

**Minutes of Performance Improvement Group Meeting**  
**Held on 29 November 2006 in Conference Room A, St Andrew's House,**  
**Edinburgh**

Present:

Sandy Cameron, Chair  
Bernadette Docherty  
Annie Gunner  
Bernadette Malone  
Helen Chambers (for Part 1)  
Martin Crewe (for Part 1)  
Fiona Roberts (for Part 2)

**Scottish Executive**

Catherine Rainey  
Marie Swinney  
Bill Ellis  
Moira Hughes (Note Taker)

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Colin Mackenzie, Norma Graham and Gill Ottley.

**Welcome and Introductions**

1. Sandy Cameron welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered a particular welcome to Bernadette Malone who was attending the Group for the first time. He also extended a warm welcome to the two guest speakers; Helen Chambers and Martin Crewe; also to Fiona Roberts (SWIA) who was representing Gill Ottley. Sandy informed the meeting that Martin Narey had contacted him to say that unfortunately he would no longer be able to continue his membership of the Group. He would, however, continue to have an interest in the Group and it was agreed it would be helpful to have his continued input.

**Evaluation and Impact: Lessons from a funding model**

2. Helen Chambers from Lloyds TSB Trust gave a presentation to the Group on her work with Lloyds TSB Partnership Drugs Initiative (PDI). Helen set out the background, explained the Partnership's findings and offered her reflections on the work of the Initiative. The PDI funding programme has additional objectives which are more strategic which are about better integrated services, the promotion of the role of the voluntary sector in this particular area and about sustainability of the voluntary sector and influencing policy and practice. The partnership is between the Foundation, the Scottish Executive and discretionary funders. Its aim is to disperse money to the voluntary sector working with children and families at high risk from drug and alcohol related problems. It has a policy focus and an ethos of evaluation. Helen highlighted the key milestones of the Initiative:

By October 2006

- £10m distributed
- Over 100 projects funded

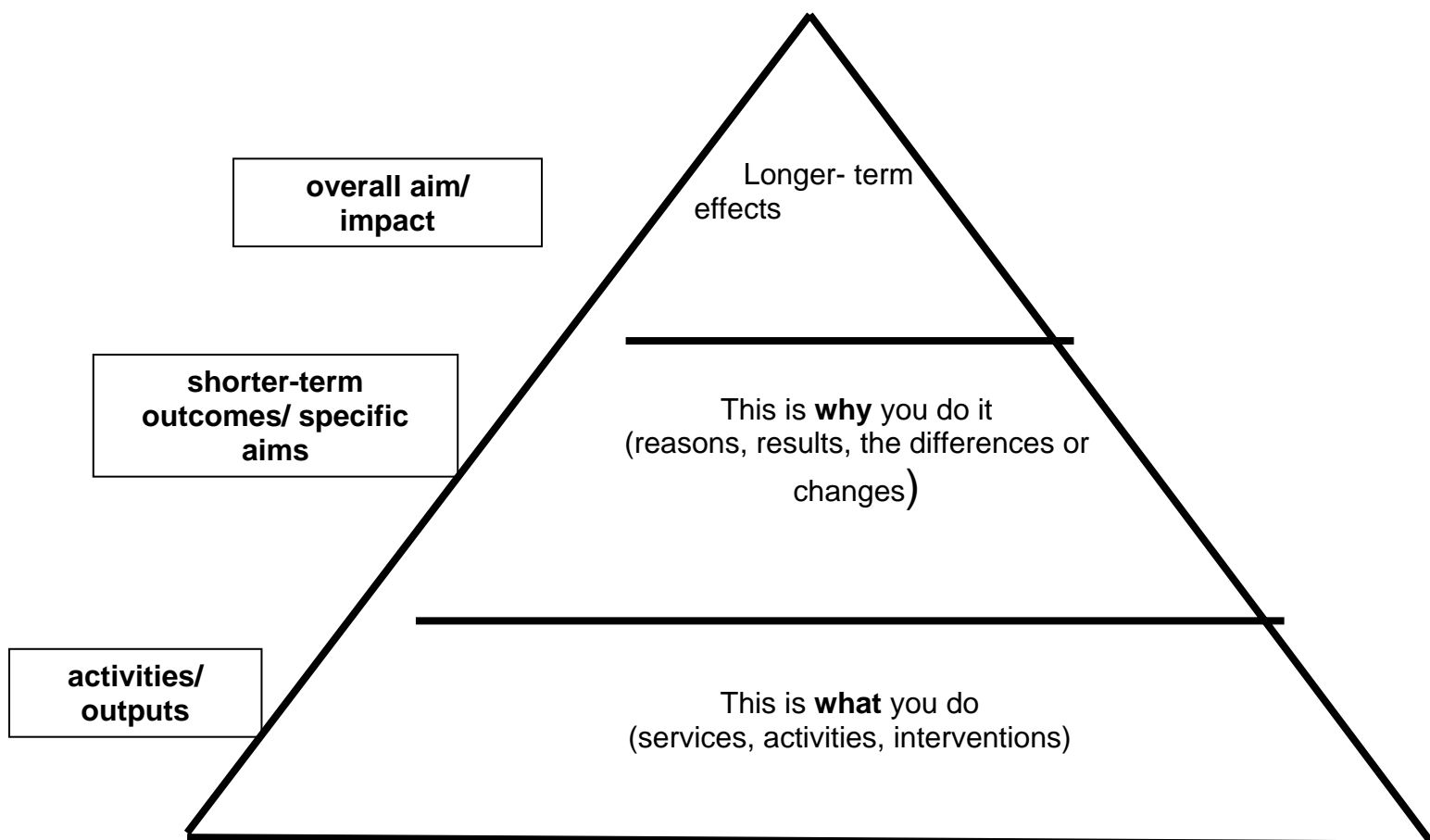
- One project has received over £1m worth of grants

