

**Minutes of the Renew and Refresh Strabane Locality Planning
Group Held on Thursday
3 March 2022 at 10am on Zoom**

Present:

Riognach Murphy - Barnardo's (LPG Chair)
Una Casey – CYPSP
Adrian Loughrey – Koram Centre
Sharon Callaghan – Strabane Sure Start
Mary McNicholl – RAPID
Shauna Devine – Strabane FSH/Strabane Family Centre
Carol Stewart – Derry City & Strabane Council Community
Judith Searle – Barnardo's (covering Riognach Murphy's Maternity)
Rose O'Brien – Education Authority
Paul Sweeney – Co-Ordinator Locality Planning
Paula Kee - Administration (minute taker)

Apologies:

Donna Magee - MACE
Shauna Spence – Action for Children
Natasha Burke – Action for Children
Niamh O'Kane – Cedar Foundation
Aidan Harkin – Community Development.
Catherine McCaffrey – Holy Cross College

Welcome and Introductions

Riognach welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending at short notice due to January's meeting being cancelled.

Riognach advised that she would be going off on Maternity in April 2022 and introduced Judith Searle who would be covering her Maternity Leave. Riognach also advised that Una would be relinquishing her oversight of the Strabane Locality Planning Group and would be replaced by Paul Sweeney who has been appointed as the Locality Planning Co-Ordinator.

Apologies

As listed above

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Riognach proposed minutes and this was seconded by Sharon.

Matters Arising

Una updated the meeting on matters arising from previous minutes.

Action: Anyone interested in attending Gender Identity Training to email their interest to Una.

Una to contact Rainbow to arrange training dates.

It was agreed going forward that meetings would be held quarterly and would be face to face meetings.

Action: Una to liaise with Paul regarding dates and once agreed issue to members. Venues to be rotated in the four different venues volunteered

Western Area Outcomes Group Update – In-Year Funding

Una gave an update from the last meeting of the Western Outcomes Group which focused on their funding. Western Outcomes Group get £100,000 in-year recurrent funding from the Board.

Una spoke on Small Grants and advised that the main focus of the meeting was around using funding in a different way and explained that feedback received regarding Small Grants hasn't been positive. There was a lot of discussion around how to move forward and the group had hoped that it could go into a three year project but when they researched this there's a lot of tendering delays and issues and it has to go into a Regional Tendering process and there are massive backlogs which could take three years. The Outcomes Group decided to set up three Task & Finish Groups and each group have been tasked to look at their task within their action plan.

Riognach thanked Una for her summation and explained that £100,000 sounded a lot but when this was broken down between all the Locality Planning Groups in reality Strabane received £15,000. Riognach advised that Una had thrown it out to organisations to see if they would be prepared to take the money and spend it but soon realised that this was going to be a huge admin element and an issue for small organisations so as a gesture of good will this year Barnardos did it under Sure Start. Riognach advised that they added money from a different pot of funding. Sharon advised that the money went within the month and

811 families were supported. Riognach advised that she has raised with the Western Outcomes Group that this was just a sticking plaster and the money wasn't being used in an impactful way and asked the Group to think on how this money should be spent.

Carol updated the meeting on money received from the Department for Communities through Councils which went to a programme called Insanity who used the money to help with food, electricity, oil, heating and warm items for winter. Councils had to work out the best way to deliver it into Communities and have protocols in place. The Department for Communities moved away from this and at the start of the current financial year (April 2021) they gave Councils money under a Transition Fund with the onus on looking at sustainability and looking at pathways. Mary advised that RAPID would be the Secretary for the Derg and Sperrin Growth Boards within the Strabane remit and she has been helping to administrate the money through the Growth Boards and there's a lot of procedure involved. Mary noted that some parts within the Sperrin Ward of the Council fall into Limavady Locality which would need to be ironed out and to also make everyone aware that the needs are very different in rural areas.

Paul advised that he was involved with the Strategy for the food, fuel, medication and social contact at the Department for Communities and Trusts were involved at the beginning of Covid and at the last meeting of the Western Area Outcomes Group they touched on that and he believed that there may be something in that model that the group could look at down the line. Riognach agreed and spoke on Carol's point around the model of sustainability and Mary's point in terms of rurality and queried with Mary if she believed that Smaller Grants was a better way of going forward. Mary advised that she was unsure and it would be trial and error.

