

# NATIONAL VOLUNTARY CHILDREN'S FORUM

## Draft MINUTES OF MEETING

The Menzies Belford Hotel, Edinburgh, 7 March 2005

Present:	Lynn Anderson	SE – Mental Health Division
	Elenor Anwyl	Contact A Family
	Kelly Bayes	Aberlour Childcare Trust
	Bronwen Cohen	Children in Scotland
	Val Cox	SE – Early Education & Childcare Division
	Joanne Crone	SE – Voluntary Issues Unit
	May Fong	Homestart
	Kirsten Gooday	Community Care Providers Scotland
	David Johnson	Waverley Care
	Gill Jones	Children in Scotland
	Hugh Mackintosh	Barnardo's
	Colin MacLean	SE – Children, Young People and Social Care Group
	Cathy McCulloch	The Children's Parliament
	Robert McGeachy	Youthlink
	Iain McLaughlan	SPPA
	Moira Milligen	SE – Mental Health Division
	Vijay Patel	SE – Children & Families Division
	Claire Telfer	Children in Scotland
	Margaret Tod	SE – Early Education and Childcare Division
	David Turnbull	NCH Scotland
	Jennifer Turpie	Children in Scotland
	David Wilson	Children 1st
	Juliet Wilson	National Playbus Association
Apologies:	Heather Coady	Scottish Women's Aid
	Susan Elsley	Save the Children
	Judy Panton	Family Fund

### Welcome and Introductions

1. **Colin MacLean** welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those around the table to introduce themselves. He then agreed with the suggestion from **Gill Jones** that a sandwich lunch be provided for future meetings.

### Apologies

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

### Minute of Previous Meeting

3. The Minute of the meeting on 4 October 2004 was accepted as a true record.

## **Matters Arising**

4. **Bronwen Cohen** had asked for an update on the EU Treaty to be given. **Colin MacLean** explained that the Government hadn't taken a decision on the referendum yet and suggested that this could be the Scottish Executive topic for discussion at the next meeting. It was agreed that this would be acceptable.

## **Topic for discussion**

### **Integrated Assessment Framework**

5. **Vijay Patel** of Children & Families Division gave a presentation on the Integrated Assessment Framework. He explained the work underway to develop a framework which would set out a common definition and process for assessing across all services. **A copy of the slides used in his presentation are attached.**

6. **Colin MacLean** thanked Vijay Patel for his presentation and noted the work that had already been carried out to take this forward, he then asked the forum members for any questions. **May Fong** asked how much of the English model would be incorporated into the framework, what were the plans for training and how would it be funded? **Vijay Patel** responded that fundamentally both models were the same, the Scottish version had built on the experiences of practitioners and had also aimed to move to the use of plain English. He explained that there had been some thinking about training across the sectors and would welcome suggestions.

7. **Kelly Bayes** asked about the YLS tool (IT assessment tool used in youth justice) and if there had been any issues around sharing information with Health colleagues. **Vijay Patel** reported that some very basic mapping had been done which suggested there was overlap, but that we would be doing some detailed mapping in the next phase. In relation to health, the framework had been welcomed and that it was seen as a natural progression. **Colin MacLean** confirmed that the latter issue had been raised in e-care discussions but if protocols were followed this would alleviate any concerns. **Jennifer Turpie** asked if the framework would be adopted by the Children's Hearings and **Vijay Patel** confirmed that SCRA had been involved in the development.

8. **Hugh Mackintosh** recognised the need for the framework to be embedded across all agencies, but asked if one agency would be in the lead. He also asked if the IT would have the ability to monitor if the outcomes were achieved and if the outcomes were linked to the vision statements from Ministers. **Vijay Patel** reported it was envisaged that the lead would be decided either because there was a statutory requirement that meant it had to be with one agency or that it was agreed in collaboration with the child and his/her carers. There had also been some initial discussion as to whether one might have the vision statements set out in the action plan and therefore the plan would be reviewed to see that there had been an improvement in the outcomes.

