



Present: Rosalind Aitken (Voluntary Action Orkney), Gail Anderson (Voluntary Action Orkney / representative IJB), Tamsin Bailey (Relationships Scotland Orkney), Davie Campbell (NHS Orkney Board), Frazer Campbell (Orkney Blide Trust), Erika Copland (HomeStart Orkney), Ann Clark (YPeople Orkney), Rebecca Crawford (VAO, Community Engagement Worker), Alison Guthrie (Voluntary Action Orkney – Adult Befriending), Harry Johnson (VAO, Enhancing Well-being in our Island Communities), Thomas Love (Victim Support Orkney), Karen Mack (VAO Connect Project), Pete McAndrew (VAO Tech Peer Mentor), Karen Scott (CLAN), Gillian Skuse (Age Scotland Orkney), Michelle Ward (Women’s Aid Orkney)

In attendance: Cecily Cromby (minutes)

1 Welcome and introductions

Rosalind welcomed those present and thanked them for attending.

2 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Phyllis Braby (Orkney Heart Support Group), Fraser Devine (Orkney Care and Repair), Robert Leslie (THAW), Sam Payne (Red Cross), Margaret Rendall (Vital Talk)

3 Notes of previous meeting held on 13 November 2020

The notes were approved.

4 Matters arising not on the agenda

Item 10 AOCB: Gail noted that she had spoken with Jim Lyon regarding social work home assessment visits. Jim had advised that social work had been affected by staff sickness, including staff self-isolating due to Covid. Gail asked members to pass on case studies regarding social work assessment delays to her. She will collate these and pass to Jim.

5 ACE’s Collective (verbal report E Copland)

Erika advised that she had stood down as Chair of the ACE’s Collective due to work commitments and the group was looking for a replacement Chair. Erika noted that the Collective had been fairly quiet as members were busy with increased service pressures resulting from the pandemic.

Trauma awareness training continued to be available. Erika noted that local councillors had received a presentation about being trauma aware and advised that Simon Tarry offered trauma awareness courses on behalf of NHS Orkney – including bespoke courses for local organisations. The NHS Education Hub had released a number of

resources which were available online and Erika encouraged services to make use of these and forward to staff and volunteers.

Gail asked Erika how successful she thought the ACEs work has been, noting that several recent documents produced, partly as result of the Children's Services Improvement Plan, had not contained references to trauma informed practice. Erika noted that work was probably happening within individual teams but that with the increased work pressures resulting from the pandemic, organisations were finding it difficult to take on extra pieces of work. Erika noted that trauma informed practice needed to be top-down as well as bottom-up. Staff teams and volunteers in the third sector tend to be very well aware, but perhaps at a strategic level there was less awareness.

As the ACEs collective was dormant, members agreed to take it off the agenda of the Health and Social Care Group.

Erika noted that she would keep in touch with Simon Tarry and act as a conduit for information. Gail advised that she would keep asking the question about trauma informed practice being included in documents.

6 Fiona Boubert, Social Security Scotland: Scottish Child Payments

Fiona presented a summary of benefits currently delivered by Social Security Scotland (SSS) and plans for the future.

Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation circulated with the minutes. Additional notes below:

Scottish Child Payment

Applications opened in November 2020 with payments starting in February 2021. Fiona advised that there could be up to 600 eligible households in Orkney. Payments were currently available to qualifying families with children under the age of 6. By the end of 2022 this would be extended to children under 16.

Fiona advised that a consultation on disability benefits was open and she would forward the link (circulated with minutes).

Fiona advised that SSS aimed to deliver benefits differently following consultation with service users. The aim was to deliver a smoother service, with fewer face to face assessments and to ensure that those who were entitled to benefits were able to receive them. Fiona noted that people could access services online, by telephone, paper forms by request and face to face meetings (when restrictions allow). Information was available in several languages including sign.

The face-to-face service in Orkney had been delayed by Covid restrictions. Fiona advised that outreach venues were planned across the mainland and isles and home visits would be available. Fiona noted that she was looking forward to working in partnership with local organisations in Orkney to deliver the service and would be happy to attend meetings with individual organisations.

Ann asked if care leavers would receive benefits only if they had a child. Fiona advised that different amounts would be paid depending on whether or not they had a child.

Gillian asked if a framework had been agreed for attendant allowance. Fiona advised that discussions were still ongoing and she would forward the latest update (circulated with minutes).

