Working Group 2 Meeting Minutes
15th February 2017
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

APPROVED

Members present: James Fletcher, ARC Scotland (CHAIR); **Alistair Gilmour**, Autism Network Scotland (minutes); **Arlene Johnstone**, Social Work Scotland/NHS Highland; **Robert Mitchell**, Scottish Government Care, Support and Rights; **Zoe Robertson**, Perth and Kinross Council; **Lynsey Stewart**, Autism Network Scotland.

Apologies: John Butcher, Directors of Education; **Anna Cooper**, National Autistic Society; **John Dalziel**, Skills Development Scotland; **Laura Dykes**, Dumfries & Galloway Council; **Lynsay Haglington**, East Dunbartonshire Council/Social Work **Ronnie Hill**, Scottish Government; **Jane Hook**, Parent ; **Donna Nicholson**, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland; **Annette Pyle**, Scottish Government Care, Support and Rights; **Scott Richardson-Read**, ARC Scotland.

Guests: Allison Crawford & Leanne Anderson, Inspiring Scotland.

1. **Previous minutes and action** points - previous minutes were approved.

Review of action items

i.   AG to find out who to speak to at the National Autistic Society in AC's absence.

        ACTION POINT - AG to find out who will represent NAS at the group's meetings from Jenny Paterson.

ii.   JF to forward a potential date to AP to meet discuss meeting with Maureen Watt.

        A meeting took place on 12th January 2017 between Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Mental Health, AP and RM of the Scottish Government, and group chair JF and SRR of the Association for Real Change. The meeting reflected the points raised by the group at its previous meeting. The minister was thanked for the support offered by her department to work being done in transitions, and to encourage a continued national focus on transitions across different policy teams. The *Principles of Good Transitions 3* was launched at the Scottish Strategy for Autism Fifth Annual Conference on 16th January, featuring a keynote speech from the minister. Ms Watt also provided the foreword for the publication and spoke at a recent Parliamentary Event to celebrate the publication of Principles, sponsored by Colin Beattie MSP.

        RM informed the group that it should not hesitate to contact the minister via her team for her assistance in implementing its ongoing agenda.

iii.   LS to provide a list of examples of peer support networks ahead of the next meeting of the Working Group.

        Addressed under 'Links with Carers Team'

iv. AP to invite a representative of the Scottish Government's carers team to join the next meeting of the Working Group to discuss how the group might constructively engage with carers issues.

AP has provided a paper from the Scottish Government's Carers Team, circulated ahead of the meeting, in lieu of a representative in person.

v. SRR to provide information to the group on the pathway to engagement for carers and carers groups.

To be carried over in SRR's absence.

vi. LS to ask Thom Kirkwood of the Strategy's Wider Engagement Group about sharing any information he has gathered in his work on any peer support networks and specifically carers networks.

Addressed under 'Links with Carers Team'

vii. IH to select key information he holds on SEEMiS to share with the Working Group.

IH provided a paper to the group circulated ahead of the meeting.

viii. SRR to provide AP with his notes on Scottish Funding Council's transitions training in colleges and universities.

SRR and AP have been in contact on this. The Scottish Funding Council wishes to ensure that all college and university staff are appropriately trained in transitions, with ARC Scotland soon to pilot training schemes.

2. **Links with Innovation Fund projects**

Allison Crawford and Leanna Anderson of [Inspiring Scotland](#) were invited to attend today's meeting to discuss transitions-related work being done by charities funded by the Scottish Government's Autism & Innovation Fund. Working Group 2 aims to learn more about these particular projects and how they might link with them to further the group's work plan following the launch of the *Principles of Good Transitions 3*.

There are forty-three projects funded in this way whose work relates in some way to young people's experiences of transitions. The projects are based across Scotland from the central belt to the Highlands and Orkney and are overseen by a wide range of different organisations, from larger charities such as Scottish Autism to local organisations such as Edinburgh's Tailor Ed Foundation. Not all of these forty-three projects necessarily feature transitions as their main focus but as a relevant topic within their work. Types of projects among this number include those related to the arts, to wellbeing, and to the work of carers.

Having previously worked with the Scottish Women's Autism Network (SWAN), Inspiring Scotland is hoping to ascertain if there is interest amongst the members of with Working Group 2 in co-hosting an event on these transitions-related projects.

JF noted how the previous year's Autism & Innovation Funded projects were winding down at the inception of Working Group 2 and said that he did not wish to see the opportunity presented by this year's projects to be missed. He felt that by linking the work done by the projects with that done by the Working Group, the overarching national initiatives it serves, and the new *Principles of Good Transitions* document, it could assist in ensuring the longer-term sustainability of the project-funded work. It would also help the Working Group to have a better understanding of the learning and challenges arising from project work.

