

**NATIONAL VOLUNTARY CHILDREN'S FORUM  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Scottish Executive, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, 3 October 2005

Present:	Ellenor Anwyl	Contact A Family
	Kelly Bayes	Aberlour
	Graham Bell	Kibble Education and Care Centre
	Fiona Bennett	Barnardo's
	Robert Brown	Deputy Minister for Education and Young People
	Rod Burns	Early Education & Childcare Division
	Bronwen Cohen	Children in Scotland
	Anna Cossar	Additional Support Need Division
	Joanne Crone	Voluntary Issues Unit
	Marion Davis	One Plus
	Stig Dryden	Social Work Services Policy Division (work placement)
	Kirsten Gooday	Community Care Providers Scotland
	Douglas Hamilton	Save the Children
	Fiona Hope	Social Work Services Policy Division
	Gita Jackson	Children & Families Division
	Gill Jones	Children in Scotland
	Janet Law	SOSCN
	Ruth Leith	Partners in Advocacy
	Gillian Lithgow	Youthlink
	Jan McClory	Children 1 <sup>st</sup>
	Robert McGeachy	Youthlink
	Margaret McLeod	Youthlink
	David Milliken	Homestart
	Catherine Montgomery	ENABLE
	Gina Nowak	Barnardo's
	Judy Panton	Family Fund
	David Purdie	Early Education & Childcare Division
	Tracy Rodger	CLIC Sargent Cancer Care
	Gwen Smith	Social Work Services Policy Division
	Claire Telfer	Children in Scotland
	Margaret Tod	Early Education & childcare Division
	John Watson	Barnardo's
	Juliet Wilson	National Playbus Association
Apologies:	Cathy McCulloch	Children's Parliament
	Ian McLaughlan	SPPA

## **Welcome and Introductions**

1. **Robert Brown** welcomed everyone to the meeting and, in particular, **Stig Dryden** from Bremen, Germany who was here on a work placement in Social Work Services Policy Division. **Robert Brown** also outlined the portfolio responsibilities – Peter Peacock led on all school matters while Robert Brown led on youth matters and social work issues. **Robert Brown** looked forward to the meeting as an opportunity to engage with the voluntary sector. **Gill Jones** welcomed the Minister and noted that the number of attendees reflected the importance of the meeting.

## **Apologies**

2. It was agreed that apologies would be recorded in the Minute.

## **Minute of Previous Meeting**

3. The Minute of the meeting on 7 March 2005 was accepted as a true record.

## **Matters Arising**

### **EU Treaty**

4. **Robert Brown** explained that as the EU Treaty had been placed in stasis this item had been moved to Matters Arising rather than a discussion topic. He noted that a broad debate about the future political and economic direction of the EU was the right response to the French and Dutch no votes; the PM had set out his vision for the future of Europe in his keynote address to the EP on 23 June; the PM had identified three key challenges for Europe:

- how does it respond to globalisation and the modern economy, particularly the need to modernise the European Social Model;
- what does it do about issues of security, such as organised crime, counter-terrorism, and drug and people trafficking;
- and what the right foreign policy and defence position is for Europe in the modern world.

The UK would take a leading role in this debate, not least as Presidency; and as part of the debate, the UK would hold an informal meeting of Heads of State and Government in the UK on 27/28 October.

5. **Bronwen Cohen** reported that there were important issues relating to children and the EU and these were ‘Missing and Sexually Exploited Children’ and ‘Trafficking of Human Beings’. Children in Scotland were in discussions with the Minister for Europe and DfES on these issues but recognised that there was no proper framework in Scotland. She also raised concerns about the invisibility of children in Europe and how Scottish concerns were fed into the process. **Robert Brown** explained that bilateral discussions were ongoing, but he undertook to feedback to colleagues in the relevant Division. **Janet Law** emphasised that it was important to have a framework, especially post Bichard.

**Action Point: to be raised again as matter arising at the next Forum meeting**

## **Sexual Health Strategy**

6. **Robert Brown** provided an update on the current work in the implementation of the Sexual Health Strategy. **Gill Jones** reported that the discussion at the last meeting had highlighted gaps in the strategy and shown it to be a standalone document with no joined up thinking and these issues had not been addressed. **Bronwen Cohen** suggested that as no-one from the relevant Department was available it would be beneficial if a meeting could be facilitated separately from the Forum to discuss this issue further with relevant officials.

