

CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP
WOODHILL HOUSE – COMMITTEE ROOM 4
Wednesday 12th March 2008

10:00 a.m.

MINUTE OF MEETING

Present:

Emma Watson	Manager – Childcare 4 All (Chair)
Jim Wilson	Scottish Enterprise Grampian
Cllr Richard Stroud	Elected Member
Maureen Rennie	Manager - Childcare @ Home
Mandy Mayo	SPPA
Jenny Willox	Parent Representative
Susan Bain	Association of Quality Nurseries in Scotland
Elaine Herron	Development Officer - Scottish Childminding Association
Helen Farquhar	Early years Review Team
Gillian Robertson	Partnership Manager – JobCentre Plus
Caroline Hay-Crawford	Development Officer (Childcare Strategy)
Debbie Bruce	Training Officer (Childcare Strategy)
Amy Pirie	Information Service Co-ordinator
Jean Peat	Minute

Welcome

The Chair asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of Helen Farquhar, Early years Review team, present to observe and Gillian Robertson, replacement for Campbell Stewart, JobCentre Plus.

1. Apologies:

Linda Pirie	National Day Nurseries Association
Jo Hughes	Education Officer (Early Years)
Chris Smillie	Project Officer – Working for Families
Shaunna Allan	Development Officer (Early Years)
Moira Beverley	Education Accountant
Martina Hickey-Laing	Aberlour Childcare Trust
Margaret Wylie	Scottish Childminding Association

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Although not able to attend, Linda Pirie had emailed her request for an amendment to the last minute of 12 December 2007 AOCB. Linda wished the minute to read that *Adam Ingram stated that the guidance had been misinterpreted by some local authorities and what was intended was that partner providers should be able to retain part of the funding paid to them, to use for training. Not all the funding was intended to be paid to parents however, Aberdeenshire had made it clear that all monies paid to providers had to be paid to parents.* The rest of the minute was agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.

3. Draft Minutes of Partnership Sub-groups for Noting:

Funding Task Group Meeting 31 January 2008

There were no questions or comments

Training Task Group Meetings 12 December 2007 & 28 February 2008

There were no questions or comments

ACTION

4. Matters Arising from Last Minute:

a) Care Commission Complaints Procedure

Linda, in her email, had also requested that the Childcare Partnership write a letter to Jacqui Roberts, and copy to Adam Ingram, outlining the urgent need for an appeals procedure to ‘protect the rights of Care Providers and their employees when complained against, to protect the rights of Care Providers, their employees and other involved agencies with regard to the content of inspection and complaints reports and when there is disagreement over grading levels’. After some discussion it was agreed that this was something that The Partnership could do. Emma asked for volunteers to help her to compile a response on behalf of The Partnership. Linda should be included and Mandy wished to contribute by email. Emma asked Jean to arrange a meeting for all interested parties.

b) INEA II Inspection

Caroline had in her possession the recently published report on the Inspection of the Education Functions of Aberdeenshire Council (INEA) and was able to report that The Childcare Partnership had received a very favourable mention along with the Information Service. Caroline thanked everyone who had contributed to the interviewing process.

5. Childcare @ Home & Childcare 4 All Reports:

Emma highlighted the Childcare 4 All Mobile Resource Vehicle and its potential use by other agencies and schools.

Maureen advised members that The Partnership had since agreed the funding for next year. The BIG Lottery funding applied for has still to be announced.

6. Working for Families:

Chris Smillie was unable to attend the meeting.

7. Children in Scotland – Update on Research Exercise:

Some members met with Sarah Gillian to contribute to the research on Community Planning. Transport was also looked at as a key issue. Gaps in provision identified by the group were; lack of consultation with children, insufficient support for parents of children with additional support needs, sustainability issues for some services and lack of mobile resources, in particular a reading bus or playbus, both of which will feature in next year’s plan.

8. Early Years & Childcare Strategy Review:

Helen Farquhar, a member of the early years and childcare review team was in attendance to observe. Consultation is ongoing and the ‘Child at the Centre’ framework is being used to look at different themes. The draft report is on schedule to be out in June and submitted to the Education, Learning and Leisure committee in terms of the recommendation highlighted by the review. The Information Service will meet with members of the review team on Monday. Mandy asked whether agencies would be involved in the review and Helen was able to reply that SPPA will certainly be included in the process.

Caroline added that the admissions policy has also been reviewed and agreed at the E, L & L Committee in February. Mandy asked if she could receive a copy. Caroline will send one on to her.

9. Childcare & Pre-school Education Plan 2008 Review:

Caroline guided members through the second draft of the plan highlighting the changes that had been agreed at the ‘Away Day’ on 26 February. Jim updated on the new Skills Development Scotland and advised that as yet no policy had been decided on whether SDS would be members of The Childcare Partnerships. It was agreed that it was important from a training aspect to have someone from Scottish Enterprise around the table.

CHC

Caroline reminded everyone that figures would be updated right up until the time of printing. In terms of the budget, Caroline said that the total figure of £1,754,756 might look like an increase but single status had to be accounted for. Some savings would have to be made in certain areas and an increase in fees for Council out of school care services would have to be considered. It is hoped to have the completed plan ready for the conference in May.

10. Jobcentre Plus:

Gillian Robertson handed out a brief paper on changes to the Lone Parents' benefits which started in October 2007. It was agreed by all that the Partnership would be happy to work closely with the JobCentre Plus when finding either work or childcare for lone parents returning to the job market but Caroline was anxious that advisors would not give parents living in rural areas high expectations of what might be achieved. Small schools and the lack of affordable transport can often be barriers to providing childcare in a rural setting. Gillian assured the group that advisors would be made aware of this and that there were already some links made with 'Dial a Bus' services. Lone parents with older children will no longer be able to claim income support but will be placed on job seekers allowance. Members were concerned about the pressure on parents to rush into work but Gillian advised the group that there were no time limits on how long parents can stay on the job seekers allowance.

Gillian promised to keep everyone informed and to pass on figures of client groups to areas once they were available.

GR

11. 2007 – 2008 Expenditure Update:

The financial statement showed that there was a balance of £43,311 up to the end of February but did not, as yet, include the full deficit for the Aberdeenshire Council managed out of school care settings. Caroline advised of the possibility that not all money committed would be needed therefore any remaining would be set off against this deficit.

12. AOCB

Princess Royal Trust – Banff

Caroline wished to inform the group that the above project is now moving forward with building work expected to start in the next two months or so. The Partnership has committed £150,000 for capital cost over the last two years to this project and it is expected that, once the building is near to completion the Trust will return to ask the Partnership for revenue funding towards the cost of equipment and salaries for the childcare element of the project.

Childcare Strategy Conference

Emma reminded everyone that the above conference would take place before the next meeting of the Partnership and any partnership member wishing to attend would be welcomed. The conference is to be held at Kintore Primary School on the 17 May 2008.

13. Date & Time of Next Meetings

Wednesday 18th June 2008 – Woodhill House – Committee Room 4

Wednesday 10th September 2008 – Woodhill House – Committee Room 1

Tuesday 9th December 2008 – Woodhill House – Committee Room 4.