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There are background papers to agenda items: 6, 7(b) and 8

SCOTTISH CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE CHAIRS FORUM

Radisson Blu Hotel, Edinburgh, 8 September 2010

Minute of meeting of Scottish Child Protection Committee Chairs Forum

MINUTE OF THE MEETING

DATE/TIME: 8 September 2010 at 10:30 hours

LOCATION: Radisson Blu Hotel, Edinburgh

CHAIR: Chief Constable Colin McKerracher (CM) – Grampian Police

SECRETARY: Jenna Mckay (JM) – Grampian Police

IN ATTENDANCE

| | | |
|----------|------------|---|
| Tim | Armstrong | Angus CPC |
| Bill | Atkinson | Perth & Kinross CPC – Chair |
| Safaa | Baxter | East Renfrewshire CPC – Chair |
| Corrine | Begg | NESCPC – Chair |
| Rosie | Bolton | Falkirk CPC |
| Mike | Briggs | Dumfries & Galloway CPC – LO |
| Diane | Burns | East Ayrshire CPC |
| Hugh | Carswell | South Ayrshire |
| Norman | Dunning | South Lanarkshire (Independent) Chair |
| Sheila | Foggon | East Lothian CPC |
| Myra | Frankland | East Renfrewshire CPC – Chair |
| Steven | Hatch | Fife CPC |
| Pauline | Hoggan | North Lanarkshire CPC – Chair |
| George | Hunter | |
| Susan | Kerr | Inverclyde CPC |
| Catriona | Laird | MARS |
| Adrian | Larwie | ELBEG Public Protection Partnership Officer |
| Sara | Lovelock | Clackmannanshire CPC |
| Linda | Maclennan | Highlands |
| Angus | MacLeod | Western Isles CPC – Chair |
| Jo | MacPherson | West Lothian CPC – Chair |
| Ivor | Marshall | Edinburgh CPC - Chair |
| Sean | McGleenan | Dumfries & Galloway SWD |

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| Jenna | Mckay | Grampian Police |
| Colin | McKerracher | Chair |
| Anne | Mitchell | ELBEG Public Protection Partnership Officer |
| Eleanor | Mitchell | Grampian Police |
| John | Myles | Fife CPC |
| Gill | Ottey | SWIA |
| John | Raine | Borders (Independent) CPC – Chair |
| Jane | Ridgeway | West Lothian CPC – LO |
| Kenneth | Ritchie | Inverclyde CPC – Chair |
| Jillian | Russell | North Ayrshire CPC – LO |
| Anne | Salter | Stirling CPC |
| Joanne | Sharp | North Ayrshire CPC – Chair |
| Gill | Smee | Orkney CPC - Chair |
| Beth | Smith | MARS |
| Rikki | Sneddon | East Dunbarton CP Coordinator |
| Elizabeth | Strang | Argyll & Bute CPC |
| Susan | Taylor | East Ayrshire CPC – Chair |
| Astrid | Telfer | Edinburgh - LO |
| Donald | Urquhart | Glasgow CPC – Chair |
| Helen | Watkins | Shetland CPC – LO |
| Brian | Yule | NESCPC |

1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

CM opened the meeting and welcomed those present. He gave a brief resume of how the days proceedings would take effect and thanked members for their patience during the transitional period between handover of the Chairs. CM then discussed the proposal to adopt a new agenda format including the potential for updates to be provided within a recognised agreed template. CM then welcomed new members which included: John Raine, CPC Chair (Independent) Borders, Joanne Sharp, CPC Chair, North Ayrshire, Linda MacLennan, Highlands.

2. APOLOGIES

| | | |
|----------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Alan | Baird | Dundee City Council |
| Deirdre | Cillers | Clackmannanshire |
| Elaine | Wright | East Ayrshire |
| Fiona | Miskelly | Midlothian |
| Fiona | Stevenson | Glasgow CPC - Chair |
| Gillian | Nicol | Borders (Lead Officer) |
| John | Simmons | East Dunbartonshire CPC - Chair |
| Kate | Gabb | Shetland |
| Lesley | Boal | Lothian and Borders |
| Margaret | Anderson | Falkirk |
| Pene | Rowe | Highlands |
| Ross | Drummond | Perth and Kinloss Council |
| Tim | Huntingford | Renfrewshire (Chair) |
| Tom | Wood | |
| Gillian | Buchanan | Scottish Government |

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| Steve | Black | Western Isles (Chair) |
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3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minute of 8 June 2010 was accepted as a true record with amendment to include Safaa Baxter as an absentee from the meeting. Gill Smee raised the fact that Actions from the last meeting appeared to be missing from the current agenda. CM explained that these Actions would in fact be covered during the afternoon input from Scottish Government Representatives.