7 Jim Lyon, Interim Chief Social Worker OIC: Multi Agency Child Protection Guidelines discussion

Jim advised that he had been in post since June 2020 as the Interim chief social work officer for OIC/OHAC and Head of Service for Children and Families and Criminal Justice. He noted that part of his role was to try to recruit a permanent chief social work officer and head of service.

Jim advised that he was attending the meeting to speak about the Inter Agency Child Protection Guidelines and the Self Evaluation and Self Reflection document (linked to the Care Inspectors Quality Framework) which was relevant for both third sector and statutory agencies. He advised that the Guidelines were launched on 2 December 2020 at meeting attended by 120 people from statutory and third sector agencies. Jim noted that the launch meeting included good discussion about the importance of what happens when a child may be at risk – ie what to do and who to speak to, and how the system works. He hoped the guidelines were constructed in a way that was relatively easy to read – he noted that some guidelines were directed at professionals who were involved in investigating child protection concerns, ie social workers.

Jim stated that one of the reasons he was keen to have the Guidelines put together was the critical report on children's services from the Care Inspectorate in February last year. Jim also noted that the critical report was one of the reasons he was brought into post to provide help and direction in relation to developing the improvement plan, identifying actions and putting those actions in place. Jim noted that it was his decision to introduce the self-evaluation approach: to identify strengths, areas of weakness, areas to develop and to take account of feedback from the community and partners.

Jim discussed the importance of good relationships with third sector partners. He stated that the third sector provided cover for areas that the local authority could not reach and that it did so in a far better way than statutory children's services. He went on to note that statutory and third sector services were both needed to work effectively. Jim mentioned a recent discussion with Gail around some of the real challenges in Orkney in relation to small isolated communities, particularly on the isles, connectivity, and infrastructure issues.

He noted that the focus of his work so far had been to try to ensure that Orkney had enough qualified social workers to respond to community need, discussing challenges relating to staff sickness and turnover. He advised that the whole nature of social work was based on establishing trusting, reliable and consistent relationships. OIC have had to rely on agency social workers which does not help build these relationships. He noted that other council and NHS services in Orkney, along with counterparts in other island and rural communities, were also affected by recruitment issues. He reiterated that most of his time so far had been spent on this issue.

Jim advised that he wanted to establish a mentality of self-reflection in the social work team. He suggested that there was not such a thing as a good or bad inspection, rather an accurate inspection which reflected how people saw themselves or an inspection which showed disconnect between how an organisation saw itself and how inspectors saw it. He noted that the latter was the case with the recent inspection of OIC children's services. He advised that a leadership group had been established - with representatives from social work, the improvement team, NHS Orkney, Police Scotland and education services - to focus on the provision of statutory children's services.

Jim stated that social work needed to enjoy public confidence to be able to provide children's services properly and discussed the importance of working with third and private sector organisations. He noted that this was an easy thing to say and that the real test of how much confidence the third sector had in social work services would be how successfully they could work together and how well third sector groups felt supported and funded. Jim stated that he wanted to hear back from third sector organisations to look at areas where they can work more effectively together, continue to build relationships and at ways in which OIC could support them more.

Jim acknowledged that the third sector had significant challenges in funding and discussed the £4.2 million savings that OIC had to make over the next three years. He discussed the impact of previous cuts in council funding and the resultant cuts to jobs and services (around one third of OIC jobs were shed in 2011/12). Jim agreed with points previously made by Gail that cuts to local authority services had serious impacts for the third sector who were first to feel the squeeze in contracts. He noted that he could not promise that OIC would be able to put more money on the table and suggested that the third sector were better at generating money and finding funding that statutory services.

Comments and questions:

Gillian discussed opportunities to re-design the role of social workers and use the third sector to pick up some of the tasks. She noted that during the pandemic there were serious issues with social workers not visiting people and it was left to organisations like Age Scotland to pick up the assessments. She asked if this could be a way to work in future to free up the time of social workers. Jim noted his disappointment that social work had not been conducting visits, suggesting that they should have been able to do so if other organisations could. Jim advised that he would be happy to discuss the possibilities with Lynda Bradford (Head of Adult Social Work Services).

Gail noted that discussions on the importance of joint working given resource, staffing and finance restraints had been had time and again (well before the onset of Covid). She stated that if it couldn't be made to work in Orkney, where could it work. She advised that there was real scope for discussions on working collaboratively to provide a holistic approach and noted the need to get together to identify what groups struggled with and how services could work together to overcome this. She would welcome movement on this collaborative working. Jim stated that he would put a brief agenda together and ensure that the right people were round the table. He advised that he could not give any guarantees beyond this, but that if someone asked for a meeting to explore these issues, it needed to be done and something good would come of it. He gave his commitment to putting an agenda together and getting people round the table.

