

Meeting Report 10th June 2010 St Margaret Park

Theme Child Poverty

This was my first meeting in my role as Children & Families Voluntary Sector Involvement Officer. As the meeting took place during the consultation period for the Child Poverty Strategy it was decided to base the event around this topic. The morning started with a round up of the work from each of the Core Aim Group Representatives. Those who were unable to attend sent written feedback, which was included in the information pack given out on the day. This was an opportunity for members to find out about the work of each of the 7 Core Aim Groups and how that work feeds into the strategic planning of the Children & Young People's Partnership Board. A list of the current reps is shown in appendix 2.

Presentation : Geraldine Murphy WLGA

The first presentation was given by Geraldine Murphy from the WLGA and she explained the background to the strategy and highlighted some facts about the impact of poverty on children's lives. She gave an overview of the Strategy and explained the consultation questions.

The members then split into 5 groups to discuss and write down their responses to the consultation questions. They were asked to pick out 3 key points to feedback at the end of the session. One hour had been allocated to the task however people found the time too short to fully answer all the questions. The discussions were far reaching and illustrated how complex and difficult this issue is. The strategy does have areas that people felt were not properly addressed and all the responses were collated after the meeting and feed back to WAG via the consultation section on their website. For full details of the feedback see appendix 3.

Presentation 2: Amanda Bateman Smart Money Credit Union

The second presentation was given by Amanda Bateman from Smart Money Credit Union. She outlined what is a Credit Union, Where to find one, who runs them and who can join. She explained the services they provide from savings accounts, low cost loans and financial literacy training. This was linked into the impact on Child Poverty and how Credit Unions can help break the cycle of dependency on high interest lenders. The presentation was really well received with people asking lots of questions at the end. Hopefully this information will be passed back to practitioners and help people escape from difficult financial situations.

Presentation 3: Lisa Williams Adventure Play Team

The final presentation of the morning was given by Lisa Williams from the Adventure Play Team. She introduced a DVD made to show the work of the team in New Tredegar and the difference they have made to the lives of the children in the area. It was an uplifting conclusion to the morning and raised everyone's spirits after the difficult issues that had been discussed before.

The morning finished with lunch and an opportunity to network and catch up with colleagues and fellow professionals. All participants were encouraged to complete an evaluation form and the results are shown below

What was the best thing about today?

- Information and Networking
- Child Poverty, Strategy discussion
- Opened my eyes to the poverty information
- Networking, presentations and workshops
- The child poverty issues – excellent, informative and thought provoking
- Good information
- Networking and sharing, getting to grips with poverty strategy through the consultation
- Confirmation of 'same idea' everyone seems to see the issues from same angle
- Adventure Play DVD – love it., wish my kids lived in New Tredegar not old Tredegar!
- Sharing information and gaining knowledge of other projects and provisions
- Discussions around child poverty strategy and then the uplift of the Adventure Play DVD

What was the worst thing about today?

- Problem with sound
- Never enough time
- Such a big issue to discuss in such a short time

Is there anything you would like covered at future events?

- All attending having a 2 minute slot to give an overview
- Good mix of information for the day
- Training opportunities/volunteering for 16-18 year olds
- Would like to see what CCBC, LHB, etc are doing about child poverty!
- Briefly going over who is here, so that networking can be easier achieved

Any Other comments?

- Enjoyed
- Excellent – well organised and informative
- Enjoyed networking with other agencies
- Excellent Event! Well done!
- It seems that lots of agencies are from childrens perspective who is here for young people 16-25 (are these groups being represented?)
- So Glad we have this
- Excellent and worth while meeting

Appendix 1 Delegates List

Surname	First Name	Organisation
Broughton	Melanie	Home Start Cwm Rhymni
Brunton	Dave	Senghenydd Youth Drop In Centre
Davies	Lorraine	Your Way
Davies	Catherine	GAVO
Gill	Nicci	Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin
Griffiths	Gemma	Barnardo's
Hagerty	Nikki	GAVO Play Team
Harris	Claire	Clybiau Plant Cymru
Howells	Keith	Snap Cymru
Jones	Lowri	Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili
Kenvyn	Angela	Community Services
Lubienski	Jill	Action for Children
Meghji	Lynne	Right From The Start
Morris	Kelly	Risca Safehouse (Llamau)
Northey	Sian	Caerphilly Parent Network
Prosser	Jackie	GAVO Play Team
Russell	Kerrie	Skills for Living
Thomas	Diane	Churches In Action
Thomas	Diane	Gigabites Youth Porject
Williams	Lisa	GAVO Play Team
Williams	Diane	Caerphilly Womens Aid

Kim	Jones	GAVO
Allison	Randall	GAVO

Appendix 2
Core Aim Group Representatives

Name		Represents
Dave Brunton (Chair)	SYDIC	CYPP Board Core Aim 2
Lynne Meghji	Right From the Start	CYPP Board Core Aim 6 Core Aim 7
Leah Salter	Action for Children	Core Aim 3
Sian Northey	Caerphilly Parent Network	Core Aim 5
Melanie Broughton	Homestart	Core Aim 1
Nicci Gill	Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin	Core Aim 4 Deputy Core Aim 1
Ann fritter	Caerphilly Parent Network	CYPP Board Core Aim 5
Lowri Jones	Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili	Deputy Core Aim 4
Leah Salter	Action for Children	Core Aim 3

Appendix 3

**Child Poverty Strategy Consultation Workshop
VOLUME Network Meeting 10th June 2010**

Question 1

What are your views on our three strategic objectives for our new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales?