4. **OUTSTANDING TASKS**

CM advised members that all the tasks allocated to Philip Raines would be covered during the Scottish government update during the afternoon session.

Item 4 Standing items

National CP Guidance Consultation Update

Other Comments (re consultation)

Members spoke about consultation and it was suggested that efforts should be made to get some of the other national committees to send representatives to the afternoon session of the September meeting.

Action - Philip Raines to organise for session on the consultation at PM meeting in September

Item 6

Education at Home & CP issues

At last meeting it was agreed that this should be an agenda item and "in consortia discussions".

Item 7

Care Commission Report on Private Fostering

This subject obviously generated a healthy discussion with a number of questions being raised by members. General consensus that Local Authorities and Social Work are the responsible bodies not CPC – it was felt that it was not a CPC issue at all.

Action - To be referred to Philip Raines for feedback from the Scottish Government perspective

Item 8

Transfer of Files between Authorities (England & Wales)

East Lothian has a case of a transient family via Dundee and Aberdeen from Blackpool. First class service throughout Scotland regarding files. Not so in England where they had to send someone down to physically collect the files. A more professional approach is required.

Action - To be referred to Philip Raines

5. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/UPDATE**

(a) National coordinators update

CM invited Catriona Laird (CL) to give an update regarding her role and work which she

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had been involved with since her appointment on the 28 June 2010.

CL reported that she had made contact with a number of CPCs, Chairs and Lead Officers to discuss their priorities and views. The post is based within the MARS service and also provides opportunities of linking to the wider child protection community. She has made contact with other national coordinators linked to ADPs and the Violence against Women agenda and has become involved in a number of events and activities with a link to community planning or with a national focus.

CL has also attended consultation events on the revised CP guidance and participated in SLWG in public awareness and in the near future on management information. It is also planned to develop MARS networking site, "marstalk", and to act as a central collation point for CPC material to be hosted on MARS website. The national Coordinator is keen to be accessible to CPCs and to support any local activity, which is contributing to the CPC agenda.

ACTION: CL to prepare an operational plan for the December CPC meeting reflecting the planned strategic assessment.

(b) MARS Update

Beth Smith (BS) asked members if they had any specific questions regarding MARS in context of the written update paper submitted by the Scottish Government. She specifically sought information from members on their experience on accessing the MARS website and the material contained on the site. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for BS to provide a live demonstration of the website during the morning session of the next meeting.

ACTION – BS to arrange live demonstration for the December morning session.

Ricky Sneddon (RS) explained that some members were being hindered in utilising the MARS website and associated documentation because of the inadequacies of ICT systems within their local authority areas and/or other agencies. He discussed the need for ICT representation within Child Protection Committee's.

BS suggested that this could be progressed at a national level, however more information was required as to who was unable to gain access.

Subsequent discussion with members indicated that the Chair through MARS should progress the ICT issue at a national level. Members agreed that ICT was a big issue which impacted across all agencies of the Public Sector. This was an area where SOLACE, ACPOS and HMle also had a role to play.

During the discussion it was noted that a high percentage of children and young persons use multiple social networking sites as their main form of communication. Therefore it is imperative that those involved with child protection were able to access these sites.

ACTION: CM, CL and BS to progress at a national level. JM to circulate question to all members regarding access to the MARS website and thereafter disseminate this information to CM, CL and BS.

(c) HMle Inspections

Norman Dunning (ND) South Lanarkshire advised members that their authority has just commenced their inspection with the Inspectors due to meet staff within the next week. At this stage a considerable amount of work had been undertaken and the engagement had been constructive.

