

Working Group 4 meeting minutes  
24th March 2015, 11 am  
Perth Autism Support, Perth

**APPROVED**

**Members present:** David Breslin, Speaking Literally; **Kabie Brook**, Autism Rights Group Highland; **Bill Colley**, Caledonia Learning and Care; **Elizabeth Coyle**, Service User; **Kirsty Forsyth**, Queen Margaret University/Autism Achieve Alliance; **Anne Marie Gallagher (CHAIR)**, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde; **Anne MacDonald**, The Richmond Fellowship Scotland; **Janine Robinson**, NHS Education for Scotland; **Ali Taylor**, Care, Support and Rights, Scottish Government; **Annie Watson**, Autism Network Scotland;

**Apologies:** Jess McPherson, Scottish Government, **Bryan Davies**, Social Work Scotland; **Anna Robinson**, University of Strathclyde; **Andrew Stansfield**, Patrick Wild Centre, University of Edinburgh; **Alan Somerville**, Scottish Autism

**Minutes by:** Tracy Wenzl, Autism Network Scotland

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – members all introduced themselves to the group.
- II. **Minutes** – approved by the full group. During this, a discussion was raised about whether someone from Education needed to join the group. AT reported that Scottish Government Education colleagues had been approached and this had resulted in Leia Fitzgerald (higher education) being appointed to work group 2.
- III. **Review of Action Items**
  - a. NAS Director has been contacted, she is working on determining who from NAS will join Working Group 4
  - b. RCGP Scotland contact information was forwarded to JR
  - c. AM has service group contacts and will pass them to JR for further follow up
  - d. AMG – we'll focus our next meetings each on a section of the NES Training Framework
- IV. Update on NES Training Plan and review of documents – JR

JR reported that the NES project will be further funded by Scottish Government from April 1. NES has identified gaps and commissioning some training. One of these was Adapting CBT for adults (already held) and for children (upcoming.) NES will follow up with attendees of these two course three months later to assess impact. They want to consider impact before commissioning any further training.

KB asked if NES would be following up with service users (from those who have received training) and JR said they are considering this. EC raised a concern that the CBT courses were commissioned from outside Scotland, and noted it would be best to use Scottish resources whenever possible. JR agreed but noted that the CBT training could only be done by the group that did it due to time and resource constraints.

Discussion turned to what elements should be included in training courses, with a general understanding of autism, features (per the Menu of Interventions), and evidence-based all being noted as key.

On the new Training Plan (in draft form), KB noted that it doesn't get into living issues like bullying, rights and community. BC asked about the "autistic community" and KB noted that there is one, but cautioned against stereotypes. As with any community, the autistic community is made up of individuals, and some choose not to participate in the community at all. JR noted that this was covered in more detail in the Training Framework, which sits alongside the Training Plan, but wants to consider it further.

BC noted that the RCGP has a very good training on learning disabilities available, but that it isn't taught. He questioned how much impact the NES Training Plan can have, given the limited time GPs and training GPs have.

JR noted that NES will be developing and commissioning training, and that much of this is being done in joint work with Autism Network Scotland. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is another partner in developing training resources.

**ACTION ITEM:** KB to send JR her input on how best to include this in the Training Plan

In June, the National Autistic Society is holding a mental health and autism conference in London – NES is attending and bringing key contacts from Scotland to further the impact. NES is planning to attend several conferences to further disseminate the Training Framework and Plan. They will have a stand at a social work conference in Crieff in June. Autism Network Scotland is in Shetland this week disseminating the Training Framework, and NES gave ANS a set of slides to use in presentations about it. NES will begin developing trainings this year, but these will likely not be ready for use until next year. AMG noted she is presenting at a conference in late April and that NES is invited to put up an information stand. She is further developing a questionnaire to use during her presentation and will partner with JR on this.

**ACTION ITEM:** AMG and JR to partner on creation of a questionnaire for April conference

KB asked about pharmacists and their involvement in the Training Plan. JR said they have their own document, which she can pass along to KB.

**ACTION ITEM:** JR to send KB pharmacist web resources on autism

- V. AMG noted that today's meeting will focus on the first section of the Training Framework – Knowledge and skills levels in Identification, Screening, Assessment and Diagnosis. She presented three main considerations for the conversation:
- a. "understanding before tools" – AMG noted that it was important for teachers, practitioners, etc to understand autism and behaviours before they try to use tools (rules, supports, etc) – otherwise, they may not end up helping the person. It is hard to respond appropriately if behaviour isn't understood. BC noted that to understand autism, one has to also understand himself (as a neurotypical)
  - b. 20:20 Vision – AMG noted that this initiative is about living healthier lives. It advocates delivery of services closer to home. Diagnosis should be available closer to home as well – instead of shifting people with complex needs up through the system, the lower ends of the system should be skilled up to better handle needs in

the community. Out of area placements send resources away that could be used to build capacity at home. BC noted that not providing appropriate care in education can have negative impact on the child's mental health. KB noted that the classroom environment must be considered – reducing class size could be a simple adjustment that would make a big difference.