VOLUME Group Response following consultation session on 10th June 2010

The following are key themes that came out of the group discussions

Objective 1: Reduce the number of families in workless households

- An excellent objective but is it realistic especially with the current economic circumstances and job loses?
- There are lots of issues that need to be addressed before you get to this point and a change in cultural attitudes
- How do we in the Voluntary Sector impact on this? Our funding and capacity is being reduced

Objective 2: Improve the skill level of parents and young people in low income families so that they can secure well paid employment

- Who defines “well paid” employment “living wage might be a more appropriate term
- Higher paid job will be needed in private and public sector where are these jobs going to come from?
- Raise the minimum wage, you need to make it financially worthwhile to work and not remain reliant on benefits
- Where will you get the base line information from to be able to measure the improvement in skills?
- There will be a need to look at long term unemployment issues and change people’s attitudes to working as well as addressing confidence and self esteem issues
- Need to remove the restrictions on accessing training and education opportunities ie. length of time out of work and age specific opportunities
- Education is important but you need to have a background that will support the child even going to school a lot of work needs to be done “on the ground” before these objectives can be achieved.

Objective 3: Reduce the inequalities that exist in the health, education and economic outcomes for children living in poverty, by improving the outcomes of the poorest

- Access to services and advice to enable parents to make informed decision
- Highlights the importance of partnership and multi agency working and the need to promote and raise awareness of local services
- Identifying inequalities and barriers to accessing current services
- Parents/Families need to have the confidence and motivation to make contact with anyone to get the information to make the decision

Question 2: What are your views on the policy action we set out in the Delivery Plan?

- Is this achievable within the 5 year time frame? Probably not!
- “Decent” – “reasonable” “adequate” who defines these?
- The plan relies very heavily on getting people into work
- How is this all going to be funded?
- Need to look at what is already being provided at service level so we don’t end up replicating services and or” throwing the baby out with the bath water “there is a lot of fantastic work already going on that is addressing the key targets set out in the strategy

Working with UK Government

The Voluntary Sector voice needs to be heard in policy development and deliver and the need to think more strategically. Also to forge better links with policy maker
Supporting employers – will this include voluntary sector and council
Where is the quality? - How will support be administered?

Creative projects and thinking- and the need for financial confidence
Will require fantastic partnership working

Children not materially deprived

Sign posting and partnership working
Gaps of children in poverty that are in more affluent areas
Lack of services and support which work Borough wide

Promote employment

Reduce educational inequalities: no mention of SEN, NEETS. Again families need independent unbiased advice. People need the initial confidence to seek support
Raise profile and wage of important jobs
Business use voluntary sector more to fill jobs as skills have been built
Minor services and linking better with services – local businesses
Identify the needs in communities
More flexible working to encourage people back into work, but employers will also need support and the need for out affordable childcare
There is a need to consider single parent families who are working but on a low income
Transport to access services is an issue

Skills to secure employment

Volunteering opportunities as a stepping stone to getting into work
Linking with other partners and services to offer more holistic services
Team around the community
There is an Emphasis on educating parents –but how do you get them to engage - they may not want it
Family friendly working practice – what incentives are there “encourage” – so what does that mean? That someone asks nicely – will that have an effect.

Young People & employment and opportunities

Are the jobs there? There is also the need for training and volunteering opportunities
There needs to be an integrated approach by agencies

Question 3: Do you think the policy action set out in the Delivery Plan will enable us to achieve our three strategic objectives and our vision for 2020?

- It is unrealistic that poverty will be eradicated by 2020
- Is the idea to improve lives or to increase economy?
- All of this will not be possible without the money for organisations who deliver services in the Community. Current economic climate will make this very difficult if funding is being withdrawn
- Skills & Training needed for the agencies/services who support the families to ensure that the service is the best
- Needs to be early intervention
- Need to bring the “community” back to the community sense of belonging
- Not without looking at the issue as a whole

- Need to look at how things fit together with stepping stones needed to give appropriate support to families.

Question 4: What is the best way to integrate local multi-agency support for families living in poverty?

- Communication and information sharing will be key.
- There needs to be joined up policy, procedure, practices and objectives.
- Sharing skills and information and work holistically with families – children & young people. Using local knowledge – local services – for the local people.
- Local authority needs to have the confidence in the Voluntary Sector to deliver and ensure the funding of projects to let us do what we do best and partnership needs too mean partnership.
- Core funded elements of projects to protect services
- Multi agency working is currently developing a Team Around Family approach (understanding and using each others skills and knowledge) but there is a need to make sure that services are not excluded from the inner hub of support that could reduce the level of support that the family received. Also to ensure that the development of a core of agencies then made it difficult for other agencies to be involved.
- Families need to be supported to engage with services with the promotion of services/projects. The Statutory sector needs to be more aware of what is available to compliment or support their service to families from the voluntary sector and to promote the awareness of these services.