

Doran: National Commissioning Group for Education Provision – for children and young people with complex additional support needs
Venue: Scottish Government, Victoria Quay, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
Date: Monday 30 April 2018
Time: 10:00 to 12:00

Present

- Margaret Orr, (Chair)
- Deborah Walker, Scottish Government
- Kevin Barr, (Secretariat) Scottish Government
- Laura Caven, Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
- Alex Little, Strategic Planning Manager, NHS (Teleconference)
- David Barr, Aberlour representing Coalition of Care & Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) & Educating Through Care Scotland (ETCS)
- Laura Battles, Donaldson's School, representing the grant-aided special schools
- Steven McPherson, Education Scotland
- Paul Nisbet, CALL Scotland representing the grant funded national centres, Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) & Enquire
- Laura Meikle, Scottish Government

Apologies

- Andrew Jeffries, Head of Service representing Social Work Scotland (SWS)
- Barry Syme, representing The Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP)
- Megan Farr, Children and Young People Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS)
- Caroline Amos, Representing Association of Directors Education Scotland (ADES)

1. Welcome & Introduction

1.1 Margaret Orr (**MO**) welcomed members and thanked them for attending. Margaret welcomed Laura Battles (**LB**), Chief Executive of Donaldson's school to her first meeting as the new representative of the seven grant-aided special schools, having taken over this role from Richard Hellewell.

1.2 MO explained that the aim of the meeting was to discuss the draft report on the public consultation of the 10 year strategy and agree next steps.

1.3 MO invited Laura Meikle (**LM**) to provide an update on changes in the Scottish Government, Strategy & Performance Division and the Support and Wellbeing Unit. LM informed the group that she was promoted to the Support & Wellbeing Unit head. LM confirmed that the team is currently recruiting for 2 Team Leaders, who should be in post shortly. LM informed members that the Deputy Director of Strategy & Performance Division, Donna Bell has moved to Safer Communities, and that Graeme Logan previously with Education Scotland had been appointed as the new

Deputy Director. LM advised that Graeme was unable to attend today's meeting but planned to attend a future meeting. Finally, LM confirmed that Kevin Barr (**KB**) has also joined the group and replaces Deborah Lynch as secretariat.

2. Chairs update

2.1 MO provided a brief update in relation to the work she has undertaken over the last few months.

3. Draft Analysis Report on the Public Consultation to the 10 Year Strategy

3.1 MO invited Deborah Walker (**DW**) to give an overview of the draft analysis report on the consultation to the 10 year strategy.

3.2 David Barr (**DB**) asked before the presentation on the analysis report on the 10 year strategy could an update on the 3 year commissioning cycle be provided. LM advised there would be a redraft of the 3 year commissioning cycle strategy later in the year. This follows on the decision by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to continue to fund the seven grant-aided special schools and the three national centres at the same level for 2018/19.

3.3 DW confirmed that there had been 61 responses to consultation, 14 from individuals and 47 from organisations. Those responses, where permission was given by respondents, have been published on the consultation website.

3.4 DW advised that the majority of respondents welcomed the strategy, however some felt that areas of the strategy lacked important detail and some areas would benefit from greater clarity. The following suggestions were provided:

- Timeline for implementation
- Short, medium and long term goals
- Details on how progress and monitoring of the strategy would be undertaken
- More robust data – Deborah reflected that work was being reviewed by the Advisory Group Additional Support for Learning

3.5 DW explained that in response to Question 5 in the consultation 'Scope of Services to be Commissioned' – it was reassuring that most of the responses to that question aligned with earlier findings in the Doran National Needs Analysis, which was published in March 2015. It is worth noting that transitions featured much more prominently in the public consultation. There was strong support for the strategies aim of training and development.

3.6 Other areas identified in the consultation were:

- To be updated to align with changes from the Education Reform agenda;
- The strategy needs to address early year's provision and show how it links to early years support for children and young people with complex additional support needs and transition to primary education.
- More detail on how families, parents, carers and the children and young people will be engaged in the strategy.

