

# **Working Group of Representatives of Scottish Social Work Advisory Panels/Committees**

**Note of meeting held on Friday 2 March 2001**

**Lothian Room, COSLA's Offices  
Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace  
EDINBURGH**

**PRESENT:** Ivan Cornford, Angus  
Karen Lax, Dumfries & Galloway  
Eric Archibald, Dumfries & Galloway  
Cllr Torn Smith, (*Chair*), East Dunbartonshire  
Anne Carswell, (*Facilitator*), East Dunbartonshire  
Paul MacArthur, East Dunbartonshire  
David Asquith, East Dunbartonshire  
Margaret Duncan, Fife  
Cllr Irene Connelly, Fife  
Cllr Jackie Burns, South Lanarkshire  
Liz Norton, South Lanarkshire  
David Wiseman, COSLA

**APOLOGIES:** Major Elson, Aberdeenshire  
Liam Byrne, Borders  
Peter Neely, East Ayrshire  
Pauline Hunt, Orkney Islands

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Councillor Tom Smith welcomed those present and explained the purpose of this Working Group:

**to prepare an action plan for a co-ordinated approach to the Scottish Parliament during its consideration of the Regulation of Care Bill with a view to ensuring that provision was made for the new Commission to have the support of local advisory panels/committees, similar to those existing at the moment.**

Tom explained why David Wiseman had been invited to attend this meeting: he was the author of a COSLA Briefing on the Regulation of Care Bill, part of which noted the advantages of continuing with Advisory Panels/Committees. Also, the meeting was being held in COSLA's offices purely because this seemed a handy location for representatives from throughout Scotland. Anne Carswell provided a verbal summary of the papers provided to everyone attending this meeting (copies are attached for individuals who were not able to attend.)

## **2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT DISCUSSION**

It was reported that COSLA had made a written submission to the Health and Community Care Committee. The submission supported the principle of having local advisory bodies, the exact number of which should be agreed later.

The report of the deliberations of the Committee had noted this issue without giving a firm commitment to preserving local advisory bodies. The issue was seen to be related to the question of the number of regional offices to be created, which itself was still under discussion.

It was noted that there was nothing in the Bill to prevent the establishment of local advisory bodies. However, it was agreed that it would be preferable to have the need for this reinforced in primary legislation. Indeed, in the light of the difficulties experienced by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, it may be that the number of members of the management board of the Commission will be fewer than originally envisaged, thus strengthening the case for making alternative, localised, arrangements for representation of relevant interests. The case should however continue to stress the importance of protecting the interests of vulnerable people, and promoting collaboration as a means of improving services.

Local negotiation will be needed to avoid conflict and duplication between Councils and the Commission in respect of issues such as development work, care standards, dealing with complaints, implementing 'Supporting People' and the Housing (Scotland) Bill when it becomes an Act.

Another argument in favour of local advisory bodies was the need to promote other policy priorities of the government such as active citizenship. There had been a discussion at the Health and Community Care Committee on the question of incorporating a statement of values and principles in the legislation. Opinion was against this at the moment, although such provisions had been made in other legislation.

It was reported that MSPs for Fife had met representatives of the local advisory body and had endorsed a number of issues raised. It was recognised that high-level governing bodies would tend not to be aware of developments at the grass-roots, where issues affected the daily lives of vulnerable people. Concerns had also been raised at the meeting about fees rising whilst it is suggested that the frequency of inspections will decrease.

### **3. ACTION PLAN**

It was noted that the Stage 1 debate was expected to take place on Wednesday 7 March, and the Stage 2 process could not begin until at least three weeks afterwards. However, it was essential to make an impact during the Stage 2 process and this left relatively little time to do whatever those present wished to do.

It was agreed to appoint a Sub-Group to prepare a proposed Amendment to the Bill. This Sub-Group would have to meet soon and report back to a further meeting of this Working Group before the end of March. Five individuals agreed to take part in the Sub-Group:

Councillor Tom Smith	East Dunbartonshire
Councillor Irene Connelly	Fife
Liz Norton	South Lanarkshire
David Wiseman	COSLA (for information )
Anne Carswell	East Dunbartonshire (to facilitate)

Both the Scottish Executive and individual MSPs could then be asked to support the Amendment. There will be a cut-off date for Amendments during Stage 2 and care should be taken to avoid missing the deadline.

It was agreed that a legal representative would be asked to attend both the meeting of the Sub- Group and the next meeting of this Working Group, to ensure that any proposed Amendment would be legally competent. David Wiseman advised that a legal representative from Fife was already well briefed about the Regulation of Care Bill. Councillor Irene Connelly from Fife will ask if this legal representative could accompany her to both the planned Sub-Group meeting and the next meeting of this Working Group.

The Sub-Group will also consider what should be included in a Briefing Note to explain to MSPs and others why we are so keen for Advisory Panels/Committees to continue and why we wish an amendment to be progressed. Also, it was agreed that this Briefing Note could be used as a basis for a Press Statement.

### **4. SUB-GROUP MEETING**

Sub-Group to meet on Friday 9 March from 2.00 pm. It is hoped that this will take place in Eastwood House, Eastwood Park, East Renfrewshire, as some of the members will be attending an earlier meeting at this location. Anne Carswell will confirm arrangements with members of the Sub-Group.

Summary of task:

- consider appropriate place for Amendment in Regulation of Care Bill;
- draft an Amendment;
- draft a Briefing Note, to explain why we are so keen for Advisory Panels/Committees to continue and why we wish an Amendment to be progressed.

## **5. NAME OF THIS WORKING GROUP**

It was agreed that the title of this Working Group will be simplified to: Local Dimension for Regulation Working Group.

## **6. NEXT MEETING OF LOCAL DIMENSION FOR REGULATION WORKING GROUP**

This Working Group to meet again:

**Date: Monday 26 March from 2.00 pm**  
**Location: Strathclyde Room, at COSLA's Office,  
Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh**

(a map is attached for individuals who were not able to attend this meeting).

For the next meeting all members should:

- ◆ consider the appropriate place in the Bill for the proposed Amendment;
- ◆ consider the best strategy for targeting, including
- ◆ who should receive the proposed Amendment and the Briefing Note;
- ◆ who might be prepared to progress the Amendment.
- ◆ consider who should receive the Press Statement.

Ideally, the papers produced by the Sub-Group will be circulated to members of this Working Group before the next meeting on 26/3. To facilitate this it would be helpful if members could provide Sheema Reid with details of the quickest way to send information e.g. e-mail address or fax. number. Sheema can be contacted

'phoning: 0141 762 5613 or  
emailing: sheema.reid@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

Also, members are asked to advise Sheema whether they intend to attend the next meeting and if they would like any particular items included on the Agenda.

**AGENDA**