

C-19 Education Recovery Group
Minutes of meeting, Thursday 17 September 2020

Attendees

- John Swinney MSP, *Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Chair)*
- Councillor Stephen McCabe, *Children and Young People spokesperson, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director of Improvement, Attainment & Wellbeing, Scottish Government*
- Greg Dempster, *General Secretary, Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- John Gallacher, *Regional Manager (UNISON)*
- Gayle Gorman, *Chief Executive and Chief Inspector, Education Scotland*
- Carrie Lindsay, *President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Joanna Murphy, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*
- Fiona Robertson, *Chief Executive, SQA*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Marie Todd MSP, *Minister for Children and Young People*
- Maria Walker, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Frank Strang, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Gillian Hamilton, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Alison Cumming, *Director of Early Learning and Childcare, Scottish Government*

The meeting began with the DFM thanking Joanna Murphy for her invaluable contributions within the Education Recovery Group and other areas of policy in the Scottish Government, as she stands down from her position as chair of the National Parent Forum, following the AGM on 19 September.

The group went on to discuss the weekly infographic and welcomed the 93.2% attendance rate in schools, which shows a recognition of the dedication from the system across the country. There were some concerns around staff absences and

the management of classes if numbers were to rise given the current rate of COVID infection in Scotland.

In relation to the guidance, it was highlighted that there should be a broadly consistent delivery of the guidance in schools, albeit there will be different approaches at a local level. The DFM was keen for officials to explore any key issues/themes around the implementation of the guidance with local authorities and professional associations and to discuss these further at the next meeting.

There was an update regarding Headteacher support, following an action from CERG on 3 September for a separate meeting to be held to discuss the challenges that headteachers were facing. A meeting took place on 11 September with representation from ADES, COSLA, EIS, SLS and AHDS. The group recognised that the work to re-open schools, to ensure implementation of changing health and safety guidance and the continuation of learning and teaching is challenging and there is a need to work collectively on all aspects of this. There was agreement that the current priority is continued support for a safe return to school for all young people in order for them to get back to learning successfully. The discussion highlighted a number of concerns, on guidance, communications, workload, support for students and probation teachers and staffing/budgets.

Members were also updated on the additional package of workforce support which has been progressed as part of the work of CERG workstream 6. This included support for early phase teachers, coaching and mentoring opportunities and reflective supervision.

Finally, there was a discussion on the equity audit. The Scottish Government recently reaffirmed its commitment to undertake this equity audit through the 2020-21 Programme for Government. This will be delivered via two phases: (1) an initial evidence review of local, national and international literature, which is now underway, and (2) a survey based on a representative sample of schools and children's services. It was highlighted that some work will take place on this in October/November and the proposal is to provide a full report in December, with regular updates provided to the group up until that point. An associated action was taken to provide a brief update on the use of PEF at the following meeting.

The DFM mentioned that the focus of the next CERG meeting will be on issues around implementation of the guidance and parental engagement.

Next meeting: Thursday 24 September 2020