

24 HOUR TELEPHONE SERVICE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (TIG)

Minutes of Meeting held at Scottish Executive, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh Friday 18 August 2006 – 10.30-12.30

Present:	Maggie Tierney	Scottish Executive
	Gaynor Davenport	Scottish Executive
	Mike Briggs	Dumfries & Galloway CPC
	Gillian Buchanan	Glasgow CPC
	Peter Connolly	Dundee CYPPC
	Sarah Lovelock	Clackmannanshire & Stirling CPC
	Rena McCarry	South Lanarkshire CPC
	Ann Mitchell	Lothian & Borders Police
	Mike Moran	East Dunbartonshire CPC
	Gillian Nicol	Scottish Borders CPC
	James Pinkerton	Out of Hours Social Work
	Peter Reilly	Grampian Police
	Pene Rowe	Highland CPC
	Debbie Smith	Aberdeen CPC
	Fiona Swift	North Lanarkshire CPC
	Pam Smith	Edinburgh Social Work Services
	Sandra Thain	Fife CPC
	Douglas Watson	Scottish Border CPC
	Catriona Laird	Falkirk CPC

Discussion Paper TIG 001A/2006 circulated in advance

Introduction

1. Maggie Tierney chaired the meeting and invited introductions.

Background

2. The meeting opened an explanation of Ministers' commitment to a national telephone service based on a delivery model outlined as option 2 in the discussion paper. The options annex was tabled for illustrative purposes only, showing other models originally considered for the Grampian pilot telephone line. Ministers agreed that we should seek to implement a single telephone access point for child protection services across Scotland similar to the pilot run in Grampian last year based broadly on option number 2. This Group is convened as a short life working group to steer that process and develop a delivery and implementation strategy for national roll out by late Spring 2007. A system should be introduced which eases access to services for people, adds value to what is already happening, and provides a sustainable system with the potential for future development.

The Grampian Experience

3. Peter Reilly was involved in the Grampian pilot throughout and gave a summary of his experience of the 24 hour telephone service which ran in the North East Scotland (NES) CPC area from June 2005.

- NES were concerned about the confusion amongst the public about who to contact if they were worried about a child. This was highlighted in the leaflet produced in the

area “What can you do if you are worried about a child”, where numerous contact telephone numbers were required to cover all the local child protection services. See website for generic leaflet.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/01/20382/48303>

NESCPC concluded that a single access point to services was required for public and professionals not so familiar with child protection issues. Timing was fortunate as the Scottish Executive were also seeking a pilot area for a 24 hour telephone line.

- The pilot started in March 2005 and the line was live for 22 weeks. Preparatory work was carried out across 3 NES areas, the Scottish Executive, and the media company six months in advance. At the same time a publicity campaign was launched to sensitise the public to children needing help and providing clarity about the purpose of the telephone line.
- The service contract was awarded to MessagePad via competitive tendering. The service was handled by call centre staff that either sent out information for general enquiries by post, or routed calls directly to the relevant service, in the relevant geographical area when callers expressed concerns about a specific child or family.
- The pilot activity highlighted the importance of local involvement, both in development and in ongoing assessment and review.
- Tracking of new or displacement activity was not recorded and needs to be built into future service delivery.
- Local telephone numbers were retained during the pilot campaign
- The service provides a “softer” way of reporting/enquiring
- The pilot was expensive partly because there was no real indicators of how to cost the call handling service in terms of initial demand. However, on evaluation it was considered that the added costs of national roll out would absorb the high fixed costs and not significantly increase.
- Issues that still need to be considered for a national pilot include:

What happens to local numbers?

How to manage internal communications at local level?

Publicity

4. Peter Reilly concluded that based on the NES pilot experience, Grampian are keen to see a fully developed national model.

5. Maggie Tierney referred to paragraph 5 of the discussion paper and invited comment on the effect of replacing local numbers with the 0845 national line. The following points were noted.

- Out of Hours Service Edinburgh and Glasgow currently use 0800 number and would be reluctant to change at this stage
- Glasgow CPC fully supports the project which ties in with local plans for a dedicated line

- Concerns from other areas who already have established systems in place – essential to complement and not contradict what is already in progress
- Issues around front office/back office support within call centre
- Handling of out of hours calls/capacity to respond locally varies across Scotland
- Possible language barriers
- Level/type of skills required by call handlers, e.g. call handling v info/advice
- Dissolution/retention of local numbers
- Recording of telephone calls/data protection/legal issues
- How to develop minimum standards
- Mobile phone technology
- Risk Assessment

6. It is not intended that the new telephone service would improve local CP practice arrangements and existing problems such as capacity to respond out of hours and local language barriers will not be resolved through this new service.

7. The Group agreed that the Scottish Executive should develop a specification which would consider the points raised and provide flexibility in terms of phasing in CPC areas over a period of time, according to local development needs (if technology permits). There is no plan to phase out any local numbers that some authority areas may wish to retain, until full project evaluation has been carried out.

8. There was broad agreement in the Group to replicate the model described in paragraph 11 of the discussion paper provided that would add value and would not interfere with local arrangements. The model needed to be developed and properly risk assessed. The Group would like to hear more from MessagePad, the service provider for the Grampian pilot.

9. The national line is likely to divert calls some relevant calls to helplines such as ParentLine or ChildLine who are already overloaded. It would be helpful to have their contribution to the working group.

Summary

10. It is intended that the short life working group will convene approximately 4 times over the next six months and with opportunity to convene in Glasgow or Grampian, if members wish.

11. The following action points were agreed for the Scottish Executive
- **invite MessagePad to present Grampian pilot evaluation findings at next meeting, and address queries on skills required by phonenumber staff**
 - **develop initial spec to develop the 24 hour telephone line and establish its procurement status**
 - **develop remit for group**
 - **invite ChildLine to Group Membership**
 - **confirm date and venue of next meeting mid September**

**Scottish Executive TIG Group Secretariat
8 September 2006**

