

Newry and Mourne District Council

Report of the meeting of Newry and Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership held at 9.30am on Friday, 5 June 2009, in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry.

In Attendance: Fergal O'Brien, SHSCT
Katerina Skrebska, Ethnic Minority Support Worker
Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer
Marie-Anne McCaul, Simon Community
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative
Rosemarie McDonnell, Citizens Advice Bureau
Jacinta Linden, SHFHI
Loma Wilson, NIHE
Eddy Curtis, NMDC
Briega Magill, Administration Officer

Also in Attendance: Christine McCarron, Drugs and Alcohol Team
Deirdre Magill, Drugs and Alcohol Team
Israel Hontavilla, Project Manager, STEP
Cathy Murray, Cosy Homes Programme

Apologies: Kathleen Murphy, Newry and Mourne Carers
Una Walsh, South Armagh Women and Family Health
Eoin Devlin, Env Health
Orla McCann, Supporting Communities NI

Minutes of Meeting held on 27 February 2009

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 27 February 2009. (Copy circulated).

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

Briega to follow-up with L Bradley re circulation of names and contact details of Neighbourhood Renewal officers.

Presentation – Drugs and Alcohol Partnership

Fergal introduced Christine McCarran to members – Christine is a member of the Newry and Mourne Drugs and Alcohol Team.

Deirdre Magill then gave a presentation on the work of the team and on the structure and work of the Southern Area Integrated Alcohol and Drugs Support Services. (Copy of structure attached)

Deirdre said services available included One to One Education, Group Work, Accredited Training Qualification, Needs Tailored Prevention and Parent Support.

She said one to one support included a referral system and screening process, mapping exercise, risk and protective factors, harm reduction, and coping strategies – learning to say “No.”

Deirdre said group work took place in various venues across the Newry and Mourne Area with specific Drug and Alcohol Workshops being held.

Deirdre said Accredited Training Courses were available. An NVQ Level 1 Drugs Awareness course, consisting of 9 contact hours, was provided during evenings and weekends at central locations. This was successfully completed by 212 participants. A NVQ Level 2 Drugs Awareness course, comprising 39 contact hours, was facilitated 1 day per week over 6 weeks – successfully completed by 18 participants.

Deirdre said they offered support to other health professionals and to parents. She said the TATI (Talking about Tough Issues) programme was particularly successful. They also had an Arrest Referral Support Service for anyone coming into contact with the PSNI or Probation Service.

In response to a query from Bertie Flynn, Deirdre said they had a very good working relationship with the community sector in the Newry and Mourne area.

It was agreed, when updated, Deirdre would forward the Southern Area Integrated Alcohol and Drugs Support Service Structure to Briega for circulation to members.

Presentation – Citizens Advice Bureau

Rosemarie McDonnell, Manager of Citizens Advice Bureau, then gave a presentation on the work of CAB.

Rosemarie said she had been Manager of CAB for seven months and the service was now based at Ballybot House in Newry.

Rosemarie said the Money Debt Advisor dealt with issues such as repossessions, credit card debt and bank debts. She said, in the current economic climate, the number of people affected by such issues had risen dramatically and the stress and worry of such situations was having a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of many of these clients. Many

people, in particular construction workers, were suddenly finding themselves being made redundant and unable, in many cases to claim benefits if their partner was still in employment.

Rosemarie said there were also several advisors within CAB who offered one-to-one, telephone and e-mail advice. She said the regional website was a useful tool especially the Self Help Guide.

Outreach services were provided in Crossmaglen on Monday mornings, in Mullaghbawn on Tuesday evenings, in Newtownhamilton on Wednesday mornings and in Kilkeel on Friday mornings. She said there was a drop-in services every Tuesday and Thursday in Ballybot House from 10.00 a.m. to 12 noon. Rosemarie said she was currently looking at extending this service further in the South Down area.

Rosemarie said they also had four volunteers who were able to avail of accredited training. She said CAB was currently looking to recruit a Tribunal Worker/General Advisors and would hopefully have someone in place by September.

Fergal thanked Rosemarie for her presentation and asked members to liaise with Rosemarie and to assist and work with CAB where possible.

Warm and Cosy Homes – Energy Efficiency Project

Cathy Murray, SHSST, then gave a short presentation on the above project. She said NIE had offered funding to home owners or private tenants for the above energy efficiency programme comprising the following two options:-

- Option 1 – Energy Saver Homes Package - includes insulation (cavity wall, loft, hot water cylinder) 4 energy saving light bulbs and natural gas or oil-fired central heating (Applies only to households with Economy 7, solid fuel or those with no central heating)
- Option 2 – Free Insulation.

To be eligible, one of the following criteria must be met:

- Single with income or pension less than £18,000 gross
- Joint couple with income or pension less than £25,000 gross
- Single parent family with income or pension less than £25,000 gross
- Over 70 irrespective of income.

