

**Eastern Regional Foster Focus Meeting, Baddeck Provincial Building
Tuesday November 5th, 2024**

In Person:

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| Aliesje MacInnis (DCS, recorder) | Gary Landry (Federation) | Jennifer March (DCS) |
| Donna-Deveaux-MacLeod (DCS) | Wendy Thorn (DCS) | Shaun Butler (DCS) |
| Erin Warner (DCS) | Shirley Howard (Federation) | |

Virtual:

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| Sandi Brown(FP) | Jill Martin (Federation) | Kayla MacKinnon (FP) |
| Margaret MacMillan (DCS) | | |

Regrets:

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| Georgeina MacKinnon (DCS) | Kevin McGrath (DCS) | Erin Warner (DCS) |
| Mairi MacLean (DCS) | | |

| Agenda Item | Discussion | Action |
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| 1. Minutes | Aliesje will record the minutes. | |
| 2. Welcome and Introductions | | |
| 3. Review of Attendees list across programs | Gary and Margaret previously reviewed and can add to list if others should be invited | |
| 4. FFFNS Updates | <p>Foster Families Launch: Thank you to all who organized and attended launch. Next year will be in Northern Region on same weekend.</p> <p>Gatherings/Events: Discussed the number of events foster families are invited to attend which has increased considering Mockingbird/Constellations. One foster parent noted they are very rural so always needs to travel distances to things and does not feel getting Mockingbird experience as only three homes. Wendy expressed that she has talked to Hub Home about recruiting of others in the area and brainstorming ideas. Was asked if they could sometimes join other constellations. Margaret will bring back to Georgeina MacKinnon as we want to ensure they feel supported. Gary said will also discuss at DCS/KPMG meeting to see what is being done in other areas. Was discussed at the Launch with Foster Families and hearing still not getting a lot of involvement in gatherings. Margaret asked if being discussed at monthly Peer Support meetings and response was gatherings not specifically discussed. Noted that gatherings with just adults would be beneficial and was well received when previously done</p> | Margaret Gary |

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| | <p>and some may be able to do in days when children are at school. Options for gathering locations a challenge and homes need to be creative in rural areas. Some concerns/feelings expressed about foster families having a say in gatherings, suggestions not taken seriously, menu concerns, children bored, money needed for swimming or bowling, twelve foster families in Constellation and only three showing up, always at Hub home, and not feeling accommodated. Wendy said are funds and was one recently at Hanks Farm with Pita Pit food; and one with swimming and lobster at Hub Home and suggested a meeting to discuss as want everyone to feel engage. Question asked if Hub Homes can join these meetings and Foster Association. DCS and the Federation will discuss this matter. Suggestion made to think about older children helping with the events like the Christmas parties. Gary noted that the Hub Homes meet once a month on the importance of engagement and listening. Wendy will take back to the Social Worker team to discuss. Gary explained that Wendall and Sheila are on the Board for Federation and can attend their meeting, Rob, the chair, had conflicts for today.</p> <p>Training: Shirley Howard is the Coordinator of Training for the Federation and started in February 2024. The new and revised sensitivity training program, which is one day now vs two, was rolled out slowly in September. Rollout SW nominated someone from their group, first session communication going well. A new NVCI-blended refresher was added this Fall, and it is 4 hours in-class with a 3 hour at home online component. The online option-filled up fast. Two more sessions this Fall - Nov 16 and 30th and will roll out more times in Spring. We still offer the one-day refresher in class for NVCI as well as the 2-day Basic for first time foster caregivers.</p> <p>AGM - May 30,31 & June 1, Liverpool Best Western has a block of rooms. Federation and DCS to share this info.</p> | <p>DCS & Federation</p> <p>Wendy</p> <p>Federation & DCS</p> |
| 5. Allegations and Support Program | Jill and 2 Social Workers with CAIT complete all investigation, attended pre-service in Eastern, hosted Hub home support meeting (Next meeting is Nov 26 th). Reminders are sent for meeting, and turnout has been good and lots of sharing ideas. | |
| 6. FOTS Updates | Erin noted surveys sent to foster care caregivers by one Hub home, guest speakers and staff but no foster families attended. Hoping to get more input. | |
| 7. DCS Update | Margaret noted that the Provincial DCS Foster Outreach Supports (FOTS) meets is in Truro today; lots of discussion on role of FOTS and with project team and how can better serve with Mockingbird; | |

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| | <p>direction is being creative, talking with foster families versus referral base service.</p> <p>Foster Care Redesign -focus this year is recruitment and retention of foster families; working to hire for Ambassador Program; focused Recruitment plans in each region and lots of work to do - foster families the most valuable recruiters.</p> <p>Emergency Receiving Homes - Mairi and Georgeina are working to get emergency receiving homes operating across the province. A region has test started; short term stays in their area; selection of homes taking place and they need certain skill level- high skill set needed). Trying to identify homes before end of December.</p> <p>Aliesje noted that the department is working closely with CBU and their Bachelor of Social Work Program. Shaun Butler, SD Manager is retiring in December after many dedicated years of service.</p> <p>Shaun noted the importance of these meetings as need to hear feedback, need to collaborate to improve, always needs to be progressing.</p> <p>A foster parent asked if it is possible for birth parents to submit letters regularly. Jennifer said there are openness meetings, goal is always to have openness, decisions are made with lots of input from children in care, foster care and adoption. Margaret mentioned openness with foster families as they would have info for children as well and to maintain relationships; non-identity social histories can be written and explain the child's story and children could read with their adoptive parents.</p> | |
| 8.Foster Care Updates | <p>A foster parent noted that last placement left in April, only doing respite at this time, Social Worker vacancy, and interest in being emergency receiving home. Noted that a lot of Hub Homes are doing respite now and will ensure Social Worker aware she is available for respite.</p> <p>Respite payments not coming easily with Hub Homes entering - takes long time.</p> | DCS |
| 9. Positive Stories | Gary noted the progress of these meetings with great information sharing and discussion from those attending. | |
| 10.Next Meeting Date | <p>June 2025</p> <p>Gary Landry will not be attending as retiring in December and well wishes extended to him.</p> | |

Minutes taken by: Aliesje MacInnis