

Working Group 2 meeting minutes
20th January 2015, 11 am
Thorn House, Edinburgh

APPROVED

Members present: **John Dalziel**, Skills Development Scotland; **Leia Fitzgerald**, Higher Education/Scottish Government; **James Fletcher**, ARC Scotland (CHAIR); **Jackie Gallagher**, East Dunbartonshire Council/Social Work Scotland (for Lynsay Haglington); **Kirsten Hogg**, Camphill Scotland; **Ian Hood**, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland; **Scott Read**, ARC Scotland; **Lynsey Stewart**, Autism Network Scotland; **Ali Taylor**, Scottish Government Care, Support and Rights

Apologies: **John Butcher**, Directors of Education; **Laura Dykes**, parent; **Arlene Johnstone**, Social Work Scotland / NHS Highland

Minutes by: Tracy Wenzl, Autism Network Scotland

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – JF gave an overview of the day, that the plan was to shape the group's priorities going forward. Members introduced themselves to the group. ARC Scotland facilitates Scottish Transitions Forum, and has recently published Principles of Good Transitions 2 document – this document features heavily in the group's current/proposed priority plan and in Strategy goals.
- II. **Group Purpose** – JF proposed group's work leads to actions to take forward in workplaces/groups/forums – each member has responsibility for taking action. Today's plan is to shape the Priority Plan and make recommendations to Governance Group and the Scottish Government, along with raising key areas of concern.

AT said the Scottish Government is generally looking at what can be delivered in 12 months, though this timeline is just a suggestion. She caught the group up on how the working groups have been re-arranged and gave a summary of each working group's goal. She discussed a few key areas where progress is happening (NES Framework, AAA Improving Diagnosis Times) and mentioned that Scottish Government's Joint Improvement Team is working with One Stop Shops to improve sustainability.

LS described the role of Autism Network Scotland in the Strategy work – an ANS advisor sits on each group to assure feedback across groups. ANS is also meeting with National Autism Co-Ordination Project team members to inform them and allow them to feedback to local authorities. ANS and NACP are supporting local authorities with tools towards writing local strategies and plans. ANS is engaging with as many stakeholders as possible, with a new focus on engaging with people who don't yet know about the Strategy work. A discussion about local action plans and how they relate to transitions ensued. The group discussed areas in which they'd contributed to former sub-groups, writing action plans, and strategies and plans already in place.

LF said there is currently no specific autism strategy for autism in higher education – autism is currently covered under support for disabled students. She noted they need to raise awareness of available supports for students.

The discussion turned to what was done in the previous sub-groups – former members of the earlier transitions-focused group, and a former member of another other sub group thought the prior groups had good ideas, but some had been unfocused in terms of making a lot of progress/taking action, and that each group worked independently without much oversight or collaboration. It was generally agreed that the new group format and specific goal of each group should lead to more focus and better production. Feedback and communication from stakeholders was noted to be vital.

The agenda was amended, placing item IV – Learning from Transitions roadshows before item III – Review of Priority Plan.

III. Learning from Transitions roadshows – LS reported that a consultation event has been held in Inverness, with further events planned in Ayr, Perth and Wick in February and March. In Inverness, a mix of delegates spoke about the Principles of Good Transitions 2 document and how helpful (or not) it is in improving people’s experience of transition. We were told that families are doing most of the work to help young people through transitions, and good transition experiences are often associated with particularly supportive staff rather than effective processes. Many young people and families don’t know about what support is available to them or who is accountable for coordinating support. Support levels depend on the school/area/services available. SR noted that young people were very involved in the roadshow event, and that their hopes were similar to other young people, such as spending time with their mates, having a job, getting married, etc. LS and SR noted that in general, people are fed up with constant consultation/over-surveying without seeing results/ change come from them. People are eager for action. IH noted that the last sub group found that most people had smooth transitions and cautioned against changing everything for the few people who hadn’t had as easy of a time. A discussion ensued about the availability of data on successful transitions. JD noted there is a Data Hub that is supposed to keep track of all young people through age 25.

JF reported (for LD) that maintaining friendships is another challenge for young people with autism as they transition from school. She also noted the importance of parental networks, housing availability, and the opportunity to live independently.

SR has videos from a recent event where young people shared their transitions experiences, he will send those to the group when edited and available (by mid-March)

ACTION ITEM: SR to send video links to TW for dissemination to working group

IV. Review of Priority Plan – JF suggests that the group focus efforts on young adult transitions (ages 14-25). Discussion ensued with some members indicating a preference for a lifespan focus. It was eventually agreed that the group would start with a focus on young adult transitions, but remain open to opportunities to influence positive change in other transition age groups if opportunity arises.

ACTION ITEM: LS to update Group’s priority plan timescales and indicate which items have already been completed

ACTION ITEM: SR and LS to distil learning from Principles of Good Transitions 2

roadshows into 4-5 key recommendations. They will have this done by mid-February and add any additional points raised from March event in Wick later. They will present this at the next group meeting.

ONGOING: SR and LS are working to identify areas in the PoGT2 document that might need tweaking before next publication/version 3

The discussion then turned to what practical changes can be influenced by the group. The conversation again turned to the availability of data and in addition to the recommendations being prepared by LS and SR, the following items will be collected and presented at the next meeting:

ACTION ITEM: JF to bring results from ARC Scotland's survey of senior officials within health, education and social work on how effective PoGT2 is in improving transition support.

ACTION ITEM: JF to request data from Scottish Analytical Services, via AT – numbers of young people with autism in education (destinations, attainment, data by local authority). LS will first check if the national Autism Co-ordination Project has or plans to request this information.

If unable to acquire latest numbers, SR has this data from 2012

ACTION ITEM: JD to look at data from Opportunities for All to see if there is anything autism-specific

ACTION ITEM: IH to gather mentions of transitions from local autism strategies and plans and present in document

ACTION ITEM: LS to check with National Autism Co-Ordination Project to see if they have any transitions data from their work with local authorities

The next meeting will focus on analysis of data gathered and this will guide the priorities of the group going forward.

V. **Work plan for year and allocation of tasks** - To be discussed after data review/next meeting

VI. **Meeting Dates and Venues for 2015** – group to meet every other month, dates to be sent out via poll. The group will alternate between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

ACTION ITEM: TW to get proposed dates from JF, send out Doodle poll

KEY MESSAGES:

The group will focus efforts on improving transitions of young people (ages 14-25), but will consider opportunities to affect other transitions. Recommendations from this group will as far as possible be developed in partnership with young people with autism, their carers and professionals from across all relevant sectors. The group will approach transitions as a process, not a single event (such as school-leaving.) Progress will be guided by data analysis and better understanding of current process, concerns of service users and families. The group recognizes that there is often confusion for young people and families during this transition period about what support they are entitled to and is accountable for coordinating it. We also acknowledge that many young people with autism will not meet current eligibility criteria for adult services, however our work should also take regard of how their life chances can be improved.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION ITEM: SR to send video links to TW for dissemination to working group (mid-March)

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ONGOING: SR and LS are working to identify areas in the PoGT2 document that might need tweaking before next publication/version 3