9. **David Turnbull** recognised the situation where consistency would be achieved through a co-ordinator even though the services were being provided by differing agencies. He favoured this as a model and could see this as a role which the voluntary sector could undertake. **Kelly Bayes** noted that clear guidance would be needed to undertake this role.

10. **Gill Jones** asked if consideration had been given to the transition into adulthood beyond the age of 18. She noted from some of her work for the Social Exclusion Unit in London that it was important to 'go with the flow' of young people's cultural beliefs in policy design, rather than cut across them. **Vijay Patel** agreed that an assessment should not be based on an adults view, but that this was best managed by practitioners ensuring that they did not assume and asked questions that would be enable them to see things from the child / young person's views. He also explained that this was only the starting point and we would want to evaluate the framework after a period of time.

11. **Ian McLaughlan** noted that the framework should focus on all children and so asked if those professionals dealing with early years and youth work would be included. **Vijay Patel** confirmed that there were so many people involved in children's lives and they should all see the draft assessment triangle to see where their role fitted in. **May Fong** explained that during the recruitment of staff, Homestart had shared information when needed and with the parents' permission, however she recognised that there would need to be a change in policy. **Hugh Mackintosh** agreed that UK policies may have to be addressed. **Kelly Bayes** noted that voluntary organisations may have problems around dissemination and training costs. **Vijay Patel** recognised that some voluntary organisations might opt out of the process and so thought would need to be given to how to engage at a local level.

12. **Colin MacLean** noted that there was a genuine dilemma to set standard procedures and to focus on the outcomes for children and that there would need to be further discussions. He thanked **Vijay Patel** for his presentation. **Gill Jones** took over the Chair.

### **Voluntary Sector Role in Sexual Health Strategy**

13. **Gill Jones** welcomed **David Johnson** of Waverley Care, an organisation to promote the welfare of people with HIV based in Edinburgh. **David Johnson** explained that the original impetus for the sexual health strategy was the high number of teenage pregnancies in Scotland. He suggested that whilst investment in sexual health clinics was needed there was a danger that the strategy might overly focus on clinical targets. He explained that there were also determinants around the following factors: deprivation; looked after children; women; prisoners; black and minority ethnics; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexuals; and those with learning disabilities. Interventions were needed especially to improve the low self-esteem of today's youngsters and youth development programmes were being delivered by various agencies to address this. However, he explained that many teachers did not feel confident in delivering the share programme in schools and it was up to the head teachers to decide on how the programme should be taught. The potential role of voluntary sector agencies in helping deliver this had been missed. Children who did not attend school were missing out. There was an important role for parents in all of this but they often needed the kind of support that voluntary sector agencies could provide. Again there was no acknowledgement of this, nor of the need for close consultation with young people themselves. An opportunity had also been missed to acknowledge the need for a sexual health and relationships forum focussing on young people and actively involving them.

14. **Gill Jones** thanked **David Johnson** for his presentation and sought questions from forum members. **David Turnbull** was surprised that the strategy made no mention of alcohol given the links with teenage pregnancies. **David Johnson** agreed that the strategy was a stand alone document, with no joined up-thinking. He also stressed that it didn't make any links with the drugs agenda either. **Hugh Mackintosh** explained that this showed a lack of confidence for teachers and that it should be addressed in the Chartered Teaching Programme. **David Johnson** did point out the existence of the Sexual Health Learning Network that brought teachers and other professionals together and showed that teaching staff were keen to develop their skills in this area. **Kelly Bayes** reported that there was a sexual health clinic within a youth project in Stirling which was well used but found it difficult to get funding.

