

Working Group 4 meeting minutes
23 June 2016
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

APPROVED

Members present: Anne Marie Gallagher (CHAIR), NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde; Kabie Brook, Autism Rights Group Highland; Jayne Porter, Autism Network Scotland; Annette Pyle, Care, Support and Rights, Scottish Government; Anna Robinson, University of Strathclyde; Janine Robinson, NHS Education for Scotland; Ruth Adams, The Richmond Fellowship; Charlene Tait, Scottish Autism; Bill Colley, Caledonia Learning and Care; Moira Park, Scottish Autism.

Apologies: David Breslin, Speaking Literally; Jayne Kemp, City of Edinburgh Council; Jenny Paterson, National Autistic Society; Andrew Stansfield, Patrick Wild Centre, University of Edinburgh Kirsty Forsyth, Queen Margaret University; Elizabeth Coyle, Service User.

Minutes by: Alistair Gilmour, Autism Network Scotland

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** – Draft agenda was approved.
- II. **Minutes** – approved
- III. **Review of Action Items**
 1. **ACTION ITEM:** CM to circulate outcomes document with meeting documents.
Done.
 2. **ACTION ITEM:** AMG/CM to circulate information on diagnosticians in Scotland trained on ADOS or DISCO to working group.

Also,
 3. **ACTION ITEM:** AMG gathering information on those who are both ADOS and DISCO trained through Scottish government funding.

The information was circulated to the group in hard copies at the meeting. The group went on to discuss training on a regional basis, highlighting where diagnostic teams are currently operating. Plans for future training were considered and clarification sought regarding selection for the next wave of funding. It was suggested that the previous mapping exercise around autism services and resources might be consulted on locating diagnostic teams in Scotland.

ADOS training videos are to be made available through the NHS Education website. The intention is to bring together related information on pathways to diagnostic assessment to make this path explicit to the different audiences looking for access to these services. The introduction of formal tools to aid diagnostic assessment, has left some capable clinicians, who would have carried out diagnostic assessments in the past, less confident in reaching their diagnostic opinion now. Further ASOS and DISCO training should support, increasing capacity to carryout diagnostic assessments and not hinder it. It is important however to know where diagnostic capacity and diagnostic teams currently

exist.

ACTION POINT – AMG to compile a paper on locations of current diagnostic teams for circulation with the group for further consideration around how training is prioritised.

4. **ACTION ITEM:** AP to speak with Education colleagues within Scottish Government and Education Scotland about the provision of autism courses in teacher training. AP to investigate contacts at the HMIE.

Done – MP and AP met Paul McWatt of Education Scotland and discussed both adding the Autism Toolkit to the Education Scotland website and measures that might be taken to include autism awareness training as standard in teacher training programmes.

It currently features in some programmes, but not all; AR stated that in the Strathclyde course autism training is currently optional. It recently became a compulsory element of teacher training in England following an act of the Westminster parliament.

The group discussed the issues surrounding the positioning of autism training within teacher training programmes. Some teachers are unaware of the existence of the Autism Toolkit.

AMG felt it falls within the group's remit to strongly communicate to the Scottish Government that, as all teachers will teach autistic children in their careers, some training in autism awareness ought to form an essential part of standard teacher training. It was pointed out that this ought to be a requirement under GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and/or HGIOS (How Good Is Our School).

It is also felt that an effort must be made to reach 'school refusers' to incorporate them into education, as well as offering training to both current teachers as part of their continued professional development and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) as a new element to current training. The impact of any new training scheme must feature measurable outcomes.

This should be framed as enabling professionals to be better practitioners; for example by considering and adjusting the classroom environment for autistic children, teachers are able to provide greater opportunities for learning and supporting the capabilities of children with autism. Current teaching philosophies of inclusion ought to offer the same opportunities to all children in mainstream classrooms. 'Autism Plus' aspects such as other mental health issues also require consideration. Failing to accommodate children with autism appropriately in education impacts upon them into adulthood. Training should be offered to all staff in schools and not exclusively teachers.

The group feels that an effective way of beginning this process is the inclusion of use of the Autism Toolbox in the inspection criteria of Education Scotland.

ACTION POINT—AP to invite Paul McWatt, Education Scotland, to attend a future meeting of Working Group 4 to discuss adding the Autism Toolbox to inspection criteria.

ACTION POINT – Group to begin a list of questions for Paul McWatt on awareness of autism may be raised across mainstream provision.

