

From: lormac1053@aol.com
To: IEC1053@aol.com
Subject: Fwd: Eighteen And Under
Date: Tue, 10 Feb 2009 11:15

emails 6, 6a
in same packet, Report on 18a's
internal investigation

-----Original Message-----

From: Gordon Sharp <gordon.sharp@dundeecity.gov.uk>
To: lormac1053@aol.com
CC: Dymock Margo <margo.dymock@dundeecity.gov.uk>; McAra Ken <ken.mcara@dundeecity.gov.uk>
Sent: Tue, 10 Feb 2009 9:22
Subject: Re:Eighteen And Under

Good morning Irene,

A letter is being issued to Laurie following the meeting that took place on the 23rd January. In order to discuss this letter a meeting has been set up involving Ken McAra, Margo Dymock and myself. This is on the 20th February at 21 City Square, conference room B, at 2.30pm. I do expect that Laurie will want to be accompanied, but this should be by a member of the committee.

6a

Can you please confirm?

Regards - Gordon

lormac1053@aol.com (09/02/2009 14:54):

>Gordon,

>

>Attached are the notes from your meeting with Laurie on the 23rd January.? As you can see there are some corrections to be made.? I apologise for the delay in sending these back but, unfortunately, this was unavoidable.?

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>Regards,

>Irene.

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>

>Irene Clark

>Eighteen And Under

>Telephone: 01382-206222

>

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Note of Meeting	SUBJECT: -
Date: - 23/01/09	Investigation into concerns relating to Eighteen and Under
Present: - <u>Laurie Matthew</u> – Co-ordinator (Eighteen And48 & under) <u>Sandra Hutton</u> – Volunteer (Eighteen And48 & under) <u>Margo Dymock</u> – Children's Services Manager, Residential Child Care – Social Work Dept. – DCC <u>Ken McAra</u> – Quality Improvement Officer, Educational Development Service – Education Dept. – DCC <u>Gordon Sharp</u> – Outcomes Officer, Fairer Scotland Fund, Corporate Planning - DCC	

1) Introductions

2) Questions for clarification: -

a) Update on the committee of Eighteen48 Aand Under: -

- The following members have stood down: - Norman Clark, Iona Whytock, Sandra Hutton and Gwen Docherty; Gavin Gerrard
- New committee members comprise: Tracey Murray, Andy McGinnis and Joseph Luambasi ;
- Office bearers are: Caroline Forster (Chairperson), Barry Eggleton (Secretary) and Lisa Callandar (Treasurer)
- Other than office bearers the remaining committee member is Gavin Gerrard, Gwen Docherty meaning that there are presently 7 members of the committee.

b) Staff and staff roles are: -

Co-ordinator and VIP worker	Laurie Matthew
Taywise worker	Irene Clark
DV support worker	Sandra McIntosh
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Marley Laurie (10 hours) Susan Currie (5 hours)
Admin. worker	<u>Susan Currie</u> <u>Katyie Wingham</u> <u>Shaun Taylor</u>
DV8 worker	Aileen Hunter
Promotional	Laura Tulloch Keiran Watson <u>Katyie Wingham</u>

c) Presently volunteers comprise: -

- Sandra Hutton, Alex McTurk, Gwen Docherty and the committee. Only Alex is involved in support.

d) Relationships were clarified as follows: -

3) Explanation of City Council concerns relating to support provided to young person and response:-

Comment [laurie1]: ACAS and the Office of the Information Commissioner have informed Management of EAU that we are in breach of the Data Protection Act by releasing this personal information without consent of the employees concerned.

Comment [laurie2]: Owing to concerns surrounding Data Protection, Privacy and DCC's equalities Policy, we do not feel it is appropriate to record names and relationships in this note. It has not been made clear why this information was sought, who would have sight of it and how it would be stored. If DCC makes clear why it ought to be included, despite above concerns, then Eighteen And Under might agree to its inclusion.

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- a) Workers were initially concerned during November regards the following points: -
- i) Unclear how the volunteer had become involved with the young person?
 - ii) The young person had been provided with personal information about the volunteer support worker and had been in his house overnight. The personal information revealed at this point was that the volunteer was a 'homosexual' and that he had a male partner who lived out with Dundee. His accommodation was described as 'sparsely furnished'

Phone Contact, 3 recorded calls had been made with 18 and Under with requests that the volunteer support worker's supervisor contact SWD. The supervisor was Sandra McIntosh.

There had been no contact until 10th December, at least two weeks had passed since the first contact had been made by SWD.

