

Changing Lives Practice Governance
Meeting held on 15 June 2007
In Conference Room 8, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Present:

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

Scottish Executive
Bill Ellis
Catherine Rainey
Moirra Hughes (Note Taker)

Apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Campbell, Peter Gabbitas and Sandra Nutley.

Minutes of Meeting and Matters Arising

1. The minutes of the last meeting held on 27 March 2007 were agreed subject to an amendment at paragraph 8; the first sentence should read:

“Evidence from the inspections showed that the CSWO was no less than second tier in social work structure within the Council.”

Role of Chief Social Work Officer

2. Andrew opened the discussion on this item and said that he was grateful to Alexis, Bryan and Bill for their paper and the work carried out following their earlier discussions. He saw this as a key piece of work which required in-depth consideration. Andrew thought it would be helpful to circulate widely the points arising from our discussions and explore the possibility of an event later this year engaging with key interests.

3. Bryan spoke to the paper and explained that they had reviewed all the background information on the CSWO. It distilled the key issues for consideration and attempted to move the discussion on. The paper was predicated on 2 basic assumptions which the Group agreed as the starting point:

- that there will be a CSWO, and
- that the role needs to be defined in guidance rather than in legislation.

4. Alexis suggested guidance should define minimum tier and the right of access. There was brief discussion of where the role should fit within the structure in relation to CHCPs and the need for further discussion in relation to Community Justice Authorities. All agreed that the CSWO should not be buried within organisations and that the CSWO should have access to influence at the appropriate level. In discussion the following points were made:

- Michelle Miller reported that she had taken over the role of CSWO on her move to the City of Edinburgh Council and spoke about the structure adopted by Edinburgh. Michelle offered to provide examples of where the role sits in relation to the corporate team. **Action: Michelle to provide examples;**
- Both Perth & Kinross and West Lothian have worked through the issues and papers are available;
- Important to explore the issue of how the role is managed and monitored;
- Accountability and reporting perhaps more important than function and would want to make sure could be accommodated in any structure or future organisational changes;
- Issues about commitment to the role and the feeling around the table that the CSWO should sit at the corporate table, also the importance of this in relation to contributing to corporate issues such as managing risk and setting budget priorities and how this links to the wider agenda of public service reform ;
- The third bullet point in the paper should say something about whether guidance should specify who appoints the CSWO and whether or not the appointment panel/chief executive has access to professional advice on appointment;
- No role at present for SSSC. No requirement for the role to be registered though if using the title of social work officer there would be an expectation that they would have to be registered;
- Important for CSWO not to be seen as a ‘flag waver’ with no accountability. Recognition from CSWO that there are pressures on Chief Executives. Need to be aware of the practicalities of delivery of services;
- Need to consider where the professional lead, advice and guidance for social work resides in relation to the Scottish Executive, SWIA, any new structure ;
- CSWOs’ legislative role in relation to complex issues around commissioned services should be highlighted;
- Need to be realistic about the role of the CSWO. What else fits around the role, who needs rights of access to the CSWO, and what rights of access to others does the CSWO need

5. In discussion the role of the CSWO was seen as having three key elements:

- setting standards and challenging poor practice – with link to and access for practitioners
- helping shape services, values and contributing to corporate thinking and operations;
- developing professional leadership and promoting social responsibility (setting a climate/ethos within the profession and across the local authority as we’ll as within the role of the CSWO itself)

6. It was recognised all of this needs to align with any Governance Framework – and indeed other frameworks in development – especially that on Leadership and Management. It was agreed that half a dozen key points would be drawn up and circulated as a Key Principles Paper for the next meeting. It was noted that it should avoid being prescriptive wherever

possible. This paper could form the basis of a brief discussion paper for a half-day event on the role of the CSWO. It was proposed this event would involve other parties and professionals from other sectors, as well as CSWOs.

Action: Catherine/Bill/Alexis and Andrew to pull together a paper from today's discussion.

7. It would be helpful to visit one or two Chief Executives and Directors of Social Work to see how they have worked through some of the issues.

Action: Alexis to arrange for one or two of the Group to carry out visits during the course of the summer.

WORKPLAN

8. It was agreed that the plan should be populated with cross-cutting issues and some amendments to the timelines. Agreed there should be reference to reserved function work (as yet to be tackled) in the context of the CSWO work. Once amended it was agreed the draft should be circulated to other Change Programmes and Local Practitioner Forums. Other issues that were raised in discussion were:

- CJSW integrity needs to be protected
- Under the Practice Governance theme it was agreed that the working definitions be put on the web
- Practice Governance Framework needs further work populated from the earlier work from Phil Cropper's paper and points raised today
- There was reference to the Unison paper submitted to the Review, under Consultation and Supervision.

Action: Bill to issue a draft workplan. Catherine/Bill to look at drawing out the key issue that need to be covered in the development of a Governance Framework. .

CITIZEN LEADERSHIP

9. The Group discussed briefly the Citizen Leadership paper currently out for consultation which includes a foreword from Andrew. Andrew informed the Group that responses received to date had been very constructive and drew the Group's attention to the recent letter he had received from Bernadette Docherty. The point was made about making the document more relevant to the users of compulsory / coercive services.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

10. Bryan gave an update on the three work groups –

Infrastructure
Capacity Building
Embedding use of research in practice.

11. Bryan spoke about how Children 1st were modelling a good way of building research into case work and how they had been supported at their recent in-house event in relation to practitioner research. Reference was made to the R&D UK Co-ordination of issues and the SISWE/SE UK Group and how this would capitalise on developments in each of the four countries. In terms of Capacity Building work was ongoing to encourage people to do more thinking in terms of research and development. Capturing all the information from the Leading to Deliver Projects, Changing Lives Assessment returns and the work of each of the

Change Programmes was a key issue. There is a real need for the Chairs Group to look at how we are gathering and using evidence.

Action: Bryan agreed to put this on the agenda for the next Chairs Group.

CHAIR'S REPORT

12. Andrew gave a brief update and reported that:

- Both he and Liz had attended the recent User/Carer Forum in Edinburgh and said that it had been a good meeting and explained how they had developed a presentation based on Who Wants to be a Millionaire;
- Andrew delivered a talk to management students at Stirling University;
- Local Practitioner Forum launched in Scottish Borders;
- Andrew, Bill, Catherine and Bryan would be attending the National Practitioner Forum which takes place on 20 June;
- Andrew will be meeting with Fiona Hyslop on 26 June;
- Andrew had attended the National Social Work Services Forum at the Scottish Parliament on 14 June Chaired by Adam Ingram, Minister for Early Years and Children;
- Ruth will be attending the local practitioner forum in Dumfries in August.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13. There was discussion of Professional Rights paper previously circulated by Ruth. Discussion continued on the accountable/autonomous issues in relation to this paper and links to the ethical governance issue. There was an option to open up the discussion on this across the other Change Programmes.

Action: Ruth agreed to provide a draft notice after which Moira would canvass the other Change Programmes to gauge interest in attending a meeting on this theme.

14. Andrew updated the group on a discussion he had with Lord Laming recently and explained that he had expressed interest in seeing the paper on the CSWO. The Group were in agreement that he should see the paper once further developed and that it would be helpful to open this out for further debate.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The date of the next Practice Governance Group is **4 September 2007 from 10.00a.m-1.00 p.m. in Victoria Quay, Edinburgh.**