



**Caithness Health Improvement Forum**  
**Meeting Held in the**  
**Mowat Room, Assembly Rooms, Wick**  
**on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 11am**

**Present:**

Pauline Craw, NHS Highland - Locality Manager Caithness (Chairperson)  
Margaret Allan, Laurandy Centre  
Lorna Simpson, Ormlie Community Association  
William Ather Caithness Deaf Care  
Sue Mileham, Crossroads-Care Manager  
Elizabeth Smith, Community Health Partnership Committee  
Chris Mackenzie, Caithness Mental Health Support Group  
Alison Brownie, Volunteer Stroke Service - Chest. Heart Stroke  
Fiona Henderson, Caithness Community Care Forum  
Naomi Watson, Homestart  
Yvonne Hendry, Caithness Voluntary Group  
Dr David Bell

**In Attendance:**

Koreen MacDougall, CDO - Caithness Partnership  
David Shearer, Assistant Administrator - Caithness Partnership

**1. Welcome & Apologies –**

**Apologies were received from:**

Jennifer Rawlins, Jean McLennan, Anna MacConnell, Katrina MacNab, Deirdre Aitken, Margaret Brown, Sylvia Mackay, Anna Swanson, Margaret Bremner

Mrs Pauline Craw welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to posthumously acknowledge the work and commitment that George Bruce OBE had made to improving the health of people in Caithness and on the behalf of CHIF expressed thanks to George for his generous contribution.

**2. Minutes of meetings held on 27 August 2008**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008 were approved as a true record of the proceedings.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**4. CHIF Terms of Reference and Membership**

Pauline Craw requested that all present review the Terms of Reference document to evaluate and suggest any amendments that would be appropriate for CHIF. It was agreed that the Aim of the CHIF “to promote the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing of the

(Draft for approval at next scheduled meeting)

people of Caithness” was important to remain the focus of the CHIF. Dr David Bell asked if the forum would consider adding “individually and collectively” to the Aim as there are two aspects. The forum agreed to amend the aim to; “The Aim of the Caithness Health Improvement Forum is to promote the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing of the people of Caithness, individually and collectively”.

Koreen MacDougal expressed concern that there is possibly a need to look at widening the reach of the forum to ensure all the relevant groups and individuals of Caithness are benefiting. It was suggested that submitting CHIF information to Yvonne Henry - Caithness Voluntary Group newsletter, would assist the forum to improve its reach in the community. The forum agreed to submit CHIF information and any relevant updates to the newsletter and also to submit Caithness Partnership website links to CHIF information, where the forum minutes will be held. Pauline Craw asked the forum to consider any other key stakeholders who may benefit from membership to enable the forum to capture all relevant groups and asked everyone to forward any membership requests to the Caithness Partnership.

Pauline Craw asked the forum if they would prefer the chairperson role to be rotated. The forum all agreed for Pauline Craw to continue her role as CHIF chairperson.

Elizabeth Smith asked if the forum had a vice chairperson. Pauline Craw explained that there was no official vice chair elected and if all agreed, to continue without an elected vice chair until the next AGM due in February 2010.

Pauline asked if each of the forum members could provide a paragraph stating their role and responsibilities as well as what they would like from the forum which could then be put together for CHIF information and be published to the Caithness Partnership website’s health section. The forum agreed to do this and to update the information annually.

- *Action – David Shearer - Caithness Partnership – To amend CHIF Aim in Terms of Reference Document.*
- *Action – David Shearer - Caithness Partnership – To submit CHIF information to CVG newsletter.*
- *Action – David Shearer - Caithness Partnership – To receive member’s role information from the individual forum members, compile and publish to Caithness Partnership website.*

## **5. Health and Homelessness – Dr David Bell**

Dr David Bell introduced himself as a part-time consultant in public health and wellbeing and he is also chairperson to the NHS Highland Homelessness Action Group. Dr Bell explained to the forum that he was presenting this report on behalf of Margaret Brown, Manager NHS Highland who was unable to attend on this occasion.

Dr David Bell explained that the statutory responsibility for dealing with people who believe themselves to be homeless or are under threat of becoming homeless is to the local authority. He highlighted that the homelessness statistics calculate one family as a unit and in many cases there are a number of children within this statistic unit that are homeless. Dr Bell reported that there are approximately 2200 homeless presentations in the Highlands per year and the count for Caithness is around 200-300 per year. In the majority of local authorities, the proportion of the homeless presentations that have children is between 20 and 40%. Dr Bell said that the Government has correctly stated that Local Authorities are to be discouraged from placing homeless families with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation as a temporary solution. This is because this format of accommodation is very unsuitable for children for many reasons such as homework issues, young mothers with babies as well as many other practical issues.

