiry and had input in that. Part of that inquiry involved looking at how to reduce the barriers in the voluntary sector. Some of that work influenced how the Disclosure and Barring Service was changed, with its measures altered to more common-sense levels.

Ms Gray: Building on that, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 will also bring the portability of disclosure certificates in Northern Ireland by 2014 and into 2015. That will further reduce the perceived or real barriers that some volunteers may face in seeking opportunities.

The Chairperson: How will that work?

Ms Gray: It is our understanding that when an applicant receives his or her disclosure certificate, it will be portable within, for example, the children's workforce. When a person moves or takes on a new post, the new employer or volunteer manager can verify it through an online system. The verification will either confirm that the certificate is current and valid — that there have been no problems since the date of issue — or it will signpost the employer or volunteer manager to request a new disclosure certificate. So its introduction is very much anticipated right across the sector.

Mr D Bradley: Good morning. Thanks very much for the presentation. I want to raise with you one point made in your paper. You address the terms of reference of the Committee's inquiry:

"Building on the standards and guidance there is a widespread range of safeguarding training programmes available to groups through a number of providers, with many child protection training providers delivering sector specific courses for example Sports Council training."

You go on to make the point:

"There is some disparity however in terms of what some sectors consider as the minimum learning required for the different roles involved in working with children and/or vulnerable adults. Agreement about this would ensure there is consistency of practice across all sectors and agreement on 'portability' of training across sectors."

That is a very important point because you seem to suggest an unevenness of training across various sectors that needs to be tied down to, at least, a basic minimum. Do you want to comment further on that?

Ms Adair: The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has started to address that through its training and education committee, which is trying to agree what is the minimum learning needed by someone who has very minimal contact, as opposed to someone who works on the front line with children and young people daily. It is about trying to identify exactly what the outcomes need to be and what learning such a person needs. As the very minimum, we always say that, if there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, people need to know who to talk to and what to do about that. So it is really about trying to provide some consistency on that. As I said earlier, some people will say, "We will try to give a 20- or 30-minute presentation and, then, off you go." Is that enough?

Mr D Bradley: You also mentioned the potential for a regional safeguarding training framework. Is that related to the same minimum standard?

Ms Adair: Yes. The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland is trying to create that so that there will be agreement on what is required. On the other side, the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership is doing exactly the same thing for vulnerable adults. It is good that there would be the same system on both sides.

Mr D Bradley: The Committee has concerns across the remit of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. In your presentation and paper, you mention specifically that you have co-operated well with the sports and arts sectors. Have you had any experience of the DCAL remit outside those sectors?

Ms Adair: It is, probably, limited.

Mr D Bradley: With libraries and museums, for example?

Ms Adair: We have had some contact with museums, but not a huge amount, so some work could, probably, be done there. We work very closely with Libraries NI. We have a partnership, and are in contact, with Libraries NI on a number of issues. We have addressed safeguarding with it.

Mr D Bradley: The impression that I get — I hope that I am wrong — is that a number of organisations have their oars in the water on safeguarding and protecting: Volunteer Now, the NSPCC, Sport Northern Ireland, and so on. Is there any means of ensuring that all those organisations work co-operatively and that no gaps are left because one organisation thinks that another is doing certain work?

Ms Adair: There is always a danger of somebody slipping through the net. We work very closely with all those organisations. We have a co-ordination forum whereby key organisations involved in the various parts of the voluntary and community sector come together. We communicate a great deal online to keep in touch, share information and try to ensure that each knows what the other is doing. There is no room for overlap; nobody has any capacity for that. So we try to work as closely as possible.

We could look at a number of issues that cut across Departments. The Department of Education and the Department of Health face many of the same issues as DCAL. There is room for more cross-departmental co-operation and discussion, particularly given the number of changes that there have been. We need to get the information out to everyone. There has to be a lot more promotion of that.

