



## Strabane LPG Meeting 8.9.22

Zoom 10:30

Minutes

### Present:

Judith Searle Chair (Barnardos)

Paul Sweeney WHSCT

Sharon Callaghan Surestart

Shauna Devine HUB

Shauna Spence AFC

Rose O'Brien EWO

Susan Doherty DCSDC

Mary Mc Nichol RAPID

Donna Downey Gateway

Sorcha Friel Holy Cross

### Welcome and Introductions:

Judith opened the meeting by welcoming all and allowing for introductions

### Notes of previous meetings

Judith reviewed minutes of previous meeting. Corrections regarding Susan Doherty as an apology and not an attendee. Where stem appear changed to "stay and play". Minute was proposed and seconded.

## Update from WAOG

Judith outlined that the update from the WAOG would be in relation to the discussion regarding the task and finish groups. The last WAOG meeting was on 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

Paul contextualised this by outlining the rationale behind the T&F groups with the WAOG keen to ensure funding was implemented ASAP and that a more long-term view was adopted as opposed to grant aid funding. Paul also indicated that as Locality Planner he continues to directly raise the concerns/issues/needs of LPG members to the WAOG.

## Priority 1

Judith referred to the material sent by Paul regarding the priority area and checked that everyone had an opportunity to access them. There was discussion regarding the funding for this priority and how it might be best to have a rural and urban aspect. An opportunity for an expression of interest was sounded and Mary proposed that she could take this forward with some of the rural youth groups for implementation and where RAPID could support. This was agreed as a way forward with rural groups.

Shauna Devine commented that she was intending to meet with urban youth providers in the near future and that she could take this forward for year two in order to reach as many as possible.

Susan highlighted the Churchtown Association as an example of a rural youth provision who could benefit from the resource as they had existing youth groups ongoing and Sharon suggested that Aidan Harking could also assist with an approach within the urban context.

There was discussion relating to the concept of HOPE and how this could be incorporated into the programme, possibly through training. Sorcha indicated that Holy Cross was still implementing schools of HOPE with 3 year 9 classes.

There was consensus with the group that there was an urgency to make the funding accessible as soon as possible and the best way to do this was to adopt Mary's proposal.

**Action** Mary to take forward with rural youth groups

**Action** Paul to discuss quantum with Una

## Priority 2

Healthy Families. This merit of this type of programme, where families could access personal development and healthy living strategies was echoed throughout the group. Sharon indicated that this was implemented in Strabane in the past and was very well received with parents/carers and families.

Judith outlined that our task was to agree a provider within the LPG who would take the lead on this priority. It was agreed by all that RAPID were able to lead on this service. Mary indicated that there was a need to prioritise the rural communities in the first instance, citing Artigarvin and Victoria Bridge as particular areas that could avail. RAPID had the necessary relationships and infrastructure to enable this at short notice.

There was unanimous agreement that this was the most efficient way of getting this service implemented as quickly as possible.

Paul asked if there was a possibility of collaboration with other services such as the Council to support this. Susan pointed out that the Council are already providing similar type services and that the opportunity for joined up collaboration exists there. Mary indicated that the Trust also have similar provisions which could also be a route for collaboration.

Sharon pointed out that the Strabane Community Project could be a potential link via the social supermarket.

Rose supported the idea and said that there could be parents whose children were involved with EW services who could really benefit from this.

The group agreed that this was needed in rural areas because of the dearth of services and where the cost of fuel and services are prohibitive for people travelling outside of their local area.

There was agreement that RAPID take this forward focusing on rural communities.

## Priority 3

ASD Provision. This generated much discussion within the group, as it is a need that is consistently raised at LPG meetings. Judith provided an overview of the proposal outlining how it had taken various format before arriving at this final proposal.

There was no dissent from the group regarding the proposal to fund 2 X 0.8 wte Autism Support Officers over the two years. This is match funded by Autism NI providing a service for children diagnosed with ASD and supporting their families.

Shauna (AFC) and Sharon (Barnardo's) indicated that both their agencies offered support services for children both pre, post diagnosis, and continue to struggle to meet demand. They welcomed the development of this intervention and the collaboration with the Trust's ASD Early Intervention service.

Paul spoke of the need to map all services within the locality for ASD and raised the possibility of developing an ASD café type approach to begin to better articulate the growing need for services in this area, and for parents.

Rose highlighted that over the last two years many children were off school due to the pandemic and children were slipping through the net in relation to picking up early signs of ASD and that this was very worrying.

There was unanimous consensus for this proposal.

#### HUB Update.

Shauna informed that the Family Support Hub continued to be extremely busy. Consistent theme remain such as, ASD, the need for Mentors, cost of living increases and the effect on families and children. The lack of available services and the extended waiting times for access to existing services is now becoming a more acute issue, particularly for signposting from the HUB. Families are finding it difficult to travel outside of their area for services due to rising fuel costs. They are still able to access play therapy and refer to AFC however, these services are becoming more stretched.

Donna indicated that play therapy can be accessed via MACE and that she is involved with a regional task and finish group to systemise the referral process across all HUBS. Mary outlined that there were services such as Destined who can provide sibling support services for families.

#### Member Updates

May informed the group that their successful Baby Bump and Beyond event will be hosted in Claudy on 11<sup>th</sup> of November.

Donna indicated that Gateway remains extremely busy, particularly now with children returning to school. The RED meeting are working well and they are hoping to expand this to Omagh.

Sharon informed that the recent Sure Start impact report for the area has been published and clearly demonstrates both the demand and the positive impact services have for families. Sharon also indicated that there could be funds available through the Child Trust Fund that has remained unclaimed in the Strabane area.

Action Sharon to send details regarding this to Paul/Judith to disseminate.

Shauna from AFC outlined that changes with staffing in the organisation might allow for more service access in the Strabane area. AFC continues to work collaboratively with the Family Supprt HUB and have a limited Crisis fund available for families in need.

AOB No

Dates of next meetings

November 10th 10:30 am

January 12<sup>th</sup> 10:30 am

March 9<sup>th</sup> 10:30am