



## **Notes of Western Area Outcomes Group held on 26 February 2025 at 10 am via MT**

**Present:**

Mr Tom Cassidy, Director of Children & Families, Western Trust [Chair]  
Mrs Valerie Maxwell, Children's Services Planning & Information  
Manager  
Ms Ciara Burke, Programme Manager, Derry & Strabane District  
Council  
Mrs Margaret Taggart, Acting Directorate Business Manager, Western  
Trust  
Ms Donna Downey, Service Manager [Early Intervention]  
Dr Priscilla Magee, Locality Planning Co-ordinator  
Mr Paul Sweeney, Locality Planning Co-ordinator  
Ms Sheena Pierce, Child Care Partnership Manager  
Ms Deirdre Hasson, Education Authority  
Mr Paul Ryan, Area Manager - Foyle, Youth Justice Agency  
Ms Rioghnach Murphy, Barnardos  
Ms Clare Maguire, Children & Young People's Co-ordinator, Derry City  
& Strabane District Council  
Ms Catherine Cooke, Reform Change Co-ordinator  
Ms Bronwyn Campbell, Regional Family Support Hub Co-ordinator  
Mr Kevin Duffy, Assistant Director [Children's Health & Disability],  
Western Trust  
Ms Pearl Coalter, Strategic Planning & Performance Officer,  
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council  
Ms Maxine Gibson, Children's Services Planning Professional Officer  
Mrs Lisa Storey, Child Development Interventions Co-ordinator,  
Health Improvement, Equality & Involvement Department  
Ms Rachel Armstrong, Integrated Care Systems Senior Support  
Manager, Western Trust [attending for Shane Breen]  
Ms Helen Sheils, Head of Community Services, Fermanagh & Omagh  
Council  
Mrs Brenda MacQueen, Executive Director, Dry Arch Children's  
Centres  
Dr Josephine Deehan, Western Local Commissioning Group  
Mrs Monica MacIntyre, Department for Communities  
Ms Elaine Forrest, Personal Assistant, Western Trust

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Mrs Julie Wilson, Head of Service [Governance Lead for Family &amp; Child Care], Western Trust</p> <p>Ms Muriel Bailey, Head of Services &amp; Operations, Parenting Focus</p> <p>Ms Alison Wallace, Strategy Manager, Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership</p> <p>Mr Mark Rogers, Programme Manager Children &amp; Family Services, Extern</p> <p>Ms Fiona Teague, Head of Health &amp; Social Wellbeing Improvement [West], PHA</p> <p>Ms Laura Feeney, Senior Programme Manager, Save the Children</p> <p>Ms Sharon Callaghan, Omagh Women's Aid</p> <p>Mr Barry O'Hagan, Derry &amp; Strabane District Council</p> <p>Ms Anne Quinn, Interim Director of Regeneration and Planning, Fermanagh &amp; Omagh District Council</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Chairman's Remarks</b></p> <p>Tom welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions were made. He advised that Daniel Quinn and Helen O'Neill's presentation on "Early Intervention: Family Support NI" would be re-organised for a future meeting.</p> <p>Tom noted that the end of the current financial year was approaching and he thanked members and their staff for their hard work in continuing to provide services across all areas. He predicted the demand for services would continue in the future, and that he believed this area to be the most deprived in the UK which research shows has an impact on demand.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Notes of Previous Meeting held on 18 December 2024</b></p> <p>Approved.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>No new matters arising.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Presentation "Early Intervention: Family Support NI "Right Service, Right Time"</b></p> <p>Deferred.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>Valerie reported that the Task and Finish Group had met on 10 January 2025 and looked at options for the remaining £60,000 which had to be allocated and spent before 31 March 2025. A spreadsheet detailing the agreed spending plan [split across each Hub area for service provision] had been shared with members. Valerie said a significant amount of work had been undertaken and she thanked Donna and Bronwyn who had co-ordinated with the Hubs individually, and Margaret and Contracts staff in taking this forward.</p>

Donna commended staff in the Hub's for undertaking this work within a short timeframe and said it was a sign of partnership and commitment to children and families. She said the proposals were creative in identifying areas of unmet need. Donna said the Hubs would complete an evaluation report which would be shared with members in due course. Kevin commended this work and asked if it could be referenced against themes to align spending to priority areas.