**Action Point: The Secretariat undertook to arrange a meeting with Health colleagues and representatives from the Forum, before the next meeting of the Forum, to discuss the issues raised at the last meeting.**

## **Mental Health Act**

7. **Robert Brown** reported that The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 was due to come into force on 5 October 2005; and the formal provisions of the Act applied to any person subject to compulsory powers. The Act put in place several safeguards with respect to the giving of medical treatment to children under the age of 18, such as the provision of specialists in child and adolescent psychiatry. He also reported that several safeguards had been put in place for children under the age of 16 years. **Bronwen Cohen** noted that this information had been asked for in advance of this meeting which would have allowed for further questions if necessary and given that the forum members who had raised the topic were not present at today's meeting she would take this response back to them. **Robert Brown** explained that he would be happy to receive any additional comments which could be picked up at the next meeting if appropriate and taken back to colleagues.

**Action Point: additional mental health information attached at annex A comments to be sent to the Secretariat and, if appropriate, discussion under matters arising at the next Forum meeting.**

## **Other Business**

8. **Bronwen Cohen** asked if there was a date for the publication of the Integrated Early Years Strategy. **Margaret Tod** reported that the strategy was now more of an approach and whilst it still had the same outcomes for children, it was being looked at in conjunction with other early years policies. There was no publication date yet set. **Bronwen Cohen** asked if the approach would be consulted on. The Scottish Executive indicated that it was not felt necessary to consult unless the approach differed substantially from the strategy.

## **Topic for Discussion**

### **Strategic Funding Review**

9. **Joanne Crone** of the Voluntary Issues Unit gave a presentation on the Strategic Funding Review in which she set out the joint principles and action plan. **A copy of the slides used in her presentation and a copy of the joint principles and action plan are attached.**

10. **Robert Brown** thanked Joanne Crone for her presentation, noting that it was helpful to see the way forward, he then asked the forum members for any questions or comments. **Gina Nowak** asked if the action plan was available on the SE website. **Joanne Crone** reported that it should be on in the week beginning 10 October. **Kirsten Gooday** reported that there had not been a complete buy-in to the Strategic Funding Review and asked which model of full cost recovery was being considered. She also asked for a public reassurance that the voluntary sector would be involved in the process. **Joanne Crone** confirmed that the Unit were working in partnership with SCVO and CoSLA to implement the Strategic Funding Review findings. Through mainstreaming and discussions they would continue to work on a joint basis towards meeting outcomes. There was not one model of full cost recovery which was currently being promoted; the impact assessment aimed to examine the costs, benefits and costs of full cost recovery in order to identify a realistic and manageable way forward. This was all still in the early stages and the pulling together of the advisory group was a joint process.

11. **Robert Brown** asked if there was a single model of best practice. **Joanne Crone** reported that because the voluntary was so diverse, it was not possible to take a 'one size fits all' approach. However the Strategic Funding Review aimed to identify solutions to common problems that were encountered across the voluntary sector, such as the need for sustainable funding. **Janet Law** asked, in the scale for voluntary sector funding, what percentage was provided to children's service delivery. **Joanne Crone** said that she thought this was relatively high but this could be confirmed from searching the direct funding database on the website. **Marion Davis** asked if there was a distinction between direct and core costs or if this would subsidise individual projects. **Joanne Crone** reported that the move towards an investment approach to funding would help remove some of the unhelpful distinctions between core and project funding. **Bronwen Cohen** noted that there was a risk factor associated with a 'one size' rationalised funding approach. **Joanne Crone** confirmed that the Voluntary Issues Unit did not want to inhibit growth and there were benefits of having joined up working practices. **Kelly Bayes** asked about the definition of full cost. This would be outlined in the impact assessment. **Robert Brown** explained that the theme was of common work being valuable.

## **Workforce Reform**

12. **Gill Jones** explained that there was a crisis developing around the issue of workforce reform and **Bronwen Cohen** would introduce this topic with examples being provided by **Graham Bell** and **Fiona Bennett**. **Bronwen Cohen** gave a short presentation which outlined the key issues for the voluntary sector and the need for a changing workforce. **A copy of her presentation is attached.** **Fiona Bennett** gave a short presentation on the work in Family Placement Services and the relevance of workforce development to foster carers as professionals. **A copy of her presentation is also attached.**

13. **Graham Bell** outlined the work of Kibble Education and Care Centre and the key issues related to the selection, recruitment, training and development of social care staff. The level entry requirements for the sector meant that there was a difficulty in recruiting staff due to the nature of work, shortages within the labour market, appropriately qualified staff and the wider pay and conditions issues. Therefore they were 'hiring for attitude and training for skill'. There were also issues around training existing staff to the necessary requirements. Social care staff work with young people with complex, chronic and acute needs and staff have important qualities like life experience and maturity but they should also have sufficient entry level skills. The minimum staff requirements were noted in 1992 in the Skinner Report and last year the figure for workforce meeting the qualification requirements was only 19%. A major overhaul of entry level training and recruitment would begin to address some of these issues.