Karen asked if there would be a formalised programme of multi-agency training and updates. Jim advised that he was very keen to be involved in joint training initiatives with the third sector and suggested that this be an agenda item on the meeting discussed above. He suggested that some of the materials produced by OIC, ie the self-evaluation document, would be helpful for third sector organisations as well as statutory. He advised that there had been challenges within the council regarding resources available to provide training, but that this was not an excuse.

Tamsin – note in chat: *'I was very encouraged to hear Jim talk about the need to build 'trusting, reliable and consistent relationships' and it would be good to see this ethos reflected explicitly in the Inter-Agency Guidelines. In terms of practical steps to improve joint working, we would really value clear communication around Children & Families Social Work roles and responsibilities. I appreciate this has been difficult with a lot of changes happening, but we have struggled at times to understand who is doing what and, as this becomes clearer, we would really value open dialogue so we can understand how we best work with SW colleagues.'* Jim stated that he was very interested in this and advised Tamsin to contact Lucy Morton as soon as possible to discuss further. Lucy was in post as interim service manager until 31 March. Jim advised that he would inform Lucy that Tamsin would be in touch.

Jim discussed the need for him to put things in place that would be carried on by new people who come into post. He advised that he would leave audit trails and communications to do this. He noted the possibility of him taking up a mentoring/support role when a new head of service was in post.

Harry asked Jim to clarify the current service provision for home visits for adults on the islands. Harry said that his understanding was that social workers were still not visiting the isles and that some island residents had not had social care assessments for some time and as a result were not getting the support needed. Jim noted that Covid restrictions had meant restrictions to the movement of social workers, but stated that people's needs should determine their need to be seen. Jim then discussed Scottish Government policy relating to social work visits to care homes, and acknowledged that this did not answer Harry's question. He suggested that Harry email him with examples which he would pass to Linda Bradford and ensure that an answer was provided. Jim noted that he also did not know what was happening regarding children and families provision at present, suggesting that a delayed return to Orkney after Christmas was the reason for this. He advised that children on the Child Protection Register and those with a multi-agency care plan in place must be seen and this be reported to Scottish Government. He was unsure about provision for other vulnerable children and adults but would look into this.

Erika – note in chat: *'I'd like to echo thanks for Jim's honesty, and I think clear communication which has been mentioned would be more than welcomed. I do feel more positive now about moving forward, and feel that the concerns raised within last February's report and subsequently by myself and colleagues have been heard - certainly by Jim - and if these are addressed, as Gail says, we have an opportunity here in Orkney to change and lead the way in how support is offered and given to our population....'* .

Gillian requested that the Self Evaluation document be circulated.

Michelle noted that during the consultation for the child protection plan, there was agreement that a universal referral form be included. Jim stated that this had not been at the top of his list, but he was happy to fast-track it if people thought it useful. He noted that he did not think there was a need for a form, suggesting that a conversation with a social worker regarding an individual case would be preferable to a form, and noting that it was the social worker's job to determine if there was a concern. Michelle advised that standard forms were useful for organisations to ensure that they collected and provided the right information, noting that Women's Aid were used to working with standard forms for this reason. Jim suggested that this information was available in the published guidelines. He suggested that Michelle look at what was available in the guidelines and come back to him if she thought that a standard form was still required. Jim noted that he wanted to encourage conversation rather than forms. He noted that there was a standard referral form for statutory services to make referrals to the Children's Reporter. Jim then discussed the importance of feedback from statutory services following a referral and mentioned the importance of confidentiality in small communities, referring to research conducted by Gillian Ritch on dual relationships.

Gail discussed the difference between a member of the public raising concerns about a child and a third sector organisation raising concern, as the third sector were often already working with that child or family. She noted the importance of clear collation of information about the case and a shared understanding of what then happens and how the third and statutory agencies work together thereafter. Michelle agreed and added the importance of third sector organisations recording information correctly in their own case files. Jim advised that the third sector should be at the table and involved in discussions about shared clients. He noted that no child protection procedures were currently in place at OIC and that he had given himself a deadline of the end of January to ensure that child protection procedures were in place. Jim noted that third sector organisations should ask social work for any information or advice when needed, including on legal matters.