LS suggested that there would be an appetite for these events outside the usual event locations of the central belt, while Allison said that the concentration of projects in northern Scotland make it a suitable area to consider. As Inspiring Scotland do not specialise in events on transitions, there is an appetite to work with ARC and Autism Network Scotland on a series of events showcasing the funded projects, given their experience of running the *Exploring Transitions* and *Autism & Transitions: Understanding your Role* series of events. ANS & ARC are able to describe how to get the most from the *Principles* document and its Autism Supplement, as well as to advise on the most appropriate event formats for sharing information, encouraging collaboration and beginning an ongoing dialogue.

The group discussed at length the potential formats and audiences for these events, bearing in mind that projects would be at different stages of development and have differing levels of familiarity with resources such as the *Principles of Good Transitions 3*. Offering concurrent workshops offering an introduction to transitions and others in greater depth was seen as a possibility, though there was concern that this might lead to workshops of impractically small numbers. It was also hoped that the events might serve as the precursor to new initiatives rather than simply the culmination of prior work.

The group discussed how demonstrating the value for money offered by the projects' work, in getting the most out of limited resources, was key to ensuring sustainability. By engaging with local shareholders to gauge what is felt to be most needed in particular areas, it is hoped that best practice can be identified and supported.

LS suggested that an event on the funded projects aimed at the Autism Strategy Lead Officers Collaborative might offer a pre-existing audience used to openly and honestly discussing complex issues in supporting autistic people in Scotland. The Lead Officers Collaborative, and its events involving service commissioners and providers, foster collaboration and best practice sharing between local authorities across Scotland and their colleagues and other stakeholders as they work to create and implement local autism strategies and plans. The group endorsed this suggestion as a means of organising an event in the central belt to showcase and discuss the future of the Autism & Innovation Funded Projects to a well-established community of practice. JF has previously presented to the Collaborative on the *Principles* document, so there is continuity in discussing how it might link with the work being done on transitions by the funded projects.

JF stressed the national perspective of the *Principles* document and how this feeds into the overall aims of the Scottish Strategy for Autism, with the emphasis on the sustainability of services as key to embedding mechanisms for good practice in transitions. With this in mind, the initial events were envisaged to begin with a session discussing how the work of the

funded projects fit into the framework of the *Principles* document and Autism Supplement, followed by a more detailed discussion of what is required to ensure their sustainability and cost effectiveness.

The group went on to discuss options for further events outside of the central belt of Scotland. Inverness was floated as a potential alternative venue for an event gathering projects in the Highlands and the north of Scotland, potentially working with the Shirlie Project to access their established inks in the area. It was also suggested that any event might be broadcast live online via social media as a means of being viewed by those unable to travel to the proposed venues, and in areas such as the Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway and Argyll & Bute, where known examples of good practice in transitions are independent of the funded projects.

The timescale for these first events was suggested to be 6-8 weeks from this meeting, in April 2017. This may be revised depending on how this fits into the funding period of the projects themselves. The Autism & Innovation Fund has provided funding until the end of March in some cases and until September in others. Working Group 2 is extremely keen to harness the learning from these projects and utilise the expertise of the charities. RM stated that there will be more clarity around the 2017 Autism & Innovation Fund by March.

ZR suggested that the key to sustainability will be the cost efficiency of the projects and their ability to raise continued funding following the completion of their initial grant from the Autism & Innovation Fund. Conducting a cost/benefit analysis can demonstrate how spending money on ensuring effective transitions for young people can go on to prove to save greater sums in the long term, as those people are less likely to require the same levels of support in future.

ACTION POINT - JF to liaise with Allison and Leanne of Inspiring Scotland to discuss the practicalities of two events, in the central belt and Inverness aiming to frame the work of the Autism & Innovation Funded projects around the *Principles of Good Transitions 3*. Depending on responses to this, these would be followed by a second event to discuss strategies for sustainability of project-funded work. It may be appropriate to invite a wider stakeholder group to the second events.

3. **Principles of Good Transitions 3 and Autism Supplement**

The Principles of Good Transitions 3 and its Autism Supplement are now published and available. As noted above, it was launched at the Scottish Strategy for Autism Fifth Annual Conference, and is considered by Working Group 2 as an anchor point for its work. It can be downloaded [here](#).

4. **Technology enabled care**

The group discussed how it might link with existing work being done to analyse the use of technology such as mobile phone applications (apps) in supporting young people's transitions. ZR described how Perth & Kinross Council have applied to use an app called [Brain In Hand](#), which enables people to track their feelings throughout the day, to remember activities, reduce anxiety and feel supported. It is known to be used by individuals in Scotland but Perth & Kinross are the first local authority to invest in licenses for its use, with the year-long exercise to evidence its use and inform whether future investment is

made. The council have 20 young people interested in using the app at present and will present a full cost analysis following the trial.

