

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLANNING
COOKSTOWN LOCALITY PLANNING GROUP**

**Thursday 6th February 2014 at 10:00am
Gortalowry House**

Attendance

Martin McCann	TIPSA
Selena Ramsey	CSP
Roisin McConville	SELB
Kirstie McCammon	Cookstown District Council
Sean McElhatton	Good Relations Cookstown District Council
Mary Tennyson	Gold Surestart
Anna Reid	Simon Community
Damien Reid	Simon Community
Brenda Hughes	Cookstown Cultural Integration Service
Gail Anderson	Network Personnel
Charlene Beattie	Network Personnel
Sharon Dillon	Cookstown Citizens Advice Bureau
Vicky Boland	NHSCT: Mid Ulster Family Centre

Apologies

Karen Donnelly	Gold Surestart
Frances McKenna	Mid Ulster Child Contact Centre
Lisa Cooper	Gold Surestart
Ursula Marshall	Cookstown Disability Forum
Elizabeth Whyte	Public Health Agency Nursing
Martina Henry	Cookstown & Dungannon Women's Aid
Lisa Montgomery	MASTS

1. Introductions and Apologies

In Ursula's absence Mary agreed to chair the meeting, she welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for a round of introductions.

2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 3rd October 2013.

The meetings were reviewed and agreed.

3. Matters arising

No matters arising.

4. Presentation- Mary Tennyson, GOLD Surestart Service

Mary explained to the group that GOLD Surestart provide support for families with children under 4 years. The 'cut off' for services provided is when the child reaches their fourth birthday. They take in 7 wards, which have just expanded to include Maghera. These wards are;

- i. Gortalowry
- ii. Oldtown
- iii. Killymoon
- iv. Dunamore
- v. Pomeroy
- vi. Ardboe
- vii. Maghera

It has proved and is still proving to be difficult to stick to these wards, especially when the family are just over the border of the ward and the needs are high.

GOLD Surestart Cookstown, employs 55 staff, most of which are part-time. The management committee are open to new members who wish to join.

The Health team are a lot of the time the first point of contact. Referrals can be through a third party organisation or can come directly through GOLD. The breastfeeding Support Service has just been Unicef awarded recently.

The breastfeeding peer support service consists of previous breast feeders providing help either via a telephone conversation or in person. This service has proven very helpful for new mothers, after they have been discharged from hospital.

Two year old programmes have been funded by the Department of Education. They allow for free play, which is a different structure from playgroup and allows more interaction. This programme takes the same term breaks as playgroup i.e. summer, Christmas and is heavily oversubscribed. Last year there were over 250 applicants for 84 spaces. There are now criteria for selection.

There are 7 of these programmes running;

2 x Pomeroy

2 x Holy Trinity P.S. Cookstown

2 x Derrycrin P.S.

1 X Dunamore- St. Marys P.S. in a purpose built building

Speech and Language - one full time speech and language therapist two speech and language assistants. The speech and language team provide training for childcare teams, one to one and also group training.

Home support- 7 workers, which are allocated to a particular family for short term support. Support is provided once per week for approx. 6 weeks and then the situation is reviewed. Families with complex needs are referred to Home Support programme by social services for home based support. This may include post natal depression or parenting management.

Childminding

NICMA worker- provides training and for drop in support.

Regulates child minding in the area. GOLD Surestart provide and fund a respite childminding service in crisis situation, and families may use this service up to twice per week. This service is also oversubscribed.

Volunteering

GOLD Surestart provides volunteering opportunities for young people to increase their experience and employability.

Disability Service

Mary explained that disabilities may only become apparent when the child is approaching their fourth birthday. This service is available to provide support to parents and families around the difficult time of diagnosis. There is a parent support group which runs once per week. Selena is hoping the group could aim bring together a support group for parents and families of children with disabilities over five years of age. Mary agreed that this would be a good idea.

Parenting programme

Funding is available for development and training staff. This programme is for socialising and teaching parents, providing individual and group advice and information to parents.

Incredible years- importance of playing with children and talking to them and imparting information onto the children.

Stay N Play- parents are encouraged to come in and play. The key in this programme is playing. Emphasis is on the fact that they don't have to have the latest or most expensive toys; play is about the interaction with your child.

Mary emphasised the fact that these GOLD programmes are great as they are free, and with poverty in the town, it is a great benefit to poorer families.

Vicky pointed out that transport can be a problem, and it is great that the programme runs in the more rural areas for this reason.

5. Update- Big Lottery Bid

A couple of meetings have been held since July/ August. It has proved to be a challenge, however they are still working on it. The subcommittee members are hoping to meet again today.

6. Update- Disability Forum

Mary Tennyson gave a brief update as Ursula was unable to attend the meeting today.

The main project currently is a website which will provide access information for the Mid Ulster area- 'Access Mid Ulster'. This project is moving along well.

A drama project has been discussed and a meeting is to be scheduled at The Hub.

Selena advised that she has had an under spend and is hoping to fund a project for the disability forum, as this is a target area.

7. Update- Cultural Integration Project

Brenda informed us that this project is running from 3 centres;

- i. 3 x groups running out of Holy Trinity P.S
- ii. 2 x groups running from Cookstown P.S

- iii. 2 x groups running from Phoenix P.S- these are now complete.

This project is also funding English language classes for foreign nationals.

Three families have been referred from The Hub for family support. Vicky suggested that she could possibly refer some families to this service. Mary pointed out that anyone can be referred to this project and avail of the services.