Mr D Bradley: Earlier, the Committee heard from Sport NI and the NSPCC together. I asked them whether it would be useful, from the perspective of DCAL's remit, for there to be an annual conference on protection and safeguarding. Is there a need for something like that on a Northern Ireland basis?

Ms Adair: Anything that allows communication to be shared and increases the mechanisms for getting information across is to be welcomed. We run a number of events throughout the sector that

bring a diverse range of groups together. We work in partnership with organisations such as the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers, and we are planning a conference on child safety on the internet and social media. So a lot of those things are happening, but there is always room for improvement.

Mr D Bradley: When that conference is finished, is there any mechanism to spread the learning to benefit others?

Ms Adair: As with any conference these days, everything goes on the website. Information is usually put on the website and disseminated through newsletters, and so on. As an organisation, we do —

Mr D Bradley: There is sometimes a need to draw attention to particular findings and ensure that people are aware of them and act on them.

Ms Adair: Absolutely. You are right. The learning has to be spread as widely as possible.

Mr McGimpsey: You talk about a Charter Mark and the notion that we should, perhaps, have some form of central register so that various groups are not affiliated to various bodies. That would give comfort to the parents and carers of children and vulnerable adults. How do you see that Charter Mark working? It could not be solely for sport; it would have to be for sport and the arts. Who would administer that, bearing in mind the problems experienced with Access Northern Ireland carrying out central checks?

Ms Adair: That would have to be explored. When we worked with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on a clause in the protection of children and vulnerable adults legislation, we piloted a Charter Mark whereby we would work with a number of organisations. The organisations would, first, self-assess against the standards, which would identify the gaps that they needed to address to improve their practice. They would do that with the support of the available organisations. They would then be assessed against what they had done to make sure that they were meeting the standard. The idea was that, if an organisation met the standard, it would get a visible sign — a Charter Mark, Kitemark, call it what you will — that identified it as an organisation that met minimum standards. That programme was shelved because the legislation changed. At the time, the Department of Health was driving that, and it thought that an awarding body would be responsible for the assessment.

There are a number of models that could be used. I go back to the cross-departmental nature of safeguarding. Sport has shown how it could do it. It is about identifying assessors. In our Keeping Safe model, we have Keeping Safe trainers, who are steeped in knowledge and information and so can go out to organisations and train. The same applies to getting people who can assess organisations and give them a stamp that parents can look for.

Mr McGimpsey: What about bodies that do not apply? You can find the gaps in organisations that come forward and look for that information, but what about those that do not bother? That is where the big gaps would be.

Ms Adair: That is the important point. We need to map and find out who those groups are. Who is out there? Who is falling through the net? We then need to audit and try to bring them on board and engage with them as best we can. There are many very small groups who are struggling and probably know nothing about the Protection of Freedoms Act — it means nothing to them — so it is a big challenge.

Mr McMullan: I congratulate you on your presentation, which you put across passionately. Why do we refer to vulnerable adults but not children with special needs? There is a vast difference, as you know, and there are complexities. Volunteers who work in that sector are not mentioned. I agree with what you said in your presentation about the need to put more emphasis on disability, but how do we do that? The DHSSPS pilot was stopped because the legislation changed. That Charter Mark-type programme looked as though it could have been a good programme. Do you think that enough serious thought is given to disability and special needs to have that running alongside child protection?

Ms Adair: I think that there is now. We are working very closely with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which, in turn, is working with the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership and local panels to try to raise the whole issue of people who are vulnerable but who are not children and

young people. We incorporated as much on working with children with disabilities as we could into our training on children and young people. We have set modules whereby people can focus solely on that. However, we have taken the approach that it needs to be an inclusive part of all our training. When we train people in any area, we try to get them to think about the whole picture.

Mr McMullan: Do you think that disability and special needs rank as highly, or is there still a battle to get them the same recognition?

