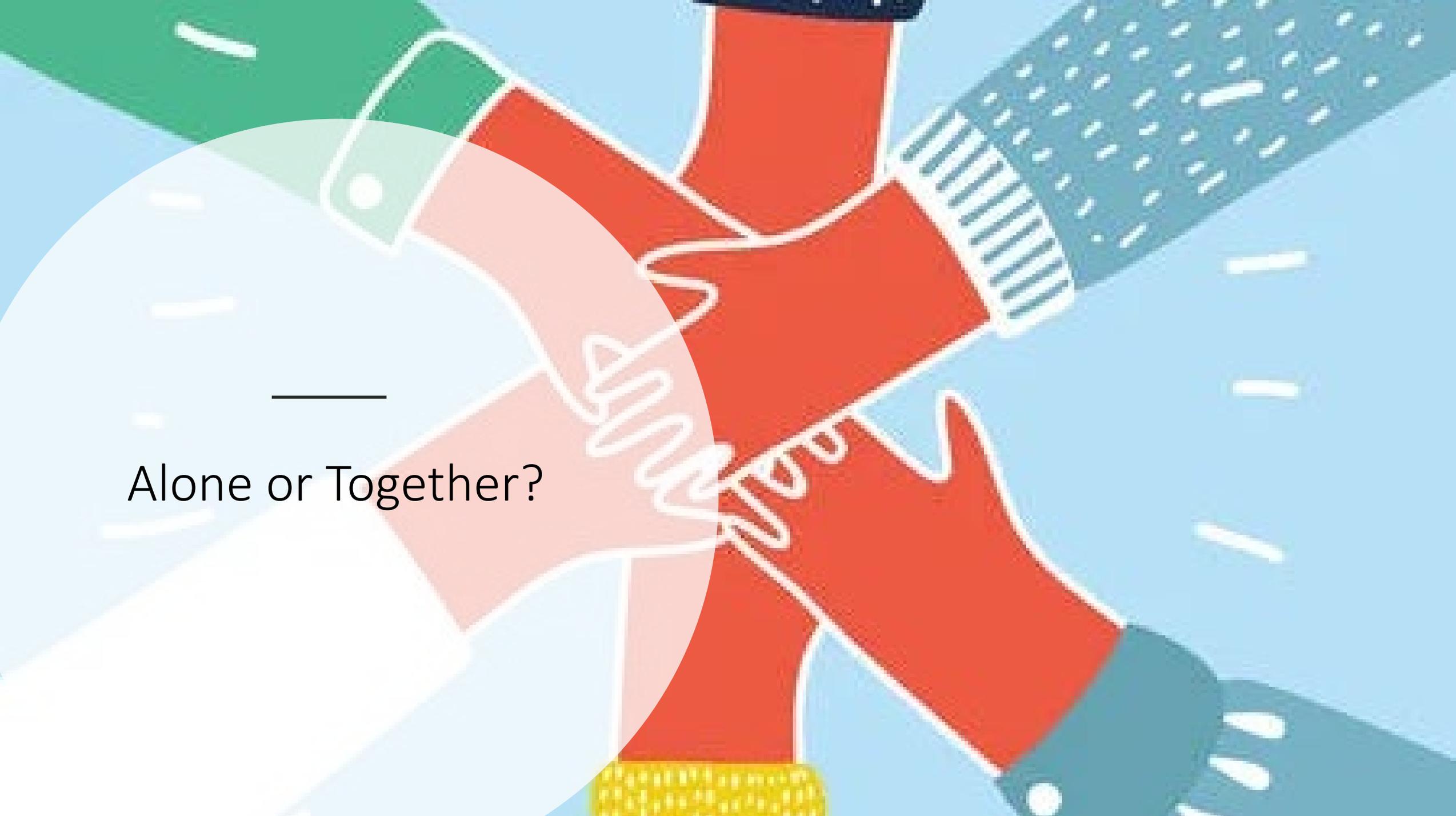


Working together

A collaborative effort to protect children

Directorate for the Child Protection Services
Foundation For Social Welfare Services Malta



An illustration of several hands of different colors (green, red, blue, white, yellow) holding a globe. The hands are positioned around the globe, with some fingers visible. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds. A semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

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Alone or Together?

What is the goal?

Depending on the Social Contract of the State, we find differences in the agreement between the State and its People, as to how the State will care for the People.



Readjusting everyone has not been automatic

All other services resisted the idea of working differently. They all enjoyed the status quo and did not wish to change. **In 2019 the Child Protection was accused that it will merely push activities that were within its portfolio unto others so that their load is alleviated.**

DCPS had to earn the reputation of a trusted leader, to be able to cause influence.

