

Changing Lives Practice Governance Group
Meeting held on 9 September 2008, Conference Room 7, Victoria Quay

Present:

Andrew Lowe (Chair)
Geraldine Doherty
Michelle Miller
Sandra Nutley
Ruth Stark
Bryan Williams
Peter Gabbitas

Scottish Government

Andy Bruce
Gwen Smith
Sandra Murray (Secretariat)

Apologies

Liz Bohan
Alexis Jay
Alan Campbell

Welcome and Apologies

1. Andrew welcomed everyone to the meeting

Minutes of Meeting

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the following change:
 - Geraldine Doherty attended the meeting but was omitted from the minutes.

All action points from the previous meeting had been taken forward.

Chair's Update

3. Andrew reported that since the last meeting:
 - He attended a meeting hosted by Peter Gabbitas and Michelle Miller concerning the Chief Social Work Officer paper. Also in attendance were Catriona Renfrew, two Community Health Partnership Chairs and a third colleague from Highland Region, by video conference. This was a positive meeting where some previous sensitivity around professional leadership and operational management were resolved. By the end of the meeting all were content with the proposals included in the draft guidance on the role of the CSWO.

- Andrew had been asked to speak at the Community Health Partnership Conference. He was also going to speak at the ADSW, National Practitioner's Conference on 11 September.
- Following the last meeting of the Practice Governance Group Andrew met with Val Cox to discuss issues around the Reserved Functions of a Social Worker, in order to agree a way forward for the paper. Andrew then met with Alan Baird to discuss rewriting the Reserved Functions paper in light of the meeting with Val Cox.
- Andrew met with ADSW/CSWO'S in Stirling where he had a useful discussion with Bernadette Doherty regarding the challenges/issues with the Reserved Functions paper.
- Andrew has agreed to speak at a Citizen Leadership meeting for the East Lothian/Midlothian area.

Role of the Chief Social Work Officer Update Paper

4. Andrew updated the meeting on the current position of the "Guidance on the Role of the Chief Social Work Officer" paper.
5. Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has approved the draft guidance and circulated it to Cabinet colleagues with portfolio interests. Helpful comments have been received from the Cabinet Secretaries for Finance and Sustainable Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Justice, supporting the guidance and offering suggestions on how it might be strengthened further. These changes have been made to the paper and we expect to receive Cabinet approval to proceed with a 12 week formal consultation by 10 September 2008. It will then be circulated to stakeholders and put on the Scottish Government website. A list of the stakeholders was circulated at the meeting where appropriate amendments/additions were made.
6. It was agreed that the covering letter accompanying the guidance should stress the significant consultation work with key stakeholders that had already taken place.
7. Andrew and Andy were thanked for their work on this paper.

Reserved Functions Update Paper

8. Andy confirmed that the Scottish Government was committed to producing a revised paper on reserved functions that built on the discussion between Andrew and Val Cox. Such a paper would follow the same process of consultation that had been undertaken with the CSWO paper. A discussion followed on the draft paper produced by Andrew during which several points were made:

- It was noted that the revised draft of the Reserved Functions paper had been repositioned to appear less protectionist and to stress the important contribution that social work – in partnership with other agencies - had to make to delivering good outcomes for Scotland.
- There was an agreement that, whilst the paper incorporates the essential building blocks needed to reflect the revised structure, further work was required to develop the flow of the paper. In particular, the paragraphs referring to Citizen Leadership and Principles and Standards should be shortened and the bullet points added as an Appendix.
- The paper should be made clear that it is concerned with local authorities' exercise of their statutory duties.
- A key issue for the paper was in relation to the issue of delegation in relation to reserved functions. Whilst it might be possible for functions to be delegated to non-social workers, it was important to be clear that, in these circumstances, accountability remained with the social workers and could not be delegated. There should be a specific note in each section of the paper to stress this point.
- Further work was required on the list of reserved functions, aiming to achieve the same degree of sharpness and clarity that was apparent with the function relating to mental health. Most of the functions currently listed related to situations where social workers were involved, along with other agencies, in taking difficult decisions relating to the deprivation of liberty. It is important for the agreed list of reserved functions to articulate the essence of the social worker's role in these situations.
- It was agreed to find a replacement phrase for 'new social work'.

Action - Andy to redraft the paper in light of these comments for consideration at the next meeting.

Practice Governance Framework for Social Work Services

9. There was a general discussion around the need for this framework. It was agreed that this framework would bring together a range of tools and materials that are already in existence in order to assist social work organisations to manage performance and define accountability. Accordingly, the framework is expected to be a fairly short, succinct document.

Action – Andy to re-circulate the revised remit for further comments before re-commissioning Forensic Consulting, stressing the need to engage key members of the group at an early stage.

A.O.B

10. No other business was reported and Andrew brought the meeting to a close.

Date of next meeting

4 November 2008, 10.00 in Conference Room 7, Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh.