

Governance Group Meeting Minutes
21 June 2016, 1pm
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

APPROVED

Present: **Kabie Brook**, Autism Rights Group Highland; **James Fletcher**, ARC Scotland; **Anne Marie Gallagher**, NHS GGC; **Alistair Gilmour**, Autism Network Scotland; **Emma Hanley**, Autism Network Scotland; **Ian Hood**, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland; **Richard Ibbotson**, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland; **Thom Kirkwood**, Parental Peer Advocate; **Jean MacLellan** (CHAIR), National Autism Co-ordination Project; **Donald Macleod**, National Autism Coordination Project; **Peter McCulloch**, Social Work Scotland; **Jess McPherson**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division); **Jenny Paterson**, National Autistic Society; **Annette Pyle**, Scottish Government (Care, Support and Rights Division); **Cathy Steedman**, Autism Initiatives; **John Urquhart**, COSLA.

Guest: **Kjersti Fergusson**, Scottish Government.

Apologies: **Carolyn Brown**, Fife Council/Education; **Michael Dawson**, an autistic person; **Iain McClure**, NHS Lothian; **Alan Somerville**, Scottish Autism.

- I. **Welcome, apologies and introductions** – JMacL welcomed the group to the meeting and apologies were heard.
- II. **Minutes** – minutes from 11 February were approved.
- III. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The One Stop Shops

JMcP updated the group on the current situations regarding the funding of the autism One Stop Shops and the sustainability of the services that each has offered in its local area.

As the Scottish Government pilot One Stop Shop in Lanarkshire concludes, Hope for Autism is expanding their remit in North Lanarkshire to develop an enhanced service in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council and supported by Scottish Autism during a transition period. South Lanarkshire Council meanwhile are working with parents' groups to develop a new model that ensures engagement with autistic people, their families and carers.

National Autistic Society (NAS) and Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership have made a commitment to work together to make the Aberdeen Scotland's first autism-friendly city. The aim of this project is to ensure that there will be an increase in public understanding of the condition, help facilities and services in the area become more accessible, and develop new groups to meet the needs of autistic residents. The project launches as the Scottish Government's pilot One Stop Shop in the city comes to an end - meaning that autistic residents and their families will continue to have access to high-quality support, information and advice.

In Ayrshire, a non-building-based model, funded by the Health & Social Care Partnership for two years, is pending confirmation.

CS stated that Autism Initiatives is committed to continuing the One Stop Shops that they facilitate in Edinburgh, Inverness and Perth, which are being supported by a UK-wide fundraising campaign. Funds are currently in place for the Shops until the end of the financial year in 2017.

These changes to One Stop Shop services reflect the changing landscape of integration. Recent events have demonstrated where future efforts must be concentrated to ensure that useful tools and examples of good practice shared at a national level are utilized in the implementation of local autism strategies.

TK suggested that the work of the One Stop Shops and their successors ought to be a key part of the Scottish Government's GIRFEC (Getting it right for every child) approach.

IV. **Updates by tabled paper only; exceptions to be discussed**

- Policy papers from AP and JMcP were accepted by the group.
- Autism Network Scotland – National Co-ordination Project, Key highlights from Working Groups incl. feedback from the Ms MN Report and Network activity.

Ms MN Report

DM updated the group on the activity around the report into the death of Ms MN, as discussed at the previous meeting of the Governance Group. Each of the Working Groups has been requested to compile a collective response as have individual Local Authority Autism Leads, offering their recommendations. These responses will be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting of the Governance Group.

Mental Health Access to Improvement Programme on Diagnosis & Waiting Times

KF reported that the project has two definable work streams:

- a. It aims to analyse available data to help inform future data collection, to plan sustainable service provision and thereby improve conditions in primary care for people on the autism spectrum.
- b. It is working with AMG's Adult Autism Team at NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to provide a blueprint on connecting its services with needs outlined in the local authority autism plans. This work stream remains in its early stages and its scope is yet to be fully determined, but it will examine strategies in the Glasgow area and assess where they need to be refreshed to meet the changing landscape. AMG welcomes the opportunity to streamline in-demand AAT services to ensure efficiency. KF says the demands on the service need to be assessed along with the capabilities of its workforce to see what can best be achieved by the team.

KB stated that people in the Highlands ought to be able to obtain a referral

for diagnosis five years into the implementation of the Scottish Strategy for Autism.

JMacL stated that the Governance group shall discuss this in greater depth at a future meeting and assess if its outcomes are being met.

AMG will offer a presentation on what has been identified and achieved by her team as part of this programme of work at a future meeting.

V. **Autism Network Review draft report** for information and next steps

JMacL stated that in her dual role as Lead Co-ordinator of the National Autism Co-ordination Project and Governance Group Chair, she would pass responsibility for comments on the report to DM and EH to avoid any conflict of interests.

JMcP described how the purpose of the review was to take stock of the role of Autism Network Scotland in the implementation of the National Autism Strategy; to consider the impact the work of the Network has had and how it has evolved over time. The priority of the review is to examine how best to achieve the implementation of local and national autism strategies, through the development of a strategic delivery partner going forward.

The autism landscape has changed since the original publication of the Scottish Strategy for Autism in 2011 and the work of Autism Network Scotland (ANS) has evolved simultaneously, with an accumulation of changes over the years since its re-establishment.

