



Scottish Strategic Co-ordination Group Operations Sub-group

The meeting took place on **Friday 3 August 2007 at 10am in COSLA's Glasgow Office on Buchanan Street.**

AGENDA

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Welcome and apologies | 10.00-10.05 |
| 2. Minutes of previous meeting(s) and matters arising | 10.05-10.15 |
| 3. Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme | 10.15-10.35 |
| 4. Update from Move-On Working Group | 10.35-11.45 |
| 5. Lead Professional Model | 11.45-11.00 |
| 6. HMIE inspection report | 11.00-11.20 |
| 7. Childcare provision by BIA at Brand Street | 11.20-11.35 |
| 8. Section 4 contracts transition | 11.35-11.45 |
| 9. AOCB | 11.45-12.00 |
| 10. Next meeting | |

Minute of Meeting – 3 August 2007

1. **Present:** Maria Walker (GCC Education), Lesley Ann Ballantyne (Health), Joe Brady (Scottish Refugee Council), Val Thompson (Strathclyde Police), Derek Mitchell (COSLA SMP), Mhoraig Green (COSLA SMP: chair, minutes) Shafiq Mohammed (YMCA), Margaret McDonald (GASSP), Gary Sweeney (BIA), Catherine Grant (GCC), Colin Mitchell (BIA), Ray Smith (Angel)
2. **Apologies:** John Donaldson (GCC), John Short (IOM), John Hampsey (IOM) Ann McDonald (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde).

Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

3. Members agreed that the minutes of the Operations subgroup from February and July were accurate records, after Catherine Grant's initials are corrected in point 18.
4. Under matters arising JB still has to arrange to meet with KF to discuss issues with Chinese nationals.
5. All other action points had been progressed satisfactorily.

Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme

6. John Hampsey (IOM) has sent his apologies because an emergency has meant they are unable to update the group on the new approach to VARRP as planned. CM advised the group to visit IOM's website, because the approach is significantly different. There is now a more holistic approach with less cash incentives and a more support in the home country.
7. JB asked for data about people being refused from BIA so that SRC can make referrals to IOM and offer other appropriate support. At present SRC may only be aware of a person's status if they disclose it, and people don't always do so. As a result SRC make very few referrals. CM will refer this issue back to Karen Fagan and ask her to get in touch with JB re sharing this information. **JB will report back on this at the next meeting.**
8. JB said it may also be useful to restart the joint visits that happened when a person was refused asylum before NAM started.
9. CM said that there had been an increase in take up of VARRP of 200-300%. Others questioned how many people this actually represented. CM reported that two families had signed up to VARRP following Clan Alba visits.
10. **It was agreed that it would be useful for IOM to do a presentation at the next meeting.** The importance of communication between IOM, BIA and other agencies was acknowledged.

Move On Working Group Update

11. The move on group met for the first time on Monday 30 June and will meet fortnightly for at least six weeks. As a starting point the group will prepare papers mapping the issues preventing refugees accessing (1) benefits and (2) housing. The group will then act to resolve these issues, including through engaging with DWP and Inland Revenue.

Lead Professional Update

12. CG reported that the interviews for the qualified post for the lead professional will be held on 24 August. The unqualified post interviews are uncertain because GCC social care staff are currently out on strike.
13. CG reported that a meeting was taking place today between John Donaldson (GCC), Kit Wyeth (Scottish Executive) and Adam Scarcliffe (BIA) to discuss the Lead Professional role and more information will emerge from this meeting.
14. JB asked what the implications of a reduction in timeline for the legacy clearance could have on the role. CM said that if the completion date remains July 2011 the process of casework was to be 30-40 cases a month and each case would be turned around by the lead professional in 6 weeks. The process for the review of the asylum case would depend on each case.

HMIe Follow-Up Action

15. MW reported that following the recent inspection of services for children of asylum seekers in GCC, they were obliged to develop an action plan to demonstrate how they were taking forward learning. The inspection report stated that Glasgow City Council, Strathclyde Police, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and voluntary sector organisations had to be involved in developing and implementing the action plan.
16. MW said the GCC has already engaged with all relevant partners, except voluntary sector organisations. This will happen at an event on 27 September where the voluntary sector and other stakeholders are consulted on a draft of the action plan. Another similar event for young people and the parents of asylum seekers will be held on the same day.
17. DM asked if GCC had approached Scottish Executive regarding the action plan. MW said that they had, and that discussions were ongoing regarding resource issues. Many things required by the action plan would not in fact need additional resources.
18. The action plan has to be submitted within three months and a follow-up inspection is expected after 12 months.

Childcare Provision at Brand Street

19. CM reported that BIA had rejected the proposal submitted by YMCA Glasgow to provide childcare at Brand Street. CM read a statement from Lis Welsh which said that BIA was unable to afford the cost of childcare and that they were not receiving funding from elsewhere for this service. The statement read that there is currently no other BIA site where childcare is provided and that they have never received a request for help finding childcare or for an interview to be suspended to arrange childcare.
20. There was some discussion of this statement and a number of people around the table agreed that despite BIA's position there was a clear need for childcare that this issue should be pursued. It was recognised that there was a need for childcare more widely (for example and lawyers or doctors appointments) but that this group should focus on provision at screening interviews, substantive interviews and the tribunal stage.
21. SM said that the proposal put forward by YMCS had involved 1 day per week outreach crèche provided from the training suite at Festival Court. He has spoke to Welsh Consortium who negotiated to have similar facilities in Wales.
22. There was discussion about alternative solutions, including placing children within external crèches (for example as provided by YWCA at Charing Cross). GS suggested a glass partition in interview rooms at Brand Street, which children could play behind while their parents are interviewed. VT said that when the police needs childcare they tend to use social work or victim support or children are left with friends.
23. **It was agreed that members of the group should forward evidence of a need for this service to MG. MG will speak to colleagues in Wales to find out about their arrangement and work out indicative costing and report back to the next meeting.**

Section 4 Transition

24. RS reported that all Angel novations had now taken place. There were still 11 cases that had to be physically moved because of the M&Q property did not meet the Angel Group's standard. This group is made up of two families (2 & 3 persons) and the rest are singles. RS confirmed that he was looking for properties in the same area so the children did not have to move schools.
25. LB reported that health visitors are receiving complaints from their clients about the quality of accommodation. GS said to forward the addresses of these properties to him and he would investigate. RS said he was happy to arrange joint visits to address problems.

26. LB said that health visitors also said their clients had reported missing items from their accommodation. RS said this was a novation issue and he was trying to establish whether or not those items had been provided by M&Q originally or not. GS said that Angel should have done inventories when they took over those properties. Any items not on the inventory should be replaced, and if inventories had not been created Angel would have to replace all missing items.
27. AK said that YMCA said that they had nothing to report since the previous meeting.

AOCB

28. JB reported a number of upcoming events:
 - 23 August, Seminar on Funding Issues, ATLAS Partnership/ODS, Glasgow
 - 8 October, Holyrood Asylum Conference, Glasgow
 - 22 October, ATLAS Conference, Glasgow
 - 9 November, Scottish Refugee Council conference
29. DM said that CSMP were currently looking at ways of turning the NAM implementation group into a monitoring group. He said that any suggestions on how this could be approached would be welcome.
30. CM said that he would alternate his attendance at the Operation subgroup with Karen Fagan, who would report on NAM. Each BIA rep will represent the whole of the BIA organisation.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday 6 September, 10.00-12.00 at COSLA's offices.

The October meeting will be moved since it clashes with the Holyrood conference. Details to follow.