

Working Group 2 meeting minutes
4th March 2015, 11 am
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

APPROVED

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

Apologies: John Butcher, Directors of Education; Leia Fitzgerald, Higher Education/Scottish Government; Arlene Johnstone, Social Work Scotland / NHS Highland

Minutes by: Tracy Wenzl, Autism Network Scotland

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Introductions were made around the room.
- II. **Review of group purpose and links to autism strategy** – JF briefly restated the aims of the group with regard to transitions and the autism Strategy
- III. **Action points from previous meeting (and review of minutes)** – a question was raised about the Data Hub (Item III in 20/1/15 minutes) and what exactly it was. JD explained it was managed by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government and that it contained basic public data (name, address, college and course) of school leavers/young people. The goal was to catch people if they are leaving higher/further education without finishing and provide additional supports. Young people know the data is collected, but it's not a voluntary process (ie, no opt-in) since it is not sensitive data. There is a flag added when a young person has additional support needs, but no information on specific needs are collected or reported.

The minutes from 20/1/15 were approved.

Review of action items:

- a. *SR to send video links to TW for dissemination to working group (mid-March)* – the videos are still being edited, should be available mid to late March.
- b. *LS to update Group's priority plan timescales and indicate which items have already been completed (mid-February)* – DONE. LS gave an update on these, which included information about the Employment Network event in October and future plans related to promoting employment of autistic people to employers, and the development of support materials (website, leaflets, etc.)

JF asked about learning from Autism Development Fund projects. An event featuring transitions-focused events was discussed, with the group leaning towards wanting to see if new learning or outcomes have been achieved by the projects before deciding whether to hold an event.

ACTION ITEM: AT to look into the situation regarding additional funding (£1K) for transitions focused events

ACTION ITEM: AT to report back on findings from ADF projects

ACTION ITEM: AT to report on which funded projects are about transitions

ACTION ITEM: SR to forward the report (once complete) to see if their experiences match the findings from the Principles of Good Transitions 2 roadshows to funded transitions projects for their feedback

The importance of the link between funded projects and local authorities was stressed. The short-term nature of project funding may be a disincentive for its inclusion in local strategies. Further information about the extent to which projects feature in local implementation of the strategy will be pursued with the National Autism Co-Ordination Project (NACP).

- c. *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 (1st week March) – on agenda for today*

LS and SR briefly described the event format - the first day, they meet with people on the spectrum, parents, carers and practitioners. They provide an overview of the PoGT2 document and people can comment specific to autism, what is and is not working in their communities, and discuss local and national resources. On the second day, they speak to young people. The final report is due mid- to late April. There may be additional events in Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders and Forth Valley.

- d. *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. – on agenda for today*
- e. *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 Coordination Project has or plans to request this information. – Not requested via NACP, IH has the data to present today (DONE as far as info is available)*
- f. *JD to look at data from Opportunities for All to see if there is anything autism-specific (1st week March) – no report*
- g. *IH to gather mentions of transitions from local autism strategies and plans and present in document (1st week March) – initial findings forwarded via email, will discuss today*
- h. *LS to check with National Autism Co-Ordination Project to see if they have any transitions data from their work with local authorities (1st week March) – none noted*
- i. *TW to get proposed dates from JF, send out Doodle poll – Done, dates set and sent out via email*

IV. Analysis of learning (transitions road shows) and other evidence

a. *Transitions plans in local autism strategies and plans* – IH analysed 30 existing local area strategies and plans for mentions of transitions and how they were being addressed. It was noted that generally three types of information about transitions were included – qualitative comments from consultation; statement of current practice; and forward thinking of what they'll do/would like to do next. An analysis of the transitions content of 5 local plans showed the following:

- Area 1 included a lot of information on what is happening, but very little on where to go next with transitions.
- Area 2 has a bulleted list of short, concrete steps to take towards improving transitions.
- Area 3 has a good and consistent plan for transitions – how they'll work, care packages, etc are accounted for
- Area 4 just stated what is happening currently, acknowledges need but does not lay out a future plan
- Area 5 has specific targets for transitions, is tracking number of transition plans

Overall, IH observed a lot of discussion on what is occurring, but only a few plans that have specific plans/targets to address transitions. All areas reviewed at least mentioned transitions in some fashion. Many areas used the goals from the Strategy and the 10 indicators of best practice as models for their own plans and strategies. Moving forward, the group would like to co-ordinate with NACP to influence local authorities' approach to transitions in their plans and strategies.

ACTION ITEM: IH to forward updated report to NACP

b. *Data on transitions:* IH presented two worksheets of data. The first compared E-say figures on adults with autism known to local authorities to Pupils in Scotland data on children with autism. This showed that there are roughly three times as many known autistic children than adults. This may indicate a problem with transitions, in that the autism diagnosis is getting lost between childhood and adulthood.

The second sheet shows school leaver destinations, comparing destinations for those on the spectrum with the overall population. It was noted that far more young people with autism end up in further education than the general population, and considerably less end up in employment.

A third set of data, to be circulated later, will show data from Pupils in Scotland about additional support needs and external help. While it appeared that many

pupils received some kind of support, in comparison there were very few coordinated support plans filed.

Additional data availability was discussed, with JD saying that Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is beginning to look at participation rates over snapshot data, and that they want to include special schools in future data collection. It would give current information on where young people are at any given time.