3. Lloyds TSB, the Alcohol and Drug Action Teams along with providers work in partnership with the PDI supporting organisations to deliver, this support is offered pre-application, during application and post-application. Evaluation is core to the Partnership's philosophy. Helen explained the three levels of evaluation:

1. Project self-evaluation
2. External evaluation by the Scottish Executive
3. Whole model evaluation

4. Helen spoke about the need to move away from the language of outcomes and make it more logical. Also that people tend to collect lots of numbers that they do nothing with, and there is a need to develop skills in organisations in order to analyse information and report. PDI use a specific tool that makes this simple – the Weavers Triangle

## Weaver's Triangle



5. It is a logic model and is very useful in making people think in a very sequential, logical way.
6. Helen spoke about the “Light Bulb” moment when talking to projects, practitioners and providers about outcomes and impact. She spoke about the “So What” challenge and gave relevant examples of its use:
- “We ran groups of 20 individuals every Tuesday “ - “So What?”;
  - “10 young men between the ages of 14 and 25 came every week” – “So What?”;
  - “They did a lot of collaborative activities” – “So What?”

Helen explained that **the outcomes were** they learnt how to communicate without fighting, , they learned anger management skills, seen in less fights outside afterwards, and police reported less calls re nuisance in local population area. The “So What” Challenge is a very good way of getting people to think about the core of what they are doing.

Systems and inputs have often driven the view of reporting, but we should not ask a question unless we know what we are going to do with the answer. Evaluation should be for everyone, projects and commissioners. There needs to be significant training on outcomes, and accountability on impact rather than numbers. There needs to be thoughtful analysis of information and not ‘monitoring officers’. Evaluation and outcomes need to be embedded in the process.

7. Sandy thanked Helen for her presentation and invited questions/comments from the Group. The main points from the discussion that followed were:

- In many ways the Weavers Triangle is already being used by various organisations
- If PDI has 12 outcomes this suggests that these are not personalised. Helen stated that these are very broad themes e.g. increased engagement with education, training or employment; reduction in alcohol and drug abuse; reduction in engagement with the criminal justice system; and increase in parenting skills. May need to develop interim outcomes around these broad themes.
- It is a very flexible model which could be used to generate a strategic plan for an organisation or plan a day’s activity or an individual’s plan.
- It needs to be done ‘with people’ not ‘to people’
- Need to be careful not to put all of the onus on the service provider.
- Need to understand the context in which this is happening. At least 3 other major pieces of work happening – high level outcome agreements, work of the performance board; and also the work of the inspectors in terms of the inspection regimes which are all driving us towards the “So What” challenge. Work going on at a national level which are related to this includes:

- Performance Review Board
- Best Value Audit – focusing on Outcomes
- Efficiency and Productivity
- Community Care Joint Outcomes

- We should not under-estimate how complex this is. General model is certainly worthy of further discussion. Challenging model but think this is the right thing to do.

8. Sandy welcomed Martin Crewe, Assistant Director, Barnardo's Scotland to the meeting. Martin explained that as well as bringing his Barnardo's experience he also brought his experience as a Quality Assessor with Quality Scotland for the last 5 years. During this time he has done a lot of assessments with public bodies, in central government, local government and education, and although his research was based on the voluntary sector a lot of the messages are very similar.