Riognach queried if anyone else had anything else to add. Adrian advised that Small Grants don't have the impact on the participants that they might look for and he believes one of the reasons is because it's on a year by year basis and if this was going to move from Small Grants the year by year needs to change before they can look at anything more strategically. Mary suggested moving from the term Grant to Tender. Una explained the issues with the Tendering process and advised that it would take up to 3 years before they can do a long term project and noted that one of the discussions at the Outcomes Group was to look at how they could be tendering something in three year's time and have everything ready to hit the ground and go out as a tender for the full amount of money but in the meantime not doing Small Grants but maybe the Outcomes Group three Task & Finish Groups getting a share of the funding and work on a proposal on how to spend the money. Riognach explained these were in the infant stages and will look at some of the priorities moving forward. Riognach noted that she has advised the

Western Outcomes Group that she didn't want to just focus on Poverty because Locality Planning Groups have been raising issues around child anxiety, ASD and a lack of disability services across the North West

Una updated the group on the priorities for each Task & Finish Group.

Group 1 - All children and young people have the best start in life and are emotionally and physically healthy

Group 2 - All Children and Young people are safe and their welfare is promoted within their home, schools and communities

Group 3 - All children and young people are supported to thrive and achieve their potential

Una advised that the first meeting was tomorrow and the three groups would then meet before the end of the month.

Action: Una / Paul to issue working document to group

Paul advised that there were discussions at the last Outcomes Group around how other Outcome Group areas use their money. Una updated the group on the Northern, Southern, Belfast and South Eastern Trusts.

Sharon spoke on Autism which has been talked a lot about and advised that she has had a few parents messaging about the fact that they don't have a Centre in Strabane where children can be seen and have to travel to Rivendell, Omagh.

Mary advised that there is an Operational Meeting that Health Improvement chair and members consist of Chairs of the Western Outcome Group, Growth Board within the Derry & Strabane Council area and Chairs of the Old Strabane Locality Group and queried if it would be beneficial to tie in as they meet quarterly and discuss issues in their areas and are able to tell you whether Council has moved forward with funding or what stage it's at and there's contingency money available. Mary spoke on Peace Plus and advised that there are six different themes within Peace Plus which will be opened in stages but under Theme 4 there's a Health Communities, Family Support and Family Hubs brackets and she believes long term these are things that the Group could be working towards. Rioghnach thanked Mary and advised that this was one of the reasons why they have Locality Planning Groups for people to give feedback. Paul queried if it would be worth exploring the Locality Planning Group putting in a bid for Peace Plus money in relation to Autism or Children's Services for children with disability. Una advised that as a group they couldn't but a lead organization could on behalf of members.

Family Support Hub Updates

Shauna advised that a lot of issues from the Family Support Hub have already been touched on, things are getting busier and more people are looking for support but less services have capacity to be able to support them so it's quite difficult to navigate in terms of managing the amount of referrals received and helping people to access services in a timely way and supporting them while they wait for services while referrals are still coming in.

Shauna advised for the last period of time they continue to have a high number of referrals. There have been 35 x referrals which has increased to 54 Individuals (32 x children and 22 x parents) being supported. They have been able to use some of their funding from different sources which has given them capacity to access things like Play Therapy and different kind of Therapies for children and have been able to support quite a few children. Shauna noted that from the recent MACE information there is the prospect of being able to do that through MACE. Shauna echoed what everybody else said around sustainability and trying to support people with a more holistic approach and support them to be able to manage funding better.

Referrals continue to come from the same areas mainly Gateway, Health Visitors, CAMHS and Multi-disciplinary Team. Shauna noted that they have seen referrals coming from ASD Service which is an ongoing area of need and also ASD OT as the waiting list for OT is longer than the ASD waiting list. Anxiety in children still remains an issue and is impacting on school attendance right down to Primary School children who are having difficulties attending. Shauna advised that they have sourced training at the end of the month to be able to support parents where children are experiencing anxiety. Paul queried if the anxiety was around school or around Covid. Shauna advised that a lot of it leads to school refusal, reluctance to go to school or difficulties getting them into school in the mornings, some of it was related to Covid but she was unsure if it was specifically related to Covid or related to the fact that children were out of school for so long because of Covid and now it's difficult to make that adjustment in terms of going back to school. Shauna noted that a lot of times when there's a referral for an anxious child there's an anxious parent and because the two things feed into each other they've looked at trying to address it in a more systemic way of working with families. Shauna noted that this was an issue pre-Covid which continues to grow.