Ms Adair: From Volunteer Now's point of view, in the past two or three years, the situation has moved on, and disability and special needs now rank much more highly because of that recognition. The standards, guidance and training strategy are in place so that trainers can go out and train others. The development of the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership and local panels is all part of a recognition of the importance of special needs and disability. It has taken a wee while, but I think that we are getting there. It has come at last.

Ms Gray: I completely agree. When trainers are out engaging with organisations, part of their vital role is to keep that focus and awareness on safeguarding all children, being particularly mindful of where there are nuances and specific risk factors or additional vulnerability issues, such as disability, particular needs, English as a second language or allergies. Organisations need to be mindful of a wide spectrum of factors, so we are raising awareness of that. We are mindful that disabled children are, in some cases, three to four times more likely to be abused than a non-disabled child, and we regularly use that message to increase public awareness of the issues.

We are mindful of the launch of the disability strategy at the end of this month, which will look at the child with a disability to see how best to provide support. The strategy will also look at disabled parents and how they can fulfil their parenting potential. It will look at the holistic family support available, and that is to be welcomed.

Mr McMullan: Do you agree that the language that we use is important?

Ms Adair: Very much so.

Mr McMullan: So why do we keep saying, "children and vulnerable adults"? Why do we not say, "vulnerable children, disabled children, special needs children, special needs adults", which covers the gamut. That would help to get the message across and make your job a lot easier. It is awfully hard to get volunteers, but I think that it is important to use inclusive language.

Ms Adair: We have moved away from "child protection" and "safeguarding vulnerable children". We talk about safeguarding, but, as Veronica said, we have to recognise that there are nuances and differences in working with different types of children.

Mr McMullan: Congratulations on your presentation.

Ms McCorley: Thank you for your presentation. Clearly, you have a lot of experience and have done a lot of work. It was a very comprehensive presentation, so well done. From your experience, can you see any remaining gap or weakness in the system?

Ms Adair: That is a big question. For us, it is about making sure that everybody has access to the right information, standards and training, and that there is consistency and accessibility across the Province. I am not convinced that that applies to every area in Northern Ireland. I think that more work needs to be done to ensure that people can get the information that they need.

Ms McCorley: How can that be done best?

Ms Adair: Unfortunately, it will come down to more resources, because you need the resources to put the structures in place, and we are working on some of that. Some of it also comes down to what we said earlier about the promotional campaign. Work needs to be done to raise the awareness of the children and young people themselves of what they have the right to expect. It is also about raising awareness in the social media, the internet, and so on. Work also needs to be done on raising the awareness of the children's parents and of those working with the children in a paid or unpaid capacity. That is a huge task, but it really needs to happen so that everybody is "safeguarding aware" and knows exactly what should be happening and how.

Mr Hilditch: I want to go back to some of the exchanges that Mr McGimpsey had with Paul Donnelly from Sport NI. I looked at Sport NI's website, and 250 of the 300 clubs are registered there under Clubmark. Mr Donnelly said that other clubs were registered with their governing bodies. However, I have been on the IFA website and, for the life of me, cannot see anybody registered, although it may be difficult to find. When Mr McGimpsey was talking about the hard-to-reach sector, the comment was made that there are 2,500 non-accredited clubs. Is that the extent of the gap, or are we reading that falsely today?

Ms Adair: I am honestly not sure. I cannot speak about the sports sector because we leave that to the child protection in sport unit. However, sector research refers to upwards of 5,000 groups across the sector. A lot of those groups are working with children and young people, so some must be struggling to access the information. Therefore, I would say that there are gaps. We need to find out what groups are out there, map them and audit them to find out exactly what it is that they need. Rather than us second-guessing, we need to find out exactly what they are struggling with.

Mr Hilditch: It is an interesting aspect of the inquiry at this stage. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you for your presentation. It really was very comprehensive, and we found it useful.

You referred to my volunteering interview for the World Police and Fire Games. I found yesterday an incredibly positive experience and really look forward to the games.

Ms Adair: We are also looking forward to the games.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much.