Cookstown Primary school is working with a family liaison officer as they have had 34 foreign nationals join the school recently. Holy Trinity Primary school has had 94 foreign national pupils join the school.

Cookstown Cultural Integration project have taken over the running of the carer and toddler group which runs in Gortalowry House every Friday morning between 10am and 12 noon. Brenda is also hoping to fund a Chinese new year in Moneymore and a One World event in Pomeroy.

8. Update- Family Support Hub

Mary received a phone call from Helen at the Family Support Hub and she explained that they are having problems receiving referrals for the Cookstown and Magherafelt Hub. Vicky and Mary both stated that they need a settled venue before this can be rectified. Vicky also stated that more networking needs to be done.

9. Membership Update

TIPSA

Martin gave a brief overview of TIPSA project to all new members. Martin informed the group that the bigger focus at present is on the older age groups as alcohol abuse in the older age groups has increased, but it has decreased in all other age groups.

He invited those present to attend a quiz on 28th February in Cookstown Golf Club for the Beacon Centre.

Martin also informed those present at the meeting that he is recruiting anyone who wishes to do the Lap of the Lough cycle with him. This is to emphasise the importance of physical and mental health.

TIPSA also have a Facebook page for anyone who wishes to 'like' it.

Network Personnel

Gail is an outreach mentor in Dungannon and Magherafelt and Charlene covers Cookstown and Ardboe. Charlene gave a brief overview of their roles. They provide support for homeless people, those with a previous record, and those with a history of alcohol/drug abuse.

One to one support is given in the form of; training, work placement, CV help and advice, applying for jobs and interview preparation. Once the client has gained employment, Network personnel keep in touch with them for a total of thirteen weeks to provide support if it is needed.

Support is available for those aged from sixteen years. The only restriction to gaining support is if you are already in employment.

Referrals come in from various organisations such as the Youth Justice Agency and the Job centre.

Network personnel link in with the volunteer centre and provide volunteer opportunities for clients to boost employability and gain experience.

Good Relations

Sean informed the group of progress with the Food Banks in the Cookstown area. It is hoped that in the future there will be one main Food Bank to provide for the Cookstown area. However, at present there are two food banks, running from S.V.D.P and Antioch Store House. Both of these food banks rely on donations.

Sean explained that the numbers requiring assistance from the food banks has dramatically increased. At the start S.V.D.P was providing food for 35-40 people, but in December 2013 it provided food for 400 people.

Sean emphasised the need to remind all staff handing out vouchers that there is a limited resource and to please check that these people are not getting vouchers elsewhere also.

Mary stated that GOLD worked closely with Denis in S.V.D.P. She stated that they notice when they go into some family homes there is nothing in the cupboards or fridge for the children to eat and that they can see a rise in poverty in the area. Mary stated that the vouchers have been a great help for them and the families they support.

Sean informed the group that the main referrals to the food banks come from GOLD, social services, GP's, migrant support and women's aid. Mary informed everyone that there was a donations box for the food bank appeal in the GOLD office if anyone wished to donate.

Stakeholder event

Selena informed the group that this will take place in the Braid, Ballymena. There has been no date set yet, but it will take place before the end of March.

There will be a keynote speaker present and outcomes planning will be on the agenda.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Sharon gave a brief overview of CAB services. She informed those present that they mainly provide support and advice to disadvantaged groups, elderly persons, ethnic groups etc.

At present CAB is working with RelateNI on the impact of alcohol project. This project is funded by the NHSCT via the Big Lottery. This project allows those affected by alcohol abuse to gain advice for practical issues from the CAB and then be referred to Relate for free counselling.

This project is currently seeking referrals.

Simon Community

Anna introduced Damien to the group as her maternity leave cover (co-ordinator in place to cover Strabane, Omagh, and Enniskillen and Cookstown areas for homelessness).

Anna and Damien are currently giving awareness raising talks to schools, youth groups etc.

Anna informed the group about the new Homelessness app which is being launched at the minute. It will allow people to search for hostels, support, food banks etc. in their local area.

Youth Services

Roisin gave information on the information evening which is being held in Cookstown Youth Resource Offices on 24th February 2014. This is to show people the extension to the youth resource building and also give information on the services provided.

The new building on the Burn Road is almost complete. This project has been heavily supported by the PCSP.

They have two new members coming on board soon to carry out rural work, especially in Ardboe and Pomeroy.

Youth services are holding employability classes at their premises for Cookstown High School and Holy Trinity pupils.

Social Services

Vicky informed the group that Aileen Quinn would be attending the next meeting. The Rotary club supported Social services before Christmas by giving help and funds. Vicky believed that this proved to be a real 'eye opener' for these volunteers.

Social services in the Cookstown area are trying to cross reference with other agencies so that the same families are not getting food bank vouchers etc. from different organisations.

NHSCT are restructuring and downsizing Cookstown Social Services unit. Vicky stated that she is aware of the need in Cookstown but she is unsure what will happen.

Vicky also said that social services need to speak to the community groups in Cookstown as they will have a lot less interaction.

Selena stated that she would take this issue to the outcomes group to feedback the information shared today as this group is chaired by the Director of Childcare Services.

10. Any Other Business

Action Plan Review- Selena stated that this needs a dedicated meeting. This review is essential so if funding was to become available then it has been previously decided what it is to be spent on.

It was decided that someone should be brought in to facilitate this meeting.

It was agreed by those present to carry out the action plan review at the next meeting- Thursday 3rd April at 10am.

11. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

3rd April 2014 at 10:00am at Gortalowry House with lunch provided.