

Strathclyde University

The Workplan Agreement - our contribution to the Scottish Strategy for Autism

1. Purpose and approach

In addition to formally accepting the terms and conditions of the standard grant letter from the Scottish Government (SG), this paper sets out to explain how Strathclyde University (SU) will deliver the outcomes for which it is funded to June 2015 implement key aspects of the Scottish Strategy for Autism.

It will:

1. Briefly outline purpose, approach, context and expectations
2. Describe both internal and external delivery mechanisms
3. Summarise the key tasks that will be undertaken to meet

the desired outcomes

Given our collective aspiration to have and to demonstrate wider engagement with people on the spectrum and their families, this narrative is explicitly written in a manner that could mean that when there is final agreement of the workplan the paper could be widely communicated to our collective audience. This would enable all those who have an interest or involvement to see and understand the transparent nature of the transaction so that they are best placed to participate themselves. In this sense, the document could become a tangible representation of the way in which we intend to work.

Context

For over a decade the University has supported a diverse range of national and local policy and practice directed at improving the quality of life of people on the autistic spectrum and their families in keeping with our founding principle of being 'a place of useful learning...for the good of mankind.'

The Strategy for Autism completed the first two year phase of its ten year Plan in late 2013, and since then, Government officials on behalf of Scottish Ministers have reviewed how best to continue the journey to the 5 year midpoint with key stakeholders which has resulted in changes to the overarching Governance structure and the creation of goals-oriented Working Groups.

These groups reflect the priorities for the coming year as agreed through the recent review. They will deliver 'better access to integrated service provision across Scotland', particularly 'appropriate transition planning, across the lifespan.' They will also stimulate 'the consistent adoption of good practice guidance across Scotland in education, health and social care services across all local authority areas.' Underpinning this there will be 'capacity and awareness building in mainstream services to ensure that people with autism and their families are met with recognition and understanding of the condition.' Co-production with the autism community is critical.

Expectations

Because of its independence, objectivity and its widely recognised academic competence in building an evidence base about effective intervention, as well as its multi-disciplinary policy and practice expertise, the University has been asked to fulfill a number of new roles. The first is to provide the Secretariat for the new Working Groups and to provide an independent chair for the Governance Group.

Secondly, it has been tasked with enhancing the role of the Strathclyde based Autism Network Scotland (the Network) in order to engage more widely with the autism community. The Network has been funded by Government since 2011 to give practical information and to share advice with those affected by autism and to facilitate knowledge exchange between the professionals who support them, both at a local and national level.

Finally, the University, in collaboration with the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), is leading a national co-ordination project for approximately a year. Its primary function is to build effective bridges between national policy and local authority implementation. Given that health and social care services are currently being integrated it is anticipated that this support will be extended to the newly formed integration authorities. This is where the Network component will also add value in having a range of practical tools that can turn aspirations into reality.

A part time academic advisory post is also being negotiated.

2. Delivery

Ownership and Project Governance

The Scottish Government will be the Project owners.

The Executive for the Project will consist of senior representatives of the Scottish Government, Autism Network Scotland, the National Autism Co-ordination Team

and of the wider leadership of the School of Education within Strathclyde University. This will meet on three occasions in total.

The Project team will consist of Jess McPherson (SG), Annette Pyle (SG), Ali Taylor (SG), Professor Jean MacLellan (SU), Emma Hanley (SU) and Donald Macleod (SU). Emeritus Professor Aline- Wendy Dunlop will discuss with SG the possible outcomes associated with her Academic Advisor role. This group will meet bimonthly to review progress and will include a regular formal monitoring component by SG to ensure that the Project delivers quality outcomes timeously in relation to available spend. Regular contact will be maintained with SG to discuss any particular issues as they arise.

University Line Management

Professor MacLellan will line manage the National Co-ordination Project Manager and the Autism Network Scotland Co-ordinator. The latter will manage the Autism Advisers and administrative staff which includes a part-time Communications post. Senior leadership from the wider School of Education will be provided by Professor David Kirk, Head of School.

3. The challenge

It is essential that there is an understood coherence between all the elements that this Workplan Agreement relates to, especially to avoid the potential risk that the new elements are simply bolted on to what is already in place. Instead, what this section does is to describe the refreshed structural changes and the responsibilities that go with them. It then outlines how the existing Network role will be strengthened and will dovetail with that of the new national Co-ordination Project so as to create synergies and to avoid duplication. The latter will principally focus on supporting local authorities and their partners to develop and implement local Autism Strategies and Action Plans. The Network will complement this approach by providing the practical tools to turn aspirations into real change on the ground to be of direct benefit to people with autism and their families. A third aspect that will underpin these developments will be the continuing research presence to make sure that new learning is translated into practice to improve people's lives.

