

REPORT ON: Local Practitioner Forums- local & national networks of engagement, communication & influence.

REPORT TO: LPFs; ADSW Executive; ADSW Professional Development Managers; Scottish Government; ADSW membership

DATE: 5th October; 2008

PREPARED BY: Wendy Harrington; Professional Development Manager; ADSW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to detail, and gain agreement on, the local and national communication channels that require to be established to enable LPFs to contribute consistently and effectively to local and national policy agendas.

2. ACTION REQUIRED

2.1 For consultation/ amendment.

3. BASIS OF REPORT

3.1 The Recommendations contained within this report have taken account of information provided by LPFs at local level and at the National LPF meeting; of the views of ADSW Executive, Professional Development Managers & of Scottish Government.

The report incorporates recommendations from previous ADSW Executive Committee/ Guidance/ Position Statement reports (e.g. 'Local Practitioner Forums' July 08; 'Guidance on the Role and Function of Geographical Grouping Meetings' Sept 08).

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The establishment of LPFs was proposed in the 2006 'Changing Lives' report from the 21st Century review of Social Work as a means of actively involving front line social work service professionals in implementing the action plan for change.

4.2 Despite central government support, many areas across Scotland had been unable to establish, or sustain the LPF development by 2008. A reason cited by local practitioners for this difficulty was a lack of established mechanisms that would allow LPFs to influence local and national agendas.

4.3 In 2008, ADSW assumed professional leadership for the LPF agenda, in partnership with Scottish Government. The association, working through the President and Professional Development Managers, is committed to supporting and enabling LPFs.

4.4 ADSW has also supported the re-establishment of ADSW Regional Grouping meetings for senior managers. These meetings will progress the recommendations from the 'Changing Lives' workgroups.

4.5 At the first national LPF Chair's meeting in September 2008, held jointly with Scottish Government and chaired by the President of ADSW, it was agreed that the arrangement for communication and the sharing of information between levels of staff and organisations needs to be

developed and defined, thereby supporting LPFs to make a more significant contribution to progressing Changing Lives.

5. PROPOSED COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION NETWORKS

(LOCAL)

5.1 Each local area will be asked by ADSW to identify a lead officer from their social work service management team to link with the LPF. Part of the lead officer role will be to ensure local arrangements exist for the sharing of information and ideas between the LPF and management.

5.2 It is recommended by ADSW that this link officer role is undertaken by a senior manager who attends the ADSW Regional Grouping meeting. This will allow information to be shared between the groups and also assist in identifying common issues and shared solutions across the region.

5.3 LPFs will offer support to areas requiring assistance with the setting up/ running of their group. This may take the form of an observational visit. Contact details for each area, along with information on LPF developments, will continue to be collated on the Scottish Government website. Each LPF area is responsible for advising the Scottish Government of any changes.

(NATIONAL)

5.4 The President of the Directors of Social Work will meet with the chairs and vice chairs of the LPFs at least bi-annually, along with the Scottish Government and the ADSW managers. This 'National LPF meeting' will allow for discussion of shared priority policy agendas to take place, of the functioning and effectiveness of the LPFs and of any other relevant matter.

5.5 There will be at least one senior manager on each ADSW geographic area grouping who will also sit on the ADSW Executive Committee in order that information can be shared.

5.6 Information on the annual priority work plans for the ADSW Standing Committees will be shared with the chairs of LPFs by Wendy Harrington, ADSW lead manager for LPFs. LPFs may assist with the progress of these plans.

5.7 ADSW Standing Committees will advise LPFs, through the ADSW office, of consultation documents, allowing responses to be informed by the frontline practitioner view.

5.8 Each LPF meeting will provide Wendy Harrington, Professional Development Manager, ADSW wendy.harrington@adsw.org.uk with bullet points of key agenda items in order that shared priority issues across Scotland can be identified and incorporated into national work plans.

5.9 The President of ADSW will identify and meet with key partners across the sector who may be invited to contribute to the work of LPFs and ADSW Regional meetings.