- c. Enabling Approach – AMG said that service workers need to be taught to provide services on their own, rather than referring up to specialists. BC suggested that a tool for teachers, etc to better recognize when a child is struggling would be helpful – a neuro tool for recognition of autism that might lead someone to further pursue diagnosis. KF noted that schools should be catching problems with engaging and participating in their classrooms. BC noted more valuable information can sometimes be gleaned from the playground. EC noted that a child's first contact is with either a GP or their teachers, etc – these people should be trained to recognize the potential for struggles so that the child can get appropriate adjustments early on. BC noted that missing a diagnosis (false negative) can have major impacts on a child's success.
- d. It was noted that Scottish Government is looking for outcomes and things that make a national impact

The discussion then moved to the four levels in the Training Framework – informed, skilled, enhanced and expert. JR noted that identification should be in the first group (informed.) KF spoke about her involvement in developing a training framework for schools that was teacher/classroom-based (Circle). Not autism specific, it helps teachers identify behaviours in a structured way. She noted that if not diagnosed while in school, the average age for an adult diagnosis is 31.

**ACTION ITEM:** KF to send Circle information to BC

BC noted that it's better to notice signs in primary school as they have one teacher all day; secondary school days are too fragmented, signs could easily be missed. The group was keen to have input in teacher training.

Discussion then turned to the NES Work Plan (draft), which noted several upcoming work streams in the funding proposal for the new year, which are yet to be agreed by Scottish Government. AMG noted that NES is running a pilot with the Ask Autism programme; working with the Autism Network Scotland Early Years Network; and examining the Fife model of integrated assessment of children.

DISCO and ADOS trainings were also under consideration – AMG noted that services are not taking opportunities to train their clinicians in using these tools, but are still referring people out for assessment. She gave the example of Lanarkshire referring autism assessments to Glasgow; this is part of 350 referrals received in Glasgow annually. This has led to 18+ weeks wait for assessment. JR noted that we need to communicate with ADHD and dyspraxia specialists and look for opportunities to partner work.

ACTION ITEM: Scottish Government and NES to agree NES draft work plan and discuss where things could be boosted

#### VI. Action Plan

**ACTION ITEM:** KF and AMG are to look at available diagnostic facilities across Scotland and determine what their current level of training is (informed, skilled, enhanced or expert)

**ACTION ITEM:** JR to meet with National Autism Co-Ordination Team in April, to consider ways of determining best practice in diagnosis in local authorities, and how to disseminate the Training Framework and Plan in local authorities for inclusion in local strategies and plans.

**ACTION ITEM:** AT to consider the best route to getting information with regard to what local authorities report to be doing on diagnosis as per each local strategy.

**ALL:** If you have documents or further thoughts, please send them to TW for dissemination to the group before the next meeting

VII. Any other current business - The next meeting will focus on Knowledge and skill levels in Management, Support and Intervention (second section of Training Framework.)

VIII. **Date for next meeting** – it was decided that the next meeting will be held in Perth on Tuesday, June 9, 11-12:45 pm, venue TBD

IX. Close – meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

#### KEY MESSAGES:

Scottish Government has confirmed additional funding for NES to continue their work around the Autism Training Framework (published) and Training Plan (currently in draft). They will be attending various conferences and events across Scotland to widen their reach, and are partnering with Autism Network Scotland to accomplish this. NES is also commissioning some training after identifying gaps, but will evaluate the effectiveness of the trainings before commissioning anything further.

The group agreed that the earliest diagnosis of autism was important, and that people commonly in contact with children (teachers, general practitioners, and parents) should be able to identify key behaviours that might indicate a need for further assessment. The group further agreed that a true understanding of autism and autistic behaviours is reliant on experience as well as information. This is key in schools and in health settings, especially adult mental health settings. The group would like to know what is happening in local authorities and in diagnostic facilities across Scotland.

#### SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

**ACTION ITEM:** KB to send JR her input on how best to include this in the Training Plan

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**ACTION ITEM:** AT to consider the best route to getting information with regard to what local authorities report to be doing on diagnosis as per each local strategy. (DONE - AT reported that the National Autism Co-Ordination Project team would be better placed to take up this work.)