9. Martin outlined the definitions of quality systems. A quality system is any one of a number of ways in which you try to implement quality management. A Quality Standard is something which is a defined model and trying to hit an agreed standard. Most systems are actually quality standards – e.g. Investors in People, Charter Mark and ISO. He explained that by contrast the Quality Improvement Framework is the model that takes an organisation past that and it is the route for continuous improvement. Within the voluntary sector there is really only 2 Quality Improvement Frameworks – i.e. the EFQM excellence model and The Big Picture.

10. Earlier this year Martin carried out research as part of his dissertation for an MSc in social services management at Stirling which was basically about the use and effectiveness of quality systems in the Scottish voluntary sector and started off with a literary survey. Martin conducted a postal questionnaire which went out to 103 organisations.

11. The research findings were shown in Martin's presentation. Some key findings were that the larger organisations make more use of quality systems. Martin found that Investors in People is by far the most commonly used standard 84% of respondents had considered using it and 49% said they had used it extensively. Second was EFQM the excellence model but interestingly about half of the organisations had considered it only two said they had used it extensively. Larger orgs more likely to have considered and used EFQM than smaller and medium sized ones. It does need experts to 'keep you right'. From those with direct experience of using EFQM people didn't like business language and jargon model, time taken to implement it, and the fact that there wasn't a voluntary sector version. However, a new model, rewritten for the voluntary sector is now available. The most popular reason for picking a particular quality system was on individual preference, either the Chief Executive or Senior Manager. The main planned benefit was around improved services and user satisfaction; although service users were initially neutral about its use.

12. Sandy thanked Martin for his presentation and invited questions/comments from the Group. Main points made were:

- Sandy mentioned that there had been research on quality assurance in local authorities and voluntary organisations under the previous performance improvement group, and Martin confirmed that he had seen and used it
- Observation that evidence generated by their quality system is largely ignored by other inspectorial, regulatory, monitoring compliance agency of any kind including

purchasers. So there comes a point when people think this is just another system among others.

- How do you make a difference simply at the frontline.
- EFQM can make a difference within an organisation but they require a lot of effort. EFQM is a good discipline for top management and the governance of the organisation but it has to be translated into something meaningful for frontline.

### **Feedback**

13. Sandy asked the Group to consider what we can take from this following both presentations. In discussion the following points were made:

- People feeling qualified out.
- Weavers triangle has potential for use with frontline staff
- It is possible to have excellent processes but poor outcomes
- Burdens are often about liability/accountability not about the quality
- SWIA's service users questionnaire asks relevant questions.
- Perhaps Commissioners should regulate this

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

14. The Minutes of the last meeting held on 23 October were agreed in principle and reference made to recent e-mails that some members of the Group understood that targets would be cross-referenced to key principles in Changing Lives. This wasn't recorded in the minutes.

15. Discussion followed about the timescale for the targets set. Sandy said that this would probably be a piece of work the Group would get to but that this was a changing landscape. The Group need to think about the right timescale for dealing with this. Catherine agreed that this was a changing landscape and asked what the Group would do with the mapping exercise. Catherine stated that indeed some of the targets are not actually owned by the Scottish Executive, e.g. Statutory Performance Indicators etc). Bill Ellis had produced a paper setting out targets that impact on social work. Copies of this paper were tabled.

16. Issues that arose from the discussion that followed were:

- Is there a role in having discussions with Audit Scotland.
- How do we embed the culture of Performance Improvement in social work at every level.
- What would we need to embed performance improvement as an ongoing process.
- Do we need to have an interface with the Performance Board to feed in this Group's concerns.
- At present there is not enough sense of how organisations are trying to embed continuous improvement in social work.

17. Catherine informed the Group that most of the Self-Assessment Returns from the Changing Lives Implementation Plan had been received and that the first cut analysis drawing out the National Priorities was underway. A summary of the findings from this would be delivered at the Change Programmes Chairs meeting on 18 December.

Following that a second cut would look at authorities/organisations key strengths across all of the service areas. It is hoped that information from this analysis will help to encourage people to be aware of what others across the country are doing and to flag up the potential for setting up some networks. It should be noted that work on this is at a very early stage.

18. It was agreed that it was important to continue to invite guest speakers along to join the Group. There was general agreement that one model may not be suitable for all, it may be that there are a range of tools and this is reflected back into how social workers are trained for the future and about how services are managed so that this becomes part of the routine.

