

## **Minutes of the Strabane Locality Planning Group Held on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 10am on Zoom**

### **Present:**

Riognach Murphy - Barnardo's (LPG Chair)  
Kathryn McCaffrey -  
Shauna Devine – Strabane FSH/Strabane Family Centre  
Adrian Loughrey – Koram Centre  
Sharon Callaghan – Strabane Sure Start  
Claire Lynch – DCSDC  
Rose O'Brien – EA  
Paula Kee - Administration (minute taker)

### **In attendance:**

Kori Gault – CYPSP

### **Apologies:**

Una Casey – CYPSP  
Roisin Hamill - Women's Aid  
Cahir Murray – Parenting NI

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Riognach welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Apologies**

As listed above

### **CYPSP Youth Wellness Web and Translation Hub**

Kori Gault gave a presentation on CYPSP Youth Wellness Web and Translation Hub. Riognach thanked Kori for her comprehensive presentation and queried if anyone had any questions.

Claire Lynch advised that she believed this was a very useful tool and queried about young people being able to access the information they need when they need it and if there was a plan to get it directly to young people through schools or youth workers and if there was support needed locally from DCSDC to encourage this. Claire advised that feedback from young people is they don't always automatically visit websites/online resources if they don't sit down and do it somewhere first.

Claire advised that she has had conversations with Education Authority and would like to hear views from the Community and Voluntary Sector about developing session plans where young people can sit down in their Youth Club or School to navigate the website as she believed they were more likely at a point of crisis to go on the website.

Kori advised this was a point made by one of the young people that helped in creating the webpage, so they contacted Education Authority and have sent leaflets/information. Kori advised they have feedback from young people stating they have been given classwork and completed the survey which was encouraging. Kori stated this would be a slow process with schools as there is a lot of things going on but they have gone through the usual request with Education Authority and asked that they put it out in the future about the Wellness Web and engage with teachers. Kori noted that they were in the early stages of getting a wallet card made that has information and useful telephone numbers that they or a friend might need urgently. Claire spoke on the Regional approach which was really important and advised that they have links into schools.

Riognach spoke about introducing young people in the Voluntary Sector particularly homeless and the most vulnerable young people who don't have secure accommodation and spoke on big organisations like Simon Community and Salvation Army who deal extensively with young people in these categories. Kori advised that they have a separate list of organisations and charities and when they send out information they will link in with them. Riognach queried if this would be available to translate into other languages. Kori advised that they have looked into it but she would need to check with Valerie Maxwell about how they were proceeding.

Kathryn advised that she was interested in the Wellness Hub considering the pupils that she would work with in schools and stated that she wasn't aware of this. She works one to one with pupils and this is something she could show them and spend time on.

## **Barnardo's ASD Service**

Riognach advised that at the majority of the LPG meetings it has thrown up the same topics around what's needed in the local community and around Autism and waiting lists and Children with Developmental concerns and advised that the MACE framework opened and Barnardo's endeavored to try and attempt in a small way to address these needs.

Sharon advised that Barnardos were successful and they have seconded 2 x staff from Sure Start to Barnardos for the pre-diagnostic programme for children showing traits of Autism, Behaviour difficulties, Speech Language and Communication (Pre Diagnostics ASD-SCL) and is open to children aged 0-6 years old. Families can be referred into MACE by their Health Visitor or Social Worker and Shauna Devine, Family Centre Manager follows up and cascades information out to staff.

Sharon explained that they take 10x families at a time, 1x staff member sees 6x families and the other staff member sees 4x families. The programme is open to parents in Strabane and Derry and their first round has just finished. There were 8x families from Derry, 1x from Strabane and 1x they couldn't locate. There is a new group starting next week

8x from Derry and 2x from Strabane. The programme is a short intervention and involves a group workshop at the beginning where they are introduced to Autism, Speech and Language and Communication difficulties to raise awareness and give them peer support and provide them with strategies and resources that they can use at home. This is then followed up by 2x home visits where staff work with the family to see what supports they need and do a package of resources for the family depending on their need. Sharon advised that she doesn't have official feedback to give at this stage but so far it has been positive and suggested at another meeting giving a presentation to see the impact that it is having. Sharon noted that some families have said they would like longer intervention and MACE have now said that a family can be re-referred.

Adrian congratulated Sharon and Barnardos and stated that this was an issue at the Koram Centre, so it was fantastic to see and they will be happy to share and queried if families could self-refer. Sharon confirmed as per MACE guidelines it has to be Health Visitor or Social Worker.

Claire Lynch congratulated Sharon and Barnardos and queried if this

was for people on a waiting list. Sharon confirmed that if families are struggling with their child's behaviour/communication they don't have to be on waiting list. Claire queried if there was a link with services and what Barnardos were doing for families that are on the waiting list for a long time. Sharon advised that they would signpost families but noted that a lot of families aren't involved with services or aren't sure what services they should be involved with so it was part of their work to help them navigate the pathway.