Gail noted that following their launch, Jim had agreed to support a session on the Child Protection Guidelines. She asked if members would welcome this opportunity, to which everyone agreed. Gail advised that she would follow this up with Jim.

Jim advised that he will be in Orkney for another 6 months, but noted that he can stay longer if needed and reiterated that part of his remit was to recruit the right person to take over.

Rosalind thanked Jim for attending.

8 Partner updates

Relationships Scotland Orkney – Tamsin advised that RSO continued to be busy with a steady stream of new referrals. She noted that services were mostly operating online. Child Contact Centre services were being provided face to face and were still allowed under tier 3 restrictions.

VAO Connect Project – Karen advised that Connect was open for new referrals.

VAO Community Engagement – Rebecca advised that a consultation would be held in February/March for the West Mainland and Kirkwall based on the place standard model, focussing on people experiencing inequality and disadvantage.

VAO Island Wellbeing Project – Harry advised that he was working with Development Trusts on food, fuel and social isolation projects. He noted that there was an increase in demand for one to one support on the islands as some services were not visiting the outer isles.

Orkney Blide Trust (note from Frazer in meeting chat) - Mental Health Strategy Steering Group meeting on 25th Jan at 14:30; Campaign with partners in NHSO to challenge anti-vaxers and conspiracy theorists re Covid vaccinations.

Frazer noted that he would be retiring at the end of March. Rosalind noted that Frazer would be greatly missed and that his contribution to the third sector and Orkney community was valued.

Y-People (note from Ann in meeting chat) - Supported Accommodation is full. Y-Talk Youth Counselling is still receiving regular referrals, Y-Change presentation is taking place on 28th Jan 11am and 2pm. Please get in touch if you would like to attending one of these sessions to find out more about Y-Change.

NHS Orkney Board (note from Davie in meeting chat) – If there is anything I can take to NHSO or the IJB please get in contact with me. Please be assured I am banging the 3rd Sector drum at every chance I get.

Women's Aid Orkney (update from Michelle by email) - 2 spaces available in refuge, currently supporting 74 women & 30 children mainly online. Only carrying out face to face in emergency circumstances. All working from home with office phones diverted to me. Out of hours number is 07444009736.

VAO Tech Peer Mentor (update from Pete by email) - The Tech Peer Mentor role is funded through TEC Scotland who are the lead Scottish Government organisation for Technology Enabled Care (TEC). The main overall aim of the project is to promote and champion the uptake of TEC and digital solutions in service design/delivery within Health and Social Care in Orkney. We are currently at the planning stages, however, it is anticipated that this will be delivered through raising awareness, knowledge and confidence about TEC among citizens and service providers in Orkney and a peer mentoring service providing support and mentoring to organisations who wish to access this service. Orkney is also a Named Partner to East Ayrshire in the Transforming Local Systems (TLS) Pathfinder Programme and I will be working closely with the National TEC Scotland team and East Ayrshire to identify aspects of this programme that can be used and adapted for the Orkney context.

VAO Adult Befriending Service (update from Alison by email) - We are still working from home and open for referrals. Some of our befrienders are making face to face visits while others are still not comfortable with this. Telephone befrienders and staff continue to support our most vulnerable clients with a weekly phone call.

CLAN (update from Karen by email) - CLAN's Support Centre's are closed again but the team are working behind the scene offering telephone support to our clients. Contact can be made by phone: 873393 or email: orkney@clanhouse.org. We also

have a range of online support available. These range from Hand Reflexology, Mindfulness and exercise. No need to pre-book these and they can be accessed at any time. We are working on a range of live classes and groups. These include yoga, gigong, mindfulness and bereavement. We will be emailing out our finalised 'What's On' leaflet to both clients and our contacts in due course.

Home-Start (update from Erika by email) - We are continuing to support most families via remote support, but for some we are seeing them face to face, both in public settings/outdoors, and in some exceptional circumstances, within the family home. We are currently working on recommencing group support indoors. With schools closed to most pupils, we contacted those families who have school-aged children and in some cases were able to help speed the acquisition of a device to enable the children to participate in online learning.

9 AOCB

Gail advised that the IJB had some money to disperse to support the most isolated in the community. She had hoped to have a discussion about how this could be done and look at scope for collaborative working, but the meeting overran. She will circulate information.

Gail advised that a review of adult protection would take place in the near future. Gail will keep members updated.

Gail advised that significant changes to disclosure legislation would soon take place. Volunteer Scotland Disclosure services would be providing training and Gail will circulate information when available.

10 Date of next meeting

12 March 2021