19. Sandy referred to earlier work developed under the previous performance improvement group, and that the tool 'How Good is Our Team' (developed alongside the Children and Families Performance Improvement Framework). This had been tried by teams in a few local authorities and was now being applied across Children's services in Aberdeenshire. Sandy felt that feedback on this would be useful and the possibility of inviting the group from Aberdeenshire to a future meeting.

20. As highlighted earlier the Group need to be conscious of the 7/8 pieces of work being carried out simultaneously which are due to report around June/July next year. Important for the Performance Improvement Group to make the connections with the other relevant bodies leading this process e.g CoSLA, Audit Scotland etc. Catherine informed the Group that she was also taking forward a series of meetings with colleagues in the Health Department to discuss work being done on the various agendas which were fundamental to the Changing Lives programme to help ensure connections and alignment.

**Action: Sandy to write to these bodies and let them know about the work of this Group.**

21. Sandy mentioned there was interesting and challenging work by an organisation called Vanguard, written by John Seddon that was available on the web. Marie Swinney said that she would investigate if there were papers that would be helpful to circulate round the group. .

**Action: Marie to identify and circulate papers if appropriate.**

### **SWIA Survey**

22. Fiona Roberts from SWIA introduced a presentation on the SWIA survey and spoke about the SWIA questionnaire which had been circulated to the Group earlier. Fiona explained briefly the background and technical detail of the survey and that the survey was only one part of the performance inspection process. It was important to note that the results from this exercise were not used in isolation other supporting evidence would also be a factor. To date ten local authorities have been surveyed with 500 questionnaires sent out to service users across five service areas:

- learning disability
- older people
- mental health
- substance misuse; and
- physical and sensory impairment

23. The Group were informed that the last three questions in the questionnaire specifically related to outcomes. This measures people's expectations which may differ between different groups and between different authorities but it is measuring their personal view of services. This is not a benchmark it is people's expectations and perceptions. It was agreed that this was a good first attempt for SWIA but there was a view by a few members of the Group that the questions were very disability related and did not focus on some of the other aspects of social work that is about authority and control and the role that social work has in relation to that. Fiona explained that SWIA are only sending out one questionnaire to cover everyone and therefore have had to keep it fairly general.

24. Sandy raised that there had been work on obtaining user views under the previous performance improvement group using ACAPI (audio computer assisted personalised interviewing). Marie explained that this was being investigated initially for children's views. It used on screen questions combined with a voice reading the text and it could be made accessible for children using graphics etc, but could also be developed for other user groups. Nick Gornall (previously from Dartington research) had given a presentation demonstrating a draft online questionnaire around the vision for children (safe, nurtured etc). It could provide individual or aggregate information at a specific point and changes over time. This work has been passed to Boyd McAdam in the Executive's Youth Justice Team to be taken forward as part of the GIRFEC work. **Action: Marie agreed to speak with Boyd about progress and the possibility of having a presentation of this at a future Group meeting.**

### **Targets Paper**

25. Bill spoke to his paper which was circulated earlier. Bill explained the difficulty in pulling out the targets across the Scottish Executive Departments. Bill spoke about the key things offered were very much recognising that they are moving away from the old targets and standards and in terms of priorities moving away from processing and moving towards outcomes. Public Service Review and the many different pieces of work being done and the need to link in to that. Other relates areas are –

Review of Outcomes  
Review of Inspection  
Review of Data Collection

26. There followed a brief discussion which raised the following points:-

- Would colleagues in the field identify with these targets?
- Acknowledgment that the focus of the paper was on targets rather than on data collection
- SWIA has no standard list that they check against although the same ones do come up
- Is this related to what individual want or are they political targets

27. Sandy thanked Bill for carrying out this exercise. The view was expressed that there needs to be a mechanism that adds to this paper and helpful to have a map of all the activity that is going on.

28. Marie gave a brief update on the discussions that took place at the two day meeting of the Outcomes Group working on joint outcomes for community care. Marie explained that the proceedings of the event were being captured by video etc and along with the consultation exercise were due to be put on the web. The website address had not yet been made available so Marie offered to ensure that the group were included in the consultation which had a tight timetable.

**Action: It was agreed that Marie would pass the membership details of this Group on to the organisers of the Outcomes Group.**

#### **Functioning of the Group**

29. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Group would meet for a full day bi-monthly from 10:30 until 4.00. There would be the possibility of Zoe van Zwanenberg, Director of the Scottish Leadership Foundation, arranging visits for the Group to other organisations.

30. Sandy agreed that it would be helpful to have a written remit for the Group. It was agreed that Sandy and SE colleagues would formulate this.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

**12 February 10:30 until 4:00, conference room E, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh.**