- c. *Transitions roadshows draft report* – SR presented the draft ‘Digging Deeper’ report, based on input from three roadshows already held. The report contains six key themes and five recommendations. LH commented that the themes are the same as noted through consultation in her local authority. SR noted that other organisations and professions have also had the same findings. It appears we know what needs to change, the challenge now is how it can be achieved.

Discussion followed, with one major issue being that due to eligibility requirements, someone with autism, but not a co-occurring issue, are often not assessed as being eligible for social care services. Another issue noted was that mainstream services sometimes do not identify the signs of autism, leading to delays in diagnosis and suitable support being put in place.

JD pointed to “Young Scotland’s Got Talent” as a good model of an employment/transitions event that provides positive outcomes for young people. Local Transitions ‘fairs’ were also seen as effective. LD raised the question of whether health, safety and sexuality have been raised at the transitions roadshows. SR noted it was not, but will raise these topics at future events if appropriate, but might sit outside of transitions issues. LD further suggested that parents need more training on how to support young people through transitions. She also suggested that skills for young people should be started earlier, so that they have exposure to the workplace and learn about social appropriateness.

Discussion followed about the recommendations identified in the ‘Digging Deeper’ report. It was generally agreed that the group support the recommendations, however we need to check these out further with other stakeholders before deciding which to pursue and what specific actions may be needed to achieve them.

ACTION ITEM: SR and LS will update the report with learning from further events. Once this has been done, it will be circulated to ADF funded Transitions projects and local autism strategy leads for input and comments.

ACTION ITEM: JF to meet with NACP and discuss how they may be able to help us check out the ‘Digging Deeper’ recommendations through their contacts with local autism strategy leads.

ARC Scotland’s survey of senior officials within health, education and social work – JF reported that generally, the feedback was that policy and legislation were too confusing, and that more joined-up working was needed. The interim report noted a big practice variation across Scotland.

Recommendation 4 from 'Digging Deeper' concerning accountability for transitions was raised, as it touches health, social care and education. The Children and Young People's Bill definition of the 'named person' may help with this. The bill guidance is out for consultation currently.

ACTION ITEM: SR to look at recommendations already in public domain and try to align them with the recommendations. Once this is done he will circulate them to the rest of the steering group for additions they are aware of for discussion at next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: AT to confirm whether the group can respond to the CYPB consultation, given that the group is funded by the Scottish Government

ACTION ITEM: If we are able to respond, SR (with LS) to draft recommendations for guidance to submit during consultation, circulate to group via email before next meeting

V. Identify specific priorities

The group then returned to the consideration of recommendations from the roadshows 'Digging Deeper' draft report.

Recommendation 2 was considered (re: eligibility criteria) and it was decided that further data analysis could inform our future discussion about this.

ACTION ITEM: IH to simplify E-say and Pupils in Scotland data and present at next meeting

ACTION ITEM: SR to check Sir Harry Burns' work for relevant information, and circulate it and any other relevant papers/research data on eligibility

It was noted that a review of eligibility criteria was supposed to have taken place after a 2010 mandate in the Self Directed Support Strategy, however we are unsure if it occurred.

ACTION ITEM: AT to find out if this review occurred or if/when it will occur

VI. Next meeting: May 7, Edinburgh (venue TBD)

KEY MESSAGES:

The group has heard concerns from people with autism and their families from the Principles of Good Transitions 2 roadshows. We have identified six themes that we think need to be addressed if we are to help improve transitions for young people with autism. They are: processes, options and choices, accountability, information and training, eligibility and unmet need, resources.

The group is considering ways to measure the outcomes that young people have achieved as well as their positive destinations in training and employment. There is good practice in local authorities, and the group wants to identify these good examples and share them with others, in order to guide local authorities' plans and strategies.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION ITEM: AT to look into the situation regarding additional funding (£1K) for transitions focused events

ACTION ITEM: AT to report back on findings from ADF projects

ACTION ITEM: AT to report on which funded projects are about transitions

ACTION ITEM: SR to forward the report (once complete) to see if their experiences match the findings from the Principles of Good Transitions 2 roadshows to funded transitions projects for their feedback

ACTION ITEM: IH to forward updated report on local autism plans and strategies' approach to transitions to NACP

ACTION ITEM: SR and LS will update the report with learning from further events. Once this has been done, it will be circulated to ADF funded Transitions projects and local autism strategy leads for input and comments.

ACTION ITEM: JF to meet with NACP and discuss how they may be able to help us check out the 'Digging Deeper' recommendations through their contacts with local autism strategy leads.

ACTION ITEM: SR to look at recommendations already in public domain and try to align them with the recommendations. Once this is done he will circulate them to the rest of the steering group for additions they are aware of for discussion at next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: AT to confirm whether the group can respond to the CYPB consultation, given that the group is funded by the Scottish Government

ACTION ITEM: If we are able to respond, SR (with LS) to draft recommendations for guidance to submit during consultation, circulate to group via email before next meeting

ACTION ITEM: IH to simplify E-say and Pupils in Scotland data with focus on transitions, and present at next meeting

ACTION ITEM: SR to check Sir Harry Burns' work for relevant information, and circulate it and any other relevant papers/research data on eligibility

ACTION ITEM: AT to find out if review (of SDS eligibility criteria) occurred or if/when it will occur