Riognach explained that Barnardos hoped to continue rolling the programme until March 2023 but it wasn't secure.

Riognach stated that there was a lot of need it wasn't going to meet all the need, even in the local community, but it was a starting point and noted that the reason they left it open was there are parents that believe their child has Autism but in fact it might be issues with behaviour/routines/toileting etc. that if staff got to them they could prevent them having to go down that path of trying to get on a waiting list.

Claire Lynch advised that there was money that comes from the Executives Office from the Department for Communities which goes to Community Development which has a very different remit but there is a significant amount of monies and stated that she has raised with the Community Development Manager the constant need that has been identified by this group but there doesn't seem to be the same money that comes down through Health so she has asked them to start raising it at their meetings that a need has been identified which is everybody's responsibility in terms of children and young people's wellbeing there are huge gaps but because it's not within the Department that's allocating the money its being overlooked.

**Action: Claire Lynch to keep group updated.**

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Riognach advised that as she has already mentioned the previous minutes and there wasn't anything to note she was going to move on to the next agenda item.

### **Matters Arising**

Riognnach updated the meeting on matters arising from the previous meeting.

Riognnach noted that the August meeting was cancelled and stated that she has discussed with Una the frequency of meetings and suggested going forward that the group meet once quarterly, but when they do meet they should have an update about what different organisations are doing and areas of need. Strabane LPG was one of the LPG's that fell by the wayside and people have been fantastic to come back but the aim of the LPG was to discuss what they are doing, why they are doing it and whether they need to highlight gaps higher up to the Outcomes Group.

**Action: Una to send out Information regarding change to frequency of meetings going forward**

## **Family Support Hub Updates**

### Strabane Family Support Hub

Shauna advised that the Family Support Hub has started moving back to more face to face contact for families with Risk Assessments and Covid mitigation in place. Referrals have been quieter over the summer but this would be a normal pattern. At this stage they've had 26 referrals which equates to a mixture of children and parents that have been referred and

noted that the referral pathways into the Hub remain the same i.e. Health Visitors, Gateway, CAMHS, GP Multi-disciplinary teams, ASD Team which they have started seeing when people are on the Waiting list they are contacting the Duty Worker at ASD who is referring them back to the Community to see if there's any supports they can access and school referrals which are picking up. Shauna advised that there has been an increase in telephone enquiries people needing advice on the telephone and not needing anything specific in terms of a service from the Hub or people who need signposting onto other services.

Shauna advised that in terms of issues coming through and issues where there are gaps in terms of what they can do they are beginning to see referrals for Gender Identity in Children who are transitioning, sleep is an ongoing issue and ASD continues to be an ongoing issue. Waiting lists aren't getting any better not only for ASD but for Education Psychology and OT and noted that currently the waiting list for OT was

around 3 years. Shauna advised that they continue to see trends in terms of anxiety in children which is an ongoing area of need and noted they have identified a need of support for parents and are currently working to identify a support programme for parents on how to respond and how to put practical things in place when their child is experiencing anxiety.

Shauna advised that they have accessed some Parenting NI Programmes through MACE and are currently running 'Keeping Your Cool' and in November will be running 'Dealing with Children's Challenging Behaviour'. Shauna advised that if anybody knew of anyone who would benefit from these to contact her and she would pass details onto Parenting NI. Shauna advised that support continues to run in terms of their CAMHS Skills Provision which is one mechanism they've developed for supporting children with anxiety and also through funding received from the Trust they have been able to access Play Therapy and have offered 12x sessions from a qualified Play Therapist which is working well.

## **Members Update**

Riognach stated that at other LPG meetings organisations give updates on progress made and noted that Sharon has already updated meeting on the ASD Programme and Shauna has highlighted the Parenting NI Programme and asked if any other organisation had any updates.

### Koram Centre

Adrian advised that the Koram Centre have secure money from Public Health Agency through The Clear Project which is a 6 week programme that supports parents around ASD and provide them with more information on what it is, how it presents and how to manage their own wellbeing and promote self-care which they hope to deliver that in January with a Therapist who works for the Koram Centre called Dale Mitchell

Dale is specialised in Autism and Autism Initiatives. Adrian advised that the referral system was open referral process, people who are an entry into Sharon's programme and there are concerns they can contact the Koram Centre.

Adrian spoke on the Koram Wellbeing Project which is a Lottery funded project and advised that they have included some young people to find out what they would like to see and they have come back with more general interventions around children and young people's wellbeing and

Art and Dance so staff are contacting a company called Echo-Echo in Derry who do dance programmes and also In Your Space which is around wellbeing for Children and Young People and they hope to deliver these in the New Year.