Cathy said a limited number of packages were available and it was on a first come, first served basis. The programme would run June and July with a closing date of 31 July 2009. A student would start with the Council in July who would provide some additional support to Cathy in logging details and seeking evidence of income etc.

Cathy said a Press Release would be published in the local papers in the near future. She said across the Southern Region it was hoped to carry out 132 free insulations and 50 energy Save Home Packages.

1000 leaflets were distributed to members of Wellbeing Action Partnership for wider distribution.

Justyna McCabe to be asked to translate the leaflet into Polish and Lithuanian and this then to be circulated by e-mail to WAP members including Jacinta Linden and Cathy Murray.

Introduction to team and consultation on Promoting Wellbeing Strategy

Fergal invited members to an information/consultation morning on the 12th June at 9.30am in the Board Room in Daisy Hill Hospital.

The purpose of this morning will be twofold-

- to inform community and voluntary groups about the Promoting Wellbeing Team and give people a chance to meet new staff and hear about their roles
- to provide an opportunity for groups to give their views on the Promoting Wellbeing Strategy which is currently under consultation

A full copy of the strategy is available on request prior to this meeting.

Briege to e-mail all Members with this invitation.

Presentation by Israel Hontavilla, Belong Programme Manager, STEP

Israel said the Belong programme was developed by the Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee Working Group on the rights and needs of BME Children and Young People. The programme aimed to improve outcomes for BME children and young people (7-12 years) across the Southern area. The overarching outcome for the programme is to promote a sense of belonging, through increasing cultural confidence and competence, increasing participation in clubs and schools, increasing educational achievement of Traveller children, reducing bullying and racial-bullying and increasing resilience.

It was agreed Israel would liaise with Bertie Flynn in relation to possible participation with the Scouts organisation.

Progress Report - Ethnic Minority Support Worker

Katerina said approximately 1500 queries had been dealt with to-date. She said the number of appointments per day had now almost doubled.

Katerina said over the past couple of months the jobs available to migrants in lower skilled labour positions, have rapidly declined. Due to redundancies many migrants seek help with accessing the services, finding new employment and employment rights issues. She said she had referred a number of families for the Keep Warm Fuel Grant through SVP.

Katerina said there was a real danger that some of the BME families will be or are already living in poverty because of job losses or restricted access to support services. She said her database of queries and client contacts showed that majority of BME people living and working in Northern Ireland are settled families including 'lone parent families'. She said there was no evidence of 'crowds' leaving Northern Ireland; there are still newcomers mainly from Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria seeking employment in Newry and Mourne District.

Katerina said most of her clients are members of Polish community, Slovakian, Lithuanian and Russian speaking communities. Also cases of Hungarian, Latvian, Czech, Bulgarian, Romanian and Portuguese speaking people coming or calling to ask for help or information. New leaflets were now available in a further four languages - added Hungarian, Latvian, Slovak, Bulgarian.

Katerina said there would be a Celebration of Lithuanian Culture event in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor on Saturday, 20 June 2009, organised by the Lithuanian community members and supported by Newry and Mourne District Council and the Confederation of Community Groups.

It was also planned to hold a Coffee Morning with Sure Start Orana on 23 June 2009 for BME Families to provide further introduction to services of Sure Start and Ethnic Minority Support Centre, and information on health and education.

Katerina said in the near future she would be based for one morning per week for a period of six months in the NIHE offices in Boat Street to assist BME customers with housing queries/issues. It was hoped that this service would be extended to the Kilkeel area in the future.

Fergal thanked Katerina for all her hard work.

Update from Aisling Rennick

Southern Investing for Health Partnership

Community Energy Efficiency Programme The Issue Group agreed to commit a maximum of £25,000 annually to this programme and agreed to investigate the possibility of extending the programme in partnership with Down and Lisburn Trust.

A very successful event was held in Armagh on 25 March 2009 regarding “tackling fuel poverty at a local level”. The event was arranged by the Community Energy Efficiency Project and was attended by a broad range of community representatives.

Fuel Relief Scheme The Southern Board through SIHP provided £19,000 for emergency fuel relief in the Newry and Mourne Area. The scheme was co-ordinated by the Council and delivered through St Vincent de Paul, Newry Baptist Church and Sandy’s Street Presbyterian Church. The scheme was aimed at those most in need and therefore operated only on the basis of referrals from appropriate organisations. Referees were provided with oil vouchers, bags of coal or part payment of fuel bills. The programme has now closed and is being evaluated. Similar projects were coordinated by TADA for Craigavon and Banbridge and HAZ for Armagh and Dungannon.

One hundred energy efficiency packs have also been made available, targeted at older people. The packs contained radiator reflector film, a flask, a fleece blanket and an energy saving lightbulb. All packs have now been distributed through relevant agencies.

Air Quality The Issue Group have contributed £2000 towards an air quality publicity campaign being developed by Southern Group Environmental Health. The campaign was rolled out on billboards throughout the Southern Area week commencing 18 May 2008.

