

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES STRATEGIC FORUM

Note of Meeting

Tuesday 13 December 2016, St Andrew's House

Attendees

Mark McDonald (Chair)	Minister for Childcare and Early Years
Alan Baird	Chief Social Work Adviser, SG
Phillip Gillespie	Scottish Social Services Council
Donald Macaskill	Scottish Care
Jane Devine	Social Work Scotland
Annie Gunner Logan	CCPS
Trisha Hall	SASW
Bob Parry	IRISS
Trish McCulloch	HEI Representative (Dundee University)
Claire Lightowler	Centre for youth and Criminal Justice
Stephen Smellie	Unison
Jacqui Lunday Johnstone	Chief Health Professions Officer, SG
Jane Johnstone	Professional Social Work Adviser, SG
Jamie MacDougall	Deputy Director for Care, Support and Rights Division
Christina Naismith	Lead of Strategic Commissioning – Integration, SG
Jane Mackenzie	OCSWA, SG
Sarah Gledhill	OCSWA, SG
Guest Presenters	
Neil Macleod	SSSC
Sarah Mitchell	Allied Health Professionals Unit, SG / NHS Lanarkshire
Susan Kelso	Allied Health Professionals Unit, SG
Ian Coldwell	Pagoda PR
Lynne Ziarelli	Pagoda PR
Secretariat	
Shona MacPherson	OCSWA, SG
Francois Roos	OCSWA, SG
Apologies	
Shirley Rogers	Director, Health Workforce SG
Fiona McQueen	Chief Nursing Officer, SG
Helen Happer	Care inspectorate
Anna Fowlie	SSSC
Elaine Torrance	Social Work Scotland
Karyn McCluskey	Community Justice Scotland
Olivia McLeod	Director Children & Families, SG

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting including Ian Coldwell and Lynne Ziarelli from Pagoda PR, Susan Kelso and Sarah Mitchell from the Scottish Government's Allied Health Professionals Unit and Neil Macleod who would all be presenting items on the Agenda. He also welcomed Claire Lightowler to the Forum

who has taken over as a new member to be action-strand lead for the Improving Use of Evidence strand.

2. Note of last meeting - 27 September 2016

The note had been previously circulated for comment so the note was agreed meeting agreed - all actions had either being actioned or were on the agenda.

SPECIFIC WORK STRANDS

3. Promoting Public Understanding

Scottish Social Services Awards

Jane Devine, as action-strand lead for Public Understanding, introduced the item and the presenters from Pagoda PR – the company which had won the tender to project manage and administer the Awards on behalf of the Forum.

Ian Coldwell and Lynne Ziarelli from Pagoda PR gave a presentation outlining progress with the development of the Awards application website and related promotional and delivery material. Key points included:

- The material reflects the Forum's thinking about the awards being about valuing the workforce and promoting positive examples and good practice from across the sector.
- The application process will be launched on 16 January 2016 and close on 28 February 2017, with judging panels convening in March 2017. Shortlisted entries will be asked to create a short film to tell their story
- A communication note would be circulated after the meeting for use by Forum members on their own websites. It would include links to the holding page on the awards websites where people can register for updates. The web domain name has been secured as www.sssa.scot and twitter handle as @SSSAwards which can be used with immediate effect.
- The launch-plan includes a press release and possible blog from the Minister. This will be circulated to Forum members who can use on their own websites to promote the awards and encourage nominations.

Shona McPherson then noted that each actionstrand would convene its own judging panel to shortlist the applications, chaired by the relevant actionstrand lead. Dates had been arranged and Forum members would be asked to let OCSWA of their availability for and, interest in being on one of the shortlisting panels.

Discussion points:

- The Minister asked what measures were in place to counter any potential negative perception of yet another public sector awards event. Pagoda PR noted that these awards have particularly innovative categories which will make them different from other awards. A key factor is also that these awards will be about sharing and learning from the good practice which will be highlighted before and after the Awards event itself.
- Donald Macaskill noted that the Scottish Care Awards had made use of videos for some of their categories and that it was received very successfully. He noted

that such an exercise is expensive and might deter people from entering. Jane Devine said that finalists will be encouraged to make the recordings themselves on their phones or tablets which can then be edited professionally before the awards.

- The Minister suggested that Scotland's colleges could be approached to see if media students could be involved? This might prove a less expensive option than engaging professional media companies.
- Pagoda PR agreed that this could be pursued. They also noted that entrants would be encouraged to submit other media also, such as photographs and sound-bites and that the final film should be in a format to be shared on social media, but not have an overproduced feel. The Minister suggested that the option of a dedicated YouTube channel be explored.
- Bob Parry noted that IRISS are attending a conference in March with Scottish colleges so could explore this link further
- Jane Johnstone noted that people using services should also be encouraged to nominate which will emphasises the impact social work services on real people.

