

Changing Lives Practice Governance Group
Meeting held on 8 July 2008 in Conference Room 7, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Present:

Andrew Lowe (Chair)
Liz Bohan
Geraldine Doherty
Alexis Jay
Michelle Miller
Sandra Nutley
Ruth Stark
Bryan Williams

Forensic Accounting Services

Steve Renwick }
Eric Purves } for item 1

Scottish Government

Andy Bruce
Gwen Smith
Moira Hughes (Secretariat)

Welcome and Apologies

Andrew welcomed Steve and Eric from Forensic Accounting and thanked them for joining the meeting and introduced Gwen Smith who replaces Bill Ellis. On behalf of the Group Andrew congratulated Liz on her recent promotion.

Apologies were received from Alan Campbell and Peter Gabbitas

Minutes of Meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 May were approved.

Practice Governance Framework

2. Andrew introduced Steve and Eric from Forensic Accounting Services. Steve Renwick gave a powerpoint presentation which set out the context for the framework. Some of the challenges they faced from the outset were:

- Why do we need a framework
- How do we avoid being too prescriptive
- How do we avoid imposition
- How do we encourage local ownership and local adaptation

3. Steve explained that the document was in two parts –

1. the context and scene setting
2. self assessment matrix with 11 themes which were identified in discussion with colleagues

Steve informed the Group that the matrix could be detached from the document and used as a self-assessment tool within each local authority or agency and tailored to local practice.

4. The following points were made during the discussion that followed:

- Important issues re self-assessment model. View that there should be no more checklist type material. SWIA work with 32 local authorities and the framework

needs to fit with the SWIA model as this is what local authorities will be assessed against.

- The framework needs to fit with key processes e.g. EFQM model, as this is what local authorities are comfortable with.
- No reference to the R&D Strategy and not enough re evidence base. This needs to be addressed otherwise it will sit in the margins.
- Paper does not talk about social relationships with the client It is important to remember that the person who owns the assessment is the client.
- Agreement that there is a need for a Practice Governance Framework, but that the paper needs more work and input from the Group.
- Danger in only showing how the framework can be cross referenced to others; it needs to better inform the SWIA tool
- Framework has to have a dimension that speaks to practitioners.
- Need for a framework which is easily understood from Orkney to Edinburgh
- Produce a set of expectations which could be worked into the SWIA tool.

5. It was agreed that further work with Forensic Accounting Services should be commissioned in order to develop the framework further with the possibility of co-opting help and knowledge, particularly from SWIA and IRISS. The Group were clear that there was to be no further self-evaluation tool developed. Alexis and Brian stated that they would be happy to be involved in reviewing the next draft.

Action: Gwen and Andy to pull together all the areas discussed today and to be explicit about what is expected. Need to be clearer re original spec and direction. Group content for Andrew to have further discussions with Gwen and Andy ahead of further discussions with Forensic Accounting Services.

6. Both Steve and Eric thanked the Group for the stimulating debate and suggested that further comments could be e-mailed to them via Gwen.

Role of Chief Social Work Officer

7. Andrew informed the Group that he had attended a SOLACE meeting and they had given their endorsement of the paper as it stands. Andy reported that the internal mechanisms of Government meant that the paper needs to be circulated internally within Scottish Government then approved by the Cabinet Secretary, Fiona Hyslop and Cabinet before being issued for external consultation. The timeframe for consultation is –

- 3 weeks for internal consultation
- submission to Fiona Hyslop
- placed on cabinet agenda
- external consultation period of 12 weeks

8. Andy confirmed that the Group will have a role in the analysis of the contributions received from the consultation. It was also agreed that in the submission to Fiona Hyslop it would be spelled out that CoSLA, ADSW and SOLACE have already been consulted and given their approval to the document.

Action: Andy to take this forward.

Reserved Functions

9. Andrew explained that this paper was slightly more contentious.

10. Andy reported that Val Cox had looked at the paper and felt that as it stood it was too prescriptive in light of the Concordat Agreement. A lengthy discussion followed about how this had been championed by ADSW and was core to the 21st Century Social Work Review. Views expressed around the table were –

- that it wasn't about being prescriptive or self-protective but about accountability and responsibility, especially in areas where social workers' activities impacted on individuals' liberty
- Reference was made to the arguments for retaining reserved functions which were set out in the Milan Committee report.
- Important links to registration – if the registration agenda is to be effective, it is important to be clear about what various roles involve.

- Some of the core skills need to be protected
- Not about being prescriptive in how LAs deliver but about being clear about what only a social worker can do and why. The focus should be on the professional responsibilities of the social worker.
- Paper should allow LAs to look at the skill mix needed to deliver the service
- The vision is about professional identity
- Important links to the protection of title – if the ‘social worker’ title is protected, it should be clear what activities the title covers.

11. It was agreed that the paper needs some re-working and needs a sharper context piece.

Action: Andrew to redraft the paper in the light of his discussion with Val Cox and pass to Andy for SG comments.

Liz agreed to take the paper to her local practitioner forum and to feedback comments.

Paper will be removed from the Chief Social Work Officer paper.

Andrew will e-mail a report of his meeting with Val Cox.

Chairman’s Update

12. Andrew informed the meeting of his interview with Forensic Accounting Services and his dialogue re the practice governance framework. He also reported on his meetings with Gwen Smith and the various talks on Changing Lives with the Users & Carers Forum and the Learning Disability Service Users Forum. Brief mention was also made of the Changing Lives training taking place in Scottish Borders and the forthcoming meeting Andrew, Michelle and Peter have on 10 July with Catriona Renfrew.

National Practitioners’ Conference

13. Gwen gave a brief update on the National Practitioners’ Conference which took place on 25 June. The conference was well received with some very positive feedback, key comments made by practitioners were that they were looking for a fantastic framework to be produced; clarity of roles and the CSWO role to be defined.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 9 September from 10.00 until 1.00 in Conference Room 7, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh.