



Notes of Western Area Outcomes Group
held on 14 December 2022
at 10 am via Microsoft Teams

Present: Mr Tom Cassidy, Director of Women & Children's Services, Western Trust [Chair]
Mr Paul Kellagher, Children's Services Manager, Action for Children
Ms Lisa Storey, Child Development Interventions Co-ordinator, Western Trust
Ms Denise McCallion, Health & Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager, Public Health Agency
Mrs Brenda MacQueen, Dry Arch Children's Centres
Mr Paul Ryan, Area Manager - Foyle Office, Youth Justice Agency
Ms Aileen McGuinness, Chair of Derry Locality Planning Group
Mrs Priscilla Magee, Locality Planning Co-ordinator, Western Trust
Ms Una Casey, Regional Locality Planning Co-ordinator
Mrs Angela Wade, Directorate Business Manager, Western Trust
Dr Josephine Deehan, Western Local Commissioning Group
Ms Muriel Bailey, Director of Family Support Services, Parenting NI
Mr Paul Sweeney, Locality Planning Co-ordinator, Western Trust
Ms Judith Searle, Interim Assistant Director of Children's Services, Barnardos
Ms Helen Sheils, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Ms Laura Feeney, Save the Children
Ms Brownyn Campbell, Regional Family Support Hub Co-ordinator
Ms Shirley Gillespie, Early Years
Mrs Joan Byers, Interim Assistant Director [Children's Health & Disability], Western Trust
Ms Elaine Forrest, Personal Assistant, Western Trust

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Apologies

Ms Alison Wallace, Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership
Ms Mairead McGilloway, Head of Service, Western Trust
Mrs Linda Watson, Caw/Nelson Drive Community Association
Ms Edel Fox, Omagh Women's Aid
Mr Mark Rogers, Extern & Chair of Fermanagh Locality Planning Group
Ms Claire Lynch, Children & Young People's Co-ordinator, Derry City & Strabane District Council

	<p>Mrs Elizabeth Campbell, Assistant Director for Transformation & Pathfinder, Western Trust Mr Pat Armstrong, Head of Service [Governance Lead for Family & Child Care], Western Trust Ms Lisa McGrath, Mencap Ms Maxine Gibson, Professional Advisor for Children’s Services Planning</p>
2	<p>Chairman’s Remarks Mr Cassidy thanked members for making time to attend today’s meeting and for all their efforts at this difficult time due to the cost of living crisis.</p> <p><u>Membership Update</u> Mr Cassidy welcomed Ms Shirley Gillespie who was attending from Early Years.</p>
3	<p>Notes of Previous Meeting held on 26 October 2022 Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.</p>
4	<p>Matters Arising There were no matters arising.</p>
5	<p>Presentation - Poverty Mr Kellagher shared his presentation on Action for Children’s insight into poverty over the last two years. He reported that Action for Children had spent almost £80,000 in the Western Trust area supporting families with small grants since the beginning of the pandemic. He said vulnerable families and people who were no longer working were amongst the hardest hit, and gave case examples. Mr Kellagher detailed the effects of coldness on the body when people were struggling to heat their homes [blood flow to brain, increase of breaths, blood pressure, heart rate] when temperature dropped. He queried whether the use of words such as “vulnerable”, “poor”, “needy” were the right words for practitioners to use. He said poverty was having a huge impact on stress and mental health, with an increasing burden on charities and complexity of safeguarding risks.</p> <p>Dr Deehan congratulated Mr Kellagher and his team on the excellent work they did. She said the impact of cold homes was quite alarming, particularly for children and the elderly, due to changes in the blood system. She said she was concerned that aid from charities and statutory authorities was not sufficient and it was now the “working poor” being impacted. Dr Deehan reported that Fermanagh & Omagh Council had approved grants with the major recipients being families for home heating.</p> <p>Mrs Byers said the presentation was stark, particularly in relation to the effects of the cold and requested to use information in the presentation to inform staff teams.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mr Kellagher agreed for his presentation to be shared and also offered to input to teams.

Ms Searle advised that Barnardos were also running a similar crises fund which was available for families, but said longer term solutions for families in poverty were needed and this needed to be kept on everyone's agendas. Ms Feeney said Save the Children were working in partnership with Action for Children and the Hubs and said it was fantastic what had been achieved working in partnership and utilising maximise resources to have the greatest reach.

Mrs Magee reported that Fermanagh and Omagh Councils and Save the Children had given donations to Hubs.

Mrs Campbell said the Western area was disproportionately impacted by poverty and financial supports for assistance were higher. She said the Omagh Hub had been featured as a great case study in the National Preparedness Commission publication and agreed to share with members.

Action

- Mrs Campbell to share article on Omagh Hub via Mr Cassidy's office.

Members reported that some families were getting duplicated offers of support from different organisations, and said it would be beneficial to pool organisations providing support together. Mr Sweeney said there was a need to bring structures and communities together, in particular, the Department of Communities.

Ms McCallion commended the breadth of work and the response to the poverty crisis which was ongoing, and thanked everyone involved. She said the Department of Communities had responsibility for food poverty in the region and asked if members were aware of what was going on and enquired where DSD was going forward to ensure a co-ordinated, local response. In relation to funding from DFC, Ms Sheils said she was only aware of some funding for the social supermarket pilot, and nothing additional through the community support programme. Members agreed that it was important to have a strategic, co-ordinated approach to align resources to those most in need, and avoid duplication.

Action

- Ms Callion to share paper with the group.

Mr Cassidy proposed that the Outcomes Group establish a Poverty Task and Finish Group to ensure it was working in the most efficient way and to explore initiatives that the Outcomes Group could look at to ensure no duplication of effort. Ms McGuinness said it would be important that the membership was reviewed, so the right people could be invited.

Action

- Mr Cassidy asked Mrs Magee, Mr Sweeney and Ms Casey to discuss at their meeting tomorrow, including whether there should be one group or two separate groups for northern and southern areas.

	<p>Mr Cassidy enquired if there was a wider CYPSP view that needed to be taken and if there was a resource that could be availed of. Ms Casey said there was model available that could be requested from the Belfast group.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms Casey to discuss with Ms Maxine Gibson and also link with the Belfast Co-ordinator. <p>Mrs Magee said she was aware that some families didn't cook and food banks were being asked for microwavable food. Discussion took place on "Cook It" programmes run by the Health Improvement Team. Ms McCallion said this was about building capability and capacity in families and available programmes should be rolled out to communities in the future.</p> <p>Mr Ryan reported that poverty was having a big impact on the criminal justice system and, for the first time that he was aware of, a young person who had stolen food. He said the Youth Justice Agency were setting up a fund to help young people in crisis situations to tide them over for 24 hours in emergency situations.</p> <p>Ms Casey advised of a cost of living resource which was updated twice a week and encouraged members to forward her information about available supports.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms Casey to share the link for the Cost of Living Guide again via Mr Cassidy's office. <p>Mr Cassidy said everyone working with families needed to be conscious that they did not view poverty, on its own, as a child protection issue.</p> <p>Mr Kellagher thanked everyone for their comments. He said everyone needed to be careful not to duplicate systems for family support as the Hubs were in existence. He said poverty was a public health crisis which was impacting on almost every aspect of life and would be with us for a very long time.</p> <p>Mr Cassidy thanked Mr Kellagher for his presentation and for starting today's conversation on poverty which was extremely important.</p>
6	<p>Update from Locality Planning Groups</p> <p>Mrs Magee reported that the Autism Cafes had been extremely successful. She said an action emanating from this work was how could families access intervention when Autism had not been the diagnosis. She requested a meeting to learn of procedures and pathways. Mrs Magee reported a lack of resources from Autism NI and the National Autism Society in Omagh and Fermanagh.</p> <p>Mrs Byers advised that the Autism team were quite a small team and reported that the Trust had commissioned some private assessments, but there was no split assessment in the northern and southern sectors. She reported that referrals to the Autism service continued to rise month on month, but Dr Mary McDaid, Head of</p>

Service for Autism, and Mrs Margaret Ferris, Autism Co-ordinator, were open to become involved in any group.

Mrs Bailey advised that the National Autism Society were keen to work in the West if they had a venue to work with teenagers. Mr Sweeney said there were a range of providers in local communities and the Autism Cafes allowed those agencies to come together. Ms Storey agreed that services in Omagh and Fermanagh were very limited in comparison to Derry.

Mr Cassidy said there was a need to get an understanding of who funded these organisations to ensure they were delivering in the areas they were funded for.

Action

- Mrs Magee to identify groups she believed were not delivering appropriately within in Omagh and Fermanagh so Mr Cassidy, as Chairperson of the Outcomes Group, could make contact with them.
- Mrs Byers to link with Mrs Ferris to enquire about funders so organisations could be monitored on their service delivery in Omagh & Fermanagh.
- Ms Casey to check on funders with the Strategic Planning & Performance Group.

Mr Sweeney highlighted the normalisation of critical responses in response to Poverty and how best to escalate this. He said members were reporting positive engagement with Gateway services. Autism Cafes were continuing. Unicef work was progressing and was a standing item on locality planning agendas.

Action

- Ms Casey to review the attendance record for Outcomes Group members and draft a letter for Mr Cassidy's signature to send to absent members to highlight the importance of attending to allow for fuller discussion of important issues and to make informed decisions.
- Discussion took place on having a meeting to focus solely on Autism - for further discussion at the next meeting.

7 Hubs Update

Ms Campbell reported that Hubs continued to be busier than usual and said Co-ordinators were working incredible hard and were dealing with increasingly complex referrals. She reiterated that Hubs were not service deliverers, but co-ordinators. Mr Cassidy said there was a need to define complexity in relation to the Hubs.

Action

- Ms Campbell to share examples of complex cases at the next meeting.

Ms Campbell reported that Professor Ray Jones had held a Family Support workshop recently with representation from both parents and Hubs.

8	<p>Community Planning For discussion at the next meeting.</p>
9	<p>Safeguarding Mr Cassidy reported that the Safeguarding service continued to be busy with NIPSA staff striking on Monday of this week and continuing with action short of strike [working to job description], which was ongoing and which would impact on services to children and families. He said this service already had huge vacancies.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ms McGilloway to provide an update at the next meeting. <p>Mr Kellagher said the volume and complexity in Family Support Hubs reflected the pressures on Social Work Teams, and was a similar picture to the UK. He said Hub funding was a limited resource and would impact on safeguarding.</p> <p>Ms McGuinness reported that the community sector were also seeing an increasing demand on services. Mr Cassidy said it was important to guage the number and types of issues coming from MDT's.</p>
10	<p>Any Other Business Mr Cassidy thanked members for continuing to deliver services to local communities.</p> <p>He wished members a Happy Christmas.</p>
11	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting 22 February 2023 at 10 am via Microsoft Teams</p>