The group has links with [Technology Enabled Care (TEC)](#) who may be interested in this work and be worth linking with if the group decides to incorporate such apps in its work plan in any way.

If these technologies fall within the group's renewed remit, it is interested in how these new technologies could augment existing methods of support to young people in transitions in useful, tangible ways.

ACTION POINT - ZR to circulate Perth & Kinross Council's Technology Strategy to the group via AG.

ACTION POINT - RM to discuss with colleagues at the Scottish Government to ascertain any useful contacts for the Working Group on technology-assisted care.

5. **Data sources**

The Working Group has been pursuing data sources providing detailed information on the numbers of young people in transitions since its inception. It wishes to do so to help recognise the components of successful transitions, to identify the numbers of people successfully transitioning and the level of unmet need. This will provide a fuller context for the group's work plan as it accurately identifies the scale of the work still to be done and the impact to date of the national autism strategy.

The group has a request for data based on the 2011 Census currently being processed at the Scottish Learning Disability Observatory which, it is hoped, will have borne fruit by the April meeting of the group. It is also in discussions with colleagues at Napier University on useful data as it attempts to gather a holistic view of the issue.

Ian Hood provided the group with his paper on SEEMiS prior to leaving the Working Group.

RM also provided the group with a handout and described work being done by his colleague, Kjersti Fergusson, at the Scottish Government. Kjersti is currently working with colleagues in Dementia in utilising resources her colleagues used to gather data on people accessing support. The main focus of this work is on reducing waiting times for people seeking an autism diagnosis. RM offered to take any questions the group has on the issue to his colleagues in Education Analysis and to explore how data gathered could be linked to the Working Group's remit.

ACTION POINT - (Assuming the SLDO data is received by next meeting.) All group members to review SLDO data for how it might be used to answer four key questions.

6. **Links with Lead Officers**

Nothing to add following JF presentation at the September Lead Officers event.

7. **Links with Carers Team**

Ahead of today's meeting, AP circulated a paper from the Scottish Government Carers Team detailing its aims and the upcoming Carers (Scotland) Act 2018. The Working Group would like to explore how it might link with the work of the team in future.

LS also circulated her draft paper on existing peer support networks, with a further paper expected from Thom Kirkwood of the Wider Engagement Group in due course. Examples of peer support networks varied across Scotland, including groups intended for parents of autistic children, while other themed groups aimed at children can also become de facto peer support groups for parents organically by bringing adults together to share information and support. Online examples of peer support networks include Facebook groups are often popular in rural areas of Scotland, connecting people across the country. LS described anecdotal evidence of successful per support networks at recent *Exploring Transitions: Digging Deeper* events.

LA described a peer support group in Glasgow for carers that brings together parents whose children are undergoing diagnosis.

ACTION POINT - AF & LA of Inspiring Scotland to provide LS with information on peer support networks for carers funded by the Autism & Innovation Fund.

LS described recent inquiries made to Autism Network Scotland regarding parents having difficulty in supporting their children as they transition out of education.

Scottish Autism's Right Click was cited as an example of a programme that generates peer support amongst participants.

JF asked what the Working Group might offer to support such networks, which very often operate independently from services and support. It was suggested that this might be incorporated into the work being done with the Autism & Innovation Fund projects on transitions.

ACTION POINT - ZR to pass her information on peer support networks to LS for inclusion in her paper.

JF suggested the group would consider in future the provision of information to parents and carers.

8. **Older Transitions 'Think Tank'**

LS is due to meet with NHS Education for Scotland later today to discuss this issue.

9. **Review of Work-plan**

ACTION POINT - AG to update Work Plan to feature additional items on criminal justice, the use of technology in transitions support, and the provision of information in health care, and to post the updated version to the Scottish Strategy for Autism website.

10. **AOB**

Autism and Learning Disability is to being incorporated with the policy team on Dementia, to be led by Gillian Barclay. The group will be kept abreast of any further developments.

11. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 19th April, 11am, at the Number 6 One Stop Shop, Edinburgh.

KEY MESSAGES

We are pleased to have contributed to the publication of the *Principles of Good Transitions 3* and its Autism Supplement. These were launched by Work group members at the Scottish Strategy for Autism Annual conference on 16 January. The documents provide a practical framework that all professionals can use to improve the experience of young autistic people in transition. We are delighted with the positive response these publications have received, the support we have received from the Scottish Government and the good work already happening across Scotland to put these principles into practice. We continue to link with the Scottish Government and many other partners to ensure a continued national focus on transitions and to help embed the practical solutions we have identified.

The Principles of Good Transitions 3 can be viewed here.

The Autism Supplement can be viewed here.

ACTION POINTS

ACTION POINT - AG to find out who will represent NAS at the group's meetings from Jenny Paterson.

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