

Child & Family Support Forum

28th July 2009

Present Katherine Small (Pro Contact), Mike Wild (MACC), Elaine Young, (North M/c YIP), Hugh McWilliams (MCCR/BME Network), Lynn Perry (Barnardos), Sinead O'Connor (YASP), Cate Allis (Spurgeons), Christine Smyth (Longsight Youth Arts), Ross Grant (VYM), Jen Richardson (Routes BHA), Vera Martins (42nd Street), Alicia Henry (Support for Progress).

Apologies Judith Saffer (Reconnect, DePaul Trust), Claire Kerfoot (Contact a Family), Amina Lone (Race Foundation), John Biggs (Whitemoss Club for Young People), Amy Wilson (Eclipse), Khent Abraham (Manchester Carers Forum), Martin Duffy (VYM).

Minutes of the last meeting & Matters Arising

Under the item on Safeguarding – Ross mentioned that there was an amendment to the minutes regarding the e-learning courses: the amount of interested applicants who applied and should read 10 and not 700. If you are still interested on going on this course, please contact with Ross.

Matters Arising

Mike reported that MACC had submitted a tender together with VAM and CN4M for the infrastructure support contract from Manchester City Council – there has been no decision as yet and so the start date has been revised from 1st July 2009. It is now expected to be October 2009.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Strategic Lead Update

- **Children's Board** – Mike continues to attend these meetings, along with and Shirley Adams from Gaddum Centre and gave feedback on the most recent meeting:
 - Geoff Little (Deputy Chief Executive (Performance) at the City Council) is now Chair of the Children's Board
 - The meeting was dominated by discussion of the relationship between the Safeguarding and the Children's Boards. There is an in-progress governance statement and a delivery plan which is intended to show how the two tie together. The Safeguarding Children Board has certain functions to fulfil and needs to have in place the right measures to meet the expectations of Central Government. The City Council (ultimately through the Chief

Executive receiving assurances from the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services) has to provide evidence to Government that it is fulfilling its duties in implementing safeguarding arrangements. The relationship should allow the two Boards to challenge each other in a positive way. Mike will circulate papers once the joint working agreement has been finalised.

- The Children's Board also receives a quarterly performance report which sets out progress on the key targets for the city in relation to Children, Young People and Families (the Every Child Matters agenda). It is unclear how the voluntary sector's contribution is captured in this report.
 - More fundamentally, the Board has had discussions around how to improve its own performance: in particular the need for the Board to work effectively as a team.
- **Children Trust Leadership Team** – this is the operations side of the Children's Board, responsible for putting the systems in place to deliver effective services across a range of agencies. The voluntary and community sector's relationship with this group is unclear: we're on the Children's Board and all the district structures but we are not on the Leadership Team nor do we have a means of communication with them. It was set up originally for Local Authority and PCT as these organisations had the most to do in realigning services and getting staff to work together: we have been asking for clarification on the relationship with the voluntary and community sector, particularly through the Strategic Lead.

It has now been agreed that there will be a quarterly meeting with the Strategic Lead who will produce a report to the Children's Trust Leadership Team from the sector which will provide the basis for a discussion. Our strategy is therefore to present the Children, Young People Families Third Sector Strategy to the Children's Board and the subsequent action plan will be taken to the Children's Trust Leadership Team.

- **Children Trust Arrangements Programme** – Following requests at the Children's Board, a handbook is now available (in draft form) containing all the projects which are bringing the Children's Trust Arrangements into being – such as Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The handbook is currently little more than a set of terms of reference for different steering groups and Mike has asked for this to be updated so it provides an overview of the various projects and who is involved.
- **Common Assessment Framework** - Vera raised a concern that voluntary sector organisations are being told by their insurers that they will not cover organisations in taking on Lead Professional Role as this takes on liability

for the performance of other agencies (including statutory bodies). Mike agreed to check with other infrastructure organisations on this as it has significant implications for voluntary organisations who work with children, young people and families in multi-agency settings.

- **Contact Point** – There is still confusion as to what contact point might mean for the voluntary sector organisations. Mike has been given details of a new contact person who may be willing to present to a future Forum meeting. He will give an update on this at the next meeting.
- **Commissioning** – Mike reported that Children’s Services were recruiting for a Commissioning project manager who oversee commissioning development within Children’s Services. It is unclear how this relates to the Youth Service. It was noted that there is currently only identified “commissioner” within Children’s Services at the moment. Shirley Woods-Gallagher is responsible for Parenting and Family Support. It’s not clear who would lead on any other other commissioning processes. A Commissioning Project Group has recently been established and Mike is a member – further feedback at the next meeting.

Mike also informed the meeting that MACC had circulated a tender for a review the recent Parenting and Family Support and Youth Services commissioning processes and a number of applications had been received. Mike will feed back at next meeting.

- **Youth Service** – Following on from the discussion of commissioning, Ross expressed concerned that there is still no-one at the City Council who is able to speak with authority on behalf of the Youth Service. Of late, there have been 4 different contacts. There is no clear direction on the structure for the Youth Service and no clarity around how an “integrated youth service” (i.e. spread around each district) is be put in place through commissioning. VYM is keen to find out where the Youth Service fits into the priorities in each district. It was agreed that this should be raised with Children’s Services – Ross & Mike will talk further on how to approach this.
- **Safeguarding** – the Forum has representation on the Safeguarding Children Board and a particular focus on workforce development (being led on by Voluntary Youth Manchester). Lynn Perry (Barnardos) is now the Board participant and asked the group to let her know what issues they would her to report and feedback in this capacity.