Neighbourhood Programme The Issue Group contributed £4000 towards a neighbourhood-based programme. The programme worked in partnership with NIHE to provide 4 grants of £1000 each to neighbourhood-based projects with an environmental focus. The 4 projects were based in Ballynasaggart, Dungannon; Drumellan and Westacres, Craigavon and Meigh in South Armagh and included removal of graffiti, provision of window boxes and entrance features.

Small Grant Programme 36 groups have been funded in this year’s programme and the first of the reports are coming into the SIHP office. Publicity and promotion of the impact of this programme continues.

The VOICE programme – teaching English language skills to non-English speakers – a training course is planned for June and is fully subscribed.

The Mentalentivity programme, promoting positive mental health for men living in rural areas, is currently being implemented in South Armagh and a DVD is being produced. This programme will be presented to the full Partnership meeting in October.

Health Inequalities Workers in the Southern Area

It was noted three Health Improvement worker posts to tackle health and social wellbeing inequalities have recently been appointed within District Councils under Service Development investments from the legacy SHSSB, now the Public Health Agency. The Officers will be focusing their work in the key Health Improvement priorities of Smoking Cessation, Nutrition and Healthy Eating, Drugs and Alcohol and Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy.

Two Officers will be employed by Armagh City and District Council under the auspices of Southern Group Environmental Health Committee. One of these Officers will be based in Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council but work across Armagh and Dungannon and South Tyrone Districts and the second Officer will be based in Banbridge District Council, to work across both Banbridge and Craigavon Districts. The third Officer will be employed by, based in and work across Newry and Mourne District Council.

The Officers will take up post in the near future and will want to meet with relevant staff as part of their induction, but also to ensure effective communication and consistency of approach for this service development across the southern area.

It was agreed that the Newry and Mourne Officer would be invited to all future meetings of the Wellbeing Action Partnership.

Newry and Mourne District Council

Community Challenge The Newry and Mourne Community Challenge will be held in September/October 2009. The Challenge will be organised in partnership with Women and Family Health Initiative and South Down Family Health Initiative following on from the successful arrangements in 2008.

Credit Crunch Information Sessions Two Money Management Information Sessions were arranged for Council employees. The Sessions were delivered by the Money Management Advisor from Newry CAB and were extremely positively received.

No smoking Day Competition - A staff competition was held to mark No Smoking Day on 11 March 2009 with approximately 100 staff members

participating. Southern Investing for Health Partnership sponsored the prizes for the competition.

Step-o-Meter Challenge Twenty Council employees have just completed in the Southern Area Step-o-meter Challenge, which aims to encourage people to increase the level of activity in their daily lives.

Newry and Mourne Home Accident Prevention Group - Home Safety week this year was 20 –25 April 2009, with the theme for this year as “Lift it and Lock it”. Particular focus was given to the parents and guardians of under 5s. In conjunction with Home Safety Week, the HAP group obtained funding from Southern Trust to provide basic safety packs for older people and families with small children. Packs to be distributed through relevant organisations. The HAP group along with Surestart and SIHP has provided changing mats with safety messages to be distributed to new mothers in the District. The project was launched on Monday 16 February
Electric blanket testing sessions were held in Warrenpoint, Killeel, Mountnorris and Jonesboro. In total 128 blankets were tested; 71 failed – a failure rate of 57%.

Local Government Awards 2008 The Challenge of Change Project was named Best Joint Initiative between Councils at the Local Government Awards 2008 event held on 26 February 2009. We have also been asked to submit the project for the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) Awards.

Review of Action Plan

It was agreed to hold a half day, one item agenda, meeting on Friday 11 September 2009 to review the Wellbeing Action Partnership’s Action Plan for 2009-2011.

It was also agreed to hold a further Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting on Friday 25 September 2009 to discuss other routine business.

Request to attend Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting

At the request of Caroline McEvoy, Editor, Newry Reporter, it was agreed she be invited to meet with the Wellbeing Action Partnership at the meeting on 25 September 2009 to establish contacts/links with various members.

South Down Family Health Initiative – Lottery Funding

Members expressed their congratulation to Jacinta Linden on the much welcomed funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

Jacinta said that South Down Family Health Initiative had been awarded a grant of £491,217 over the next four years to boost the health and wellbeing of local people. She said there were four key outcomes across the Newry and Mourne area, including networking activities, community education, health and wellbeing and training.

Jacinta said it was hoped to have three new staff in post very soon to help deliver the proposed programme. Jacinta said the Wellbeing Action Partnership was an ideal forum to provide contacts/advice and assistance and she looked forward to working with members.

It was agreed a letter of congratulations be sent to the Chairperson of the South Down Family Health Initiative.

It was agreed that Sean McKeivitt, Neighbourhood Renewal be invited to all future meetings of the Wellbeing Action Partnership.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 11.45 am.