

Minutes of Children & Young Peoples Network

18 December 2006

10am – 12pm PCCS

Present:

Charlie Adie – Motiv8 and Community Network member
Brenda Cairns – Homestart and Community Network member
June Christie – Mencap
Karen Drayton – Connors Toy Library
Jackie Ingram – Connors Toy Library
Sue Ganter – Interfusion
Katherine Marsden-Broad – Portsmouth Under 8's Forum (PUEF)
Terri Windsor – Homestart
Mary Wishart – Community Network

1 Welcome and introductions

2 Background and context to the network

- 2.1 MW outlined how and why the idea of the network had come about. The Community Network is not well represented for the arena of children and young people and it was agreed at the last Network meeting that CA and MW investigate the creation of a sub-group around this area. Further to this, CA pointed out that representation across this area of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is lacking and it is hard to say it is being represented at all the different meetings at present. There is confusion about whether representatives at these meetings are acting in the capacity of their own organisation or as part of the wider sector. If it is as a sector rep, then there are further challenges as to how information is fed back.
- 2.2 CA gave some detail about similar groups set up by Southampton Voluntary Services and by Community Action Hampshire which have been very successful in creating a recognisable, accountable and coherent body for consultation and information sharing from the VCS. Links to the alliances are <http://www.southamptonvs.org.uk/alliance.htm> and <http://action.hants.org.uk/ECMHamp.html>
- 2.3 It was agreed that it was very important to ensure the VCS continues to be an independent voice in influencing change and having input into local decisions. The creation of this network would be a vehicle in which to ensure this can happen much more effectively than is the current position.

3 Who should be involved?

- 3.1 There was discussion about whether the network should be comprised from the VCS entirely or also have members from the statutory sector. It was observed that multi-agency groups already exist, and the reason

for setting this network up was to create a stronger voice for the VCS. It was agreed that the network would be made up of VCS representatives with the option of inviting other agencies to attend when appropriate.

- 3.2 There was discussion about how information could be shared and making sure providers and service users are kept informed. Distributing information via an email circulation list is a good way to keep many people informed efficiently.

There was consideration as to whether young people and other service users should be directly involved on the network to ensure we know their views. Discussion revealed that a lot of consultation already happens through Community Improvement Managers and other bodies. It was agreed that the make up and structure of the network would allow for feedback to service users to be delivered and gathered in an effective way. Any Terms of reference needs to have a clear statement on how feedback will work.

- 3.3 It was agreed that a clear Terms of Reference document needed to be produced, ensuring a democratic representation of the sector.

- 3.4 The areas that need to be involved were agreed to be:

- Early years
- Under 8's
- Children 9-13
- Youth 13-25
- Faith groups
- Uniformed groups
- Disability groups

A piece of work needs to be carried out to identify exactly where the gaps are in getting representation are (9-13 in particular was flagged up as being one to consider in particular). A number of sources were identified as being helpful to doing this (Parent Users Group with Mencap; ABC Surestart; CIP Managers; Children's Fund; CIED team; Portsmouth Disability Forum; CHYPS directory; Children's Centre Partnership).

ACTION: MW to perform mapping exercise using a variety of sources to identify gaps.

4 **Structure of the network and how it links in to existing forums**

- 4.1 Currently PUEF offer a forum for the under 8's. A forum for 8-13 age range was planned but never came into being. The Youth Forum for age range 13-25 ran successfully but has not been in operation for some time now. This new network would not be duplicating the work of any existing body; it will only complement what is already operating.

4.2 There was discussion about how this network links in with the Community Network. It was agreed it was important that this network is a way in which to increase representation from the children and young peoples sector in a focussed and productive way, and it will feed back into the Community Network, and then back to the LSP and associated partnerships accordingly. It was agreed the Terms of reference for this network will state clearly the link to the Community Network.

4.3 There was discussion around the structure of the network. There will be the wider network of VCS children and young peoples organisations (the figure of 300 was mentioned in terms of exiting contacts and databases) and then there will be a Steering Group which will compromise 10-12 members and be comprised of the following to co-ordinate the work of the network:

- Community Network – 2 members
- Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership representative – 1 member
- Early Years – 2 members
- Children – 2 members
- Youth – 2 members
- Specialist groups – 2 members

It is likely that members can hold more than one role – for example, BC is a Community Network representative and also an Early Years one.

It was agreed that the Steering Group should be able to co-opt other relevant members as and when appropriate.

ACTION: MW to draft Terms of Reference document, job description for Steering Group members and a Guidelines document.

There was some discussion as to whether the reps should be providers or users.

ACTION: MW to speak with Phillip Lee from Southampton VS about their experiences of this.

5 Next Steps

5.1 It was agreed that the Steering Group should be in place by Easter. Members would be selected at this point in time by either volunteering or being approached if not already involved. An open meeting would be a useful way to introduce the Group, and presentations from each member were considered an option for this meeting. It was important to stress that this would be an interim Steering Group, put in place to get the network started. It would be reviewed after an agreed period of time, when members could be put in place more democratically.

- 5.2 A high profile volunteering event is being organised by the CIED team in February 2007 and it was agreed it would be a good way to launch the network. Ideas included publicity in the News, and the production of a leaflet to distribute at the event.

ACTION: MW to speak with Sarah McDuff in CIED team for further information.

- 5.2 The question of how any costs incurred will be met was raised. The Local Network Fund was cited as a possible source of funding which may be appropriate. Seeking support from PCC was also suggested, in the form of providing support in kind (room hire etc).

ACTION: MW to look into possible funding sources

- 5.3 Briefing sessions were a way of sharing information with the wider network which had worked well for Southampton. 5 or 6 meetings a year was suggested, perhaps holding these at community facilities. The seven new Children's Centres were offered as potential ideas for venues as well.

ACTION: MW to research possible venues.

6 Any other business

- 6.1 The name of the network is to be considered and decided upon at the next meeting.
- 6.2 The Children & Young People's Plan 2007/8 consultation was discussed briefly. Organisations had responded individually to the plan. The overall feedback was that it related too heavily to educational targets, and the priorities had been decided on in relation to how easy they were to measure, rather than being real priorities. This was felt to be very disappointing and the feedback had reflected this.

7 Date of next meeting

- 7.1 The date of the next meeting was agreed, Monday 8 January 2007 10am – 12pm. It was agreed to hold it at PCCS, as it was felt to be important that the fact the network is being driven by PCCS, so the meetings should be visibly owned by it.