ACTION

- **OCSWA to send communications note on the awards to Forum members for use in publicising in advance of the launch date.**
- **Forum members to advise of communications contacts so material can be disseminated direct to them.**
- **OCSWA to circulate dates of Shortlisting Judging Panels seeking volunteers for involvement.**

Public Understanding Research – presentation on initial findings

Trish McCulloch gave a presentation on the initial findings from the research project on "*What the public think about Scottish social services and why*". This research was commissioned earlier this year and is one of the actions under the public understanding strand in the Strategy. Initial findings are based on the results from an online survey of 2,500 participants. The researchers are now undertaking a number of Focus Groups to get more qualitative data in order to better understand the reasons behind the survey results.

Discussion points:

- Annie Gunner Logan noted that the initial findings suggested an invisibility of the work of the voluntary sector, particularly regarding adult community care, learning disability etc. She suggested this might be because the voluntary sector does not necessarily describe itself as a provider of social services.
- Jane Devine noted that prior to the research there was an assumption that social services attracted negative opinions particularly in the media - so it's useful to see these findings.
- The Minister asked if it was possible to analyse which media outlets are accessed by the participants and how those perceptions are influenced by particular publications? Trish McCulloch confirmed that these factors will be looked at as part of the final findings.
- The Minister noted that good perceptions of social services appears to relate directly to people using services, whereas negative perceptions relate mostly to

people haven't engaged with these services. He also asked if a geographical breakdown was possible?

- Trish McCulloch confirmed a geographic analysis was possible. She also noted that the first 2 focus groups comprised people who use services. The remaining two focus groups are not "self-selecting" and may attract a different set of respondents - so a more complex set of messages can be expected.
- Claire Lightowler noted it would be interesting to see what the data reveals regarding the importance of 'shame' as a factor in social services. Trish noted that more data will be available on this after the next round of focus groups.
- Donald Macaskill noted a recent Independent Age report on difficult conversations and how the findings are to be taken forward in relation to death bereavement. He noted it would be interesting to see an age breakdown of the survey findings - and how this influences perceptions of social services. Trish noted they will try to explore this more through focus groups.
- Trish also noted that perceptions can fluctuate over time and through a person's lifespan.

ACTION

- **Final report to be brought back to a future Forum meeting.**

4. Supporting the Workforce

SSSC – update on work to develop Workforce Skills Report – Paper 1

Neil Macleod, SSSC, provided an update on progress with development of the SSSC's Workforce Skills Report which is due to be finalised by March 2017. The findings to date are based on feedback from over 750 participants - key themes highlighted include leadership, access to technology and access to training and qualifications.

Discussion points:

- Donald Macaskill noted that Scottish Care members are grateful to have been included in this work. He noted that the points about the ethical challenges of working in care seems to conflict with other research undertaken by Scottish Care. He also observed that learning and development budgets are being used to ensure that learning required for registration requirements is delivered but that this may impact on resources for other kinds of training given budget constraints
- Annie Gunner Logan referred to the section on page 5 about "work ethic" and sought clarification on what additional skills, capabilities and work ethic means for job readiness and job understanding. Neil noted there was no further information on this particular point which was based on a single remark by a respondent to the survey. He will review how to make sure that the report makes clear when topics covered are general points and when they arise from smaller groups or even sole individuals.
- Trisha Hall noted that SASW members have spoken about the difficulties in keeping up skills and qualifications, for example the growing use of hot-desking can affect people's abilities to find the space for reflective practice. They are also hearing examples of a perceived disconnect between university teaching and the reality of practice.

ACTION

- **Final report to be brought back to a future Forum meeting.**
Review of Social Work Education - verbal update

Phillip Gillespie provide a verbal update on the main outcomes from phase 2 of the Review of Social Work Education. The main findings from the Review Group, co-chaired by Trish McCulloch and Susan Taylor, is that social work education is fit for purpose but there are challenges particularly around resources and practice placements. The report sets out a number of recommendations some of which the SSSC will begin work on, others will need to go to Ministers and others for wider consideration.

Discussion points:

- Alan Baird noted the need for clarity of timings for the next phase of the review particularly in light of the linked commitment in the Programme for Government.
- Trish McCulloch noted that a key message had been the need for a co-owned approach to professional learning and that this starts at the qualification stage. The success of a supported year rests also on strengthening learning in the workplace – there is an opportunity for the Forum to think about how this can be collectively supported.
- Donald Macaskill noted that a timeframe leading into 2018 might cause a decline in the energy developed at the events to discuss the review. He asked if there was an opportunity for the timeframe to be brought forward.
- The Minister suggested SSSC/OCSWA could take a look at the timescales involved and consider whether there were options to bring some elements forward.

ACTION

- **SSSC/OCSWA to look at timescales for the next stages of the Review and provide an update on this for the next Forum meeting.**

Allied Health and Independent Living Improvement Programme – Paper 2

Jacqui Lunday Johnstone introduced the presentation, noting the synergies between the AHILP and the aims of the Strategy given its focus on wellbeing, enablement, partnerships with other agencies and maximising the potential of the workforce. Susan Kelso and Sarah Mitchell then updated the Forum on the Allied Health and Independent Living Improvement Programme which is due to be launched in early Spring 2017.

