

Meeting of the National Resource Group on Western Isles' Recommendation 27
Friday 31 August, 10:30 am, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Attendees

Claire Monaghan, The Scottish Government, Preventative Services for Children, Young People and Families (Chair)
Maggie Tierney, The Scottish Government, Child Protection Team
Claire Carthy, East/West Dunbartonshire Council
Peter Ashe, NHS National Services Scotland
Maria McKay, Western Isles Council
Gus MacDonald, Tullialan Police College
Brenda Doyle, ADSW
Brigid Daniel, personal capacity & for SCCPN
Peter Hope-Jones, The Scottish Government, Child Protection Team (Secretary)

1. Welcome and apologies

Claire welcomed the group. Apologies had been received from Penny Curtis (COSLA). Claire Carthy was attending in place of David Anderson (ADES), and Gus MacDonald was attending in place of Kerr Duncan (ACPOS).

Claire noted that Lindsay Ferguson (The Scottish Government) was soon to change roles, and so would no longer be part of the group.

- *Action – note of thanks to Lindsay*

2. Minutes of last meeting

The diagram of the restructured Children, Young People and Social Care Directorate, which was to have been circulated, is still not available.

Action – Peter HJ to circulate new structure diagram when available

All other action points had been completed. The minutes were agreed to be accurate.

3. A business case for “a multi-agency national set of arrangements to support those working with both complex and simple child protection issues and cases” (Peter Ashe)

Peter Ashe tabled his paper on proposed action in light of Recommendation 27, and gave a brief presentation on the reasons behind the proposal. Peter explained the need for a process of ‘disjointed incrementalism’ – the external world will continue to change and there will not be a final solution. Peter highlighted that linkages and network development will be essential to the success of the Multi-Agency Resource Service (MARS). Approximately 350 people have already signed up for the shared web space.

- **Action – Peter HJ to circulate PowerPoint slides**

During discussion of Peter Ashe’s paper, the following key points arose:

- It is important to overtly acknowledge the nebulosity of the network – practitioners will be anxious to find ‘the right solution’, but this won’t always be possible in a landscape which is constantly changing.
- The West of Scotland network could provide a useful model for a network around the MARS, with people around the MARS with a semi-formal role in spreading knowledge outwards.
- Not everyone in the network needs to know everyone else – you can use a ‘six degrees of separation’ approach.
- The variety of resources available can be confusing, especially without quality assurance. The MARS could provide information on whether materials have been accredited by universities for credits, are supported by teaching, have accreditation from organisations – i.e. map what accreditation is already there rather than judge quality. The MARS cannot accept risk though – ‘buyer beware’ must be the message.
- The spread of issues will be very wide so there can be no universal system of qualification and accreditation of either resources or professionals.
- The MARS would not undertake administration of brokering, just prompt people to contact people.

- **Action: Peter Ashe to do a rough costing and send to Claire**

Maggie proposed a ‘three-legged stool’ approach, consisting of three separate strands, all needing funding:

- The research network functioning as a clearing house bringing together research;
- The shared web space transformed into an accessible resource – Barnardos has been commissioned to continue populating the web space; and
- A central MARS person acting as a central hub, spreading the word about the network, and building up the MARS role by also taking bits of other people’s time – approximately 2.5 people ultimately.

All agreed with this approach.

Maggie pointed out that credibility for the MARS function is crucial. The person who takes on this role will need to already have a good reputation in the child protection community. It is not an administrative role.

- **Action: Maggie to capture the ‘three-legged stool’ plan in a paper (including a diagram) to take to CPC Chairs. After CPC Chairs there will need to be a discussion with Ministers.**
- **Action: Claire to have a ‘light touch’ conversation with Ministers next week.**
- **Action: Peter Ashe to pass role models document to Maggie.**
- **Action: Immediate: All to email Maggie one or two sentences on what the MARS person will be and what kind of person they need to be. Copy to the rest of the group.**

4. Next meeting

The next meeting will be after the October break.

- *Action: Peter HJ to arrange and give details to the group.*