

**Minutes of the Renew and Refresh Strabane
Locality Planning Group Held on Thursday
27 May 2021 at 10am on Zoom**

Present:

Riognach Murphy - Barnardo's (LPG Chair)
Una Casey – CYPSP
Roisin Hamill - Women's Aid
Mary McNicholl - Rapid
Natasha Burke – Action for Children EISS
Sharon Callaghan – Strabane Sure Start
Shauna Spence -
Adrian Loughrey – Koram Centre
Claire Lynch – DCSDC
Kori Gault - CYPSP
Alana Willis – CCMS
Shauna Devine – Strabane FSH/Strabane Family Centre
Rose O'Brien – EA
Ivan Barr - Melmount Forum
Brenda McAnenny – Melmount Forum
Andy - Melmount Forum
Paula Kee - Administration (minute taker)

In attendance:

Frances O'Neill – Middletown Centre for Autism
Margaret Ferris – WHSCT Autism Services

Apologies:

Clive Beatty – PSNI
Claire Doherty – Holy Cross College

Welcome and Introductions – Riognach welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies – as listed above

Middletown Centre for Autism – Frances O'Neill gave a presentation on the background to the Middletown Centre for Autism. Riognach thanked Frances for her informative presentation. Riognach advised Frances that they have had extensive conversations on the lack of services and information available to parents.

Frances spoke on training opportunities and advised that they work with Parent and Voluntary Groups and anyone looking for training can contact admin@middletownautism.com or training@middletownautism.com and they will try to accommodate.

WHSCT Autism Service – Margaret Ferris, Autism Co-ordinator and Service Improvement Officer gave a presentation on what Autism Services do and the current demand on the service within the Western Area. Riognach thanked Margaret for her informative presentation and advised that when she sees figures written down its very daunting and explained that the Group have had a lot of discussions and asked if anyone had any questions for Margaret or Frances.

The following questions/observations/comments were discussed:

- How long is the waiting lists to get into ASD Services (Margaret)
- Does ASD Service accept private diagnosis of Autism (Margaret)
- Is Autism Service linked in with the MACE Project (Margaret)
- What's the maximum number of trainees that can be facilitated within one training programme (Frances)

Margaret advised that they were being inundated with queries around support in schools for children and young people thinking they can only get support if they have a confirmed diagnosis of ASD which shouldn't be the case and should be based on the need of the child and advised that it might be beneficial to have someone from Education attend the group to advise what they do and how they support those children. Riognach advised that was a good suggestion and noted that the overall message from today was that despite the fantastic services offered by WHSCT Autism Services and Middletown Centre there is a massive gap in services. Riognach advised that if anyone had any questions or any follow up to contact Una.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Riognach advised that she has read through the comprehensive minutes from the last meeting and was happy to approve. Riognach provided update from actions.

Action: Sharon to send photos regarding period poverty to Una for E-Zine article

Matters Arising Family Support Hub Updates

Strabane FSH / Strabane Family Centre

Shauna advised that today's update would be brief as they were only two months into the first quarter.

The Hub has been busy and to date there has been 25 referrals which equates to 87 people that have been supported through the Hub which breaks down to 24 children and 17 parents and 24 other children benefiting indirectly. There also been an increase in terms of phone enquiries and advice and for the two months there has been approx. 25 referrals that have been signposted. The source of the referrals to date have been Gateway, Health Visiting, Sure Start, CAMHS, Schools, self-referrals and the GP Multi-Disciplinary teams who have contributed to the self-referrals as they direct parents.

Shauna advised that the majority of the referrals are for one of two issues. One is anxiety that seems to be impacting on school attendance and also parenting in terms of managing and implementing boundaries. Shauna advised that there has also been referrals for child to parent aggression and they've been able to go through MACE and put a programme in place through Parenting NI 'Walking on Eggshells' which has previously proven difficult to access in the Strabane area and they've had a number of parents sign up for and they also plan to run more of the Parenting NI programmes in the Autumn term.

Shauna advised that they have been continuing to deliver some face to face support safely where they can (risk assessed) which is increasing as restrictions start to ease. They have also come to the end of the ASD Support Group based on the incredible years programme. They are delivering a number of CAMHS skills programmes for children relating to anxiety which works best for children aged 7-10 years old but can be adapted for older children.

They have been running a Circles of Security Group which has been very successful and they hope to continue to run that. They have been able to access through Relate Play Therapy for some children which has been brilliant but there is a waiting list for this. The cost for Play Therapy for children and young people is expensive and beyond a lot of parent's reach so it has been positive that they have been able to refer on to that service. Shauna advised that she was unsure how long that service would be available through Relate as it depends on Therapists and availability. They have also continued to signpost children and young people to the Koram Centre, EISS and the Family Centre.

Shauna advised they have identified ongoing gaps in relation to teenage children, there is a need for Parenting Programmes that address those needs and they are looking at these for the younger teenagers, there is also a need for Befriending service which they don't have the capacity for in Strabane. Sleep is also another issue and they currently don't have any trained sleep counsellors who are able to deliver support to

children from aged 4 and above. ASD continues to remain a high level of need that has been identified. Anxiety in children and young people and there has also been enquires in relation to social outlets in particular for children with additional needs which is another area that is difficult to identify services to meet those needs. Shauna advised that there are more resources in Derry but often that's not accessible to some of the Parents in Stpabane.

