

Governance Group meeting minutes  
11<sup>th</sup> November 2014, 3 pm  
Autism Initiatives, Edinburgh

**APPROVED**

**In attendance:** **Kabie Brook**, Autism Rights Group Highland; **Carolyn Brown**, Fife Council/Education; **Michael Dawson**, an autistic person; **James Fletcher**, ARC Scotland; **Anne Marie Gallagher**, NHS GGC; **Emma Hanley**, Autism Network Scotland; **Ian Hood**, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland; **Richard Ibbotson**, Autism Initiatives; **Thom Kirkwood**, Parental Peer Advocate; **Robert MacBean**, National Autistic Society; **Jean MacLellan** (CHAIR), National Autism Co-Ordination Project, Strathclyde University; **Donald Macleod**, National Autism Coordination Project; **Iain McClure**, NHS Lothian; **Peter McCulloch**, Social Work Scotland; **Jess McPherson**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division); **Jane Neil-MacLachlan**, Independent Advisor; **Annette Pyle**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division); **Alan Somerville**, Scottish Autism; **Ali Taylor**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division)

**Apologies:** **Maureen Bruce**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division); **Beth Hall**, COSLA

**Minutes by:** Tracy Wenzl, Autism Network Scotland and National Autism Co-Ordination Project

- I. **Welcome, apologies and introductions-** JMac noted that MB was unable to attend due to a previously scheduled holiday, and BH was unable to attend due to required travel. Both remain committed to the work of the group. Members in attendance all offered a brief introduction.
- II. **Remit and Roles of Governance Group and Working Groups** – see Annex 2 in provided Workplan Agreement from Strathclyde University. JMcP explained this new phase and structure of the work plan, which was based on previous work towards The Scottish Strategy for Autism. The new phase sets time frames and realistic work plans and goals. The groups' work is intended to inform the Government so that they can appropriately target resources. Government will rely on chairs to identify if new process isn't working, or if adjustments need to be made. It is time to move forward, and adjustments can be made along the way as needed.

TK questioned where the link to Government's 2020 vision came from; JMcP explained that it adds a greater link to wider government and health policy. The 2020 vision has been recently revised and an action plan to prioritise how work moves forward is included, including a route map with 12 priority areas. Discussion ensued about the finer points of priority areas, and which would be applicable to autism work. JMcP said Government will rely on chairs to provide input on specific opportunities in these areas.

Concern was raised that the remit of groups was quite large and may not be possible to deliver in 12 months; JMcP explained that the expectation is not full delivery of everything, but that specific and attainable goals are reached – assure what can be done is done well.

III. Progress Review – attendees asked to give update on major projects/successes over last few months

IM – working on SIGN guidelines; good to have knowledge of evidence-based [research] across age groups as it affects clinical issues

CB – Fife diagnostic process runs itself – goes through schools but NHS is administering. This type of process is only happening in 1/3 of Scotland – could be a template to expand nationally

PM– Noted the importance of local area strategies – they need to be self-monitored and evaluated against performance targets/benchmarks. Local level should be monitoring and reporting on how their strategies are working; successful local programmes should be considered at national level. JMCL noted that performance indicators are important, as the landscape is varied currently with regard to local strategy plans

JF – “Principles of Good Transitions” documented produced in collaboration; promotes 7 clear principles that should be adopted for young adult transitions. They are now trying to create a working document; will look at this in Working Group 2 and hold local events in partnership with Autism Network Scotland to get wider engagement/input.

RM – NAS has a Young Campaigner Group – will take part in policy making. They contributed to the Scottish Play Policy. They would like to continue this project if possible.

JNM – Menu of Interventions Roadshows have been held and one is upcoming; looking at local practice. New NES framework is “sparkling diamond” and needs to be widely promoted.

AMG – has a group of 14 newly diagnosed adults with autism who responded to informal survey. Noted very high rates of drug use, suicidal thoughts, and all were bullied in school

RI – former Subgroup 4 is now Employability Network, in partnership with Autism Network Scotland. October event was held which demonstrated why certain work settings have been successful, and a meeting will be held soon to look at outcomes. Autism: Life in Colour 2014 submissions are on their web site – recommends taking a look.

KB – mentioned that she’s seeing good engagement and productivity in Highland

TK – perceives less team inclusion in Forth Valley, and that diagnosis is slow. Good research is coming out on transitions, that seems to be working better overall, but there is still room for improvement in Further Education.

MB – It is crucial that parents, carers stay involved with Strategy work. Recommended better research integration into practice; needs to be a new way of thinking, with interdisciplinary work

JMcP – Government funded Research Series, NES Framework, AAA diagnosis times project – all projects have provided Government with ideas to move forward. Discussed the enhanced role of the Network (ANS) and National Coordination Project being a strength in sharing best practice, integration.

IH – discussed challenges in funding to local programmes, resulting in cuts to most expensive programmes that are leaving people without or with reduced services. Local government budget cuts create challenges for those who need services the most. Eligibility criteria is a key question moving forward.

IV. **Achieving the Goals** – updates from the Working Group chairs

Group 1 (RI) – first meeting set for 1<sup>st</sup> December. Hopes to hold one meeting for each of the four goals of group, needs to get meetings on calendar to assure goals are achieved.

**ACTION ITEM:** TW to send schedule of group meetings to Governance Group

Group 2 (JF) – first meeting set for 20<sup>th</sup> January. Looking at transitions document with group members. Hoping to create framework to move forward. Will look at local strategies to see where young adult transitions fit into these. Key groups are represented in membership but need someone from Further Education. Ready to utilize skills of members to affect policy.