(Draft for approval at next scheduled meeting)

A recent survey on the health needs assessment of homelessness people has demonstrated that the great majority of homeless people have not only homelessness problems but also have multiple health related problems needing addressed. These are issues such as mental health problems, dependant children, alcohol problems and chest problems. This clearly demonstrates that homeless people are one of the groups in society who suffer from multiple and complex needs. Dr Bell stated that multiple and complex needs require multiple and complex solutions and therefore the problems faced by homeless people can only be met by partnership working of various services including voluntary sectors as well as the communities themselves.

Dr Bell also explained that many people regard homelessness as a moral issue and are under the assumption that homeless people are somehow to blame for their situation. The most common reason for people becoming homeless is family disputes which accounts to around 40% of Homelessness presentations. Many of these are young adults of age 16 where they have had to leave the family home and have been re-housed. Many are ill equipped to deal with running a home without support and therefore results in tenancy failure. Dr Bell stated that some other reasons for becoming homeless are; coming out of armed forces, prison, and hospital as well as leaving an institution. This highlights the complex reasons that can lead to a person becoming homeless and clearly demonstrates the need for multi partnership approach.

Pauline Crow thanked Dr Bell for his homelessness presentation and agreed that this affects all the forum members in their roles. She asked the forum for their response.

Elizabeth Smith agreed regarding the perception of what homelessness means and expressed her concern that the subject has not been publicised enough to enable the community to be more aware of the causes of homelessness as well as the difference between homelessness and sleeping rough.

Pauline Crow enquired if it might be a suggestion for Public Health Department to action an awareness event to help promote the awareness of homelessness. The forum agreed this would be something worthwhile pursuing in the future. Dr Bell agreed to mention the homelessness awareness to Margaret Brown, NHS Highland.

The forum agreed that they all now have a better-informed understanding of homelessness and should therefore respond to referrals from the local authority more effectively. As homelessness affects all the forum members, it was agreed to keep the homelessness issue an ongoing topic for the forum with updates at each meeting.

Dr Bell requested that his contact number be recorded to the minutes and would welcome any contact from the forum members. Dr Bell Tel: 07702 059 289

- *Action – Dr David Bell - To liaise with Margaret Brown NHS regarding homelessness awareness.*

## **6. 10k Charity Run**

Koreen MacDougall provided the forum with an update from Anna MacConnell. Koreen explained that the Mey charity run was an initiative to get people who had never run before to run successfully and complete the run. Anna MacConnell stuck to the programme religiously and successfully completed the charity run. Koreen stated that Anna found it hard during the winter months but received great support from friends and family who went out with her to keep her motivated. Koreen reported that Anna MacConnell has kept up the activity and has recently completed the Ness 10k run with seven minutes off her recorded time for the Mey

(Draft for approval at next scheduled meeting)

charity event. Anna also intends to complete the Harris 10k run in March. Koreen also stated that in undertaking this challenge Anna has lost weight, feels healthier overall and would thoroughly recommend this to anyone who wishes to take up running.

The forum acknowledged Anna's achievement as well as forum member Alison Brownie who also participated and has kept up the activity and reported being much healthier because of this activity.

Pauline Crow agreed to forward the running programme to the Caithness Partnership to publish on the partnerships website.

- *Action – Pauline Crow - To forward running programme to Caithness Partnership*

## **7. Update from Community Health Partnership Representatives**

### **Health Service – Pauline Crow**

#### **Smoking**

The smoking cessation officer Katie Wilson has moved on to become the Cardiac Rehab Practitioner therefore a new Smoking person shall be recruited in due course.

#### **Healthy Weight**

They are looking to improve childhood obesity through a government initiative and intend to recruit into this new post, which will be dual format looking at motivating pregnant women as well as childhood obesity.

#### **Early Years Group**

The group is continuing to carry out its role.

#### **Alcohol and Drugs**

With new funds being made available from the government they have increased their practitioners within the drug service. John Webster their alcohol specialist has resigned therefore this post will need to be recruited.

#### **Oral Health**

Oral Health continues to be improved. The Childsmile initiative continues to be very successful. This initiative was promoted at this year Harbourfest with the Childsmile wagon providing face painting promoting the scheme very successfully.

#### **Laurandy Day Center – Margaret Allan**

Margaret Allan explained that the day care centre work with the very elderly and rely on support from the health service as well as the community. The centre is currently at full capacity with a waiting list, with referrals received direct from the hospital.