With the Strategy reframed by the Outcomes Framework, this is seen as an opportunity to ask how the Scottish Government and other stakeholders view the role of the Network, and to assess what the Scottish Government wish to achieve and who is best positioned to assist it in achieving its goals.

The policy team wishes to support innovation and by doing so change best practice accordingly, with its strategic partner supporting such an aim. A key strength of ANS is its Scotland-wide overview and remit, connecting the National Strategy with local implementation. There is however a perceived lack of clarity about the remit of ANS, something the Scottish Government acknowledges responsibility for. The Scottish Government's requests of ANS change over time and lead to a lack of transparency for stakeholders. ANS's responsive service to Scottish Governments requests is commendable, though feeds this perception. The capacity building and professional development of the Network also needs to be evidenced.

The work begun by the Network in analysing local autism plans is moving closer to the core of what should be expected of a future strategic delivery partner. The Governance Group needs its aims to be better outlined and its achievements to be measured to best assess its future priorities.

The new strategic partner need not be a single organisation if collaboration between organisations can better meet the aims of the policy team.

The new minister for Mental Health, Maureen Watt MSP, is to be informed of the new remit and plans of the eventual policy partner. An achievable, realistic timescale for assessing the potential partner organisations is to be implemented for the tendering process to allow an orderly transition to a new strategic partner. The 5 areas to be assessed by this evaluation, as outlined in the Policy team's paper, are:

- Capacity building and professional development
- Evidence based practice
- Learning and Development – supporting innovation and the sharing of good practice to improve outcomes
- Analysis of integrated local autism plans and ongoing monitoring and support of implementation
- Measure performance outcomes in relation to the Scottish Strategy for Autism

These are not intended to be prescriptive of the new partner's activities but aim to encourage creativity, innovation and development. They do not aim to duplicate any organisation's current output, aiming instead to signpost toward currently available services and information rather than deliver a new service.

JMcP emphasised the importance of involving people on the autism spectrum and their families in the work of the new partner and the desired capacity building to be extended to autistic people, something also recommended in the review of ANS being discussed. The new partner also ought to build on ANS's work and offer genuine engagement between the Scottish Government and the implementation of local autism plans and with local service providers.

The new strategic partner's role will also be to gather evidence to measure the outcomes of work being done to implement local and, through these, national strategies. The role of the Governance Group in the new model remains to monitor the partner's activity to gauge its success in its remit.

The group also recognised that while local strategies will vary depending on the needs of the specific area, there will be some commonality between the work required in different areas of the country. It will fall to the strategic partner to coordinate communication between the local authorities' strategy teams and to feedback to the Scottish Government and thereby overseeing a clear connection from the recommendations of the national strategy to the variation of activity taking place at local level.

AP described the current scoping exercise being carried out by the Mental Welfare Commission and the Learning Disability Commission around the inclusion of autism in the Mental Health Act. There are to be a series of consultation events to discuss what this review ought to feature. The dates for these events will be circulated widely once confirmed.

ACTION POINT – AP to circulate paper on the scoping exercise to the group.

IH suggested that the role of the Governance Group in the new strategic partnership model will change from influencing strategic progress to monitoring it.

JMcP responded that the Governance Group would still be able to challenge the strategic partner if it was felt necessary. The group's remit is evolving in response to the changing landscape in Scotland.

The One Stop Shop approach has proven popular in the areas they serve but is naturally inconsistent in that they are only available in certain areas. The sharing of good practice and of individuals' expertise is to be encouraged both geographically and across the lifespan.

EH described how Autism Network Scotland has developed its signposting remit to include providing useful answers to enquiries from the public and working with those individuals until a positive resolution has been reached, wherever possible. The group recognised that the Network has a key strength in being a Scotland-wide organisation and therefore familiar with the autism landscape nationwide.

JMcP said that the strategic partner's role will not encompass service provision or duplicate existing providers' work.

The Working Groups are welcome to discuss the review of the Network at their future meetings.

ACTION POINT - JMcP asked that the group consider the measures to be taken by the new strategic partner as outlined in the Policy paper and offer any further comments and suggestions to AP/JMcP via AG.

Discussion surrounding activities at local authority level

TK began a brief discussion of activities taking place in the implementation of local autism plans, suggesting that local communities need to see integration of national and local achievements to generate enthusiasm and momentum.

ACTION POINT – TK to share his framework for review of local autism plans.

JMcP said that the Learning Directorate are being consulted on co-ordinating the measurement of the implementation of available tools in local autism plans, using their language strategy co-ordination as a model.

KF is looking at the use of a number of available data sets relating to autism as a further means of measuring the outcomes of the local autism plans. As there is no one national data set on autism in Scotland the various available data is being compared to provide a complete picture and use the information it contains to influence policy.

A report on this is due to be published to the Scottish Government's Analytical Services Division website.

VI. AOCB

The National Autistic Society Scotland is currently reviewing the effect of the incoming national living wage on its ability to offer services.

Trainee teachers in England will soon have autism awareness training as standard.

VII. Date of Next Meeting – To be arranged

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION POINT – AP to circulate paper on the Mental Welfare Commission and the Learning Disability Commission scoping exercise to the group.

ACTION POINT - JMcP asked that the group consider the measures to be taken by the new strategic partner as outlined in the Policy paper and offer any further comments and suggestions to AP/JMcP via AG.

ACTION POINT – Thom to share his framework for review of local autism plans.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday 6th October 2016 at the University of Strathclyde, Collins building Room 201, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.