

ChildProtectionLine – National Implementation Group

Minutes of the 8th Meeting – 21 June 2007

Convened by the Scottish Executive (SE) and held at COSLA offices, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh

Present: Maggie Tierney, Scottish Executive (Chair)
Roy McGregor, Fife Council
Katrina Glachan, The essentiagroup
James Pinkerton, City of Edinburgh Council
Pene Rowe, Highland Council
Claire Carthy, East and West Dunbartonshire CPC
Alwyn Bell, Lothian and Borders Police
Gillian Buchanan, Glasgow City Council
Peter Hope-Jones, Scottish Executive (Secretary)

Apologies: Helen Watkins, Shetland Islands Council
Maggie Mellon, Children 1st
Donald Urquhart, Midlothian Council
Gillian Nicol, Scottish Borders CPC
Catriona Laird, Falkirk Council
Liz Johnson, City of Edinburgh Council
Gaynor Davenport, Scottish Executive
June Gardiner, South Ayrshire Council
Astrid Telfer, City of Edinburgh Council
Debbie Smith, Aberdeen City Council
Mary Austin, NHS 24

1. Introduction

Maggie welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting.

3. Update from The essentiagroup

Katrina gave an update based around the monthly report from The essentiagroup. Key messages included:

- The majority of callers are female.
- There is no pattern of location as yet.
- The majority of calls are in relation to specific children, and of these 64% relate to only one child.
- There were more concerns raised about the age group 0 to 5 than any other age group.
- The majority of calls are from neighbours and relatives.
- ‘Unattended or unsupervised’ was the most prevalent area of concern.

- Of those callers who identified a media source for hearing about the phone line, most said ‘posters’. However, many did not answer this.

Katrina pointed out that the format of reports has been changed and invited feedback on this by e-mail.

There was some discussion of the sample calls in the monthly report. Roy emphasised that if there is a threat to a child, phonenumber operators should go to the police in the first instance. Katrina noted the feedback for use in developing training materials, and requested further examples of types of calls and appropriate protocols.

Katrina explained that a training schedule was being developed with Children 1st, with scenarios being built into the training, and call-handling protocols being written. The database is also being revised and the new version will be rolled out in the second week of July. Training will take place in The essentiagroup offices in Glasgow.

Action: Katrina to pass training schedule to Maggie and Peter once it is developed, who will circulate to the working group for input on the design and content of the training, and for volunteers to be involved in the training on the day

4. Current problems expressed by CPCs

Maggie outlined some of the concerns which had been expressed by CPC colleagues, particularly the low number of calls coming into the phonenumber and the apprehension that promoting the national line in the media might detract from local services.

The group discussed the situation in individual CPCs as regards local Social Work phonelines, and whether promotion of the national line would be welcomed by the CPC. It was agreed that there would need to be different approaches to promoting the national line in different Local Authorities, and that CPCs should have the flexibility to choose whether or not to actively promote the national line in their areas.

It was also agreed that the protocols for answering calls would need to be very well-defined and watertight if CPCs were to be reassured of the usefulness of the national line.

5. Possible media for later this summer and December

Maggie pointed out that the necessarily truncated three-week PR campaign at the launch of the line had not been long enough to be effective – media evaluation has suggested that there should have been an advertising campaign before the PR push.

It is not yet clear how incoming Ministers wish to deal with Executive advertising. Maggie invited discussion of whether we should put in a bid for advertising monies, which would compete with other important campaigns such as recruitment for teachers, Care in Scotland, and Children’s Hearings. The working group suggested that although the value of the ChildProtectionLine is not yet proven, it deserves some priority because without good publicity it will continue to falter.

Whether or not money is granted for advertising, there is a provisional PR plan for the rest of the year, which could include a large Scottish Executive truck visiting cities with a team of about 8 people giving out flyers and inviting people in. The truck contains 6 computers with internet access, a television screen, and a private booth where one local CPC representative could give advice.

The truck could be supplemented with re-advertising in the 108 local newspapers at the same time, along with locally relevant news stories. For Christmas, we could examine using kiosks in supermarkets to raise awareness.

Other issues raised in discussion included that the phone number as printed on the posters may be too small, and that it is important that the ChildProtectionLine number should be listed in Yellow Pages and other directories.

The group agreed that Maggie should bid for support for this service from the national advertising budget, stressing the message that without advertising the line will continue to falter, and that publicity for the line will raise general awareness of child protection issues, and may increase referrals through other routes.

Maggie undertook to keep CPC colleagues informed of progress on this and asked that if there looks to be any danger of the timing or type of promotion planned for the ChildProtectionLine cutting across local efforts, to let her know.

Action: Executive to put forward bid to Ministers for advertising budget

6. Development of protocols

Katrina outlined the two protocols currently under development for The essentiagroup staff:

- Message handling protocol: CPCs have confirmed that the information which is being captured from callers is appropriate. Maggie still to draft a statement of the line's remit for distribution to agencies explaining what to do when they receive a call from the ChildProtectionLine, and outlining the draft protocol.
- Internal recording and tracking of calls: Work on this is ongoing. James Pinkerton has provided a paper on 'Access to Local Child Protection Response Services 24/7'. The protocol for recording calls will have to be developed alongside IT and paper systems.

Action: Executive to take forward work on both protocols and the short statement on the line's remit

Further discussion of the protocols was deferred until the drafts are available.

7. Responding to CPC concerns by letter

Action: Executive to draft a letter and pass to group for approval

8. Any other business

There was no other business

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 16 August 2007, 11am, in COSLA offices again.