Additional issues surrounding the conduct of the volunteer support worker were: -

- i) The volunteer had bought a computer game (aged 18) for a 13 year old;
- ii) On 2-3 occasions contact had been cancelled at short notice;
- iii) Allegations were made about unit staff being homophobic;
- iv) Young person missing and not attending school;
- v) Volunteer support worker still contacting the family after the support had been terminated.

A key question was how the referral system worked in 18 and under?

Laurie stated at this point that this was the first time she had been informed about these issues and allegations. Laurie wrote in her reply to the first letter received from DCC to ask if this was about a volunteer. No response to this was ever received.

- b) *Laurie became aware of these concerns immediately the supervisor became aware of what the volunteer had done. This was in December. The morning of 10th of December. The volunteer was suspended immediately and was told under ~~en~~ no circumstances to contact the young person or family. The volunteer was, on saying that he had broken the rules of EAU, told he could no longer volunteer with EAU. Previously, the volunteer had wanted to buy the young person a pair of shoes and this had been forbidden as it is against the Code of Practice. In relation to bringing the young person to their home this is entirely unacceptable and immediately Laurie was aware of this it was not allowed to continue. It did become clear that this action had been hidden from 18 and Under and the volunteer explained their action by saying that the mother wanted someone to take her son home and the parents fully supported this action. The mother came to EAU on the 11th Dec to plead that we allow the volunteer to continue to support the young people.*

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- c) A further series of questions were as: with volunteer recruitment, support, supervision and training –how did this happen? Also asked, did EAU take up references, did EAU carry out disclosure checks, were these done in relation to this volunteer, why did the volunteer do what he did
- d) *Laurie explained that the volunteer was supported and trained. But, he clearly broke the rules of EAU.*
- e) Concerns remain about the timeline from the initial SWD contact and the action being taken?
- f) *Supervision is weekly in EAU and there had been no reason for EAU to have concerns. Plus, Sandra did phone back to SWD, she did try to make contact, but did not get the right person until the day that Laurie was updated. Laurie would have responded had the nature of the concerns been made clear. Perhaps the system of communication needs looking at?*

- g) How does matching of volunteers with referrals work? How do EAU get volunteers, who are they, where do they come from, how do EAU check them, how do EAU know that they have shared value systems, what is the referral system in EAU, What records do EAU keep, If EAU does not keep details of referrals how can EAU deal with child protection.
- h) Volunteers come via the website, Volunteer Centre and word of mouth. Thereafter, there is a monthly presentation on what 18 and Under is about and the necessity for disclosure and references is made clear from the outset. no one is allowed to be a volunteer without these. At this point [Laurie was cut off from answering further by more questions...
This particular volunteer had been involved for a year and prior to that had been involved with another organisation working with children and young people. He works with another childrens organisation in Dundee which takes kids camping, hiking, etc. No concerns were raised by anyone. (This includes up to now as apparently he has not been accused of anything?) References were taken up as disclosure is not enough for EAU as we know that most offenders are never reported or caught.
Nothing indicated that he could not do this work. He attended all of the training. Some volunteers who do not attend the training have to be let go as the training is imperative. He attended more training than most people, including training that was not compulsory. In response to another question from the SW which asked why the volunteer took the young person home, it was stated that this volunteer may have thought that he was helping as the parent did plead with him for assistance. The volunteer was asked by the parents to take the young person.
EAU asked Is there a way of usme dealing with this, because we would certainly have dealt with it quicker if anyone had implied there was a child protection concern as seems to be what is now being implied.
Laurie asked: if there are child protection issues, are the police being informed?
Laurie was told this had nothing to do with her.
- i) Could 18 and under define support please? What exactly is it. What do EAU do. How do EAU keep young people safe. Who refers young people. Only interest of SWD is in those who are under 16.
- j) Support is led by the young person. One example, we have one worker in London at present supporting a young person through a court case. Support is not counselling. Some young people may raise allegations and then retract due to their fear of the child protection/investigation systems. 18 and Under can listen and support in a practical way, in-action. We can map out options, but there is no pressure. We help them do things for themselves that are positive.
We also have an open door policy and some young people may be connected with other agencies with whom we will work. In-addition, a young person will be challenged if skipping school. 18 and Under can be there if other agencies are rejected by the young person. We get the young people who are slipping through the net and are generally not in touch with other agencies.
We do not guarantee 100% confidentiality. We cannot! No one can! If there are child protection concerns these must be discussed with our advisors and referred to police if appropriate. referred with SWD. Within 18 and under the Child Protection (CP) workers are: Laurie, Sandra H. and Karen who have all undertaken the appropriate SVQ Child Protection training.
As Sarah Nelson's research shows there is a need to build up trust. I can think of two cases where two young children were supported through the court system to get a result. Support was essential.....at this point [Laurie] was cut off from answering more fully on this series of questions. Laurie was constantly interrupted while trying to

reply. Therefore full answers not possible to the many questions.