Action

- Valerie to take forward with the Task & Finish Group.
- Evaluation report on in-year spend to be shared with members.
- Proposed in-year spend agreed,

In relation to work with a Behaviour Consultant [detailed in Omagh & Fermanagh's spending plan], Kevin reported that it had been really difficult to recruit for this specific post, and he suggested that advice could be sought from Dr Mary McDaid, Clinical Director of Psychology and Head of Service for Autism Service.

Tom thanked members of the Finance Task and Finish Group.

Three Year Spending Plan Commencing 2025/26

Tom said in his role as Chair, he wished to ensure that everybody was clear on how decisions were taken. He invited Valerie to take members through the "Funding Discussions" paper which had been shared with members.

Valerie clarified that the Outcomes Group received recurring funding of £108,000 from SPPG. Previously, £35,000 was top sliced for Autism NI and approximately £12,500 for Unicef.

Lengthy discussion followed. The main issues were:-

**Consideration to be given to the Future Funding of Autism NI:-**

- Seek evaluation report on Autism NI to determine outcomes based accountability. [This report was received and shared with members before the meeting ended].
- Decision required as a matter of urgency as two staff were employed.
- Paul Sweeney advised that Outcomes Group funding was also match funded by Autism NI.
- Could statutory sectors add to the funding allocation? Tom advised that the budget situation from a Trust's perspective was not good for next year, so he didn't anticipate that the WHSCT could add to the Outcomes Group's funding for 2025/26. He said he couldn't comment on other statutory agencies.
- Kevin advised that it was unlikely that the Trust could fund Autism NI from the additional funding recently allocated by the Health Minister for services within Children's Disability.

	<p><b><u>Clarity required on Future Funding of Unicef beyond June 2025</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ciara reported that they were working towards assessment in June 2025 and she could not pre-empt the decision.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Future Funding Model</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Valerie advised of a workshop on Consensual Grant Model arranged for 19 March 2025 and encouraged members to attend.</li> </ul> <p>Kevin stated that the focus should be on the priority areas identified at previous workshops. There was a general consensus that the group could not take any decisions at present. Tom asked if a group, with relevant expertise, could be brought together to determine how much money was available for 25/26 and provide a recommendation on spend. Valerie detailed the current members of the T&amp;FG and asked if other members were interested in joining. She asked if a rep from the Trust could also attend the meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Action</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lisa agreed to join the T&amp;FG. Other members to consider.</li> <li>➤ Brenda suggested that the T&amp;FG give consideration to funding areas such as Omagh and Fermanagh who didn't have the services other areas had.</li> <li>➤ Paul Sweeney asked that the T&amp;FG consider a proposal for a contingency fund for LPG's.</li> </ul> <p>Tom thanked Valerie for drafting the "Funding Discussions" paper, and everyone for their input to this discussion.</p>
7	<p><b><u>Our Generation Project, Co-operation Ireland</u></b></p> <p>Tom welcomed Katrina McIlmail and Sarah Fielding from Our Generation Project, to the meeting. Sarah advised that the project was backed by PEACEPLUS to deliver free programmes and training for children and young people aged 9 - 25 years and key youth workers across Northern Ireland. She said the training would be delivered by each partner and would be co-designed and implemented using trauma informed approaches in youth work. Sarah said the cross border partnership included:- Action Mental Health, Donegal Youth Service, Co-operation Ireland, Youth Action NI, Youth Work Ireland, Playboard NI, Boys &amp; Girls Clubs NI, Include Youth and the Ulster University. Each partner organisation were identifying unmet need and would register their own group of young people. Katrina reported they would start with young carers based on emerging need.</p> <p>Brownyn commended the Our Generation project and welcomed their input and resources. Paul Sweeney advised that reps had been invited to present at the next Unicef Child Rights and Participation Board meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Action</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Valerie linking with Sarah.</li> <li>➤ Valerie asked that Our Generation project be promoted via LPG's.</li> <li>➤ Sarah to forward her presentation to Elaine to share with members.</li> </ul>

