

VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday 12th July 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Emsley (Chair), Councillor Dearnley, Sheila Acton, Bev Place, Claire Allsop, Carlo Schroder, Alistair Sheldrick and Emma Salloway.

OFFICERS: Alison James

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Brett, Councillor Rush, Councillor Heakin,

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FOR 2018/2019

60 **DECIDED – that Councillor Janet Emsley be appointed Chair of the Voluntary Sector Partnership for 2018/2019.**

MINUTES

61 The Minutes of the meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership held on 12th April 2018 were considered.

The Partnership noted with sadness the recent passing of Kenny Farrar, a longstanding and valued member of the voluntary sector and the Partnership.

DECIDED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2018 be approved as a correct record.

PRIVATE FOSTERING (PAMELA WHARTON)

62 The Partnership received a presentation from Pamela Wharton from Children's Services relating to private fostering.

A private fostering arrangement was one where children under the age of 16 (or 18 in the case of disabled children), were cared for and provided with accommodation in the carer's own home, by a carer who was not their parent or a close relative and did not have parental responsibility for a period of 28 days or more.

There were a number of circumstances and reasons why parents made arrangements for their children to be looked after by someone else. These arrangements could be a positive response from within the community to difficulties experienced by families but children subject of such arrangements were known to be a diverse and potentially vulnerable group.

Examples included, but were not restricted to:

- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family for 28 days or more;
- Asylum seeking and refugee children staying with non-relatives or friends for 28 days or more;

- Teenagers who were staying with friends or 'non' relatives for 28 days or more;
- Children on 'exchange' visits living with host families for 28 days or more.

In terms of responsibilities in private fostering arrangements:-

- Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of a privately fostered child remained with the parent or person with parental responsibility.
- Local authorities had a legal duty to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children in their area who are, or who will, be privately fostered is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.
- It was the responsibility of the parent, carer and anyone else involved in making the private fostering arrangement, to notify their local authority (LA) of the private fostering arrangement.
- However the public were often not aware of this and so the responsibility then becomes that of any professional who becomes aware of such an arrangement to notify the LA.
- Informing the LA of a private fostering arrangement is not breaking a confidence; it is good practice in safeguarding.

DECIDED - that the presentation be noted.

EXPERIENCES OF ASYLUM AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND - UPDATE (ALISTAIR SHELDRIK)

63 The Partnership received a presentation from Alistair Sheldrick providing an update on the PhD project he was undertaking relating to 'Experiences of Asylum and Welfare Services in Rochdale'.

The project was focused upon two service areas:-

- Mainstream welfare services, advocacy, and advice;
- Asylum-seeker/refugee-targeted services;

The project aims were, in consultation with partner organisations:-

- Record everyday impacts of Government policy and funding on services using accounts from asylum and mainstream welfare services in Rochdale;
- Record service users, service providers, and policy-makers experiences/perspectives;
- Develop evidence-base - highlighting issues, innovations, and value of local services.

Discussion took place with regard to the challenges faced in getting up to date statistics on asylum seekers/refugees.

It was noted that the Chair would be attending the next meeting of the Refugee Forum on 28th August 2018.

DECIDED - that the presentation be noted.

COMMUNITY COHESION AND EDUCATION (CARLO SCHRODER)

64 The Partnership received an update from Carlo Schroder relating to current issues around community cohesion and education.

The Partnership were informed that the Commission for Countering Extremism has formed a new Expert Group.

The purpose of the Expert Group was to provide the Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism with constructive advice and challenge in her first 12 months of the Commission on gathering evidence, publishing a comprehensive study and making recommendations to the Home Secretary, including a work plan for the Commission in future years. The Expert Group may also be asked for advice on other issues as they arise.

Discussion took place about ongoing local initiatives including work within schools and community based settings.

DECIDED - that the presentation be noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

65 Dianne Gardener provided an update on the tendering process for the new third sector provider.

Discussion took place regarding what type of organisation was needed to support and develop the sector.

Further updates would be provided to the Partnership in due course.

DECIDED - that the update be noted.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

66 **DECIDED – that it be noted that the next meeting of the Voluntary Sector Partnership will be held at 10am on Thursday 13th September 2018 at Number One Riverside.**