- k) Can the referral system be explained? Is there a statistical record?
- l) There is a referral form and it may be kept for use of be-used for workers if the young person permits. Otherwise, all referral information is shredded once we have stopped working with the young person or at their request. Our priority is to listen to the young person and build up trust and not take down details that may end the trust conversation. We often do not know the name of the young person who comes to us until they are ready to give it.
By way of example "Cool to Talk" – NHS, initially had questions about our system, because a young person posted on their web site and said we had not told about abuse but they came to visit and now they are satisfied as we were able to show the records that showed this was not actually the case. Some young people do not always tell the real truth of the situation. Interrupted midsentence again in trying to explain our systems
- m) So, you keep no track of referrals? How then can you keep children safe? How can you go back to the referrer if you become concerned about the young person?
- n) If SWD phone about a young person and it is agreed that support is needed or wanted then a visit is arranged. We ask that the SWD do not share information but prefer to hear it from the young person themselves. No information is kept as keeping information without the permission of the young person is not good practise for us. The young person is introduced in a visit, but no information relating to the young person is written down unless the person asks us to do so, taken or not taken as we will not hold it.
In relation to school work we record the number of sessions and participants, but no record is taken of disclosures as they are all passed to the teacher. No information is taken out of schools. It was mentioned that EAU are not entirely sure that teachers always deal with child protection concerns raised in class and we are awaiting input from Ken in this matter.
In relation to face to face work the young person will may come in themselves, perhaps as a one off. No information is kept, except where it is a child protection issue. If this arises then a meeting with be held of CP workers within 18 and Under and agreed if it has to be taken further. Advice is sought from advisors. The record of CP issues is kept, hopefully with the young person's consent but only until the issue/young person referred on.
Previously, we had Peter Connelly as a link between Social Work and 18 and Under. This was good as a link is needed and wanted.
18 and Under are open about our procedures and want to be open. We want to get these issues fixed as soon as possible.
- o) It was agreed that DCC will work with 18 and Under.
- p) Laurie has drafted new policies as all policies must be reviewed in January. It was explained that the draft policies are not ratified or approved by management of EAU as yet. However, in light of the current concerns this has not been concluded. It does make sense to leave approving new draft policies until the outcome of this investigation.
And, we are looking for a quick resolution regards putting things right.
- q) A break in the discussion occurred, to enable DCC staff to consider what action would be appropriate at this stage in the investigation.

4) Resume of meeting: -

Comment [r3]: This was not agreed to by EAU. EAU is confused as to why anything should be discussed about us in our absence. We protested but nothing could go ahead unless we did as suggested and left the room so that a private discussion could take place without us.

- a) Ken informed 18 and Under that a meeting would be held as soon as practical to report back from this discussion and then a response would be made to 18 and under.
- b) The new draft policies were provided to Ken by Laurie with a reminder that they are not ratified by EAU management.
- ~~b)c)~~ Laurie asked for a time scale and asked what the process was. She was told that they had to talk to other people and could not say.
- ~~e)d)~~ Laurie did raise the issue of why no one from SWD contacted her sooner, but left it up to saying that messages were left for a member of staff. These were serious concerns and surely a letter to the co-ordinator was called for, at the least? After all, there may have been an argument between SWD and the volunteer support worker during October that should have initiated action with 18 and Under? Margo explained that 3 calls to 18 and Under were logged and that it is practice within 18 and Under that is the subject of this investigation.
- ~~d)e)~~ It was emphasised by Laurie that she was not happy that a letter or other contact had not been made by SWD bearing in mind this was implied to be a child protection issue.
- ~~e)f)~~ Concluded that it was about making things right.
- ~~f)g)~~ As indicated, DCC would respond after discussing internally the note of this meeting with undisclosed people. (Laurie would be given the opportunity to correct the note as appropriate.)

Comment [r4]: a) If SWD had a concern about this volunteer early in November as they are now claiming, why did they not contact EAU as a matter of urgency? If this was a 'real' child protection concern why did EAU not hear about it until the 10th Dec? As soon as EAU heard about it on the 10th Dec it was dealt with. How can EAU possibly have a policy that makes other agencies such as SWD call us if they are concerned. It was agreed that this was impossible.

b) It seemed that SWD admitted that they knew all along that the parents were supportive of the boy staying over with the volunteer and just did not tell EAU as there was no child protection issues. This makes all that has gone on at this meeting a bit strange to say the least.