

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

Note of DESG meeting
Held in Committee Rm 2
CnES, Sandwich Rd
On 26 June 2014 at 11am

PRESENT

Lena Morrison - CnES
Catherine Barron – Lews Castle College
Alex Ferrier – Police Scotland
Innes Macleod – Police Scotland
Donnie White – Lewis Access Panel/WI MS Society
Diane Smithyman – EIS, CnES Education
Gordon Thomas – Lewis Access Panel
Elizabeth Macdonald – Harris Access Panel
Lucy Macdonald – Harris Access Panel
Carmen Morrison – Scottish Health Council
Isobel Mackenzie – CnES (Housing)

APOLOGIES

TK Shadakshari – NHSWI
Gayle Findlay – OHCPP
Mandy Macleod – Cross Reach

Welcome and Introductions

Lena Morrison (LM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Minute of Meeting of 6 September 2013

The minute of the meeting of 13 December 2013 was approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

Following Chief Inspector, Gordon Macleod's update regarding policing priorities for the Western Isles a question was asked regarding the availability of the Policing Plans in Easy Read format. This request for clarification was not shared with the Police Officers in attendance however following the meeting this was checked and 'Easy Read' Policing plans were delivered to Comhairle Offices for Distribution.

Health and Social Care Integration Update

It was confirmed that the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill had been processed through Parliament and became enacted on 1 April 2014 which had numerous implications for both the Comhairle and NHSWI. Practices which were previously discretionary for the authorities were now mandatory. It was noted the Comhairle and NHSWI had yet to reach an agreement regarding the integration model which was to be adopted and concern was shared in the group that the Island authorities were lagging behind. Information was shared which noted that the Comhairle's preferred option was the 'Joint Board' model and NHSWI had indicated a preference for a 'Lead Agency' model with the NHSWI being the 'Lead Agent'. A seminar was set to be held mid

Further update to be provided at next DESG meeting

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

July with Scottish Government officials in attendance, if the authorities cannot reach an agreement by mid August then the Scottish Government will intervene and impose a model.

Complaints and Comments in the NHS

Carmen Morrison (Scottish Health Council) updated the group regarding a national piece of work undertaken to receive feedback, comments, concerns and complaints and use this information to improve NHS services across Scotland. The review undertaken involved all 21 of Scotlands NHS Boards. Locally there was participation through face to face focus groups and the SCH set up camp in the Sports Centre to speak to individuals. There were over 100 local responses and over 700 national responses to inform the review.

A copy of the resulting report can be located using the attached link:
<http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/publications/research/idoc.ashx?docid=2f22e78b-a278-44b7-93a1-71af2c5df0f0&version=-1>

Further to this Catherine Barron (Lews Castle College) shared some of the benefits that LCC gleaned following SPSO complaint handling training that had been delivered for the University of the Highlands and Islands and how seeking and using feedback has lead to improved service delivery promotion of the services delivered by UHI as often the problem is that people do not know where/who to go to for information and advice.

Scottish Medicine Consortium

Carmen Morrison also shared information regarding another national piece of work which the Scottish Health Council was involved with locally for the Scottish Medicine Consortium. To assist with a piece of work a focus group was established in Harris involving 8 or 9 numbers of the public. The outcomes from this local focus group will feed into national outcomes to facilitate the work of the SMC and raise awareness of opportunities for further national pieces of work which are being developed.

Visit from British Deaf Association

Lena Morrison shared information following a meeting with representatives (Jean Pentland and Katie Mowat) from the British Deaf Association regarding improving local services for deaf people within the authority area. Later that day Jean and Katie met with three deaf people who live in Stornoway and provided a summary of the feedback from that meeting which largely related to the services delivered by the Comhairle and NHSWI (see attached feedback for noting).

LM to explore options of promoting Language Line



Feedback from
BDA.docx

Carmen Morrison advised that the NHs 'Living it up' project should be able to assist with some of the issues identified around access to technology and understood that some of the areas had been addressed in the PFPI annual review.

