

**National Social Work Services Forum
Held on 14 June 2007
at
The Scottish Parliament**

Present:**Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years**

Sandy Cameron: Chairman, Parole Board, Chair of Changing Lives

Performance Improvement Group

Brian Corrigan: Social Care Association

David Crawford: Association of Directors of Social Work, Chair of Changing Lives Leadership & Management Group

Christine Hallett: University Principals/Universities Scotland

Peter Hay: Society of Personnel Directors

Alexis Jay: Social Work Inspection Agency

Andrew Lowe: Director of Social Work, Scottish Borders, Chair of Changing Lives Practice Governance Group

Gail McNamara: College of Occupational Therapists

Andy Miller, Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability

Sylvia Murray: CoSLA

Fiona Robertson, Communities Scotland

Ruth Stark: British Association of Social Workers

Stephen Smellie: UNISON

Pat Watters: President, CoSLA

Bryan Williams: Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education

David Wiseman: Care Commission

Scottish Executive Representatives

Val Cox: Children, Young People and Social Care (CYPSC): Workforce & Capacity

Valerie Macniven: Criminal Justice Directorate

Colin McKay: Public Service Reform

Catherine Rainey: CYPSC: Workforce & Capacity

John Storey, Health

Ben Coburn, CYPSC: Workforce & Capacity

Moira Hughes, CYPSC: Workforce & Capacity (Secretary)

Apologies

SOLACE

Janet Birks: Falkirk: co-chair of Changing Lives Service Development Group

Annie Gunner, Community Care Providers, Scotland

Len Hammersley, Association of Scotland's Colleges

Nigel Henderson: Penumbra, co-chair Changing Lives Service Development

Jane Kennedy: CoSLA

Ronnie O'Connor: Association of Directors of Education Scotland

Catriona Renfrew: Health Board Chief Executives

Carole Wilkinson: Scottish Social Services Council: Chair of Changing Lives Workforce Development Group

Tommy Williams: CoSLA

Adam Rennie, SE, Health (represented by John Storey)

Laura Dolan, SE, Housing

Welcome and Introductions

1. Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Minister said that he was delighted to have the opportunity to meet and speak with so many people representing such a diversity of agencies and interests all of which were vitally important to the delivery of social work services and the achievement of good outcomes for the people of Scotland. The Minister focused on two particular areas:

- The opportunity to set out his early thinking and to hear from members issues they thought might further inform his thinking;
- To consider how to make the best use of the Forum and the interests represented around the table in order to take forward the Changing Lives agenda.

2. The Minister confirmed this administration's commitment to the aspirations of Changing Lives and the direction of travel this maps out for those who deliver, and those who use services or support. .

3. The Minister also set out the high level strategic objectives this administration is committed to delivering on. These are to make Scotland's people:

- Wealthier & Fairer
- Healthier
- Safer & Stronger
- Smarter
- Greener

and spoke of the significant role social work services, and their partners, have to play in delivering all of these aspirations for Scotland's people. He acknowledged that a lot of excellent work is already being done which often goes unnoticed and expressed his pleasure at attending the Care Accolades Awards Ceremony earlier this month.

Introduction by Members

4. The Minister asked those around the table to introduce themselves and asked them to highlight any specific issues/priorities either in the context of Changing Lives or indeed wider social services issues. Comments included:

- General welcome for the Minister's commitment to the Changing Lives agenda;
- Recognition of profession and the importance of supporting staff and the service they deliver which also include the need to empower frontline staff and provide the necessary leadership and support. Messages from social care workforce are that they are not supported or valued by elected members at all levels;
- Need a 'just culture', supporting the workforce, balancing accountability and autonomy and for performance improvement and self evaluation to be embedded in the organisational culture;
- Practitioners do not yet own the Change agenda as a major piece of work or see themselves as helping to drive it forward;
- Deliver opportunities for lifelong learning to develop a workforce fit to deliver, social work often seen as the poor relative to other professions such as law, midwifery etc, HEIs can make a contribution;
- Issues around Pay and Grading structures, reward and recognition, career structures; need the right workforce strategies to allow development and create

the right environment, taking account of integrated service delivery and range of sectors engaged;

- Further work needed in relation to evidence-based research and practice to support agenda;
- Users/Carers to be seen as full citizens with the same rights and responsibilities and the need to ensure strong linkage with developments in the *Changing Lives* programme;
- The need to streamline bureaucracy, the view is that this hasn't been properly addressed therefore monitoring of this is needed.
- Development of a Leadership & Management framework which will cut across boundaries and recognition of the need to prepare organisations for leadership & management fit for the future;
- Criminal Justice issues – need for more joint training and joined up working with relevant partners, including issues around performance management.