15. **David Johnson** reported that a Healthy Respect report was due out in a couple of months and that this would engage with parents to ensure that the outcomes for children were better. Young people have the confidence to speak with their parents and most have good relationships, however parents feel that they need support. The consultation should have reflected this. He explained that one positive area of the strategy was the setting up of a group to look at stigma and how to change society's view. **Bronwen Cohen** thanked **David Johnson** for his excellent summary and noted that there were long-standing issues and it was important to convey to those in the Executive that the forum would be looking for a response. **Action point: Secretariat to seek response from Health Department as matter arising for next meeting.**

16. **Gill Jones** asked if the issue of gender had been taken on board as it needed to be addressed on all fronts – not least, developing ways of involving young men. **David Johnson** explained that the original framework had included the gender debate but this had not been picked up in the strategy. He noted that interventions were needed at different levels for different genders. **Colin MacLean** noted that the Executive was aware of the various issues in discussion, and the interactions among them. The Executive was tackling these various issues in a variety of ways. The sexual health strategy was not intended to be the means of solving all of these challenges, but the Executive could consider making the links more explicit where that would be helpful. **David Johnson** explained that the key test should have been around prevention.

17. **Kelly Bayes** reported that the document would be open to the interpretation of the Head Teachers and she asked if they would be monitored? **David Johnson** explained that local authorities would be monitoring progress but no detail had been given as to how this would happen. **Colin MacLean** noted the tension between the wish of some colleagues to specify exactly what should be taught and how, and the general policy of setting broad outcomes for school education and allowing schools to decide how to achieve these.

## **Points for Information**

### **Children's Hearings System Review**

18. **Colin MacLean** reported that the Ministers had heard lots of points of view around Phase 1 and were now looking towards Phase 2 to maintain the principles of the system but also looking at how children could be better helped within those principles. The aim was to strengthen the system and decisions, modernise support structures and value the volunteers in the system. Phase 2 was likely to emerge around Easter and the following consultation would be on how to make the various system work better to improve outcomes for children.

### **Full Cost Recovery**

19. **Joanne Crone** reported that it was recognised that full cost recovery was important to the voluntary sector and a key component in ensuring the sustainability of services provided by voluntary organisations. There was a Full Cost Recovery (FCR) Working Group established in November 2003 to look into how the principle of full cost recovery could be established in the funding relationship between the public and voluntary sectors. The Working Group included representatives from SCVO, CoSLA, the voluntary sector, local authorities and the Executive. The FCR Working Group was developing a report, which would, hopefully, be published shortly. The Report would include recommendations aimed at ensuring full cost recovery was an agreed principle and adopted where appropriate in dealings between public sector bodies and voluntary organisations, and that as a consequence voluntary organisations were properly reimbursed for the services that they provided. In addition, the Strategic Review of Voluntary Sector Funding aims to improve the accessibility, effectiveness and sustainability of funding for the sector. This Review is being undertaken in partnership by the Executive, SCVO and CoSLA and aims to report shortly.

### **Mental Health Act**

20. **Moira Milligen** reported that The Mental Health (Care and Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003 was due to come into force during October 2005. The Act applied to any person subject to compulsory powers whatever their age. The Act put in place several safeguards with respect to the giving of medical treatment to children under the age of 18, such as those relating to the provision of specialists in child and adolescent psychiatry. Following a public consultation last year on all the regulations to be made under the Act consideration was still being given to which types of treatments for informal child patients should be subject to the additional safeguards and, if so, what these safeguards should be. An update would be provided for the next meeting. **Bronwen Cohen** asked if this update could be issued prior to the next meeting.

**Action point: Update to be issued via Secretariat to Forum members once available.**

### **Any Other Business**

21. **Hugh Mackintosh** asked if the Early Years Strategy would be issued before 4 April 2005. **Val Cox** responded that she couldn't say at this time. The Ministers were examining the Early Years Strategy in light of other wider policy issues. She did, however, point out that there had been no indication that the Ministers' thinking had changed substantially on the issues set out in the consultation paper.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

22. The date of the next meeting would be in either September or October 2005, subject to the Minister's availability. Subsequently, the date has now been agreed as **Monday 3 October 2005** with the Minister in attendance. The meeting will be held at **2.00pm in Conference Room 3, Victoria Quay** with a sandwich lunch provided at 1.30pm.