Discussion points:

- Annie Gunner Logan noted the issues with eligibility criteria and noted the useful evidence from the presentation around early intervention and long term cost savings.
- Donald Macaskill noted the AHILP was of fundamental importance to older people. He noted that current eligibility criteria in its current form is working in a counter preventative manner. A recent independent study of home care showed that a lack of intervention leads to increased need and cost. He emphasised the need to link with the earlier Workforce Skills Report as often this support is coming in too late in a persons lifespan.

- Jane Devine noted there appears to be a growing issue around eligibility criteria and SDS, perhaps working counter to the prevention agenda.
- Christina Naysmith noted that a link should be made with the wider AHP workforce, not just those working in social work, for example prevention and enablement in hospitals.
- The Minister noted that Housing departments should also be brought into the conversation - particular attention to be given on how people are housed appropriately.

5. Understanding Service Quality and Performance

Practitioner Engagement Events – Paper 3 draft Summary Report

Shona MacPherson presented a draft report of the frontline practitioner engagement events facilitated by OCSWA during 2016, including summaries of the discussions at the events. She noted that OCSWA will be undertaking a similar series of engagement events in 2017 and invited the Forum to take the opportunity to link up with OCSWA – both in terms of looking for opportunities to influence and contribute to the events and in helping to align events to minimise duplication across the organisations. The Minister welcomed the report and noted that he found the engagement events very useful to hear key issues first-hand from frontline practitioners .

ACTION

- **OCSWA/all Forum members to share information about frontline practitioner engagement events which they are organising in order to minimise duplication and maximise opportunities for shared delivery. Francois Roos in OCSWA can act as a contact point for sharing the information.**

6. Improving Use of Evidence

Action Strand Progress Update – Paper 4

Claire Lightowler introduced the paper which provided an update on recent progress on the Improving use of evidence action strand. The focus at the moment is on refreshing the actions and ensuring that it incorporates recognition of all forms of evidence. There will also be a re-emphasis on practical tools for practitioners and a further look at the priority actions to focus on.

Discussion

- Trish McCulloch noted that synergies are emerging from the review of social work education and that activity around implementation should therefore be coordinated to allow the sharing of resources. Trish also highlighted that HEIs are key partners (under action 23) and that they could contribute innovation in this area – there are opportunities to prompt academics to think more creatively across boundaries. In response Claire noted that this paper is a think-piece which should be utilised and encourage further conversations. A meeting was planned in March with HEI Heads of Social Work where this could be explored further.

- Susan Kelso noted that she would be glad to link up this work with AHPs who are also looking at what is evidence.
- Claire also noted that perhaps consideration should be given to how the Strategy ensures that the service users voice is heard.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7. Updated Implementation Plan – Paper 5

Jane Mackenzie noted that the Implementation Plan circulated had been updated to reflect the discussions at the November 16th Strategy Refresh Workshop. The Progress column now incorporates feedback from the discussions at the workshop and a third column has been added to note whether the action is complete, should continue or be amended. The intention is that this will help the Forum work towards a refreshed Implementation Plan by March 2017. Forum members were asked to provide feedback or comment on the Plan to OCSWA following the Forum meeting

ACTION

- OCSWA to send the draft of the updated Implementation plan to Forum members and to all attendees at the November 16th workshop to allow opportunity for comment/additions to it.

8. Suggested New Actions and Issues from November 16th Workshop – Paper 6

Jane Mackenzie noted that Paper 6 included:

- a summary of the main issues identified on the “*Issues Wall*” at the November workshop. The summary is intended as an information document to support Forum members in their thinking about potential new actions.
- the list of suggested new actions which had emerged at the workshop, along with the scoring from the day which gave an indication of strength of support. Forum members would be asked to feedback any comments on the wording of the potential new actions and also to comment on how these suggestions might translate into specific and relevant actions for the Forum to take forward.

Responses to the above would collated and then OCSWA would support action strand leads to consider the suggestions further and, in discussion with other Forum members, to look at which of these could be brought back to the Forum in March as options to consider for the refresh exercise in March. Jane noted that the intention was to do as much of this work as possible by correspondence with Forum members in order to achieve an agreed refresh by end March 2017.

ACTION

- **OCSWA to send list of potential new actions to Forum for comment and to think about how they could translate into action. Comments to be received by mid-January 2017.**
- **Actionstrand leads, supported by OCSWA, to consider actions relating to their specific area ahead of March 2017 Forum meeting.**

9. AOCB

The Minister proposed that for future meetings the Forum members should notify OCSWA of any Agenda AOCB items 2 weeks on advance of the meeting rather than have this as a standing agenda item. This was agreed

10. Meeting Dates for 2017

- Tuesday 7 March, 10.00-12.00, St Andrews House
- Tuesday 6 June, 10.00-12.00, St Andrews House
- Tuesday 5 Sept, 10.00-12.00, St Andrews House
- Tuesday 5 Dec, 10.00-12.00, St Andrews House

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