

# WOMEN'S BREAKOUT

## Meeting of the Board of Trustees

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### ITEM 5: DIRECTORS REPORT – 20 March 2017

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Trustees on the work of the Director since the last meeting.

#### Key areas of activity

##### Strategic Plan – Delivery Plan

We previously agreed that key areas of work to retain and progress are the Social Impact Bond and the work on Experts by Experience. We have been unsuccessful in securing funding for the service user engagement work, and we are now reducing our involvement in the Social Impact Bond.

##### Companies House

Our Confirmation Statement return has been submitted and accepted by Companies House.

##### Personnel

Rebecca has been successful in securing another post in Loughborough University and so with my approval and support she has reduced her hours with Women's Breakout from 22 hours per week to 15. She will work mornings on Monday to Thursday.

##### Social Impact Bond

Jim and I met again with Gloucester leads on 12 January and they confirmed their intention to take the SIB forward in Gloucester City and have identified a budget of £50,000 to work with 25 women. Gateshead have confirmed their intention to go ahead, but are awaiting the outcome of their whole system approach bid to confirm funding before making a decision on potential funding commitment. Newcastle are still working on this but have yet to commit. We attended a meeting in Newcastle on 27 February to explore this, but the only commissioner present was the Gateshead lead.

Following discussions on 6 March 2017 with Changing Lives, Nelson Trust, BWB, and the representatives of Women's Breakout Board we have agreed that the level of funding committed in each area is insufficient for us to continue with the CBOF work. Unless the commissioners are able to give a commitment to a higher level of funding over a longer period we will withdraw from this work. The two provider organisations are still able to take work forward on developing a SIB in their areas but without the time pressure of CBOF will be able to do this over a longer period of time which seems to better meet commissioner challenges. We hope to be able to turn the current work into a proof on concept pilot which will demonstrate the impact and potential of a SIB to this work. Laura will convene a meeting for Changing Lives and Nelson Trust to explore this, and BWB have agreed to offer a level of support to this work.

An e-mail was sent to the two leads and we met key lead commissioners in Gloucester on 15 March to discuss further. The meeting went very well, they remain committed to developing a Social Impact Bond, they have now confirmed funding commitment for two years, and indicated that while £50,000 is the bottom line they are expecting to increase this. We are working with them to ensure an appropriate transition and we will also be discussing with CBOF whether there is any possibility of some of the funding transferring to the Nelson Trust.

I have continued to support Laura with the development of a whole system approach/SIB in West Yorkshire, and attended a further meeting in January after which they did submit an application to the MoJ.

### **Experts by Experience**

The application for funding was unsuccessful. We had a very good response to our survey of member organisations and will be shaping our AGM around service user engagement. Key messages from the audit were:

- 13 organisations have a strategy document or statement that refers to their engagement with service users, but 26 organisations do not.
- 15 organisations have a committee for their service users, but 24 do not.
- 12 organisations have a service user on their Trustee/Governance Board one on their Board, but almost three quarters (27 organisations) do not.
- 35 organisations (90%) engage service users in the design and delivery of their services. 22 organisations (just over half) engage service users in the monitoring of their services. And 36 organisations (92%) engage service users in the monitoring of their services.
- 31 organisations (79%) have paid or voluntary staff that used to be service users at their organisation. Not all of these organisations were able to say how many they have, but we are able to say that there are well over 100 ex-service users working at these 31 organisations.
- The majority of the organisations (92%) ask for feedback from service users on an exit report.

We are preparing a 'Service User Engagement Policy' to circulate to our membership.

### **Communications**

Members were asked for information on IWD and Corston+10 and this was included in the February e-bulletin.

We now have over 770 followers on Twitter. We are regularly Tweeting key facts, other links to our website and invitations to donate to us.

The redesign of our website is going well and will be live on 15 March 2017. When the soft launch has been completed we will announce it to our members and stakeholders. We are very pleased with the work that Coopa.net have done on it and feel that it's new look will be helpful to everyone viewing it.

### **Sustainability**

I met with Hilary Barnard on 15 January, and he confirmed the offer that Roma had previously reported on. The Clinks Board met on 23 February 2017 and agreed to enter into formal negotiations around a merger. Barrow Cadbury Trust have given funding of £10,000 to this work, with Clinks leading on this application. Hilary Barnard has been engaged to take us through this work and there will be a meeting of the representatives of the two Boards with Hilary Barnard after this meeting.

The application for a joint funding proposal with Women in Prison was unsuccessful.