DCPS led by example. It took on work that was out of its remit, just to set an example of what can be achieved if one ventures out of its current remit.

All this; whilst carrying out its business as usual operations; and whilst resolving crucial deficits of a previous system.

Child Protection and the Schools

- School Consultant System to alleviate schools' concerns about CP cases.
- Free training to all schools about legal obligations, recognizing symptoms of child abuse, compiling good referrals, and the Law.
- Free training to all childcare centres
- Regular monthly meetings with the Child Safety Services and Safeguarding officers in the Church Schools
- Development of renewed MOU



Child Protection and the Police

- New consultation procedure developed between the Director of Child Protection and the Police.
- Direct links with Vice Squad, Gender Based Violence Squads, Drug Squads and Homicide, Victim Support Unit and the Local Police Districts
- New Procedure to access information across the systems.
- New Procedure that permits liaisons with the Immigration Unit.
- Free training on conducting Forensic Interviews to VS and GBDV.



Child Protection and the Services taking care of children removed from home

- Established the Looked After Network which brought together all the stakeholders that operate **any** service in the look after children architecture, with the sole scope to recreate amicable ties and iron out structural difficulties.
- Established the first draft of the residential services map, which attempted to offer a clear illustration of the gaps that exist in the residential services across the spectrum.
- Humbly took over interventions that are traditionally given to other services, pending their allocation, just to show that we are here to help (ex. SAV, Production of Review Board Applications, Transportation of minors, etc)



Child Protection and the Courts

- The Court Procedure required a major overhaul. We worked closely with;
- The Court Registry to form a new procedure that permitted the timely and adequate notification of parties of Court Procedures.
- The Judiciary to form appropriate and legitimate work alliances and procedures that aimed to utilize resources more efficiently. Now we enjoy excellent relations with the Family Court, with the Juvenile Court, with the Court of Magistrates (Gozo) and with the Criminal Court specializing in crimes against Children
- The Deputies to gain immediate contact channel that has served to keep this operation flowing fast with the complex exchange of information
- Retrained CP staff to be more in tune with the Court Procedures so that the Court gets what it needs immediately
- Established the Children House to offer a new option to the Court to interview victim children.



Child Protection and other social services

- POMA (Protection of Minors Act) Register – working to become the Registrar for this register to serve the employment community.
- Consultants to all services with regards to Mandatory Reporting and other matters of the Minors' Protection Act.
- Established new procedures and MOUs with several entities such as, Gozo FSWS Branch, ACTS, Fondazzjoni Sebħ, The Agency for the support of Asylum Seekers, Agenzija Sedqa.
- Taken on duties that are traditionally ascribed to other services, such as Urine Testing, etc.



Child Protection and the Authorities

- Formed new procedures with the Central Authority to be able to serve them on the practical elements of the Hague Convention.
- Formed new procedures with the Safeguarding Commission and the Sports Safeguarding Commission to be able to assist immediately on situations that crop up in the Malta Football Association and the Church Social Services.
- Established partnerships with the PROMISE project to ameliorate our services within the Children House to adopt the full set of Barnahus standards to be able to raise our bar with the Court and with the Police.
- Working on improving familiarity and relations with the Health Department. Insofar, we managed to extend the Butterfly Clinic into the Child Protection Offices, and to form a good channel of communication with the registrar of Mater Dei Hospital



“all this was done over and above the business-as-usual”

Funding remains relatively unchanged since 2019 so the load has expanded yet no new capacity has been redirected to the service.

Good news is that the services realised that we are here **truly** to get the job done and not to **push work** unto them. Now we are considered highly amongst our peers, and naturally people are trusting us with the leadership positions (ex. LAC Network originally vested the chair to CPS, Keyworker roles in cases vested in CPS, Services seek to support as best as they can).

The **Social Contracts** are no longer scary. Actually now other services request the help of CPS to develop similar contracts within their services with their clients. In DCPS alone, has issued **82** social contracts between 2020 to date.



Foundation for Social Welfare Services
Here for you



Let's give the cliché "better together" a real look



What is needed to work together?

A well managed group. A leader is always useful to keep the flock contained and organised.

A clear mandate. An agreed mandate offers legitimacy and focus. It also offers a vision of the end goal. It gives people the Bigger Picture.

A suitable plan. Plans help people develop pathways to their plan and understand their part in the bigger picture.

A set of sanctions when the togetherness is betrayed.