

Meeting of the National Resource Group on Western Isles' Recommendation 27
Tuesday 26 June, 10:00 am, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Attendees

Claire Monaghan, Scottish Executive, Children & Families Division (Chair)
Maggie Tierney, Scottish Executive, Child Protection Group
Lindsay Ferguson, Scottish Executive, Chief Nursing Officer Directorate
Penny Curtis, COSLA
Brigid Daniel, personal capacity & for SCCPN
Brenda Doyle, ADSW
Maria McKay, Western Isles
Peter Ashe, NHS National Services Scotland
Peter Hope-Jones, Scottish Executive, Child Protection Group (Secretary)

Welcome and apologies

As Claire was delayed for the start of the meeting, Maggie welcomed the group and explained that the last meeting had been postponed because new Ministers had recently come in and the timing was inappropriate.

Apologies had been received from Alwyn Bell of Lothian and Borders Police and Rosie Ilett of the Scottish Executive – both have moved jobs and are withdrawing from the group. Kerr Duncan will replace Alwyn. Apologies had also been received from David Anderson of ADES and from Gus McDonald of Tulliallan Police College.

Maggie described recent restructuring of the Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate in the Executive and explained that Child Protection now sits alongside *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) under Preventative Services for Children, Young People and Families.

Action: Peter to distribute diagram of restructured Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were agreed to be accurate.

Lindsay Ferguson gave feedback from the meeting of the Managed Care Networks (MCN) Steering Group on 12 March. The MCN group had planned training and education events for the year, including an event in October. There was also discussion at the meeting of the MCN group becoming more multi-agency and multi-disciplinary.

It was noted that as yet there is no formal MCN representation on this group.

Brigid Daniel gave an update on the work of the Research Network. The network will be producing a large, standalone, searchable database, and also a shorter review of key themes. The network will be meeting up in the summer to take stock and make plans for sustaining

the network. Brigid will be moving to a new post Stirling University, where there should be institutional support for the network.

Action: Brigid to contact the Executive to arrange a meeting to discuss the work of the Research Network

Child Protection Consultancy and Co-Working (C&CW)

Peter Ashe presented his paper entitled *Child Protection Consultancy and Co-Working (C&CW): a draft framework for Scotland* to the group, and gave some background on the origins of the Child Protection Shared Web Space. He explained that the aim of the web space was to encourage the sharing of information and experience beyond occasional chance conversations. The Shared Space is intended not just as a resource for holding information, but principally as a means of connecting people up. Peter tabled a diagram which compares the Shared Space with the police system for sharing information after major incidents.

There was general discussion of the paper. Brigid pointed out the danger of having a system based around statements of opinion which are not backed up by evidence and suggested that a layer be added to the system for bringing together evidence – consultation could simply reinforce hasty judgements rather than challenging them. It was agreed that the responsibility for ascertaining the reliability of information or advice obtained through the resource would rest with the person who asked the question, and that this should be made clear on the site.

It was agreed that the system should accommodate professionals registering themselves as willing to answer occasional e-mail or telephone queries, and also those making themselves available potentially for contract work, for example recently retired professionals and consultants.

There was some discussion as to whether the problem which Recommendation 27 was intended to tackle still remained. The strengthening of CPCs, the development of joint inspection of services to protect children, the Research Network, the improvements in SCRs, and the child protection training framework, have all helped to improve the situation. It was agreed that the group should seek a solution relevant to the current situation rather than inflexibly following every word of the recommendation.

It was agreed that the role of the Multi-Agency Resource Service (MARS) would have to be developed and expanded to cover three main areas:

- A co-ordination role: The MARS would help those who want additional knowledge about complex child protection cases to access information on:
 - existing evidence, in libraries, archives, academic networks, and including HMIE inspection evidence and Significant Case Reviews
 - existing practice and expertise from Scotland and beyond, including contact details
 - existing guidance on the subject in question
- Brokering concrete operational support: The MARS would be able to put the questioner in touch with others who would, for a fee, be able to assist concretely with addressing a complex case. This support could be mentoring or consultancy, or could extend to commissioning the services of one or more experienced professionals for a limited period. The MARS would build up a directory of potential contacts, who

would be benchmarked against some kind of agreed accreditation or suitable standard, but on the basis that services and advice are bought at the buyer's own risk.

- Advising/lobbying: The MARS would also be able to identify gaps in service provision and/or gaps in specialist child protection knowledge, and provide advice to the Executive and CPCs accordingly. This would be a minor function compared with the previous two functions.

It is possible that the Research Network could become part of the MARS function, as they have already done some of the groundwork.

Next steps

Action: Peter Ashe to write a revised paper, incorporating decisions made in this meeting, and circulate before the next meeting

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 31 August at 10.30am, at Victoria Quay again.

Lindsay cannot make this date – she will meet with Maggie separately to discuss the revised draft.