Task 1: Strategy Governance

Through Autism Network Scotland, the University will provide the Secretariat for:

A Governance Group chaired by Professor MacLellan which replaces the original ASD Reference Group.

The Governance Group will provide strategic leadership to the delivery of the Strategy's recommendations - aimed at improving outcomes for individuals and families living with autism. The group will help to ensure that those involved in the delivery of the recommendations, work collaboratively with individuals living with autism, and others as appropriate, to implement the autism priority plan.

The Working Groups which replace all previous Strategy Sub-Groups and which will consult on and drive forward Strategy priorities. Work groups are responsible for delivering guidance, direction, and relevant expertise in the development/delivery of the priority work plans. Work groups have the authority to make decisions/recommendations regarding the approach adopted to deliver work plans.

A Scottish Government official will attend each group. In addition, a nominated Autism Adviser will also be part of each Group and they will work with the National Project Co-ordinator to help provide an overview of workstreams to support collaboration and avoid duplication.

Ad hoc experts will be called upon for consultation on key matters as and when necessary.

The Scottish Government is liaising with Chairs to finalise the group membership and has drafted group remits and responsibilities for further discussion – Annex 2 refers.

SG will also draft letters of invitation to potential members which it will issue in the name of the Chairs. When this process is complete, preparations for the first meeting of the Governance Group will take place and the University Secretariat will take over administrative functions from the Scottish Government.

Agreed detailed outputs for the secretariat Groups are in Annex 2.

Task 2 Enhanced role for the Network

The existing role of the Network is widely understood as articulated in the previously agreed Aims listed in Annex 3. Much of this core activity will remain but will be subject to review as a matter of urgency to agree what is feasible in the light of changing priorities.

Whilst the Network and the Co-ordination Project will both provide different aspects of the new Secretariat function and associated professional facilitation, the Network will have lead responsibility for further developing wider engagement with those on the spectrum and their families.

Everyone agrees that meaningful participation by those affected is key to success. This is summarised by the national Network Autism Champion as 'nothing about us without us', a view shared by many of her peers. However, given the individual nature of autism, as well as the personal preferences we all bring to formal meetings, there are a range of perspectives on how much the Strategy has achieved in this regard to date.

The history to date is complex as is the range of inclusion models used. Some individuals on the spectrum and their families continue to feel that their voices could be better heard. They ask that they are truly listened to. The Network is therefore tasked with finding new ways for meaningful engagement with the autism community and is currently drafting a communication strategy in this regard.

As part of its stocktaking, Scottish Government issued an invitation to users and carers to give their views on how best to achieve greater inclusion and co-production in delivering the Strategy's goals. Three different types of involvement emerged ranging from receiving information only, to being part of wider consultation that stops short of the third possibility of routinely participating in specific work groups on specific topics. The Network will use these findings in fulfilling its enhanced role.

The following steps will be taken:

- The Network and the Co-ordination teams will continue to provide ongoing professional facilitation to people on the spectrum and their families to ensure that they are treated equally and fairly in achieving the Strategy goals, and they will ensure meaningful consultation takes place(ongoing until June 2015).
- As part of delivering the forthcoming Communications Strategy (to be submitted by the end of October), the Network and Co-ordination Teams will disseminate a range of communications to keep people informed and to make clear what opportunities there are for greater involvement. These will range from the Governance and Working Group minutes to regular newsletters containing key messages about progress. Web-based and electronic forms of communication should achieve maximum coverage. Templates are currently under development e.g. referral forms to make communication easier and facilitate two-way feedback
- The Network will ensure that people on the spectrum and their families have the opportunity to participate in the forthcoming Action on Autism Research Conference in November as speakers and delegates and in the same roles at the third Annual National Conference in December. The Co-ordination team

will ensure that the same arrangements apply to their planned Development Day for local autism leads provisionally scheduled for December.

- The Network and the Co-ordination team will support the involvement of user and carer representatives on the Governance Group and those who are given roles in relation to the Working Groups and will offer regular catch up meetings to build up confidence and trust. They will also ensure dissemination of information with the wider autism community (ongoing until end June 2015)
- The Network and the Co-ordination team will attend and participate in local user and carer planning and implementation days e.g. Stirling in September, Inverness in December. These events will be used to encourage individuals to participate in national initiatives by signing up to be Community Representatives. The idea is that this will bring in new voices to the national debate over the medium term.
- The Network will continue to engage with the autism community to ensure that appropriate 'autism spaces' remain and develop where individuals on the spectrum have a voice and are fully engaged and consulted (ongoing until June 2015).
- The Network will continue to extend working with local autism groups such as Hope for Autism and Reach for Autism and showcase examples of good practice at learning events. The Network will work with the Scottish Government to gather evidence of their impact on improving people's lives so that it may inform future policy direction. (ongoing until end June 2015).
- Non Government funding will be sought for a short piece of research which would evaluate experience to date and establish what components have been successful (as well as what has not worked) with a view to learning what models are effective so as to adopt them going forward.