Mike reported that MACC would be advertising for a new post to deliver a range of work around improving safeguarding within voluntary sector organisations who struggle to put this into practice. The post is funded until

March 2010 but will hopefully continue beyond that time. The main aspects of the work will:

- Pull together some tools and resources for the organisations which will be available the MACC website
- Go out to organisations and help them to put the resources into practice.
- Provide information updates and news of training opportunities
- Help co-ordinate input from the voluntary sector into the whole safeguarding board.

This is seen as a short term project to help provide support and also put resources into place for organisations. The creation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority is creating further challenges in developing safeguarding practice. Mike also reported that the Children's Board had emphasised the need for support on this area during the consultation process to inform the new infrastructure contract.

Melanie McGuinness (Family Welfare) is on a currently a member of a Serious Case Review panel. This is the first time a voluntary sector member has been on a panel and Mike will be meeting with Melanie to review how the role of being on the panel as a voluntary sector participant worked.

Mike was asked to provide an updated list of the various boards, steering groups and so on, showing who sits where. He responded that this is being updated by Children's Services and he will circulate it once it is available.

Recruitment

Mike gave an update on recruitment of the staff in MACC who would be working to support the Forum and its work:

- Strategic Lead Development Worker (Children and Families). Full time. Closing date 3rd August. Interview date 11th August. Permanent.
- Safeguarding Project Worker. 3 days per week. Closing date 3rd August. Interview date 12th August. Fixed term.

Information Sharing

- **Sinéad** fed back on her role as a rep on the Central East District Panel. 3 priority areas have been identified. Info was circulated (see the Central East page on the MACC website). The panel needs to improve knowledge of local services and Sinéad has a form wick organisations organisations

are asked complete about their service by the week of 3rd August. This will enable a strong local voluntary sector contribution to the District Plan.

- **Hugh (MCCR)** – In partnership with GMCVO, Manchester Refugee Support Network, MCCR and Manchester BME network to do infrastructure support and capacity building for groups for 3 years spread across greater Manchester.
- **Lynn (Barnardos)** –ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Mentoring Service has been set up and 2 Co-ordinators are now in post. All mentors are currently having an ESOL tutor training - a new city-wide service focused on increasing employer liability. Lynn will circulate details.
- **Sinéad (YASP)** - have reapplied for Working Neighbourhoods Fund. They are undertaking a full strategic map of how they meet Local Area Agreement outcomes and how outputs are measure. This is a major piece of work.
- **Vera (42nd Street)** - Planet Art is arts based work and work around challenging stereotypes around mental health, aimed at young people in Manchester, Salford and Trafford. This is open to all young people not just those who attend 42nd Street. They also have a 3 year Disabled Young Peoples Project for 13 -25 years offering 1-1 support and work in schools. The other project is the Imagination Bubble which uses forum theatre. More information can be available about these projects from 42nd Street.
- **Ross (VYM)** – The recent Leading the Way Conference was very successful day and generated a lot of thoughts and ideas. Produced Youth Work Matters magazine which has been in the pipeline for a while now and focussing on youth work issues and the voluntary sector. Will be producing the magazine twice a year, however if it goes down well they will produce more throughout the year. VYM undertook a consultation on restructure of the youth service last week and will be sending out a report to the voluntary sector which you can comment on. VYM going through review at the moment and will continue its level of service.
- **Jen (Routes BHA)**– Commissioned to work around children and education: every Saturday for the next few months tracking children who are out of school and the work will continue until March 2010. Routes is part of the partnership bid and the government office northwest impact fund bid was successful which will enable them to work with BME communities and migrant workers.

- **Parents Service** – leaflet circulated. Offers support around separation and divorce. Only available in North and Central Manchester.
- **Alicia Henry** – Support for Progress project based in Moss Side. Age limit 10 years upwards and offers counselling service, 1-1 support and group support. Work with parents and the elderly – community cohesion. Work with BME communities but this is not exclusive. Service is still being developed and is expanding.
- **Judith** – Running new group in September on Monday mornings for parents of teenagers in Withington. They have also submitted a bid for Children in Need to continue their mediation service for 15 – 18 year olds.
- **Mike** – The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy is now available from the Mental Health Joint Commissioning Exec. This is a large document, so please contact Mike for a copy.
- **Elaine** - North Manchester Youth Inclusion project. In the process of taking new referrals of young people 8 – 16 years who are at risk of social exclusion. Young people can access the service as well as the parents. The areas we cover are Harpurhey and Moston. If anyone wants to refer young people or would like a referral form then please email elaine.young@catch22.org.uk.

Any Other Business

Mike asked if anyone who has experience of working with CAF would be willing to contribute to a meeting MACC was setting up about the proposals to develop an adult CAF: it seems a good opportunity to share experiences across different parts of the voluntary sector. Please contact Mike if you are interested.

Next Meeting

29 September 10am – 12.00 at MACC