

Fife Children's Services Voluntary Sector Forum

Notes from Meeting Held on Friday 10th June 2005
Sinclair Town Library

1. Welcome & Introductions

Due to the absence of the Chair the Forum agreed that Bryan Poole should Chair the meeting. Everyone then introduced themselves to the Forum.

2. New Forum Guidance and Co-ordinating Group Role

Douglas McLellan introduced a paper on changing the role of the Co-ordinating Group and a new set of Guidelines for the Forum.

Douglas explained that he presented a paper to the previous meeting of the Co-ordinating Group where he had sought to create a difference between the activities of the Group and the full Forum. Previously the full Forum was the body that received the reports of the activities of the representatives that make up the Co-ordinating Group. This made some parts of the Forum difficult to follow for those members not involved in representational activities.

The new Role for the Co-ordinating Group would be to collate all of these activities and present them in a report to the full Forum for consideration and, if necessary, consultation. This then frees up Forum time for networking, campaigning and issue awareness. The Co-ordinating Group had accepted this proposal and was now asking the full Forum to agree. Following a small number of clarifications, the proposal was agreed in full.

3. Forum Activities

The Forum agreed that a guest speaker be invited to the next meeting. Kirsty Dawson mentioned that the Physical Activities Taskforce and Food & Health eating Group were keen to discuss their activities.

The Forum discussed the current delays in getting Disclosures from CRBS processed. Currently the delay is sitting at 10 weeks and is preventing the successful placements of volunteers in unsupervised positions. It was agreed that CVS Fife would draft a letter in the name of the Forum to be sent to CRBS and selected MSPs regarding the delay in getting Disclosures. This letter would be circulated before being sent. Linda King of CRBS was mentioned as a potential guest speaker for the Forum.

The Forum also discussed the current problems with Link Officers and the restructuring of Social Work activities within Fife Council. It was agreed that CVS Fife would draft a letter to Fife Social Work on behalf of the Forum setting out its concerns regarding the lack of communication and consultation on the changes currently being implemented.

The Co-ordinator of the Children's Services Funding Group, Fiona Power, was also mentioned as a potential guest speaker.

Douglas was asked to investigate what is happening with the Child Protection Units which are in the process of being disbanded.

4. Forum Communications

Douglas sought confirmation that emails would be an effective method of communicating with the Forum. The Forum agreed but stated that as many members only accessed emails infrequently that as much time as possible be given when sending information by email. It was also noted that some organisations do not have email and that other methods of communication should be used.

It was mentioned that the latest ESF Training Manual had been sent out by email. This file was particularly large and caused a delay when downloading to email inboxes where members have only dial-up access to the Internet.

Bryan stated that there might be monies available to forum members to gain access to email and perhaps provide upgrades to broadband access. Douglas was asked to investigate further.

CVS Fife are also intending to upgrade and redevelop their website with the intention for it to become a hub for sector and representational activities throughout Fife. The Forum will be kept informed of developments.

5. Early Years Review

Alison Kirkcaldy reported that Fife Council is undertaking a review of Early Years (0-6) provision in Fife. Nicola Wilson is performing this review but there is also a Consultative Group. The Forum agreed that Scott Hunter should sit on the Group as the Voluntary Sector Representative. Alison Kirkcaldy agreed to inform Nicola of Scott's participation.

6. Information Sharing

Bryan Poole gave a presentation about developments in information sharing amongst those working in Children's Services. He stated that Fife Council is developing a Gold Standard Information Sharing Protocol and that, in principle, CVS Fife supports this development. CVS Fife will be seeking funding for a legal assessment of the Gold Standard before it is able to give a definitive position.

Members of the Forum were given a draft copy of a Brief Guidance on Information Sharing for comment.

7. A.O.C.B.

The next meeting in September is the AGM for the Forum and a new Chair will need to be elected. In the absence of the current Chair, Joyce Munro gave a short presentation about what is required based on her time as Chair. All that was needed was a small amount of time and commitment to chair meetings, network with the Forum and be a point of contact for CVS Fife.