

## **Newry and Mourne District Council**

Report of the meeting of Newry and Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership held at 9.30am on Friday, 27 February 2009, in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry.

**In Attendance:** Fergal O'Brien, SHSCT  
Brian Quinn, Community Representative  
Laurence Bradley, Confederation of Community Groups  
Derrick Harris, Newry Sports Centre  
Katerina Skrebska, Ethnic Minority Support Worker  
Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer  
Ann Sarsfield  
Marian McCaul, Simon Community  
Sheena McEldowey, Environmental Health  
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative  
Lorraine Dobson, PSNI  
Angela Corr, SHSCT  
Gabrielle O'Neill, SHSCT  
Róisín Kelly, Administration Assistant

**Apologies:** Eddy Curtis, Newry and Mourne District Council  
Briega Magill, Administration Officer  
Rosemarie McDonnell, Citizens Advice Bureau  
Eileen Murphy, Newry Women's Aid  
Kathleen Murphy, Newry and Mourne Carers  
Una Walsh, South Armagh Women and Family Health  
Orla McCann, Supporting Communities NI  
Paul McLennon, EDSA  
Patrick Kelly  
Sean McKeivitt, ROSA  
Kate Hamilton

### **Minutes of Meeting held on 5 December 2008**

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 5 December 2008. (Copy circulated).

It was noted that the agreement WAP should continue to contribute towards Aisling Rennick's salary was wrongly recorded in the previous meeting's minutes as proposed by Bertie Quinn instead of Brian Quinn and this was amended accordingly.

On the proposal of Bertie Flynn, seconded by Laurence Bradley, the above report was adopted as a true and accurate record, same having been circulated.

Brian Quinn noted that ROMAL have now ceased to exist due to lack of funding. There was disappointment expressed about the demise of ROMAL and how this would directly impact on community infrastructure in the area. It was also discussed how both Patrick Kelly of ROMA and Sean McKeivitt of ROSA were invaluable in distributing information to community networks and how difficult this will be without them.

Fergal O'Brien suggested a letter of thanks should be sent to Patrick Kelly from the group.

**Action: Aisling to draft and send a letter of gratitude to Patrick Kelly.**

### **Matters Arising**

Fergal went through some action points arising from the previous meeting.

He revealed due to the reorganisation of the Trust, two additional Health Development Workers, Angela Corr and Gabrielle O'Neill would now be working in Newry.

Bertie Flynn raised the point that some children of migrant workers were at risk of malnutrition due delays or problems with benefit payments to their parents. Migrant families were now settled in the area but many were finding difficulty getting benefit payments as they had not been properly registered.

Aisling Rennick asked that if anyone heard of families in similar circumstances, they should contact Katerina in the Ethnic Minority Support Centre. There would also be a Lithuanian focus group meeting held on 12 March, focussing mainly on family wellbeing and needs.

It was agreed to ask Citizens Advice Bureau to make a presentation to the June WAP meeting regarding the work of their organisation.

### **Presentation from Laurence Bradley, Confederation of Community Groups**

Laurence Bradley, Confederation of Community Groups, then gave a presentation on the new organisation structures within the confederation.

He said that due to reduction in funding and impending RPA, the Confederation had now reduced its management structure from five to three as follows:- Chief Executive Raymond Jackson, Development Manager Laurence Bradley and Volunteer Manager Colette Ruddy. The Confederation had been restructured into 2 sections. Finance and HR will be managed by the Chief Executive and the Development Manager will amalgamate the work of the Volunteer Centre and Community Support. Laurence feels that this restructuring will make the Confederation a more robust organisation.

The Confederation of Community Groups has a 3-year financial strategy and aimed to increase services to and membership of voluntary community groups. There are presently monthly meetings with the voluntary network. The Confederation will become an information portal with an extension planned at Ballybot House, improvements in the quality and availability of the Community Newsletter and improvement and update of their website. Laurence also revealed there has been a submission to the Council to provide support for Neighbourhood Renewal and this is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  completed. Fergal asked if the names of the Neighbourhood Renewal officers could be provided.

**Action: Laurence will circulate the names and contact details of Neighbourhood Renewal officers and a copy of his presentation.**

In reply to a query regarding the closure of ROMAL, Laurence replied that it had been devastating for communities that the Confederation cannot provide the same level of support. NR are providing community infrastructure within the specific Neighbourhood Renewal areas with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  - 2 workers across 9 groups. The resources were not available to provide this level of support outside of these defined areas. The committee will take responsibility for engaging with communities outside Neighbourhood Renewal. Fergal thanked Laurence for his presentation.