CM discussed with members the proposal to introduce a template for HMle inspection updates. This proposal was accepted with agreement that learning points needed to be shared in an inclusive consistent manner.

ACTION: Ellie Mitchell to develop template.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

(a) Chairs discussion paper

Remit, Purpose & Structure

CM explained that members of the Scottish Child Protection Committee Chairs Forum (SCPCCF) have a pivotal role to play in conjunction with the Scottish Government to ensure the development and delivery of efficient processes, common standards and continue improvement during what was likely to be a lengthy time of uncertainty for Scottish Public Services.

CM continued by encouraging members to discuss and debate a number of topics that require to be agreed and developed. This would ensure the forum is strategically focused and in a position to plan and progress Child Protection agendas by using all available resources efficiently and effectively, therefore sharing the workload of ongoing reform and improvement.

CM asked members to consider the remit, purpose and structure of the SCPCCF. Subsequent discussion revealed a constitution did exist (signed off in June 2008) and this should be referred to before any significant change was proposed.

Members advised that the morning session was useful to gather views before presenting a collated response to the Scottish Government which in turn helped to inform the discussion.

Members explained that they did not wish repetition by merely repeating what had been discussed during the morning session. Members requested that the afternoon session should not be used as formal consultation with CPC's on the content of papers, that this should be done through more formal channels.

At the conclusion of this discussion it was agreed at this time there was still a requirement for two separate sessions which would allow members a safe environment to share their views and resolve any differences in opinion prior to the Scottish Government Representatives joining the meeting. Members would also welcome a revised format to the afternoon session to include discussions to share learning on strategic priorities i.e. national guidance and not to be used primarily as presentation sessions.

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CM thanked members for their open and frank discussions and advised that he would take forward their suggestions. He sought opinion on a change of title for the forum and suggested it be known as Scottish Child Protection Committees Forum. It was agreed that there should be no change at present.

Developing the SCPCCF Strategy and Business Plans

CM thereafter sought the views of members regarding work/business plans and highlighted the benefits of commissioning a Strategic Assessment. This would allow the forum to identify key priorities, allocate resources and tasks to drive business forward.

Members highlighted a concern that what might be a priority for a CPC would not necessarily be a priority for the Scottish Government. It was stressed that wherever priorities were agreed as a result of the strategic assessment were in fact the forums priorities.

ACTION: Brian Yule to liaise with staff at the ELBEG to develop a Strategic Assessment. Progress to be reported to the December meeting.

The discussions on strategic assessment's evolved through to a discussion on resources and the allocation of tasks. This generated a healthy debate on conflicting priorities and repetition of work. Members agreed that a scoping exercise would be of great value to ascertain what work is currently being done. This would also link in to the preparation of a strategic assessment. The forum also discussed a number of groups and individuals who had carried out work on their behalf previously.

Partnership Working

This discussion then led to a more detailed debate to identify who were the forum's key stakeholders. The suggested stakeholders are listed below, it should be noted that this is not a comprehensive list.

- COPFS
- ADSW
- Inspection Agencies
- ACPOS
- Scotland's Children Youth Project Commissioner
- Care Commission
- SCRA
- Children's Parliament
- MAPPA
- GIRFEC
- National Trainers
- Scottish Community Safety Network
- Association of Directors of Education, Scotland (ADES)
- Scottish Children's Reporters
- Procurator Fiscal
- SWIA
- Violence against Women Partnership
- HMle
- Children's Commissioner

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Understanding the role and status of the Consortia

CM then led discussion around understanding the role and status of the consortia. The group agreed that the Consortia, short life working groups and other key players worked well together for specific pieces of work.

Consortia were efficient and useful groups of CPC's working together to deliver on these pieces of work and offered significant expertise in this arena. However where the work of Consortia was in duplication or replicated the National strategy of work then this was unnecessary and inefficient.

In conclusion there was a general consensus is that there is a requirement to make best use of the resources currently available.

ACTION: CM to write to members as a scoping study on a number of topics

Role of the National Coordinator

The discussion evolved to include the role of the National Coordinator. Members understood that whilst there was a formal job description in place the primary function was to support the forum and the Chair. The post is currently based within MARS at Stirling however there is recognition that the Coordinator has no administrative support.

