



Notes of NGO Forum Steering Group meeting held on 13 December 2007

1) Welcome

Present:

Duncan Tree, CSV
Jo Guest, National Healthy Living Alliance
Karen Bolland, NGO Forum Royal Society of Health
Kostakis Christodoulou, Society for Health Education & Health Promotion Specialists (SHEPS)
Martin Gibbs, Department of Health (part)
Nigel Carter, British Dental Health Foundation
Richard Parish, Royal Society of Health
Robert Pickard, Chair NGO Forum
Steve Shaffelburg, British Heart Foundation

Apologies:

Ian Gray, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Julie Jay Charles, Equalities National Council
Paul Scourfield, Faculty of Public Health
Phillip Woodward, Royal Society of Health
Roz Godson, Unite

2) Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were agreed without correction. All matters arising were covered by the agenda for this meeting.

3) National conference update

KB gave feedback that the conference was well in hand. All key note speakers had been invited. Robert P would be chairing the event with additional assistance from Clive Needle to facilitate the interactive sessions. The event will be held on 30 January 2008 at the Royal Horticultural Halls in central London. Steering group members will be asked to facilitate interactive sessions. There is still exhibition space available and the group were asked to consider if they knew of organisations that might want to exhibit or include materials in delegate packs.

ACTION: ALL

Robert P will invite the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown to provide a recording speech endorsing the role of public health in addressing health inequalities and the part played by the voluntary sector.

All steering group members, who are available, are asked to register to attend the conference. KB to email the registration page address.

ACTION: Robert P & KB

4) Regional workshops update

The first regional workshop had been held in the East of England. COVER the regional umbrella body for the voluntary sector had done all the administration. It was arranged to coincide with the consultation being undertaken by the regional public health team on their strategy. The notes had yet to be finalised but KB felt that in terms of capturing 'what works' it had failed to be successful. KB tabled a paper with written questions to be used at future events. It was suggested that this clarify what the purpose was and how it would be used. It would be important for future events to ensure people had a framework to work within. SS suggested the Equity Lens could help provide structure. He will email this to KB. JG also suggested Healthy Living Alliance members could respond to the questions. Regional Healthy Living Alliance members will be invited to future regional workshops.

ACTION: KB / SS

5) National plan for health update

The initial expert group had met and a draft questionnaire had been developed. This will be circulated to all Forum members early in the new year. Steering Group members will be sent the draft before its distributed.

ACTION: KB

The British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) produced a briefing report on 6 December at their national conference looking at nutrition and physical activity. It is aimed at professionals but is written in an accessible format that does not exclude the general public.

Department of Health (DH) update: The work on scoping the health review due to the pressure of replying to Parliamentary Questions and the review by the Health Select Committee.

The review will look to have wider stakeholder involvement in the New Year. The Secretary of State needs to provide input as the depth and breadth of the review prior to taking it outside the DH.

Due out shortly: Infant mortality statistics, join strategic agreements framework, local area agreements.

For the review it would be useful to point out that health inequalities doesn't not sit comfortable within the Darzi review areas (health status, access, outcomes).

For the review the DH will be setting up a Health Inequalities Expert Reference Group, leading public health organisations will be invited to participate, including Royal Society of Health.

ACTION: MG

Key messages for the Health Select Committee include:

- The need to shift the balance from short term targets to long term aims
- Reduce emphasis on NHS
- Doing the right things at the right time
- Focus on role of other government departments, especially housing and transport

All choosing health projects are due to end in 2008.

More spearhead areas are on track to meet targets, the report is due out shortly.

Alongside the RSH the NGO Forum could put written evidence to the Health Select Committee. KB to email members about intention, ask for top three points and clarify that unless organisation opts out they will be considered as agreeing to the response.

ACTION: KB

The top line message is that the NHS is reactive and other government departments need to be involved if public health is to be improved. The reduction on the public health workforce has been very detrimental. Primary care does have a central role, but does it have capacity and skills?

The National Plan for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is addressing public health but does not expand its scope to look at work undertaken internationally. There is a lack of expertise from beyond the traditional public health/medical sector. The model used by NICE to develop guidance is biased towards the clinical model. It is important that the RSH and the NGO Forum engage with NICE and look to broaden the inputs into guidance.

6) Planning for 2008 and beyond

Robert P will meet with 12 key chief executives from the NGO Forum membership to look at how they would like to see the Forum develop in the future and how it can contribute to their work. If there is a consensus amongst the Chief Executives about where the Forum can add value he will work with KB and Dept. of Health to deliver.

ACTION: KB

Established projects must be delivered on, e.g. regional workshops, national plan, etc. Opportunities to raise the profile of the NGO Forum and show its valued must be taken at any opportunity.

KB to draft a business plan for the coming year and circulate it to the steering group in the new year.

ACTION: KB

Robert P would like to promote Forum beyond the Dept. of Health, to this end he will set up meetings with both Dawn Primarolo and David Miliband (Cabinet Office) to increase buy in and support for the NGO Forum.

ACTION: Robert P

7) Any other business

The merger of the Royal Institute of Public Health and the Royal Society of Health continues. The legal process will take some time, but there will be a functional merger as of 1 April 2008. New accommodation will be found for the offices, but there will be no major impacts on the NGO Forum.

The steering group discussed the possibility of raising the profile of the Forum by having a Westminster briefing with use of the hall for an exhibition highlighting the work of the Forum members and then a drinks reception. This could be a high profile event and include a press launch. Also discussed were the possibilities of having breakfast briefings.

8) Date of future meetings

The dates for future meetings were set as:

19 March 2008

11 June 2008

17 September 2008

11 December 2008

Lunch will be available from 12.30 and meetings will start at 1pm.

Locations will be confirmed, the next meeting is likely to be in the WHICH offices again and thereafter at the new RSH premises.

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