

**Munro Review Implementation Working Group  
25 May 2011 – Meeting Notes**

<b>Present</b>	
Tim Loughton MP	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families - Chair
Yasmin Bevan	Executive Principal and Headteacher of Denbigh High School and Challney High School for Boys
Matt Dunkley	President, Association of Directors of Children's Services and, Director of Children's Services, East Sussex County Council
Kevin Jones	Assistant Director, Children's Social Care (Cumbria County Council)
Reena Keeble	Headteacher, Cannon Lane First School
Andrew Martin	Emergency Duty Social Work Team Manager (London Borough of Haringey)
Amanda Thomas	Child Protection Officer, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Isabelle Trowler	Assistant Director, Children's Social Care (London Borough of Hackney)
Jo Webber	Deputy Policy director and Interim Director Ambulance Service Network, NHS Confederation
Graham Wright	Cabinet Member for Children and Family services (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)
Janet Grauberg	DfE Special Adviser, Children and Families
Heather Gwynn	Director, Children, Families and Maternity, Department of Health, representing Anne Milton MP
David Curtis	Private Secretary to Tim Loughton, DfE
Charlie Lang	Deputy Director, Safeguarding Practice, Improvement and Learning Division, DfE
Roger Parr	Head of Secretariat, Safeguarding Practice, Improvement and Learning Division, DfE
Jeanette Pugh	Director, Safeguarding Group, DfE
<b>Apologies</b>	
Anne Milton MP	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health
Anne Marie Carrie	Chief Executive, Barnardo's
John Goldup	Social Care Director, Ofsted
Ian McPherson	National lead for Children and Young People, Association of Chief Police Officers & Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service
Corinne May-Chahal	Co-Chair, National College of Social Work
<b>Members Appointed following the meeting</b>	
Roger Morgan	Children's Rights Director for England
Mark Rogers	Deputy Chair, Social Work Reform Board and, Chief Executive Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

## **Item 1 – Welcome and introductions**

1.1 The Minister welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Implementation Working Group. He thanked members of the Group for agreeing to join and for finding the time at such short notice. He was particularly grateful to Anne Milton for agreeing to join the Group, given the important role of the health sector in the child protection system.

1.2 Following introductions, the Minister reiterated that members had been invited in a personal or professional capacity rather than as a representative of an organisation or sector. He noted that there would be additional people joining the group, but holidays and other commitments had prevented these been finalised. The intention was to announce the final membership of the Group through an item on the Department's website.

## **Item 2 – Terms of reference**

2.1 The Minister set out his ambitions for the Group and the proposed terms of reference:

- to consider Professor Munro's report and advise on the content, presentation and ownership of the response to the Munro Review
- to identify a set of priority issues that the Group will consider and seek to resolve in time for a response by the summer; and
- to advise on how implementation of the review should proceed following the response.

2.2 He explained that Professor Munro had presented Government with a very thorough analysis and a very different report from those produced for other reviews. He and the Secretary of State welcomed the report, but wanted to give it due consideration before responding. He hoped the combined experience and expertise of the Group would help to develop that response and wanted to explore the possibility of a co-authored response, realising that that may not be practicable. He had committed to making a formal response by the summer which dictated a very demanding timetable. The Minister also said he was keen for the Group to operate transparently.

2.3 In discussion, the following points were made:

- it might not be straightforward to reconcile members being in the Group in a 'personal/professional' capacity with the 'ask' of signing up to a co-authored response in a representative capacity;
- it might therefore be more practicable for the response to be from Ministers informed by the membership of the Group;
- although it might not be possible to have a co-authored response, it needed to be a cross-Government response;
- it would be important to engage with the full range of representative bodies in all sectors but particularly in health and education;
- health and education are the two sectors that have come up repeatedly in presentations to stakeholders.

## **Conclusions and actions**

The Group agreed:  
the terms of reference;  
that the minutes of the Group's meetings be made publicly available; and  
that the secretariat explore options for gathering wider stakeholder reactions.

### **Item 3 – Conclusions of the Munro review**

3.1 Jeanette Pugh gave a short presentation on the main points from the review and the final report. Professor Munro's analysis was that the child protection system in recent times has been shaped by four key driving forces, which have had a cumulatively negative effect:

- the importance of the safety and welfare of children and young people;
- a belief held by many that uncertainty in child protection work can be eradicated;
- a tendency in inquiries to focus on professional error without examining the causes of any error;
- the undue weight given to performance information and targets.

3.2 The cumulative effect of these forces, has been the creation of a defensive system which is overly focused on procedures and processes. The direct helping work with children, young people and families has become secondary to compliance with procedures and processes and with that often the focus on children's needs had been lost.

3.3 Professor Munro's recommendations could be grouped into four broad areas:

- Valuing professional expertise
- Sharing responsibility for early help
- Developing social work expertise & the organisational context
- Accountabilities and Learning

These four areas would form the basis of the next agenda item.

