

Fife Voluntary Sector Children's Forum Coordinating Group Meeting

Monday, 19th November 2007 at 1.00 pm

Enable, Dysart

PRESENT:

Lynn Gillies	Barnardo's Family Matters
Alison Kirkcaldy	Home-Start Levenmouth
Kate Keddie	Barnardo's Levenmouth
Rhona Cunningham	Fife Gingerbread
Joyce Munro	Home-Start Dunfermline
Trudy Doidge	Enable Scotland
Tim Collins	Penumbra
Jan Marshall	Home-Start Glenrothes
Bryan Poole	CVS Fife
Lyndsay Macadam	CVS Fife (Minutes)

1. Introduction & Welcome

Apologies were received from Laura Crombie from Clued up and Debra Ibitson from Families first St Andrews. Lynn informed the group that Lyndsay Macadam from CVS Fife would be taking over Douglas McLellan's role of supporting the forum as Douglas had moved on to take up a position with Age Concern Scotland.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

No minutes were available from the previous meeting.

3. Agenda

Lynn welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited suggestions for items for the agenda as no official agenda had been drawn up.

Items Suggested were:

- Children's forum Meeting on 5th December
- Voluntary Sector Issues Group
- Funding
- Children's Services Representatives
- Training
- Information Sharing

4. Children's Forum Meeting on 5th December

Lynn read out the notes from the last Children's Forum meeting of 26th September. She told the group that she had invited Graeme Milne who has agreed to come to the next meeting to give of local Fife Children's Services. Lyndsay has contacted Fiona Power to

invite her to come and give an overview of Fife Children's Services and an insight into planning processes and funding and is awaiting a response.

Lynn has also contacted David Wright, who is happy to come and speak to the Forum about commissioning services sometime in the future.

Lynn invited suggestions as to who else might be invited to talk and what other issues the meeting could address.

Bryan advised that the forum should address the issue of funding. He informed the group that the Scottish Government has announced the budget for 2008/2009 and they have reduced the amount of ring-fenced funds, giving local councils greater freedom on where they allocate their spending. This gives greater flexibility but it means that voluntary sector organisations will have to engage with councillors in order to ensure that they are aware of the services they provide and can take this into account when allocating funding.

He suggested inviting Douglas Chapman (Chair of the Education & Children's Services Committee) and Tim Brett (Chair of the Social Work & Health Committee) to the next VSCF meeting in order to begin to build connections with the relevant councillors and try to find out which budget streams children's forum member organisations would come under now. He said he thought that most, but not all, of the member organisations' services fall into prevention rather than care and that it was important to get that message across to those who can influence budget spending.

He stressed that it was important to invite those who could inform the Forum about how and when budget decisions would be made and also to make connections with those people in order to raise their awareness of what Forum member organisations do and therefore the implications of any budget decisions that would affect them.

Following a general discussion, it was decided to postpone the 5th December meeting until January, with a view to inviting D. Chapman and T. Brett to the meeting before budget decisions were made.

ACTION:

Lynn - Write to both councillors to extend the invitation and inviting them to propose dates that were convenient for them.

Lyndsay - Cancel Cottage Family Centre booking for 5th December & contact forum members to advise that the meeting would be postponed until January and confirm date in due course.

5. Funding

Bryan said that he had wanted to flag up this new funding environment with no ring-fencing of budgets, which had now been covered whilst discussing the previous point.

He added that, according to a report on Fife Direct about a children's centre in Levenmouth, the council had agreed a three-year budget which would take inflation in to account, and had done the same for a new arts trust. He informed the group that as these are both voluntary organisations, CVS Fife had officially contacted the council to ask that this be the case for all voluntary organisations, so forum member organisations should be aware of this situation in any budget discussions they might enter into.

He also told the group that they should be aware that the Scottish government had pledged a reduction in class sizes to 18 pupils for P1 – P3 but no extra money had been given to councils in order to fund this, which would surely have an implication on budget decisions as councils would have to find the money to implement this from somewhere.

6. Voluntary Sector Issues Group

Bryan informed the group that the Voluntary Sector Issues Group had reconstituted in order to have a more coherent approach in terms of the Community Planning Partnership and have allocated a place on the group to the VSCF, who could come from either the coordinating group or the full Forum.

The VSIG consists of high level representatives from the Voluntary Sector and the CPP partners and would also be offering a place to a representative from the Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Forum. The representative would be required to attend quarterly meetings at what is a high level strategic group whose purpose is information sharing and maintaining contact between the Voluntary Sector and CPP partners. The new budget would be discussed at the January meeting and the representative would be expected to report to and from the VSCF.

After discussion, it was decided that Joyce would attend the first meeting and the issue or representation could be re-addressed at the full forum meeting in January.

7. Voluntary Sector Representative on Children's Services Group

Following a discussion about who should represent the VSCF on the Children's Services Group, it was agreed that Rhona and Kate would be the two representatives, with the Chair filling in if one was unable to attend.

8. Training

Alison told the group that she had attended a Child Protection Training Update meeting and now that the guidelines are clear she felt it would be helpful for the group to consider the issue of training provision.

Following a discussion, it was decided that the Coordinating Group would set up a Training Task Group in order to assess need, ascertain what skills and resources exist within the Forum and organise the delivery of Level One Child Protection training by the Forum. Trudy, Alison and Kate volunteered to form the Task Group and agreed to meet in Cupar on 5th December.

9. Information Sharing

Rhona attended a Social Work Practitioners' meeting recently along with 2 other representatives from the voluntary sector. The next meeting is to be held on 18th December at the Rothies Halls and the social workers are keen to encourage attendance from the sector as they are largely unaware of the services that are available in the voluntary sector to support them.

Close of Meeting