### **Progress report from Katerina Skrebska, BME advice and Support Worker**

Katerina gave a report on the work of the Newry and Mourne Ethnic Minority Support Centre. (Copy circulated)

**Action: It was agreed a letter be sent to the Education Minister, Catriona Ruane expressing concern regarding access to free school meals for migrant children whose parents were not eligible for benefits.**

Bertie Flynn also raised concerns about how to get information to the people to migrant workers who were no longer working and would therefore have reduced access to the necessary information.

**Action: Katerina and Aisling will draft a paper about benefit entitlements for the Partnership and this information will be circulated among Partnership members.**

There followed a discussion about how the BME Centre could advertise their logo outside the City Hall, but as it is a listed building, it was suggested a free-standing board may be used.

**Action: Agreed to seek information from Sure Start South Armagh regarding the numbers of BME families they support.**

Fergal thanked Katerina for her report.

## **Update from Aisling Rennick re Southern Investing for Health Partnership and Issue Groups**

Aisling began by talking about the emergency fuel relief scheme. She informed the group that a substantial amount of the funding had now been accessed. The scheme was being delivered through St Vincent de Paul, Newry, Newry Baptist Church and Sandys Street Presbyterian Church. However, the scheme was open to the whole area and referrals were being made from all parts of the District. Payment was made by voucher or stamps and the claimant was responsible for delivery of their own fuel. In conjunction with the scheme, fuel efficiency packs were being delivered to older people in the area through relevant agencies. The packs contained, radiator reflective film, a flask, a fleece blanket and an energy efficient lightbulb. The packs had proved to be extremely popular.

From 1 April 2009, the current Southern Health and Social Services Board would no longer exist and responsibility for Southern Investing for Health Partnership would transfer to the Regional Public Health Agency.

The Partnership had agreed to fund 3 Health Inequalities Workers in the Southern Area. The workers would be based in Council, with 1 worker based in Newry and Mourne.

Aisling highlighted recent electric blanket tested, which took place in the area. In total, 128 blankets were tested with 71 failing the safety standard, a failure rate of 57%. She also informed the group that Home Safety Week would be held from 20-25 April with the theme of poison safety and young children.

Bertie Flynn congratulated the Council on their campaign highlighting teen smoking in the area.

## **Enhancing Personal and Public Involvement within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust – Action Plan Consultation**

Fergal then gave a presentation on Enhancing Personal and Public Involvement Within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. (copy attached)

There was increased recognition of the right of service users and stakeholders to be effectively involved in aspects of health and social care development and delivery. The Trust has a regional strategy in context for user involvement over the next 20 years. They are committed to strategic priorities, specifically to involve individuals in decisions around their own treatment and care. A need has been recognised for consultation with community services in South Armagh and South Down to identify gaps in service.

Currently, the Promoting Well Being Department has been reshaped

Fergal agreed there are different levels of involvement

Lorraine Dobson of PSNI said there is a lot of work being done with the community around drugs and alcohol and PSNI can exert some influence from their perspective.

Aisling agreed a lot of organisations can have a direct impact on the community regarding health/wellbeing and community safety.

Fergal talked about how young offenders can work with social services – older people and Community Safety can link up. It shows that existing partnerships all help.

Aisling highlighted that Community Safety are providing security lights for the elderly as fear has an impact on their wellbeing.

Katerina felt easier access to information is needed for BME groups.

Ann Sarsfield said that SureStart have been very active in helping BME groups, holding a coffee morning for mothers with toddlers and distributing information through Daisy Mail.

Derrick Harris highlighted the work done by Newry Sports Centre in tackling obesity, trampolines are being used to great benefit in the Newry area. They also run a rehabilitation programme and help with mental health problems.

There was some discussion on how more consultation and feedback on programmes in the area would be useful.

It was highlighted there is a problem with access by bus and even crossing the road to get to Orana with children. It was suggested the group could support Orana in getting a zebra crossing to enable a safer road crossing for those travelling by bus to the centre.

Fergal raised the question of how the group could work to further address health issues.

Laurence Bradley responded that the Health in the City project had been interesting but perhaps over ambitious considering resources available. It involved looking at health inequalities in the Newry city area, and trying to develop working models

Specific areas where more help would be needed were highlighted. These included Home Accident Prevention, respite care, children in care and drugs and alcohol problems. The biggest obstacle was lack of funds in the public sector. It was suggested a health inequality worker in the council would be very useful and that available resources need to be better managed. Health in the City had been a great idea but more people resources were badly needed. It would be good to revisit the idea with a more realistic eye to the resources available.

It was suggested that sub committee structure of the Partnership had worked very well and should they be revived there was an opportunity to target marginalised groups.

It was agreed it would be useful to review the structure and membership of the Partnership

**Action: It was agreed to arrange a half day planning meeting for the Partnership.**

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 11.20am.

Signed: Aisling Rennick  
Investing for Health Officer