Group 3 (JNM) – first meeting date is out for poll, with all dates before end of 2014. Group will need to begin by clarifying aims – language is quite broad (eg, research into practice) and group will set clearer tasks. AT suggests looking at document being produced by Research Seminar group regarding research into practice. JNM is receiving requests to join her working group.

Group 4 (AMG) – has been in communication with group members with a meeting date to be set soon, in late January. She would like to have a few meetings early to set up the plan, then meet less frequently as the work progresses. Group is missing an education representative on Group 4, though a current Further Education member may meet this requirement. AS and CB both provided suggestions from Education if another member is to be sought.

**ACTION ITEM:** PM to send Social Work group member names to TW.

Policy Team Role (AP/ JMcP) – AP will coordinate between working groups to help avoid duplication of effort, share key messages and feed in national priorities. JMcP said the role of Policy Team is to act as a connector/links to other parts of government. AT will attend all groups, and AP will be available as a resource for chairs. JMcP will assist in all of this. Goal is to identify where to plug gaps in resources, policy team to take work forward. PM recommended that chairs be empowered, and that good practice is emerging in local authorities along with the big three charities – these areas should be involved.

V. **Strathclyde University Contribution**

EH explained that TW will attend all working group meetings and will take minutes as well as handling logistics (setting dates, finding locations, sending out agendas, etc.) Autism Network Scotland will have a representative on each working group to look for opportunities for wider engagement. We are looking to support communication and have developed a communications strategy, currently under review with the Scottish Government. ANS and Government agree on ANS role in supporting wider engagement. TW explained her role in taking and posting minutes, communicating key messages, requesting and gathering feedback through web channels, and collating that for chairs to

consider. In addition, ANS will utilise several face-to-face channels, including roadshows and events, as well as local authority and regional streams.

DM discussed the National Autism Coordination Project, intended to link the National Strategy with local plans, with aims to provide better services nationwide. Currently there is a range of plan completion across Scotland, with some areas having complete plans and/or strategies that have already been put into action, and others that are still drafting plans. The Coordination Project seeks to share more complete and working plans with areas that are still writing plans. DM and JMCL will be coordinating events for local authorities, with the first to take place 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Strathclyde University. COSLA has now given them the authority to visit each member local authority to discuss progress, though several areas had offered invitations before this was settled. Project will provide consultation to implementation support.

#### **VI. National Conference**

TW gave a brief overview of the upcoming Third Annual Conference on the Scottish Strategy for Autism, which will include a keynote from Michael Matheson, Minister of Public Health, as well as presentations on the new NES Framework, Autism Achieve Alliance's work on improving diagnosis times, an overview of the new configuration of the working groups on the Strategy, and an update on the enhanced role of Autism Network Scotland, with particular focus on wider engagement in the Strategy work processes. Afternoon workshops on these four topics will allow participants to get a more in-depth view. JMCP added that the workshops will be very focused – the NES and AAA workshops will seek to find where to go from here – how to improve methodology and develop programs for implementation. Discussion around diagnosis, support for areas to implement these projects, and work with practitioners.

#### **VII. Other Business**

- a. One Stop Shops – JMCP said that they've recognized that two years' funding was ambitious in terms of giving the OSSs time to establish themselves are likely to extend another year of funding with the understanding that work on long-term sustainability needs to be done. Evaluations have been completed and are being reviewed. There should be formal information released on this in early January. Discussion ensued around the need to continue to fund OSSs so that they aren't pulled from communities that now rely on them; and there's a need to expand into areas not yet served. JMCP responded that this program is still in a pilot phase and is not ready to be rolled out to further areas yet.
- b. AS requested an update on what has become of unfinished business from last two years (from earlier Strategy group configuration). AP responded that these areas have been considered in the new configuration and that some of these items are being taken up in the new working groups.

#### **VIII. Date of next meeting**

**ACTION ITEM:** TW to send Doodle Poll out to determine best dates for next two meetings. Under consideration are March: 10 or 17; June: 16 or 23

## **KEY MESSAGES**

The former reference group and sub-groups have been reconfigured into a Governance Group overseeing the work of four working groups, each with a goal based on prior Strategy work. This is to be outlined in more detail at the Scottish Strategy for Autism Third Annual Conference. The NES Framework and AAA's work on improved diagnosis times is planned to roll out for national implementation and feedback at the Conference. Autism Network Scotland will have an enhanced role in the new configuration, providing administrative support to the working groups; communicating key messages to stakeholders; and collecting and collating feedback for working group chairs to use in guiding their work forward. The National Autism Coordination Project will create links between local authorities and provide support in development and implementation of local area autism plans. There is renewed enthusiasm around moving the Scottish Strategy for Autism forward and the goals are being narrowed and clarified by the working groups as they prepare to start their work. There is an understanding among all involved that wider engagement is key and that multiple feedback channels will be utilized as work progresses to encourage participation from all who wish to be heard.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**ACTION ITEM:** TW to send schedule of group meetings to Governance Group (DONE)

**ACTION ITEM:** PM to send Social Work group member names to TW. (DONE)

**ACTION ITEM:** TW to send Doodle Poll out to determine best dates for next two meetings. Under consideration are March: 10 or 17; June: 16 or 23 (DONE)

## **NEXT MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 10 in Glasgow**