Margaret stated that in their role, they have identified that there are many gaps of support for older people within the community and would therefore like to establish a form of befriending scheme. They would like this to be implemented within the voluntary sector and understand the difficulties such an initiative presents and therefore would welcome any suggestion the forum may have.

(Draft for approval at next scheduled meeting)

It was agreed the forum would make this an ongoing topic and to have regular updates on progress.

**Ormlie Community Association – Lorna Simpson**

Lorna reported that they have a number of different projects in Ormlie. The young mothers group which has been running for almost a year is having a very positive affect. It involves mothers from 16 to 25 years of age who work on particular issues that affect their life and is carried out in partnership with Health and Social Work.

**Caithness Deaf Care - William Ather**

Mr. Ather stated that they have over 1050 clients using their centre at present. He also agreed that befriending is a problem at this time and explained that when clients come to the centre they often really just wish to talk and have some company. Many clients are house bound and when visited it can be very difficult to get away.

**Caithness Mental Health Support Group - Chris Mackenzie**

Chris explained that the group manages two centre's, The Haven in Wick and Stepping Stones in Thurso which are both open every day of the year. Both centre's are open to anyone who is experiencing any form of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and loneliness. Chris also stated that a significant number of holidaymakers have used the centre's services when they have experienced difficulties and Chris also reported that both centre's have had thousands of visitors each year.

**Volunteer Stroke Service - Chest. Heart Stroke - Alison Brownie**

Alison explained that primarily they are funded to provide support to people with communication difficulties after suffering a stroke. Alison also said that they run a social group weekly in Halkirk. Alison stated that their main concern at present was the lack of a speech and language therapist in the hospital. Also their outreach demand is increasing and they are at present awaiting training to allow more volunteers to go out into the community to meet this demand.

Pauline Crow responded, stating that the Health Service are recruiting another speech and language therapist and explained that this profession is quite difficult to recruit into.

**Caithness Community Care Forum - Fiona Henderson**

Fiona explained that she works with users and carers of services and identifies gaps in these services and provided this information in various community newsletters as well as letters to the village hall committees and community councils. Fiona reported that she has received some volunteers to be a buddy for swine flu which would involve picking up medication and delivering it to patients as well as shopping and other necessary requirements. Fiona also reported that the care forum recently conducted a homecare survey which identified the various needs of people and have been referred to the appropriate services. Fiona stated that the care forum also carried out the carers enhanced assessments which identified if carers were requiring any other services which resulted in a number of people being referred to social work for new assessments. The CCC forum is currently in the process of carrying out the consultation for the joint community care plan and should be completed by the start of 2010. Fiona explained that she also works with the access panel and recently has dealt with access issues at the Mill Theatre in Thurso and the Seacoast people have been in contact to test a new metal arm and hoist bought by the Harbour Trust.

(Draft for approval at next scheduled meeting)

### **Homestart - Naomi Watson**

Naomi stated that Homestart is an organization set up to support families who have at least one child under the age of five. Naomi explained that they work with the family as a whole to address any issues that may have an impact on the family such as a family member having undergone an operation or experiencing mental health issues, with the aim of intervening early to prevent escalation. She reported that they have supported forty-one families this year so far.

### **The Caithness Partnership**

Koreen MacDougall introduced herself to the forum and explained her role as the Caithness Development Officer. She explained that her duties are to help facilitate the forums needs and information in the form of providing all the members with a platform to share information and to help in any way to get the forums information into the community to maximize the forums benefit.

David Shearer introduced himself to the forum as the Caithness Partnerships Administrator and will assist the forum in their administrative needs through recording all forum information, arranging meetings as well as updating the Caithness Partnership website.

### **Caithness Voluntary Group - Yvonne Hendry**

Yvonne explained to the meeting that part of her role is publishing a newsletter which also includes information that various groups pass on to her. Yvonne also stated that she has a monthly column in the local newspaper as well as organizes training for people working in the voluntary sector.

## **8. A.O.C.B.**

### **Pandemic Flu**

Pauline Craw provided a short update regarding the present flu epidemic. She stated that the Health Protection Scotland are suggesting that we are now in the second wave of current pandemic with the peak expected in the following few weeks. Pauline reported that the vaccine's have now begun rolling out to the GP surgeries for the identified at risk groups.

Dr Bell stated that the current flu virus is a very mild illness and the fatality rate from H1N1 is much less than normal winter flu. Pauline Craw also explained that the Health Service have been training for a pandemic for five years and are very well equipped to handle a pandemic situation.

Pauline Craw thanked everyone for a productive meeting and Dr David Bell for his homelessness presentation.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Health Improvement Forum was yet to be confirmed which is likely to be the forums AGM scheduled for a date in February 2010.