Shauna advised that they continue to see referrals for sleep which is something there isn't a lot of support for. Paul spoke on a programme within the Trust around sleep where people have been trained to work with Parents. Shauna advised that if you're not a Trust employee you weren't allowed to apply.

Shauna advised at the last Sleep Service meeting she queried if there was anyway MACE could support the Community Sector. Bridget and Deborah Hunter were to look at costings to see if MACE could fund sleep consultancy training for the Community Sector. Riognach queried if they receive a referral for sleep where does the Hub refer them. Shauna advised that they have done some sleep training so are able to give general advice to people but not the in-depth advice in terms of sleep counselling. Shauna explained that they have one trained sleep counsellor in Sure Start who can do the full thing for children 0-4 year old which is a big ask because they have to go out to the family home at night several times and she believed it worked better with two people. There are other staff who can facilitate workshops.

Riognach advised under Locality Planning Group Sleep would be added as a new item to consider and to look and see whether or not there is training available. Riognach again spoke on the importance of bringing information to Locality Planning Group to alert other members of what they could do in terms of their own staff and different organisations may be able to get different elements of training. Adrian agreed and stated that they were going to meet about Bronagh Starrs and have two possible three at the Koram Centre that would be interested. Shauna advised that she spoke to Daniel yesterday to get a sense how many people they have so they know who many spaces are left to offer out and he was to contact her today. Shauna noted that there is an expectation if you do the training that you're going to run groups so you have to commit to that and they planned on delivering group support for parents over a six week period and if there was a pool of people training they could draw on that pool so it's not one organization that the onus fall on to run the programme. Mary expressed an interest.

Shauna spoke on three issues in relation to Befriending as there has been a few requests for that type of service which they don't have. The second issue is similar to Home Start where people go in and provide practical support in homes which they don't have access to in Strabane and the third issue is support for Teenagers and also support for parents in terms of parenting teenagers. Shauna advised that they do have some parenting teen programmes which are good if you get people at the right time but if you have someone where there is quite challenging issues maybe in their later teens it's quite difficult to come in with one of their programmes and make any change with people because it's difficult whenever you faced with issues that have been going on for a really long

time or serious risky issues and parents are struggling trying to manage. Paul advised that he was involved with the Family Support Panel and it seemed to be a theme coming up on a weekly basis conflict within the home, particularly with young teenagers.

Paul spoke on the Therapeutic Crisis programme which was a resource that can be used by any parent or any child but requires some training which was possibly something the group could look at and bring in training. Paul noted that he seen it in practice and it was very useful and can be used right across the board for parents as it was about recognising conflict and how to deal with conflict before it escalated into a crisis. Shauna agreed this would be really useful.

Riognach noted that there were no shortage of issues in Strabane and in the next year both Paul and Judith will put together an action plan for the Locality Group so that the group are moving in a direction where they feel they're making progress on some of the issues noted at today's meeting and any further issues that come up can be added on to the Action Plan. Riognach queried if anyone had any further update.

Shauna advised that through MACE they have got Parenting NI coming to run a Parenting Challenging Behaviour Course from 0-10 year olds starting at the end of March and if anyone was aware of anyone who would benefit from that support there were spaces available on the course.

Action: Shauna to send Paul information on Parenting Challenging Behaviour to share

Members Update

See above

E-zine articles, FYIs

Riognach reminded everyone if they had anything they wanted shared in the general community to send information to Paul to be included in the E-zine and FYI articles.

Any Other Business

Riognach advised that she was delighted to be handing over the Locality Planning Group to Judith and Paul and wished them the best going forward for the year and also thanked Paula for her administrative support since the Strabane Locality Planning group started up again.

Future Meetings

Dates to be agreed and issued to members.