3.7 The definition of complex additional support needs was raised by some respondents, however it was noted that the definition will remain the same.

3.8 There were two areas raised in the section relating to the Governance of the group. These were:

- How the transition move to the new funding model will be managed; and
- The membership of the National Commissioning Group membership.

3.9 DW invited members to comment. She was particularly interested to hear their views, and also wanted to agree with them today what the next steps should contain in the consultation analysis report. DW provided the following suggestions for consideration:

- Timeline with short, medium and long term goals
- How we measure what we're doing and if it's right
- Incorporating a glossary for some of the language used within the document
- A Child Rights & Wellbeing and an Equality Impact Assessment would be completed.
- Aligning strategy to education reform agenda
- Review the good practice, and the other research papers which were highlighted by a number of respondents. DW suggested that a sub group of the NCG would be best placed to undertake that work.

3.10 MO suggested that in relation to current legislation it would be helpful to provide a summary grid and how it aligns to the work we're doing, as the work may already have been undertaken through a list of other policy documents.

3.11 Alex Little (AL) suggested that a detailed low level timeline or plan for the strategy would be difficult; as delivery was dependent on a number of factors out with this group's control. It was agreed that a high level timeline with some milestones could be developed for the final version of the strategy but all agreed that a detailed low level timeline would not be possible.

3.12 MO confirmed with the group that all members are content with the strategy, and thanked LM and DW for undertaking the work.

4. Update on National Commissioning Funding

4.1 LM informed the group that she is anticipating £250,000 of funding being available for commissioning within 18-24 months. Expectation is that this will be an incremental increase over 7 years between the 1st set of resource available, and a full budget. Discussions are still to be had so there are no formal plans. There will be a plan by end of this financial year allowing the commissioning group to work through each year. MO informed the group that as initial spend had been identified, the group could begin significant work.

4.2 LM noted that this is new work for all members of the group and having money in the 1st year will allow members to learn how to undertake this work.

4.3 LM advised that the preparation of the work will be 6 months to a year and the group should begin preparation now.

4.4 LM welcomed questions. Laura Caven (LC) asked about the role of Scotland Excel. LM confirmed that Scotland Excel were initially part of the group but withdrew as it was felt they would not be involved in the commissioning process. LM confirmed that Scotland Excel does, however, have sight of the work and that a continued dialogue with them was in place.

5. Group Membership

5.1 MO asked for a reflection on a balance of the membership of both the commissioning group and project board, highlighting the importance of encouraging members to be proactive in the work if they're going to sit on either group.

5.2 Members discussed the role of health within the group and it was agreed, that due to mental health being so prominent in the Doran Needs Analysis and the public consultation that a health representative member of the group was required. AL agreed that she would remain on the commissioning group even if she were not able to attend every meeting but attend when health input was required.

5.3 The group discussed the possibility of collapsing both groups into one, however agreed that it would not be sensible to mix governance with commissioning.

5.4 DB noted that it may be helpful to rethink the project plan if the 2 groups are going to remain.

5.5 Members agreed that there should be a core group, with members attending specific meetings as necessary. There was consensus that momentum needed to be injected into the group to encourage members to attend meetings and to promote the strategy in their particular fields.

5.6 Members discussed how to effectively disseminate information ensuring that the child's voice is heard. The group agreed that work needs to be undertaken to utilise existing organisations and channels in place (Inclusion Ambassadors) to effectively share information. This is an area that will be strengthened.

5.7 LM noted that young people could be involved, however the group isn't the best forum for young people to attend and it may be better to reach out to seek young people's views. Members agreed that the Inclusion Ambassadors could be a way of reaching out to capture children and young peoples' voices.