Task 3: National Co-ordination Project

The national Co-ordination Team is to be a new and innovative Learning Project. It consists of a recently appointed full-time Project Manager and a part-time National Lead supplemented by a share of both administrative staff and a part-time Communications Officer.

The posts have been created to be a bridge between the national Scottish Strategy for Autism and implementation at local authority level. In the first instance,

Scottish Government funded a national Mapping Project¹ to become clear about the services and supports there are in localities and also provided local authorities with funding to write local autism plans. Whilst this injection of research and funding has stimulated more local activity, further work is needed. In those areas yet to develop a Plan, support can be given to do so. In others where a Plan exists, the task may be to assist in embedding this to ensure more long-term sustainability of autism service provision.

Against this backdrop the Co-ordination team will:

- Visit those authorities who have spontaneously invited them in prior to formal endorsement of the Project with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) (September/October 2014);
- Obtain formal endorsement from the Health and Wellbeing Executive of COSLA (September 2014);
- Develop criteria that clarify the proposed extent of contact with each authority (end October 2014);
- Create (end October 2014) and implement a Co-ordination Project Plan. This will form the basis of monitoring discussions with SG (ongoing until end June 2015);
- Provide some specialist expertise to areas that need or request this e.g. on out of area placement and on complex case management (ongoing until end June 2015);
- Ensure that the overarching benefits that the Learning Disability Strategy, The Keys To Life, brings to those with a dual diagnosis of autism and learning disability are maximised through joint working with the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) and other relevant partners e.g. The Glasgow Observatory for Public Health (ongoing until end June 2015);
- Establish ways of working effectively with the Network to mesh local Strategy with practical tools to improve support to people on the spectrum and their families (by end October 2014);
- Lead the planning, running and evaluation of the Third Annual Scottish Strategy Conference (by end December 2014);
- Hold events that bring together local autism leads to learn from each other

¹ www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk

and to showcase good practice (first event to take place in December 2014);

- Provide regular reports to Scottish Government on achievements and expenditure as part of ongoing monitoring (ongoing until end June 2015).

Investment

The Scottish Government Grant Award letter details the extension to the current grant awarded under Section 10 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 totaling £234,433 for the financial year 2014/2015. The details of the staffing for this are known and agreed. It is also agreed that some other discussions are needed to clarify costs for a number of additional events. As requested by Government, Strathclyde University staff have agreed to provide detail of expenditure to date to clarify deficit or slippage.

The existing contract for the Network which forms the original Grant will conclude in mid-May 2015.

It is anticipated that continuation of the work will be subject to tender when current contracts are coming to a close.

Annex 1 Secretariat outputs - some detail

Three Governance Group meetings, one to be constructed to enable the Minister for Public Health to attend to review progress personally

Liaison with Working Group Chairs to arrange meetings and to invite attendees

Preparation of agendas and associated papers

Attendance of one named Autism Adviser at each Working Group

Active outreach to seek feedback from the wider autism community

Identification of action points and appropriate follow up

Preparation and publication of minutes

Dissemination of key messages as part of wider engagement via newsletters, the website and events

Establishment of an electronic record of information

Development of a communication strategy (end Oct)

Annex 2: Group roles and responsibilities

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide members with a draft of the revised remit, roles and responsibilities of the Autism Strategy Governance Group and Work Groups for discussion and agreement at our first meeting on 25 September 2014.

Background

At our workshops in May 2014 we discussed how the existing ASD Reference Group and Subgroup arrangement could be refreshed to achieve (i) a more strategic focus on delivering the Strategy's priorities and (ii) greater coproduction with people with autism and their families. A revised structure has been agreed as follows:

- **Governance Group** to replace the ASD Reference Group, receive feedback from the Work Groups and the Scottish Government, and maintain a strategic overview and governance of the Strategy's priorities
- **Work Groups** to replace the Subgroups and act as a professional and expert working group to consult on and drive forward the Strategy's priorities and activities as specified in the Strategy Priority Plan
- an **Ad Hoc Expert Group** to be convened to discuss discreet items as required
- **Enhanced Consultation/Communication** to ensure that Strategy work is driven forward in collaborative way and that coproduction involving people with autism and their families is at the heart of any decision-making. This will be a flexible 'autism space' to enable autistic people to contribute to the strategy implementation.