Overview of priorities and direction for Changing Lives and social work services

5. The Minister thanked everyone for their contribution and identified a number of key themes:

- The importance of developing a workforce.. Building a confident and competent workforce which is well led and managed.
- Engaging with people, putting people at the heart in terms of design and delivery.
- Feeling that there hadn't been as much progress as hoped for in the programme. How do we increase the momentum and ensure engagement with the frontline and close the gap.
- Difficulties in rolling out Good/Best Practice and making people aware of the good work that is done – not just where things go wrong.

6. Comments that followed in the subsequent discussion included:

- The importance of Communication – especially in relation to disseminating key messages from Changing Lives from the top down – role for members of NSWSF as well as Membership organisations;
- More needs to be said about good practice – less emphasis on poor practice;
- Frontline staff need to feel confident that their voice is being heard;
- Need for joined up working across the Change Programmes with the Changing Lives Chairs Group overseeing the co-ordination of the agenda;
- Ensuring universal services do their bit before cases come to social work services is a huge challenge;
- Challenge for *Changing Lives* to stimulate progress and create an environment where change can take place;
- Gaining support and commitment of elected members. Possible scope for joint working with Minister. **Action Point: Pat Watters indicated there would be an opportunity to address CoSLA's Executive Group, once formed, on the *Changing Lives* agenda. An invitation would be sent to Val Cox**
- Doesn't matter if things are badged as *Changing Lives* as long as change is happening but need to be sure being communicated and the capacity for improvement is exploited.

Role of the NSWSF and Future Operation

7. The Minister was keen to ensure that the time of the Forum is well spent and acknowledged that the wider issues dealt with by the Forum cut across a number of portfolios. The view was expressed that the Forum should be used as a sounding board to test out ideas, initiatives etc relevant to wider issues in relation to social work. Space should also be created within the Forum to allow the Chairs of each of the 5 Change Programmes to give feedback/test out thinking on major pieces of work.

7. The Forum should also perform a leadership role, setting an example and members should communicate/engage with their constituencies to help further the *Changing Lives* programme and wider social work service issues.

7. Catherine Rainey indicated that a number of suggestions as to potential issues/themes which could usefully be discussed at future meetings had been received from some members. Happy to take receipt of any others.

Action Point: members to notify Catherine/Moira of any specific suggestions re future agenda discussions.

It was anticipated that the Forum would meet 3/4 times a year and the secretariat would look for a date in the Minister's calendar for some time in September .

Update on Changing Lives

8. The Changing Lives May update was seen as useful though it would be helpful to see timescales for future meetings included for each of the Change Programme.

Any Other Business

9. The minutes of the last Forum held on 6 February 2007 were agreed as an accurate record.

10. The Minister thanked all for attending and said that he felt it had been a useful meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

11. It was suggested that the next meeting take place in September. Date now arranged for 12 September..

12. Addendum to minutes attached at Annex A.

Addendum to National Social Work Services Forum held on 14 June 2007

Inputs from Changing Lives Chairs

13. Sandy Cameron, Chair of the Performance Improvement Group reported on the work of this group, stating that they saw their key role as helping to embed a culture of continuous improvement, with an emphasis on outcomes. The group had been exploring models of improvement, considering the earlier work done by the Forum on National Priorities and working with the Scottish Leadership Foundation to undertake some 'organisational raids' to learn from best practice elsewhere.

14. Bryan Williams, Executive Director of the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) reported that the new degree for social work was now broader and more collaborative with strong links to users and carers. Bryan stated that leadership and development is needed at all levels, especially the area of professional leadership. The development of an R&D strategy being taken forward in his sub-group would strengthen the evidence base for practice; support more integrated delivery; and support continuous learning and improvement.

15. David Crawford, Chair of Changing Lives Leadership & Management Group reported that it was this group's main task to create a framework to support and develop strong leadership and management and prepare organisations for leadership and management for the future. The Leadership & Management framework needs to be consistent with the other Change Programmes, sit within the Public Service Reform agenda and support joint working and integration.

16. Andrew Lowe, Chair of the Changing Lives Practice Governance Group described how the group had looked at the balance between autonomy and accountability for staff, including for other sectors. Andrew reported on the presentation at the Group's March meeting delivered by a representative from the Air Traffic Control sector and spoke about the ideas that had emerged from that with regard to the issue of Risk. The group had also taken receipt of a literature review on the different approaches to risk assessment across the 3 main areas of social work – criminal justice, community care and child protection and at different approaches in other mainly English-speaking countries. It explored variations in practice, in legislation, in language and in information-sharing between these three themes. The review was published on 8 August.

17. The Group is also looking at the future role of the Chief Social Work Officer and the work done on Citizen Leadership carried out by the User and Carer Forum, facilitated by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability. Andrew also reinforced Bryan Williams comments in respect of Research & Development (which is a sub-group of Practice Governance) about the importance of developing a learning culture in social work.