8	<p><b>Locality Planning Groups</b></p> <p>Paul reported that emerging needs remained the same. He said there was a need for involvement of younger children and said this issue would be monitored. Kevin enquired about youth engagement work and the connection of children/young people via sports centres/sports clubs</p> <p>Paul said he hoped to invite Skeoge Action Research Project to present at a future WAOG meeting.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Paul to link with Elaine to agree a suitable date for this presentation.</li> </ul> <p>Helen reported on the recent launch of available funding across all Council's on ending violence against women and girls.</p> <p>Priscilla gave an update on her report and advised on the emerging lack of counselling sessions and play therapy. She said she continued to work with the Council's Poverty Officer. She commended Fermanagh &amp; Omagh Council on the various actions in supporting the local community after the recent storm.</p> <p>Dr Deehan thanked Pricilla for her complimentary comments regarding Fermanagh &amp; Omagh Council. She said the Council were communicating with NIE regarding additional generators. She said the Council continued to be concerned at the level of poverty in the area. She wished to bring to the attention of members that Avalon House was currently full with long term residents due to their special needs, but said this had reduced the availability of respite care provision. Dr Deehan agreed that there was a huge need for counselling services and other therapeutic services. She said she was a member of Aware NI and they had available online services and youth groups for young people to avail of.</p>
9	<p><b>Hubs Update</b></p> <p>Bronwyn reported that in the third quarter, 92% of referrals were accepted as responsible and forwarded on. 4,843 connections to services were made. 18% had a diagnosis of disability with a further 5% awaiting assessment.</p> <p>Donna informed members that she was planning a meeting with MDT's via the GP Federation as she wished to enhance connections with Hubs with the aim of strengthening linkages to maximise each other's role. She reported that the Hub's continued to be busy and welcomed the addition of two new Hub Co-ordinators - Natasha Burke &amp; Cathy Sweeney. Bronwyn noted the benefit of having Donna in post which had improved linkages with other organisations and enhanced relationships.</p>
10	<p><b>UNICEF</b></p> <p>Ciara reported that the Council were working closely with Unicef and partners in the move towards potential recognition as a Child Friendly City. She said there were four potential outcomes which would influence the way forward. There would be a one day assessment with a panel of nine members - key seniors leaders and</p>

	<p>children/young people would be involved. Tom asked to be informed of the date for senior representatives to meet and to be provided with a briefing in advance.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ciara/Council staff to advise Tom of this date.</li> </ul> <p>Paul Sweeney said this was the last phase of the process and the focus would be on systemic change in the action plan with an annual report on the story of change required. Donna reported that Unicef programme fees were covered to June 2025 and there may be small pieces of work in the three months beyond this. Tom said if we didn't get recognition before October 2025, there needed to be a serious discussion whether the Outcomes Group could continue to fund Unicef.</p>
11	<p><b>Community Planning</b></p> <p>Helen said she wanted to enhance the alignment of Fermanagh &amp; Omagh's community plan with WAOG to ensure its effectiveness with appropriate representation. Valerie advised that she had already met with Helen and John Boyle. Helen said she wished to ensure appropriate linkages with key stakeholders from different structures and noted the involvement of Shane Breen and Seamus Ward from WHSCT at Partnership Board Council meetings. Tom suggested that this be raised at the next regional partnership meeting.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maxine to list on the agenda of CYPSP.</li> </ul> <p>Maxine reported that the draft NI Children &amp; Young People's Plan 2025 - 2028 was available and identified clear linkages with partner agencies including Councils.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maxine to send to Elaine to share with members.</li> </ul>
12	<p><b>Issues to be raised to Regional Partnership</b></p> <p>As discussed at item 11.</p>
13	<p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>Donna reported that the Gateway service remained very busy with over 1,200 referrals in January 2025. She advised that the service currently had a low number of unallocated cases.</p>
14	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Children's Services Co-operation Act [Northern Ireland] 2015</b></p> <p>Ciara advised that Derry &amp; Strabane District Council were in the process of preparing a response, and her colleague Clare may reach out to other members to share responses in advance of the response deadline of 7 March 2025.</p> <p><b>Finance Task &amp; Finish Group</b></p> <p>Tom reiterated his thanks to members of the Finance Task &amp; Finish Group and asked if any additional members were willing to join to contact Valerie.</p>

	<b>Autism NI</b> Kevin advised that the monitoring report on Autism NI for 2023/24 had been emailed to members during the meeting.
15	<b>Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting</b> 30 April 2025 at 10 am via MT