5. **ACTION ITEM:** AP to advise on when The Open University can attend.

AP circulated the relevant information to the group prior to the previous meeting. The group discussed health and social care integration and the changing landscape in the provision of funding to train professionals. Where the previous criteria was to offer training to any professional who might encounter people on the autism spectrum in their daily work, the thinking is to now prioritise teachers, those working in the criminal justice system, mental health services and social workers. It is felt that future training initiatives must be designed strategically and with clear, measurable, sustainable outcomes.

It was discussed whether this new training might be provided by the Open University and/or the University of Strathclyde.

****Update*** Changes to the financial landscape since this meeting of Working Group 4 mean that senior financial officials at the Scottish Government have instructed the Care, Support & Rights Division not to further commit its programme spend unless a grant has already been provided to the organisation in question.*

Therefore, the Working Group's discussion on a further wave of investment to Strathclyde and Open University for funded units will not be progressed.

6. **ACTION ITEM:** Group to identify current use of Alert Cards in agencies, including how they are disseminated. CM to add this Alert card item to agenda for the next Working Group 4 meeting.

It was acknowledged that KB had completed a short report on Alert Cards.

ACTION POINT – KB to provide AG with a copy of her Autism Alert Card report for circulation amongst the group.

JP presented to the group the draft webpage added to the Autism Network Scotland website to showcase the different examples of Autism Alert Cards available around the country. She stated that she has been unable to find a similar page on any other organisation's website to date. JP also suggested that the Working Group may wish to consider developing information for a page on creating your own individual alert card. JP asked the group to review the webpage after which point it will be made publicly available, thus concluding this key action of the Working Group.

KB pointed out that an individual verbally stating that they are autistic to a public official ought to carry the same weight as presenting an alert card.

ACTION POINT – Jean MacLellan and Donald MacLeod to be asked by AMG to include autism alert cards in their upcoming discussions with Argyll & Bute council.

ACTION POINT – AG to circulate link to finished Autism Alert Card webpage on the ANS website for review by members.

7. **ACTION ITEM:** AR to circulate report on lasting impact of University of Strathclyde's modules.

Done.

ACTION POINT – AG to circulate AR report to the group.

8. **ACTION ITEM:** A summary report of previously funded projects with recommendations will be compiled by group 4.

To be carried over to next meeting.

- IV. **Discussion** – ways in which the Scottish Government target training initiatives to make maximum impact.

See **Review of Action Items**, point 2.

- V. **Mental welfare commission report** – AMG incorporated comments into her original response.

ACTION POINT – JP's initial response to be passed on to AMG for further input.

- VI. **NSPCC and access parenting capacity** with Bill Coley.

BC described to the group how a common lack of autism training amongst social workers can lead to potentially damaging misunderstandings of autistic people's behaviour or coping strategies that can cause significant detriments to the lives of people on the spectrum and their families.

ACTION POINT – BC to begin a paper on behalf of the group on issues arising from social workers' interactions with and assessments of families with members on the autism spectrum. Following circulation, all other members of the Working Group are invited to contribute further. AP to then pass this finished paper on to the appropriate team within the Scottish Government.

- VII. **Any other Current Business**

CT described a recent conversation with the Autism Education Trust and suggested inviting a representative of AET to attend a meeting of the Working Group to discuss

their training hub and how it could potentially be integrated into Scottish education.

It was agreed there is value in this being the same meeting that Paul McWatt, Education Scotland, be invited to.

ACTION POINT – CT to contact AET to invite a representative to attend an extraordinary meeting of WG4.

ACTION POINT – AP to invite Laura Meikle and Colin Spivey, Scottish Government policy leads for additional support needs for education, to the above meeting. Also to clarify if the group may offer to cover transport costs for those invited to attend.

VIII. **Date for next meeting**
TBC

KEY MESSAGES:

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION POINT – AMG to compile a paper on locations of current diagnostic teams for circulation with the group.

ACTION POINT – AP to invite Paul McWatt, Education Scotland, to attend a future meeting of Working Group 4 to discuss adding the Autism Toolbox to inspection criteria.

ACTION POINT – BC to begin a list of questions for Paul McWatt on how this may be achieved. List to be circulated amongst the group for contributions.

ACTION POINT –AG to circulate KB's Autism Alert Card report amongst the group.

ACTION POINT – Jean MacLellan and Donald MacLeod to be asked by AMG to include autism alert cards in their upcoming discussions with Argyll & Bute council.

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