3.4 The Minister thanked Jeanette, and informed the Group that whilst it was his intention to chair future meetings of the group, if he were unable to do so on any occasion he would ask Jeannette to take the chair. He also suggested that it might be beneficial for Professor Munro to attend a future meeting of the Group to act as a sounding board.

3.5 Ahead of the discussion on the four reform areas, the Minister said there were undoubtedly funding implications arising from the recommendations. He had asked officials to consider the funding issues, but it had to be recognised there were financial constraints and that reforms might need to be phased.

## Item 4 – Identifying priority issues

4.1 The Minister invited the Group to raise and discuss the main issues they saw in respect of the four areas highlighted in Jeanette's presentation.

### Valuing professional expertise

4.2 Matt Dunkley was invited to start this discussion and made the following observations:

- There were close analogies with social workforce development. It would be important not to “kick away the scaffolding” without safe transition plans in place.
- The Government's position on peer review would be tested
- There were issues around locally available data across the piece which could hamper local decision making.

4.3 The following points were made in discussion:

- discretion and control need to be given to professionals at the sharp end. The issue is whether we have the calibre of professionals to deal with that, but recognising the good work that is taking place through the Social Work Reform Board and the College of Social Work to help address that;
- the issues were not unique to child and family social workers. They applied equally to named and designated health professionals. This called for the exploration of opportunities for the early alignment of training for social workers and health professionals, not just joint training once qualified;
- more could be done at graduate level in terms of multi-agency training. There were some good examples around such as the ‘mini pupillage’ scheme for paediatricians;
- the training for child protection leads in schools is also an issue. There is a tendency, particularly in primary schools, to assign the lead to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO);
- the need to recognise that reforms needed to be a gradual change, with the pace determined by individual local authorities;
- recognition that high academic achievement does not necessarily make individuals good at working with children and families;
- the ability to articulate clearly on paper and in court is also vital. How would the inspection framework capture that aspect?
- teams need to contain a range of skills sets to help deliver the whole.

### **Conclusions and actions**

The Minister asked that Secretariat to come back to the Group with some proposals for taking this forward based on their engagement with the journey authorities and with LSCBs on the question of multi-agency training.

## Early Help

4.4 Having been invited to open the discussion on early help, Jo Webber made the following points:

- Nobody could argue with the proposed direction of travel but implementation will be made particularly difficult given the changes that are going on around health and police;
- The use of 'duties' needs to be carefully measured. Too many 'duties' could lead to some falling off the bottom.

4.5 Other points made were:

- there needs to be a clear understanding of the relationship between LSCBs and Health and Wellbeing Boards and the ability to hold partners to account;
- it was often more helpful to view the lines of accountability as a web with than a linear hierarchy;
- change was not restricted to health and the police: education reforms were leading to greater independence for schools;
- health visitors and the health visitor programme were key to the successful delivery of an early help strategy;
- an early help offer needs to be supported by a clear commissioning process.

4.6 In concluding the discussion, the Minister said that where possible he wants people to cooperate and do things because they want to and for the right reason, rather than being obliged to do so through a 'duty'.

### **Conclusions and actions**

It was agreed the Secretariat would arrange an event for LSCBs at some stage to look at the issues raised in discussion.

## Social work expertise

4.7 Isabelle Trowler started this discussion with the following comments:

- It was necessary to look at the quality of HE provision as well as the actual content. More work was required on determining social work needs.
- Neither the review nor the Government's response will fix the problem - the development of locally determined solutions is the key.

4.8 Further points made were:

- It was important to stress this was about social workers entering a learning culture aimed at helping develop their skills;
- the incentives for attracting good people to the profession is that they need to be seen to be entering a skilled and valued profession;
- the skills of social work managers will be key to supporting development through good quality supervision;
- there needs to be greater awareness and understanding between professions, particular the schools workforce who spend significant

- amounts of time with children and families;
- the need to acknowledge that we have stepped back from the social work agenda in schools;
- there are good examples of reflective practice, joint supervision and multi-agency supervision out there and these need to be used as exemplars;
- the role of GPs in safeguarding still needs to be addressed, but it was recognised that some work is in hand.

4.9 The Minister said he recognised that the role of schools was still vital in child protection but did not believe it needed a 'duty' to make that happen.

#### Learning and accountability

4.10 In the short time remaining, the Minister invited Kevin Jones to start the final discussion. He observed:

- that the Serious Case Review process was not working, as it was not improving the learning. This needed to change;
- the LGA has been doing a lot of work on peer review which should be considered when looking at the question of accountability and learning

4.11 One additional point was made in discussion which related to recommendation 7 of the Munro Review. The Group agreed this could be remitted to other fora that were already looking at the issue of DCS accountability.

#### **Date of next meeting**

The Minister thanked members for a good discussion and their valuable contributions.

The Secretariat would arrange the next meetings, avoiding early morning slots, to allow for travel.

**DfE**

**2 June 2011**