

Note of VSCF Coordinating Group Meeting

3:00pm, Monday 17th November 2008

Barnardo's Family Matters, West Bridge Mill, Kirkcaldy

Apologies Debra Ibitson
 Liz Easton
 Trudy Doidge
 Joyce Munro
 Amber Higgins
 Alison Kirkcaldy

Present: Lynn Gillies - Chair
 Kate Keddie
 Rhona Cunningham
 Laura Crombie
 Lyndsay Macadam (CVS Fife)

Meeting Updates

Early Years Strategy Group

Lynn told the group that there had not been a meeting of the Early Years Strategy Group as yet. The group had requested voluntary sector representation, suggesting one person from CVS Fife and one from the sector, but it was felt that it might be more useful to have two from the sector. Lynn had agreed to go along initially to see what was involved and post the notes of the meeting on the CVS Fife website and invite the Forum members to come forward if they were interested in attending as representatives. Lynn cannot make the first two meetings so Gillian Scott will attend on 19th November and Rhona Cunningham will attend in December. They will then feed back to the Forum with a view to electing representatives. The group is mainly run by community services and there seems to be some overlap with the Quality Improvement Working Group (now GIRIF).

Children's Services Funding Group

The next meeting is on 10th December. This group is headed by Alistair Gaw. It has only met twice so is still being defined and at the moment is mainly looking at the transfer of previous Regeneration Outcome Agreement funds to Fairer Scotland Fund. There are a number of projects which were previously funded under ROA and some under Changing Children's Services fund which will now be funded by FSF, but there is not enough money to fund them all so the group is considering the projects to make recommendations for what to fund. This group will feed into the Children's Services group, although on this occasion there is no meeting of the CS group before the funding decisions are made so the recommendations will not go back to that group first. It is important for Lynn to liaise with Rhona and Kate here, so that the voluntary sector presents a joined-up voice between the funding group and CS group.

Quality Improvement Working Group (QIWG)

This group is now called Getting It Right In Fife (GIRIF). There were inspectors at the last meeting. Brian Kirkcaldy gave a presentation on Getting It Right In Fife, but Lynn felt this was aimed very much at strategic level rather than frontline delivery. It may be appropriate to invite Brian to give the presentation at the Forum, but it should be a session aimed at strategic, managerial level staff.

Child Protection/Quality Assurance Group

Lyndsay emailed the IRD protocol form round the Forum again, following the last Forum meeting, and all those who replied endorsed it. A digital copy of Gillian Scott's signature was produced and sent to her so she could forward it to Ross Drummond and the protocol could be signed off on behalf of the Forum. There seems to be some issue surrounding the use of the forms as they were originally designed for use by Social Work, Health and the Police rather than for wider use. The concern seems to be that people will start to use the form instead of having a conversation, when it is intended as a paper trail of a conversation, with the conversation being the vital element so there is a feeling that the form may be detrimental if it is used more widely and people do not adhere to the guidelines but rather start sending it off as a record of a concern without actually discussing that concern. The Forum needs to stress the importance of following the guidelines which accompany the IRD form. This lack of clarity over whether the voluntary sector should use the form is confusing, since there was such a push to have it signed off on behalf of the Forum - this may have been due to the upcoming inspections? Perhaps the use of the forms and guidelines should be discussed further at a future Forum meeting?

There is also an issue in Barnardo's as their policy is not to send any documents by email that contain information about a person's identity. This means that the forms have to be sent by post, resulting in the loss of the dynamic element of emailing the form directly following a telephone conversation. This issue will also affect other organisations.

Kirkcaldy Local Children's Services Group

The KLSG, led by Graham Milne, has produced an Action Plan. Representation at meetings has been mainly from Education, so the action plan has a heavy education bias. It had originally been agreed that focus groups would feed into the action plan in order to have a variety of input, but this does not seem to have happened. Lynn will try to take this up.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health & Well Being Strategy Group / See Me Group

Amber could not attend the meeting but sent a copy of 'Investing in Our Mental Wealth 2008' a partnership document round the group, along with the following message:

This has been compiled by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Well Being Strategy Group, and fits in with the Framework for Promotion, Prevention and Care. At the moment, we're working on the key priorities and the key aspirations, detailed towards the end of the document.

I'd also like to draw the group's attention to Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland. This is currently in draft and will shortly be published as the latest report/strategy around promotion, prevention and care of the nation's mental health and well being. TAMFS will include target and supports that include the voluntary sector working with children and young people, especially through the community based targets.

Finally, a brief update on my involvement with the See Me young people's group: We're currently working on developing an internet based game to help young people explore themes around the stigma of mental health issues. Development of the game is supported by

See me, and we plan to use the girl and boy characters from the See Me campaign. A game brief has been developed, and potential game designers will soon be interviewed.

It was decided to invite Amber to have another slot at a Forum meeting in order to update the Forum on these documents. Both documents can be found on the CVS Fife website.

Disability Review Group

Lynn has been contacted by an AD from Aberlour who is attending meetings of this group as the voluntary sector representative. She contacted Lynn as she is not involved with the forum so has no way of feeding back to or consulting the sector. Lynn has invited her to attend future meetings. There were originally 2 representatives on this group, so perhaps see if anyone else from the Forum is interested.

Next Forum Meeting

There was some discussion around the Forum and some concern was expressed that people who were new to the Forum, especially frontline workers, might not return if they felt that the issues that were being discussed were not relevant to their work. There is sometimes a need to address strategic issues at Forum meetings, but it is also important to be able to inform and consult the sector. It was felt that perhaps some meetings could be targeted at strategic/managerial level staff, and others could be broader. This very much depends on the issues that arise at a particular time. The matter of where to go from here with the Forum could be addressed at the next meeting.

It was agreed that it was important that representatives submit minutes from meetings to Lyndsay to be posted on the CVS Fife website, and representatives should draw attention to any action points or matters of particular interest/importance.

It is still pending to have David Wright speak on procurement at the next Forum meeting. It was suggested to invite Fiona Power to give an update on the Children's Services plan too, as this is due for renewal in 2009. Lynn to invite David and Fiona.

Proposal for next Forum it to look at preparing from procurement and the new Children's Services plan, and looking ahead at the direction of the Forum: 'Are You Prepared & Where Do We Go From Here'. This would be held in January and would be targeted at managers.

Lyndsay informed the group that CVS Fife had met with Michael Enston and Sharon Douglas to request a position statement on procurement from all Fife Council Services in order to enable both CVS Fife and organisations to prepare in time. The statements were due to be ready in the first week of December - CVS Fife would feed this back to the sector. CVS Fife will also be developing a section dedicated to procurement on its website.