

COMMUNITY SECTOR ROUNDTABLE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Tuesday 9 June 2015

Large Executive Conference Room, Level 2
Department for Child Protection and Family Support
189 Royal Street, East Perth

Meeting commenced at 9:30am

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the Community Sector Roundtable meeting.

Present

Ms Cheryl Barnett	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Kay Benham	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Irina Cattalini	WACOSS
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Mr Basil Hanna	Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc
Ms Amanda Hunt	Mission Australia
Ms Lynne Millett	MercyCare
Ms Tricia Murray	Wanslea Family Services Inc
Ms Melissa Perry	Communicare Inc
Mr Ashley Reid	Ngala
Ms Veronica Rodenburg	Yaandina Family Centre Inc

In attendance

Ms Emma White	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Apologies

Mr Ian Carter	AnglicareWA
Major Andrew Craib	The Salvation Army
Ms Mandy Gadsdon	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Mr David Hogg	Lifestyle Solutions
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare Inc
Ms Dawn Wallam	Yorganop Association Incorporated/SNAICC

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 12 May 2015

The minutes from the CSR meeting held on 12 May 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Guest Speakers

Evaluation of Delegated Case Management, Katrina Stratton, Wanslea and Alice Findlay, CPFS.

Ms Findlay noted that this presentation focuses on the evaluation of the pilot, adding value to the full report which was circulated to members last week.

The pilot has been useful in identifying challenges and further work that needs to be completed for this model to operate successfully. While it has not worked as intended, it has demonstrated improved relationships with children and carers. It is recommended that this model be further considered after the implementation of the OOHC reform.

Recommendations for implementation include:

Essential:

1. Revising the model (as currently not working as intended)
2. Clarification of the cohort
3. Selection of community service organisations
4. Review the recording of data
5. Clarification of case management responsibilities.

Highly recommended:

6. Learning pathways
7. Funding and resources
8. Child and carer rights

Desirable:

Revise learning from other jurisdictions.

The Chair thanked Ms Stratton and Ms Findlay for their presentation.

4. Actions Arising

4.1 Leadership and Partnership Forum

Mr Glew advised that further work will proceed after the announcement of the Reform Leaders.

4.2 Evidence base and evaluation – C4C's, mapping

Deferred to July meeting.

5. Agenda Items

5.1 Family Support Networks

Ms Benham noted that the recent presentation to the Child Aware Approaches Conference in Melbourne was extremely well received. Also, it was advised that the Victorian Office of the Auditor General has released its report on Child FIRST, this will be circulated to members. Link to this report: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/publications/20150527-Early-Intervention/20150527-Early-Intervention.pdf>

5.2 Integration of Youth Services

Ms Hunt advised that this working group has agreed to focus on youth at risk in Northbridge, initially undertaking a mapping exercise. Mission Australia will be initiating this work in July.

It was noted that there are a few current processes which would be useful to review/understand:

- A new State Government policy regarding Indigenous Youth.
- Corrective Services are hoping to partner with WACOSS and YACWA to develop a co design process for all their funded programs over the next 12 months before they undertake recontracting.
- Partnership Forum - Case Study process

5.3 Out of Home Care Reform – Presentation: K Benham and B Whitehouse

The Chair introduced Mr Whitehouse to the meeting.

Ms Benham and Mr Whitehouse provided a comprehensive presentation on the outcomes of the consultation process, the changing environment and the way forward. Mr Whitehouse agreed to provide the slides after the meeting.

Consultation will occur primarily via CSR. Costings are currently being investigated. Once drafted they will be provided to CSR for discussion.

Action: Mr Whitehouse to provide an electronic copy of the presentation after the meeting.

5.4 Aboriginal Children in Care

Deferred to July.

6. Other Business

6.1 Financial Counselling Services

Ms White discussed the difficult decision not to continue funding the financial counselling services beyond their current contract completion date of 30 September 2015. It was regrettable that consultation did not occur with the community services sector prior to the decision, which was delivered to the Department late Thursday. The services are now required to implement their three month exit strategy processes to 30 September 2015.

Members expressed concern and disappointment regarding the decision to defund a preventative service and the absence of consultation with the sector. Ms White reiterated that this was a difficult and regrettable process and that mechanisms are being developed for consultation processes for future resource decisions. Given the current economic climate and pressure on government departments to meet required efficiencies, hard decisions, such as this one, will continue to be necessary for at least the next four years. It is understood that wherever cuts are made in the community services space, there are flow-on impacts to other services.

Members discussed the consequences, both known and unintended, of the loss of these valuable preventative services. Ms Perry noted that the South East Corridor has now lost all State and Commonwealth funded ER and financial counselling services. The loss of this skill set, requiring specific training and qualifications, is a concern should the program ever be reinstated in the future.

Ms Perry, advised that after CPFS left the meeting with the Financial Counselling sector, the sector representatives discussed the need and willingness to measure the impact on individuals and families in their local areas. The FCAWA CEO has undertaken to develop a means to do this. It was requested that WACOSS provide some advice on this. It was agreed to discuss this item (evidence regarding impact of the service/loss of the service) at the next CSR meeting as part of the Evidence Base/Outcomes item. It was noted that in some contexts advocacy can be more powerful and more likely to be heard than the provision of evidence.

Members discussed more broadly the impact of providing only three months notice for cessation of a service. Concern was expressed that, while this may be the requirement, realistically it is not always possible, particularly when redundancies are necessary for long term staff members. Measures to ensure such short notice does not occur in the future would be ideal.

The Chair suggested that there is a need to progress these issues at the political level, with State and Commonwealth Ministers. Concern was expressed that the Child Protection portfolio is failing to attract and retain funding and resources, particularly for

programs focused on prevention and early intervention. Concern was also expressed that the community services sector is losing vital services while large sums are being provided to construct footbridges and other non-essential items.

Ms White noted several strengths of this sector in this difficult economic environment: the demand model; workload management which has a flow on effect across the whole resourcing look and feel of child protection; and a Minister who understands and believes in the value of what we do.

Action: members to include discussion on evidence regarding impact of the service/loss of the service as part of the relevant item at the next meeting.

6.2 Housing priority waitlist

Ms Cattalini advised that the recent Department of Housing funding allocation is enabling the waitlist to target families with children. Discussion has been initiated to maximise the benefit to child protection, in terms of getting children out of care, where the main restraint is living conditions, domestic violence, relative carers. Ms White has met with the Acting DG, Department of Housing, to discuss the Intensive Family Support Homes, looking child protection specific issues, regarding relative carers, to identify strategies in addition to strategies concerning the waitlist.

7. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and the meeting was declared closed at 11:40am. The next CSR meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 July 2015, at Communicare.