5.8 The group confirmed that there should be no significant change to the membership, however we should extend the invitation asking members to confirm their attendance in the group (**action**). Going forward, this should be high on the agenda.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The group discussed whether fresh research is required. MO informed the group that current post graduate leadership journeys needs to be reviewed to reflect the context of meeting complex additional support needs in a range of settings. As a group, what is the focus and what should universities be doing. Steven McPherson (**SM**) informed the group that within education there were some issues with leadership, and how change was managed and priorities identified. MO advised the group that if achievement and attainment is key training needs to inform this. The group discussed the challenge of asking schools to undertake tasks for both Pupil Equity Funding and Additional Support for Learning, as PEF is so much larger. Criteria needs to be simple for the LA as there has been significant confusion with PEF, and a whole system approach was suggested. LM informed the group that they will be commissioning services, and not just issuing funds. The need for tangible progress was highlighted.

6.2 The group discussed the leadership programme and what it might look like. The work would be undertaken through ADES, with practitioners from Education Scotland as an initial writing group, before going to universities to commission work. This will not be for this group to undertake the work, as a balance must be struck. LM agreed with a similar approach to any research being undertaken.

6.3 The group discussed the pathway from schools to CAMHS for children who require mental health support. Concerns were raised about a lack of a pathway, asking if there is an alternative route where children could access help. It was agreed that there is a need to establish whether there is anything that will add value.

6.4 LM recognised the developments happening around us (CAMHS) and the need not to replicate the work being done already.

6.5 The group acknowledged that autism and social emotional wellbeing have also been raised in the National Needs Analysis and the public consultation and was an important area where research work could be valuable.

6.6 The group discussed transitions as this featured heavily in the responses to the draft strategy. LM noted that the Scottish Transitions Forum (STF) had done work on this. Members agreed and felt that the STF is undertaking good work. However, there is concern that this does not seem to have been disseminated consistently throughout Scotland's 32 local authorities. The group need to focus on how this work translates, what good practice there is and how this is making a difference. If there is going to be an action around this, then it needs to be how to roll it out and analyse what the effect any change has had. LM noted the work of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC) and asked if there was anything they could do.

6.7 The group discussed AGASL's role to feed into the work of this group, and LM confirm that her role was to be the link between the 2 groups. MO asked that an update from AGASL is given on the next agenda. (**ACTION**)

7. Any other business

7.1 LB asked whether the group is aware of things being done in GASS schools, and asked whether it may be useful to receive information from them. MO agreed that any updates should be shared by correspondence.

7.2 DW asked that members send any final comments they have on the 10 year strategy public consultation analysis report, to her by email by close of play on Friday.

8. Summary and next steps.

8.1 MO asked the group to agree that the next 2 years should be to: investigate training, look to have external conversation with stakeholders and go more public to get work on National agenda. Also agreeing that membership is fine, inviting current membership to confirm their attendance at the group or to nominate another named person from their organisation.

8.2 MO stated that the meetings outcome was:

- 10 year public consultation analysis report discussed and agreed final comments to DW by close of play on Friday. Colleagues who had been unable to attend the meeting to be contacted by KB for any comments.
- Following the publication of the 10 year strategy public consultation report in June 2018 the 10 year strategy document will be refreshed and updated for final publication by the end of 2018.
- Firmed up intentions for coming year.
- Acknowledged that strategic commissioning for the group is new and for a number of members their first experience of commissioning. There is a steep learning curve for members and that as the work progresses the group will look for training and learning opportunities which supports them to undertake their role on the NCG.

9. Date of next meeting and close

9.1 The secretariat will send out Doodle polls for the full year's meetings, with the first taking place in late August. **(ACTION)**

9.2 MO thanked members for attending and brought the meeting to a close.

Actions

Action	Person responsible	Comments
1. Extend invitation to members asking to confirm attendance at the group.	Secretariat	By a future meeting
2. AGASL update to be given at next meeting.	Laura Meikle	At next meeting
3. Doodle polls to be issued for future meetings.	Secretariat	Full year of meetings to be issued