STARR Group update April 2018

STARR The founding members of this group met together for the first time on Monday, March 26 in Glasgow.  Young people and adults from several areas of Scotland make up this core group of people with secure care experience and the initial meeting was all about establishing trust and shared values and principles. The initial meeting proved to be very powerful as those present shared their experiences and discussed their hopes and calls for change.

**Naming the STARR**

The Group has agreed the name STARR Group. This is not an acronym, although there are several values, principles and aims represented by each letter.

**STARR represents the North Star – a constant, an anchor, a guiding light, and for ambition and hope that everyone involved with secure care will aim high and be brave and bold about changes for the future.**

The STARR members used small stones to record the qualities and behaviours that are important and also the values and ambitions of the group and expectations of how the group will work together. These are constants and now ‘set in stone’. The approach of the group though will be flexible and fluid taking into account the individual circumstances of members and the focus of individual and group discussions with children, young people and adults who are secure care experienced.

**‘S’**represents **Safety, Safe space, Security, Sensitivity** and of course **Secure care experience** and amplifying the voice of secure care experience. ‘S’ also speaks to the importance of **Safeguarding** and how this must improve across the **System.**

**‘T’** represents **Transformation**, but also the sense of being **Together**and collectively involved in influencing that Transformation. ‘T’ can also indicate **Treatment** as the group members are keen to advise, inform and influence approaches to the help and care children and young people are offered in response to the **Trauma** they have experienced. It also refers to **Training** and learning, as this is another area that the STARR group members are keen to influence in terms of the qualities, attitudes and skills of professionals involved with supporting young people in and on the edges of secure care.

**‘A’** indicates **Advocacy**and **Advice**as the STARR group will be advising the Board and Advocating for children and young people. The **Ambition**is that secure care experience informs and shapes approaches to Children’s Rights compliance and for this to improve throughout the system for children and young people. It can also indicate **Awareness**and **Attitudinal change** as a key theme is the need to **challenge negative Assumptions** and labelling and improve understanding of children and young people in secure care or where there are worries about significant harm to self and/or other people. ‘A’ may also for some people refer to the **Answers** they are seeking in relation to their experiences and the importance of **Acknowledgement** and validation where care experiences have been difficult. The letter ‘A’ represents **Accountability** – of the Board and Corporate Parents to children and young people with experience of secure care, and of the STARR Group members to them and to each other.

**‘RR’** captures the fundamental importance of **Respect**for children and young people, for their **Rights**and for how we all work together; the importance of valuing and investing in **Relationships**, including family, friendships and helping relationships when children and young people are in need of intensive support; and **Relational approaches**; a hope for a **Revolution in thinking** and practice, improved **Representation** and fulfilment of **Rights**, better Recognition of needs and the value and importance of **Reflection** and **Reflective practice** for carers, practitioners, policy and decision makers