Members were keen to support the work of the National Coordinator. However, there was recognition in the group that the forum need to quickly identify what the main priorities are in order to obtain support and commitment from the Scottish Government to deliver upon these priorities. (N.B. This reinforced the previous decision to produce a Strategic Assessment/Business Plan for the December meeting.)

Resourcing

Continuing with the theme of Resourcing whilst the National Coordinator and MARS could be considered to be a "shared service" a business case was required to secure funding in order to sustain their work. A suggested example made was for each of the 32 Local Authorities to provide £1,000 per annum which would more than secure administrative support for the Coordinator. Unfortunately given the current financial climate members appeared reluctant to support this proposal. If no additional funding is secured this means that the MARS Implementation Coordinators post could disappear at the end of January 2011, and there is uncertainty as to the sustainability of MARS after 2012 when that funding stream ends.

Members agreed that it would be extremely disappointing to lose these resources and therefore it was imperative that a quality product was being produced by MARS which could assist in securing funding and aiding their sustainability.

ACTION: CM to pursue above issues with Scottish Government & other partners.

National Training Role

The National Training Group is currently chaired by Karen MacLean, North Ayrshire and the engagement appears to be through Lead Officer's. It is unclear how their agenda is set and indeed how a national agenda is pulled together. This was a cause for concern as there needs to be a link between the forum and National training and looking to the future how this fits with the priorities and strategy agreed by the forum.

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Format of meeting

CM raised the issue on the format and conduct of the meeting. Members suggested that monitoring was required around "repeat non-attendees" and they should be encouraged to attend the forum.

Issues which were to be raised and discussed at the meeting should be presented in a template which would assist with consistency. A timeline would be agreed and sent out to members detailing dates for submission of papers, the circulation of an agenda and a proposal that minutes from the meeting should be disseminated within a week of the meeting occurring.

ACTION: JM to circulate minutes and advise members when agenda items and papers are required.

Members agreed that the physical layout of the room made it difficult for everyone to hear the discussion and whilst they did not wish to use microphones it was agreed that by standing before speaking this would assist the acoustics.

ACTION: EM consider set up of room prior to next meeting.

CM thanked members for their honesty and participation during the morning session and thereafter invited comment from members as to which issues they wished him to raise with the Scottish Government in the afternoon session. The subjects discussed were as follows;

- Child Protection information line (funding)
- Raising public awareness of child protection (National and Local need to be joined up)
- Keepers of the register (access to England and Wales)
- Underage Sexual Activity (Why is this not contained within the National Guidelines)
- Accreditation Arrangement JIIT

7. AFTERNOON SESSION

CM opened the afternoon session by welcoming representatives from the Scottish Government and also HMle. He advised them that members had an extremely valuable discussion during the morning session which covered the remit, the existence of a constitution and the value in having a two part meeting.

He advised that members had agreed the need for a Strategic Assessment, Scoping Study, and appropriate analysis of data which would identify key priorities allowing the group to task work appropriately which would ensure a programme of delivery.

CM continued by explaining that a more detailed discussion was required with Scottish Government around resourcing issues. Whilst there were a number of useful resources available to the group and an understanding that they could tap into work which was already being done it was important that this was coordinated to avoid duplication of effort.

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CM explained that discussion had also taken part around the role of the National Coordinator, national training, Partnership work and ICT access within the public sector particularly relating to social networking sites.

More detail was required in identifying key stakeholders and the group agreed to the introduction of formatted templates relating to the submission of papers and updates which should assist in more focused discussion.

a) HMle Update

CM thereafter invited Neil McKechnie, HMle to provide a very short update on current HMle work.

Neil McKechnie explained that HMle were currently preparing to transfer to SCSWIS by April 2011. Therefore the work in year 3 of HMle will be the same as in previous years and a fuller update will be provided in the December meeting. He assured members that between now and the end of the year HMle would publish a timetable of their inspections for 2011/12 in sequence. Notification of inspections will go out from HMle but the work will be conducted by SCSWIS. HMle will on 29 September 2010 publish their annual report which will contain national performance figures on last year's child protection inspections on the 4 reference or quality indicators. He wished to draw members attention to this date as the publication was likely to draw some media attention.