One of the biggest barriers to deaf people accessing and using services independently was interpretation services within the authority area. Lm advised that there was no-one in the Comhairle trained in BSL and was not aware of anyone within NHSWI who were trained to a level to undertake these services but both organisations had a contract with Language Line to deliver translation services including BSL. LM to explore options to promote this further.

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

EHRC – Improving Equality Outcomes Project

LM shared that the Comhairle has been identified as one of approximately 50-60 public authorities to participate in a project delivered by the EHRC to improve the Equality Outcomes which had initially been agreed and published in 2013. Following the publication of public authorities Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming reports the EHRC had conducted reviews of what had been published and reported their findings in a series of three reports entitled 'Measuring Up' which are accessible on the EHRC webpage. The aim of the project is to support the public authorities to improve their equality outcomes and through them improve the outcomes for service users. LM shared what the Comhairle had initially published as Equality Outcomes which were under review and advised that feedback would be sought and was welcomed.

Partners Update

Lews Castle College

Catherine Barron reiterated the benefits the college had gleaned from attendance at the SPSO training and how information following feedback and complaints is used to drive improvements in all areas including Equalities within the college.

Harris Disability Access Panel

Lucy Macdonald (HDAP) questioned whether the Disability Action Group was still in operation at the College. CB clarified that the group had been absorbed into an Equalities groups as part of the mainstreaming approach adopted by the college however all students still have the opportunity to contribute to this group and are able to see how action plans are followed through. A general discussion took place regarding the benefits of having established groups in operation.

EIS/Education

This was Diane Smithyman's first meeting and had nothing to add at this stage.

Neurological Voices

Donnie White reported that the Neurological Voices group which has been established in the Western Isles provides an opportunity for people with different neurological conditions such as Ataxia, Dystonia, Epilepsy, Huntington's Disease, ME, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Neuropathies and more to get together to discuss various issues people face locally and provide a voice to take action/complaints forward. At present it has not been very well attended so a re-launch is planned to get more people involved.

N.e.r.v.e.s. (neurological Equal Rights Volunteers Eilean Siar) has got charitable status and aims to support people with disabilities or health problems. N.e.r.v.e.s. charitable objectives are:

3.1 To uphold the rights of those suffering or affected by neurological conditions including Multiple Sclerosis, ME, Parkinson's Disease, Motor Neurone Disease or other conditions, and in particular the right to dignity and care, health care quality, and accessible health and wellbeing facilities and services.

3.2 The relief of poverty, the advancement of health and the provision of services for those affected by Multiple Sclerosis or other conditions above.

3.3 The provision of recreational or educational facilities or services with the aim of improving the life conditions for the above within the Eilean Siar [Western Isles] area.

3.4 To advance such other purposes as are charitable within the law of Scotland as the organisation from time to time determines.

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

At present the Airport authority is allowing the charity to lease premises locally at the Met office and they are working to develop Service Level Agreements with local Public Authorities.

Lews Access Panel

Gordon Thomas advised that they are still working with Calmac regarding the new ferry. Further meetings have been agreed where LAP are trying to follow up on the Passenger Access System and Signage System. One of the main problems they come up against is that the Regional Manager involved is based in Fort William which makes meetings very difficult and VC is not always successful.

Police Scotland

Alex Ferrier reported that there had been no increase in Hate Crime within the authority which is positive. PS are aware that it takes time to get through on the 101 system which may be a barrier. Regarding Local Police Plans (to be made available at a later date) the current focus is on speeding in rural areas which has been identified as a priority in a number of areas.

Housing

Isobel Mackenzie shared information regarding the new homeless unit, 'The Acres', which is near completion in Stornoway. This is a big success story for the authority. The recruitment process has been completed so the unit is fully staffed, the unit will be staffed 24 hours per day. There are 24 rooms in the unit which 3 of the rooms being fully adapted to accommodate disabled people. There are also a small number of family units although the preference is that the unit would not be used for families in the first instance. There are currently a large number of people who are in B&B accommodation as a result of their homeless situation, whilst the Acres unit won't take away all the problems it does provide some local resilience and solutions. There is still a shortage of housing in the authority area and a demand for better quality housing to provide stability for vulnerable people, even if it for a short period of time. The same referral method is in place.

Date of Next Meeting To be agreed

Meeting Closed