Riognnach thanked Shauna for her update

Shauna noted that there has also been a number of requests for practical Family Support which is something that they don't have so this was another gap in service.

Western Outcome Group Update

Una advised that the Outcomes Group didn't meet last month because of clashes in diaries and the next meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of June. Una advised that Task & Finish Groups have been meeting to look at the three priorities and to refine the actions that came out of the action planning workshop.

Una noted that child to parent aggression was something that has been discussed in other Locality Planning Groups which she has been highlighted to the Regional Partnership through a report from the Locality Planning Groups around gaps and emerging need. Riognnach advised that this was probably something that has been exuberated because of the pandemic; due to people in very close quarters and advised that aggression in society seems to be increasing.

Action: Una to put aggression (Child to Parent) on future agenda

Members Update

Riognnach recapped on the Issues/Gaps in service and queried if anyone had any comments or suggestions to add.

Claire commented on child/parent aggression and advised that this came up at Education Authority Local Action Planning Group too. They looking younger children and how they can give children and young people the emotional awareness to be able to understand their thoughts and feelings and how to communicate these. Claire advised that Education Authority locally are putting this in their Action Plan and looking at programmes.

Roisin advised that Women's Aid has a partnership with Education Authority to deliver the 'Helping Hands' Programme and the 'Healthy Relationships' in schools. Currently this is not happening due to covid

restrictions. Women's Aid had looked at virtual delivery but this was possible. Roisin noted that Women's Aid still accept referrals. The Helping Hands programme is for any child at Primary School (Years 1 to 7) and works on children being aware of their feelings and how they can be communicated. The Heading for Healthy Relationships Programme which is about the cycle of abuse, healthy relationships and early warning signs. The Teen Link Programme is for 11 to 17 year olds which has a number of different elements. Roisin advised that Teen Link was not being delivered at present as they are waiting to employ a Youth Worker but the other programmes are available to families in Strabane.

Roisin advised that if there was enough numbers she could deliver a session to a small group in Strabane and if they had a space staff could deliver the Helping Hands Programme. Rioghnach thanked Roisin and asked for information to be sent to Una for the FYI. She noted that this was the type of information that she would like to start highlighting.

Action: Roisin to send information to Una for FYI

Shauna advised that Barnardo's deliver the Social Guardian Programme to all the Teachers throughout Northern Ireland. Rose advised that a lot of referrals come from school to the Education Welfare Service but they also take parent referrals. If have parents are struggling to get their children out to school and have issues in relation to school attendance they can contact their service directly.

Action: Rose to send Una information about EWO service for FYI

Rioghnach advised that sleep an emerging issues. Sleep Scotland Programmes are expensive and noted that there was a lack of service for this not only in the Strabane area but also in Omagh and Fermanagh and queried if anybody was aware of any services that are could be offered in the Strabane area. Una advised that the Northern Trust have done work around sleep. Shauna advised that she had a conversation with one of the GP Social Workers who mentioned that they had done some training around sleep (not Sleep Scotland) and were looking at trying to develop some support for parents

Action: Una to find out from the Northern Trust regarding work done on sleep

Action: Shauna to speak to GP Social Worker around Sleep training

Mary queried if it would be possible to look at a partnership where Rapid would apply for the funding to cover the training for the Strabane Locality members. Rioghnach advised that this was something to consider.

Adrian advised that the Koram Centre are experiencing similar issues to this already highlighted. He advised that their children waiting list has been going up over the past couple of months. For example they have received 12 referrals for support for children and young people and currently have 30 children/young people on their waiting list.

Adrian updated the group on the two funding applications Koram have applied for. If successful this will enable the service 272 sessions for children per year and 160 sessions for children respectively. They also have the Koram Wellbeing project starting in July 2021 and that allows provision for 160 session for children over the year for 4 years which will offer Talking, Art and Play Therapy. Rioghnach thanked Adrian for his update and she hoped he was successful in securing some funding.

E-zine articles, FYIs

Una reminded members that if they have anything to share in the FYI could they send it to her. Una noted that she has been contacted by people asking to be put on the mailing list for the FYI so the information was being used really well.

Rioghnach reminded members that if they have any information they would like included in the Regional E-Zine to send to Una.

Gam Care Training

Una noted Gam Care Training was discussed at the last meeting. Una advised members that details are on the early May's FYI. GamCare are keen to come and talk to the Locality Planning Groups. Una advised members that Claire did a presentation at the Waterside Locality Group recently about a Unicef project around 'Child Friendly Cities' and it would be useful to have presented to Strabane LPG. Rioghnach asked for this to be added to the agenda.

Rioghnach advised that today's meeting had been very productive and the two presentations were very informative and advised that they need to look at a new list in terms of services and that was something they would take up at a later date.

Future Meetings

All meetings will be held at 10am on:

Thursday 24th June

Thursday 26 August

Thursday 28 October