14. **Robert Brown** noted that the emphasis was on recruitment and this was being addressed through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review which would define core skills. **Gwen Smith** reported that the SE issued a 'Draft National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland 2005-2010: A Plan for Action' in December 2004 and a final version would be published later this year. If there were any specific issues in response to this document they should be addressed directly to **Gwen Smith**. **Robert Brown** confirmed that qualifications were patchy across the sector. **Bronwen Cohen** noted that if there were separate reviews in each workforce area the issues could be lost, whereas the Danish pedagogue model was for staff to be able to work across sectors. **Robert Brown** confirmed that it was a challenge to define the issues and see the links, and holistic thinking was more difficult due to the organisational need to work in discrete areas.

15. **Bronwen Cohen** suggested that the children's sector workforce should be reviewed as a whole. **Robert Brown** explained that this would be taken on board as well as communities, schools and so on changing. **Gill Jones** asked how these concerns could be taken forward. **David Purdie** suggested that one of the first opportunities to discuss workforce issues would be during the consultation for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce Review. There would be a period of wide consultation including meetings and workshops and members of the Forum will be contacted when the consultation period begins. **Action Point: An update to be provided at the next meeting.**

16. **Kirsten Gooday** noted that this should link with full cost recovery as there may be different resource implications. **Kelly Bayes** noted that recruitment and retention issues also need resources and links need to be agreed. **Douglas Hamilton** noted a concern about the most vulnerable children and that area of workforce who should be seen as a priority.

## **Points for Information**

### **Youth Work**

17. **Robert McGeachy** was looking for a general update on the Youthwork Strategy. **Robert Brown** explained that he had met with Youthlink representatives recently and although the process was taking longer than expected, a consultation would take place although no date had yet been set. **Robert Brown** also personally regarded this work as important and did not want it delayed unduly. **Margaret McLeod** supported the SE in putting the strategy together and wanted to link into the previous discussion topic on workforce to ensure that these issues would be reflected in the strategy.

### **School Meals**

18. **Robert Brown** reported that Hungry for Success (HfS) was introduced in 2003 as part of the vision to establish schools as a health promoting environment and to improve the nutritional quality of school meals. The aim was to improve the diet of children by ensuring that healthy choices were available and attractively presented in schools and by improved links between healthy eating and the curriculum. The First Minister had announced a consultation on a Health Promotion, Nutrition and Schools Bill during the coming Parliamentary year, coming into effect in Autumn 2006.

19. **Marion Davis** reported that SE stats show a drop in the number of children taking school meals, especially for children in low income families and that universal free school meals would be the best way to ensure an increase in the uptake figures. **Robert Brown** explained that this was not the view of the SE but the central issue was to attract children in taking up meals. It was an effective policy but with finite resources.

### **Any Other Business**

20. **Margaret McLeod** raised the issue of full disclosure checks being requested and this being beyond what was required in legislation. She reported that this issue was being addressed through ongoing dialogue with officials in Children and Families Division.

21. **Gill Jones** thanked everyone for attending and looked forward to the interim meeting to discuss the Sexual Health Strategy in detail. **Robert Brown** also thanked everyone for the invitation to attend and looked forward to the next meeting.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

22. The date of the next meeting would be in March 2006, subject to the Minister's availability.

**Action Point: Secretariat to liaise with Children in Scotland to confirm suitable date.**

## **Annex A**

### **The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003**

- The Mental Health (Care and Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003 is due to come into force on 5 October 2005.
- The formal provisions of the Act apply to any person subject to compulsory powers. The Act put in place several safeguards with respect to the giving of medical treatment to children under the age of 18, such as the provision of specialists in child and adolescent psychiatry.

### **Introduction of safeguards for informal child patients under the age of 16 years**

- Section 244 of the Act provides for conditions that must be satisfied before types of medical treatment may be given to informal child patients under the age of 16, that is children who are not subject to the formal compulsory provisions of the Act.
- The Mental Health (Safeguards for Certain Informal Patients) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 which will come into effect on 5 October, specify that ECT, trans-cranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) require a second opinion before they may be given to informal child patients unable to consent on their own behalf.
- The regulations provide that where an informal child patient is unable to consent on their own behalf, then in addition to parental consent a second opinion must be obtained from a designated medical practitioner appointed by the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. In addition, either the medical practitioner who is primarily responsible for treating the patient or the designated medical practitioner must be a child specialist.
- Where a child has the capacity to consent to treatment, they may consent on their own behalf. Certification by a child specialist, either the child's doctor or a DMP is also required. These treatments will not be able to be given when the child has the capacity to consent and refuses treatment.
- No children have received ECT since 1996. It is unlikely that the other treatments would be considered either.