It is also essential to align this work with the Scottish Government 20:20 Vision for Health & Social Care which sets out a new and accelerated focus on a number of priority areas for action in the form of a 'Route Map'. We can't be effective by working in isolation and need to be able to influence delivery of mainstream services and ensure that this is an integrated process. Further information can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00423188.pdf>

As the delivery of the Strategy's recommendations moves from Phase 1 (Foundations) to Phase 2 (Whole Life Journey) which will drive delivery and implementation of the priority plan, there is a need to review and consolidate the roles of all stakeholders involved in the process. This document details the remit, roles and responsibilities of:

- the Governance Group
- Work Group Chairs and members
- Scottish Government Policy Team

Governance Group

Remit

The Governance Group will provide strategic leadership to the delivery of the Strategy's recommendations - aimed at improving outcomes for individuals and families living with autism. The group will help to ensure that those involved in the delivery of the recommendations, work collaboratively with individuals living with autism, and others as appropriate, to implement the autism priority plan.

This will be done by providing strategic leadership and advice, sharing best practice and encouraging participation through involvement and challenge of all key players. The group will ensure that actions flowing from the priority plan align with any actions flowing from the work of the identified 20:20 vision route map programmes and link strategically with other key groups leading work across Government and the wider autism community.

In particular the group will be responsible for overseeing the strategic delivery and implementation of a programme of work to ensure:

- Continual progress on the recommendations (via the priority plan)
- Identification of any new actions required to deliver the goals of the Strategy
- Feedback is received from the work groups and the Scottish Government regarding progress of the priority plan activities
- A robust challenge function of all stakeholders, including Scottish Government

Support

Secretariat and facilitation support will be provided by Autism Network Scotland and policy support from Care Rights and Support Division, Scottish Government.

Frequency of Meetings

The group will meet three times per year starting in November 2014. These meetings will be agreed in advance.

Timescale

The group will convene in autumn 2014. It will take stock after one year, following a review of the priority plan activities and progress to date, as to whether a standing forum of this sort would continue to add value.

Roles and responsibilities

Governance Group

Is a governance body and is responsible for providing assurance to Scottish Ministers that the implementation of the Autism Strategy is proceeding according to agreed objectives.

Governance Group members require to:

- oversee the priority work plans of the individual work groups and address any issues/concerns;
- effectively Chair and lead the working groups to ensure outputs/outcomes are delivered timeously; and
- provide assurance to Scottish Ministers that the implementation of the Autism Strategy is delivering agreed objectives.

Work Group Chairs

Each work group is chaired by a member of the Governance Group. Work groups are responsible for delivering guidance, direction, and relevant expertise in the development/delivery of the priority work plans. Work groups have the authority to make decisions/recommendations regarding the approach adopted to deliver work plans.

Work Group Chairs are responsible for:

- developing the remit of the work group;
- identifying and agreeing appropriate work group membership;
- developing a work plan in conjunction with the wider group and SG policy team;
- leading the work group, making sure actions are assigned correctly and fairly amongst all stakeholders, and making sure these actions are delivered on time. Work group Chairs have a responsibility to address any issues with regards to the delivery of actions;
- ensuring coproduction at all stages and that work is progressed in a collaborative manner, inclusive of people with autism
- identifying key areas for further discussion/consultation
- identifying key risks/issues associated with the priority plan and ensuring these are fed in to Governance Group via secretariat support and policy team input; and
- communicating progress and identifying key decisions for Governance Group consideration and advice for final sign-off, before communicating to other stakeholders.

Work Group members

Work group members have been drawn from a wide range of stakeholders in the wider autism community, including individuals with autism , carers, service and support providers, academia and others.

Work group members are responsible for:

- determining and agreeing collective approaches, to the development and implementation of the priority plans;
- making relevant and timely decisions where necessary to progress delivery and implementation;
- promoting a culture of partnership working between all stakeholders;
- highlighting any key areas of concern or issues that require advice from the Governance Group and/or Scottish Government;
- sharing information and best practice.

To enable collective approaches/decisions to be agreed for priority issues and to ensure Working Groups consider the wider picture in relation to whole strategy implementation, individual group members have been assigned a Work Group based on preference and expertise.

Scottish Government Policy Team

The Team will:

- develop, maintain and update work plans, ensuring timescales are adhered to
- influence, enable and facilitate the priority work identified by individual work groups
- provide direction and guidance to working groups as they develop detailed priority plans, and address any queries/concerns/issues as appropriate
- provide a “policy checking” function regarding the detailed work plans
- work with wider Scottish Government policy colleagues and other key stakeholders to identify and progress, any actions to support the implementation of the priority work plans
- ensure Governance Group, Work Groups and other stakeholders, are provided with all relevant information with regards to work plan progress

Annex 3 Autism Network Scotland Aims

To be a hub of impartial and reliable information about autism services across Scotland

To identify gaps in service and feed information to Scottish Government

To signpost practitioners, individuals on the autistic spectrum and their family and carers to the range of services available at both a local and national level

To facilitate networks across Scotland to promote awareness of autism

To support the implementation of the Scottish Strategy for Autism

To facilitate independent consultation and networking for local authorities

To create a Scotland-wide resource

To facilitate and enhance multi-disciplinary working across the lifespan