He urged members who had been the subject or would be the subject of inspections to complete the quality control questionnaire supplied at the end of inspections in order that they can improve the service provided. He concluded his input by assuring members that HMle were working closely with the SG on the national child protection guidance.

Marion Martin updated members of the existence of the good practice section within the HMle website. She encouraged members to submit details of best practice to be shared amongst others which demonstrated services working together and positive outcomes for children.

b) Scottish Government Update

CM then invited Philip Raines (PR) to provide members with the Scottish Government update.

PR explained to members that the consultation period for the National Child Protection Guidelines would end on 17 September 2010. At present Gillian Buchannan was travelling throughout the country encouraging appropriate stakeholders to feed into the consultation process. On 11 October 2010 the guidance's main steering group were scheduled to meet to discuss the comments and agree what should be changed before the document was presented to the Ministers. The document is planned for publication by the end of November 2010.

PR advised when the national child protection guidelines were published there would need to be guidance set out at the same time as to when any proposed changes resulting from the new guidance would occur as there would be a 'staggered' approach for example around child protection registers.

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PR explained that it would be very useful if he could provide members with a "what next" presentation at the next meeting which he hoped would develop into a regular update session which would propose additional changes to the guidance such as significant case reviews. He suggested that some of this material could be captured in the strategic assessment and link into the priorities.

ACTION: PR to provide update presentation at December meeting

PR was hopeful that the responses to the consultation on the draft into underage sexual activity guidance would be published within the next few weeks with a final version of guidance to be completed by the end of October.

He continued his update by advising that the National Risk Assessment tool kit was likely to go to commission by the end of September and hopefully the work would be completed by February 2011.

The implementation of the Protecting Vulnerable Group scheme (PVG) would commence on 30 November 2010. From this date any person taking up a new position involving regulated work with vulnerable groups would have to apply further phasing in of this scheme which would be overseen by Disclosure Scotland.

Other key dates/updates included:-

- Children's Summit 23 June 2010, at which the – GIRFEC Implementation Guide was published.
- Care Commission Report – on private fostering – An update on the key points was sent out to CPC's by a letter from the Scottish Government on 11 August 2010
- File transfer, there is no protocol in place at present but this is a subject which could feature in the Strategic Assessment
- Education at Home. There are a number of issues regarding home education. Local Authorities are currently struggling a little with guidance. There is a requirement for issues to be drawn together and prioritise what to take forward perhaps this could be captured in the Strategic Assessment.

This led to a general discussion by members around JJIT training and the accreditation framework (Pass/Fail/Competency) confusion existed as to the role of ACPOS and ADES. Members understood that money set aside for this project had to be spent by April 2011. PR suggested that there were 3 elements to this suggestion.

1. Guidance (national guidance awaiting final sign off)
2. Equipment (ACPOS is the lead) a project manager has just been appointed to facilitate this
3. Training and accreditation – CPC's must also feed into this process.

Members sought clarification on the public awareness helpline and stressed the need for coordination at both a national and local level. It was agreed that there was a definite requirement for a more coherent approach.

It was understood if any national work was to be undertaken then money was available this year however it is unclear if any additional funding would be available next year. In summary if the money was not used for the helpline then it could be used elsewhere.

8. MARS SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

BS presented members with an update from the short life working group which was developing best practice relating to Significant Case Reviews.

To date the work undertaken includes:-

- Research and Practice
- Review of current literature
- Review of guidance and 2005 working group
- Survey of CPC's
- Consultation with CPC Chairs
- Feedback from practice
- Survey by the Scottish government
- External reference group

Some of the findings included:-

- The guidance for conducting SCR's is fit for purpose
- No requirement to put on a statutory footing
- The term 'interim' is confusing
- No audit, research or quality assurance has been undertaken
- Good practice can be supported by training, standardised templates, monitoring

BS and PR then lead discussion around the Recommendations contained with this review, including proposed timescales for implementation. Several members requested clarification on who had ownership of this piece of work which the Scottish Government had commissioned.

The afternoon session continued by 'workshops' discussing Recommendation 10. Subsequent discussions were held at individual tables and therefore were not the subject of minutes.

9. AOB

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8 December 2010