Working Group 3 meeting minutes
4 February 2015
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

APPROVED

Members present: **Bill Colley**, Caledonia Learning and Care, **Aline-Wendy Dunlop**, University of Strathclyde, **Jane Hook**, Parent, **Jayne Kemp**, Social Work Scotland, **Alison Leask**, Autism Argyll, **Jane Neil-MacLachlan**, Independent Advisor, **Moira Park**, Scottish Autism, **Jayne Porter**, Autism Network Scotland, **Annette Pyle** (for Ali Taylor), Care, Support and Rights, Scottish Government, **Zoe Robertson**, Social Work Scotland, **Charlene Tait**, Scottish Autism

Invited guests present: **Jean MacLellan** and **Donald Macleod**, National Autism Co-Ordination Project, University of Strathclyde

Apologies: Ken Aitken, Ken Aitken Consultancy, **Roo Philip**, Tailor Ed, **Cathy Steedman**, Autism Initiatives

Minutes by: Tracy Wenzl, Autism Network Scotland

I. **Introductions** - Introductions were made around the table

II. **Apologies** - JNM gave apologies on behalf of members unable to attend

III. **Minutes** – the minutes from 15 December 2014 were approved

IV. **Matters Arising** – JNM presented comments from Ken Aitken. He is on the JADD editorial board. Along with fellow editor David Simmons, they could either co-edit an issue dedicated to Scottish research, OR, at a cost of £6-7K, they could then have much more control over the content that would be included. He has talked with the Oxford Press about publishing a book based on the research workshops. He hopes to be involved if the group pursues an event where practitioners are paired with researchers in order to write academic papers. He advocates for a baseline standard for Scotland/the UK in screening subjects for autism research, to assure that research will apply to greater population.

JNM also reported that the Menu of Interventions web site is great, and that it will need to be kept up to date/relevant. The website statistics were presented, with over 500 clicks to the landing page since its launch on January 15. ANS will need to work to keep the pages accurate.

V. **Review of Items in Progress**
   a. **ASD Research Series report** – AWD says the final report is due in two weeks. She is looking at the recommendations in the report and what they mean when actioned. More detail is included in a Powerpoint that AWD will forward on to the group. The Powerpoint contains AWD's interpretation of the report
   ACTION ITEM: AWD to send file to TW for distribution
   b. **JADD update** – AWD agrees with KA's statement on two ways to do the Scottish JADD issue
   ACTION ITEM: AWD to check with Aitken and Simmons on Scottish JADD issue

VI. **Review of Action Items**

a. **Local plans update and review of definitions of Good Autism Practice used in evaluating them** – Jean MacLellan reported on the NACP's progress. They are visiting local authorities, holding conference calls and building/maintain direct contact with them. They recently held an event for local authorities and NHS leads on autism plans; this event was a success with almost all areas represented. There are only five areas without a plan or draft; NACP will be working closely with those areas to assure that their plans are drafted. Their next step will be to work with areas with draft plans to help them reach final plans and strategies. One issue is the question of who should sign off on local strategies and plans – is it just the local authority, or should NHS, education, etc also be included? There needs to be integration. The NACP had a monitoring meeting with Scottish Government last week. They said that NACP was integral to the success of the Scottish Strategy for Autism.   Donald Macleod reported that representatives from 30 of 32 local authorities attended the NACP event, held on 19 January. Key themes emerging from the day were out of area placements and complex care. The next event will be held on 29 April. The evaluations from the day were positive, attendees were pleased to be together in a safe space to discuss common challenges.   JMacL said that NACP is now asking "what is good enough," how is that measured, and what consequences there are; these are all questions for future consideration in consultation with Scottish Government.

JNM asked if there are any examples of good practice – JmacL gave an example of the Highland approach to complex care. They found a building and invited prospective service providers to visit with them informally before formally going to tender; they've got several applications for this now.   DM indicated they see problems in areas where there isn't strategic buy-in. JMacL indicated there is a lot of good work being done by a lot of good people. There is a question around consultation and how it's done across areas.   The discussion turned to the collaborative formed at the end of the first NACP event; JMacL said to be successful, they would need to be clear about what the strategy is, and ask what are the desired outcomes, and how do they get there?

JNM asked how NACP measures if a local plan/strategy is good. JMacL said good plans would include 10 indicators and 4 mid-term goals from the Strategy. Social Work Scotland has encouraged the use of performance indicators – these have been drafted but are in very early stages. They are based on the 4 goals. SWS is reviewing them and refining them to generate a working document to move forward.

b. **ASD funded projects update** – AP reported that Scottish Government has received progress reports from funded projects. Some are still funded through March 2015. They are looking at a strategic way to evaluate the projects. Funded projects are required to report finances and outcomes. SG is looking to gather data and extract best practice from these final reports.   JNM asked, what is good practice and how do we disseminate? CT suggests they look at outcomes and then work backwards to see how they got there.   The data organisation could be done with the microsegmentation project in mind; which projects/practice apply where? AP says they need to commit resources, get the right person for the job. JMacL stated that ANS had applied for funding to complete the analysis of the data but the request was denied. JNM wondered what questions have been, or will be asked, to funded projects to determine success of the project. AP says final reports will be requested

soon, and that someone will be selected soon to complete the data analysis.