## Networking and influence

- I met with Adam Memon, economic advisor to the Justice Secretary, with Jim and Chris, to talk through the financial model of the SIB, and other areas of work. Following the meeting, and on Adam's request, I sent our quality assurance standard and a proposal for how the MoJ could support or get involved - which included using their influence more widely and front funding the two areas that we are working with.
- On 8 February I attended a roundtable meeting hosted by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS) and Women's Resource Centre (WRC) with the purpose of bringing together key women's organisations to discuss the potential of the Holloway site as a location for a Women's Building.
- I provided comments on the key messages being developed for the Corston+10 celebration.

## Meetings/Conferences

- On 26 January I attended a conference on 'Using a Trauma Informed Approach to address the impact of complex trauma on families'. The facilitator was Dr Sheena Webb, a consultant clinical psychologist and service manager of the London Family Drug and Alcohol Court Team. She was a very good trainer, she had an easy and friendly style and she struck me as very knowledgeable about working with trauma in the UK. She was also very good at giving some skills/words to people who were not trained in clinical interventions ie those that were trying to introduce a trauma informed approach and may be the front line of working with people who had suffered trauma ie in our prisons and women's centres. She talked about this as the 'stabilisation' phase that all practitioners had a role in while the memory processing' and 'reclaiming life' were the domain of the trained specialist. I shared this with Edwina Grosvenor and the team supporting 'One Small Thing' so that they might bring someone like this alongside Stephanie Covington. They have said they will follow up.
- On 6 February I attended the Birth Companions event 'New Insights'. It was a well attended event with presentations on: *Migrant women and maternity care; the Mums and Babies Community; the impact of targeted support on birth-related outcomes and experiences; Birth Companions' approach to supporting women; Findings from the Community Link project evaluation; listening to women's experiences of being pregnant in an English prison.*
- I attended a conference in Newcastle exploring the theme of keeping mothers out of prison. The speakers addressed the connection of trauma to the women in the CJS, the importance of working emotionally with mothers who go to prison, and a strategy for women's health and justice. The meeting aimed to explore what is working and what is not and strategies to end short term sentencing of mothers and they are hoping to develop a direction for the north east from this work.
- I commented on and signed (among other voluntary sector agencies) a letter sent to Liz Truss by Katherine Sachs-Jones on the planned building of women's prisons that suggested that community sentences were a better option.
- I attended the COVER Steering Group meeting at Styal Prison. The project is going well, with lifers recruited and trained to work with the women and 24 of the target forty women have been recruited. They have some issues to work through in terms of transfer of the women into the community or other prisons, and we are keen to ensure there is a follow up to the research as it emerges.

- I attended a meeting organised by Rosa to plan a women's leadership retreat, and have commented further on proposals by e-mail.
- I contributed to a paper that Edwina Grosvenor was asked to provide to the MoJ on characteristics of a women's centre, as part of their work on developing a strategy for female offenders.
- I provided information and circulated invitations to women's centres to attend this event. Corston +10. I attended the event which was very well attended and a good networking opportunity.

## Visits/Members

Brighter Futures will be closing Chepstow House on 24 March 2017.

### Fairways House

I met with the manager of a service providing independent parenting assessments for the court as part of Care Proceedings brought by local authorities regarding children across the country. They are looking to expand this service to include support/alternatives to prison for mothers with the primary aim of reducing re-offending and improving the lives of children.

They have comprehensive resources along the lines of psychotherapy, capacity to change assessment tools and education & training for parents. The majority of parents supported have issues resulting from their own childhood experiences, domestic abuse, mental health issues, substance misuse and learning disability.

### Anawim

I visited Anawim to see the residential facility which will be taking their first referral in the near future. Joy and I also met with Ben Martin, Commonweal, who is writing an evaluation report on Re-Unite and other initiatives supported by Commonweal.

### CRC Referrals

We asked members for information on their referrals from CRC's and gathered the following information: how many referrals were they contracted for, how many had been referred to date, and whether a contract was in place for next year. We received responses from 14 organisations, the majority of which were not receiving the referrals at the levels that were indicated in the contract.

### Educational Welfare issues

One of our member organisations raised the issue of women being imprisoned because they did not send their children to school. We canvassed our membership to see if this is a wider problem and found that a number of organisations had experienced a rise in this respect and we have collected some case studies and featured this in our last e-bulletin.

### Referee

Reference provided to support Changing Lives application to become a member of the VCSE Health Alliance.

## Summary and recommendations

The Board are asked to note the report.

**Jackie Russell**  
**Director, Women's Breakout**