**Action: Adrian to email group more information on Projects**

Adrian advised that the Koram Centre also post details on their Facebook page.

Sure Start

Sharon advised that they recently had an Art Therapy student in their service which they were hoping to keep going in the future and she now has a contact in the University who will be sending more students on placement so there is an option for some people if anybody in the group knows of anyone who would benefit from Art Therapy (children or adults). Sharon advised that at this stage she didn't have a definite date for the next placement.

Strabane FSH/Strabane Family Centre

Shauna advised that they were in the process of trying to recruit a Family Support Worker for the Fermanagh area through funding from MACE. This role will be tailored towards 11-13 year olds and they will go into homes and work with families, supporting them to address issues they are having within the home and will be working specifically in a parent child centred way and will offer support. Shauna advised that they hoped to have this up and running by January and noted that the referral process would be the same as the ASD Programme through MACE and referrals would have to come from an approved source.

Unicef / DCSDC

Claire Lynch spoke on the Unicef Child Friendly Cities and Community Project and advised that there was a Draft Action Plan now in place that might be useful for Community and Voluntary sectors going forward.

There will be an introduction to Child's Right and Practice training available for people to participate in and also a Child's Right Impact Assessment Tool which the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People are trying to promote in Northern Ireland.

Claire Lynch noted earlier conversations around Gender Identity and advised that the North West Ministry of Youth, the Youth Voice for Derry and Strabane as part of their youth manifesto had identified Gender Identity as one of the key problems for Children and Young People and the lack of services in Northern Ireland and one of the things identified was that Census didn't collect data on different genders other than male and female so they can't then develop services for a category of people they don't know exist and stated that if they can start to identify the number of adults in our population who need services for transitioning they would be more able in the future to identify support for teenagers.

**Action: Kori to raise above issue with CYPSP**

Discussion ensued around services available Rainbow Project, Sail NI, Youth Right Down in Derry and CAMHS were identified. Shauna advised that she was informed that there was a Gender GP but people would have to travel to Belfast to access this service and from what she could gather this was a service specifically for people needing to be assessed in terms of whether they needed medication.

Shauna advised that there appeared to be a lot of school refusal around these issues and stated that the children that have come to her attention (11-15 year old), there are a lot of struggles and queries around ASD as well as the Transitioning process and stated that this is becoming more and more common in terms of referrals and referrals to Gateway which she didn't feel was the appropriate avenue and noted that they all had a lot to learn around supporting people. Roisin advised that Education were finding it in Primary Schools and more so in girls and agreed that there was seemingly a link that they were seeing with ASD, not necessarily diagnosed with ASD but have traits and there were concerns around that. Roisin noted that it was only within the last 12/18 months that they were seeing more coming forward. Roisin advised that since they have been back at school a number of children who have or are having issues with school attendance some of these are linked to how they are feeling around their gender and it was about finding the right service to support and help them and agreed that Gateway was not the right service. Roisin noted that they have families who are in contact with the Rainbow Project but she wasn't sure if they were fully there for children at that age.

Claire Lynch confirmed that Rainbow Project started working with young people when they are a teenagers and noted from Derry/Strabane side

of things Gender Identity was within the Unicef Action Plan but more for the collection of information side of things.

Claire Lynch advised that she would link in with Shauna and Rose to get a full understanding as Education Authority and WHSCT are lead partners in the delivery of the Action Plan so it would be raised to their Senior Management as a gap in resources. Adrian advised that there was a gap in Training and he didn't know enough on this issue for example the use of pronouns and has referred people as sensitively and as best as he could. Shauna agreed that it was a very sensitive issue and needed to be handled in the right way. Claire Lynch advised that there was a regional training package she done a long time ago. Riognach thanked Claire and advised that they could then send information out via the E-Zine magazine. Riognach advised that she would put this on the agenda and talk to Una about trying to source somebody to come and discuss the issue of Gender to the LPG Group.

**Action: Claire Lynch to link in with Shauna and Rose for more information**

**Action: Claire Lynch to link in with Cara Friend around Training possibilities**

**Action: Riognach and Una to source somebody to come to LPG and discuss the Issue of Gender**

### **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **E-zine articles, FYIs**

Riognach reminded members that if they have anything to share in the FYI to send it through to Una.

### **Future Meetings**

Riognach noted that the next scheduled meeting was 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and as discussed at the start of the meeting regarding frequency of meetings the group would definitely meet before Christmas and suggested meeting in November and queried everyone's feelings on the frequency of these meetings. Adrian queried if meetings could be face to face. Riognach advised that she would put that on the agenda and plan a Christmas meet up in person at the end of November 2021 if the

group felt confident and happy doing that and they could discuss frequency of meetings. Riognach advised that if anyone disagreed with quarterly meetings they were more than welcome to voice their concerns.

**Action: Una to issue new date for meeting in November 2021.**