c. **Progress re: list of "knowledge hubs"/relevant websites for publication on ANS website** – CT reported that the [Knowledge Hub] is a free UK hosted collaborative platform with several special interest groups – there is no hub for good autism practice. It is used by Councils and 3rd sector organisations. One can apply to set up a new group – should this be done via ANS, or recommended from this group? JP offered that the group could use the ANS Virtual Networks as an alternative. CT replied that NAS also has [Network Autism].
ACTION ITEM: JP to look into knowledge hubs and setting one up through ANS virtual networks

d. **Review various frameworks for key aspects to include in more detailed definition of "Good Autism Practice"** – CT reported [Autism Education Trust] has lots of information on good practice. [NAS has SPELL framework] and they offer autism accreditation to schools. Scottish Autism [uses Autism Practice Improvement Framework, modified from Public Sector Improvement Framework]. This is a pilot programme within Scottish Autism that draws out areas for improvement, which sits alongside their overall framework. This requires a commitment to continuous improvement, which CT recommends be a part of any good framework. CT suggests that perhaps our job is to shine a light on what frameworks are out there and let people/organisations decide what's right for them. Discussion turned to how this information could be disseminated (virtual networks, web site, etc). JP said that it could be gathered and included on an ANS virtual network, but that the VN would need to be moderated by someone who could start and monitor conversations taking place there.
ACTION ITEM: CT to check with NES to see if they have already gathered and collated frameworks
ACTION ITEM: JP to collate available framework resources (get from CT), write them up (if not already done by NES)
AWD suggests contacting autism post-graduate courses to see if anything is available from their students – they may be doing case studies, etc that could be useful. JMacL offered to check with Anna Robinson at Strathclyde Uni.

e. **Feedback from Glenys Jones at GAP re: their definition of "Good Autism Practice"** – CT reported that there is "no criteria, as it is not that easy" to define. Glenys recommended review of latest GAP edition, which contains an article "So what exactly are autism interventions intervening with?"

f. **Information on Strategy web site counters, provide site statistics** – TW reported that currently, there is no mechanism by which to access Strategy site statistics. To add Google Analytics, which would allow us to see how many people visit the web pages, it would cost £90. No decision was made. CT recommended that the Strategy site be further promoted via social media.
ACTION ITEM: TW/JP to promote Strategy web site via social media

VII.   **For further discussion**
a. **Consider practitioners' access to journals, consider ways of helping practitioners develop skills in academic writing.**
KA's comment on a baseline standard for Scotland/the UK in screening subjects for autism research was raised. CT commented that she also wondered about this in the

context of the Autism Development Fund projects. She said the strength in the ADF projects was room for innovation and personalised approach, which is not always recognised in academic research.

JNM raised the discussion from the previous meeting, where RP suggested an event for practitioners wanting to publish results, and BC further suggesting that academics be involved. BC commented that academic data analysis requirements can be tough to meet. JMacL commented that practitioners have no time to do this (data analysis/write for journal publication.) AWD suggests that we focus on teaching record keeping, and questioned if practitioners would even want to publish academic papers. CT said that academic publications lend credibility – would data be considered credible if it doesn't meet academic standards? JP commented that practitioners are keen to learn from research, and would do this through learning events. These events could be a springboard in building confidence so that they will want to present their own findings. CT advocated for creating a "culture of sharing" – practitioners often don't have access to academic journals, they aren't reading the research. Discussion continued around how this could be achieved. AWD pointed to [Education Scotland's extranet](#) as a good example of sharing good practice. She says now it's about creating a culture where people want to share with each other. CT questioned "how do we share?" Is it via events, in the workplace? Wants to determine what strategic thing we can do around knowledge exchange for practitioners. MP says there are many different contexts for sharing, gave "Share Practice" button on Autism Toolbox website as an example.

AWD mentioned the Scottish Learning Festival and suggested considering an autism-focused festival/event. Discussion ensued with most people in favour of considering the idea. It was suggested that perhaps the event could be incorporated with the 4th Annual Conference on the Scottish Strategy for Autism in November 2015. CT wanted to consider the strategic, long term impact of the event – what happens after the day? Evaluation forms, follow-up questionnaires and networking were all suggested as possible ways to gauge impact.

JMacL says that some don't see this as a priority – not a question of good practice, but no practice. There is a huge variation in individual's perception of the value of good practice sharing. The people who are already engaged will come along, but how do we reach everyone else? BC suggested the NACP should be working towards this in local areas.

For the next meeting, the group will consider what would happen at an event, and what the outcomes of the event would be.

VIII. **Key messages** were discussed and are summarised at the end of this document.

IX. **Close –** the next meeting will be held Wednesday, 15 April in Edinburgh.

KEY MESSAGES

The meeting focused on how the group can support the development of good autism practice in Scotland. The group heard about the findings from the research series, and will be reviewing this information for the next meeting. The group received an update about the progress of the National Autism Co-Ordination Project, which is working to assure every local authority in Scotland has an autism strategy and/or plan in place. The group discussed knowledge hubs, and is considering how they might contribute to starting one for good autism practice. They discussed frameworks and will

be collating available information on this for future use. The group is keen to see the results of the Autism Development Fund projects; the data is going to be analysed through Scottish Government and will be available at a later date. The group is also considering a "good autism practice" sharing event, and will discuss this further at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEM: AWD to send Powerpoint file on research series report findings to TW for distribution to the group

ACTION ITEM: AWD to check with Aitken and Simmons on Scottish JADD issue

ACTION ITEM: JP to look into knowledge hubs and setting one up through ANS virtual networks

ACTION ITEM: CT to check with NES to see if they have already gathered and collated frameworks

ACTION ITEM: JP to collate available framework resources (get from CT), write them up (if not already done by NES)

ACTION ITEM: TW/JP to promote Strategy web site via social media

For further discussion: Consider what would happen at a "good practice sharing " event, and what the outcomes of the event would be.