

Project:	ELC Strategic Forum		
Date & Time:	10:30 – 13:00 Wed 27 th July 2016	Meeting No:	3
Meeting Place:	Scottish Parliament Edinburgh	Minutes By:	JM

Attendees

Mark McDonald	Minister for Childcare & Early Years
Jackie Brock	Children in Scotland
Lesley Brown	Education Scotland
Jane Brumpton	Early Years Scotland
Davina Coupar	West College Scotland
Stephanie Bruce	CALA
Anna Fowlie	Scottish Social Services Council
Vicky Crichton	Save the Children
Irene Audain	Scottish Out of School Care Network
Cath Agnew	Care Inspectorate
Kathy Cameron	CoSLA
Cllr Stephanie Primrose	CoSLA
Satwat Rehman	One Parent Families Scotland
Bruce Robertson	ELC Strategic Evidence Group
Clare Simpson	Parenting Across Scotland
Maggie Simpson	Scottish Childminding Association
Christine Stephen	Stirling University
Julie Wild	National Parent Forum of Scotland
Purnima Tanuku	National Day Nurseries Association Scotland
Ann Henderson	Scottish Trades Union Congress
Sam Anson	Scottish Government
Euan Carmichael	Scottish Government
Jeff Maguire (minutes)	Scottish Government

Apologies

Fiona McQueen	SG Chief Nursing Officer
Lesley Gibb	ADES
Jim McCormack	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Valerie Gale	CALA
Jean Carwood-Edwards	Early Years Scotland

Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions

The Minister welcomed everyone and said that the principal topic for discussion today would be the draft Blueprint document for the expansion to 1140 hours by 2020. He stated that his overarching aim for Forum meetings is to ensure that the forum is a practical, task-oriented group that demonstrably helps us deliver our ELC vision.

Item 2 - Minutes of last meeting and review of actions (paper 03/01)

The minute of the previous meeting was approved without revisions, although the previous action re the paper on 2 yos should have read 'needs' rather than 'hours'. All action points to be picked up as part of the agenda.

Item 3 – ELC Policy Update (papers 03/02, 03/03 and 03/04)

Sam spoke to paper 03/02, reiterating the key elements of the CYPA 2014, and confirmed that the SG is producing a progress report on LA implementation of 600 hours based on its recent survey of LAs, which received 26 responses.

Main points raised in discussion:

- Important to get data from as many LAs as possible on their implementation of 600 hours.
- Important to capture LAs' duty to consult on Additional Support Needs (ASN) – Sam confirmed that ASN would feature in the summary report.

Sam also spoke to the paper on Governance (03/03), which aimed to clarify arrangements going forward. The project has been reconstituted as a programme, with 4 inter-dependent work streams – infrastructure, workforce and quality, policy delivery and evidence. The first meeting of the new Programme Board will take place on 18 August.

Main points raised in discussion:

- It might be helpful to separate the workforce and quality projects, to enable the workforce group to focus on workforce planning.
- There was a request for the Programme Board to feed reports into the work of the Forum going forward.
- It was agreed that it would be helpful to have an update from ADES on impact assessments being done under the 1140 hours at a future meeting.

Euan introduced paper 03/04 on workforce, stating that the paper was a version of one that went to the Workforce and Quality Group meeting the previous week. Clearly large numbers of new staff will be needed for the expansion, with work ongoing with SG analytical services and ADES in particular to refine figures. Work will soon commence to better understand the factors that would encourage more people to consider a career in ELC.

Main points raised in discussion:

- Plans should seek to emphasise our desire to create better, more secure employment opportunities for the ELC workforce through the expansion.
- Important to diversify the profile of the ELC workforce, and ensure that this is built in from the start and not an add on.

- Work to attract more men into the workforce was vital, as was making links with Developing the Young Workforce (via for example the National Steering Group) and exploring both Modern Apprenticeship and Foundation Apprenticeship routes.
- Schools also have an important role to play in breaking down stereotypes e.g. via PSE courses etc.
- Parental influence is a key factor too, and colleges have a key role to play in making careers in ELC seem more attractive to men – SFC are currently working with colleges on this and plan to share examples of good practice.
- There is a need to monitor and assess the potential impacts of Brexit on the sector, which could create additional pressures.
- We need structures to retain staff, which involves developing staff skills, career progression and CPD for staff.
- There will be a need to consider how both workforce and infrastructure developments could be phased, neither of which will be able to happen all at once.

Item 4 - ELC Blueprint (Papers 03/05 and 03/06)

The Minister introduced this item by stating that it was the most substantial item on the agenda and that he looked forward to a full exchange of views on the draft blueprint. He stated that the paper on the needs of two-year-olds would be taken as part of the same item. He invited Christine to talk to the latter paper (03/06) first.

Christine stated that the experience of children needs to be central to our planning if we are to get this right. The paper highlights a particular set of characteristics and needs typical of two-year-olds (as well as other children in ELC settings), and goes on to address how best to respond to these. Practitioners need training to be able to respond to these specific needs. This cohort needs familiarity and the opportunity to explore, and learning resources and environments need to reflect this. Opportunities to build self-esteem and talk to adults are vital, as are opportunities to sleep and experience stimulating indoor and outdoor environments.

The Minister invited comments on the draft blueprint paper (03/05).

Main points raised in discussion:

- Whilst provision is universal for all 3 and 4 year olds, it is important to identify where targeted provision for some groups will be required - the commitment to introduce an additional teacher or childcare graduate into nurseries in deprived areas from 2018 was seen as an example of this.
- It will be important to manage parental expectations and to clearly articulate the aims and objectives for 1140 hours, whilst learning from the experience of the expansion to 600 hours.
- The focus should not just be on maintaining quality, but improving it.
- Need to acknowledge the quality and professionalism of the existing workforce while at the same time talking about improving quality.
- Employers have a key role to play e.g. through providing family friendly employment opportunities, and engaging with local childcare providers.
- Need to focus on overall staff terms and conditions, and opportunities for further development, and not just on salaries.
- There is a need to ensure that the child's voice is heard and that the system is delivering a high quality experience for the child.
- A key objective is to ensure that the ELC sector remained sustainable in the long-term.
- Good leadership is key in terms of high quality – SCEL are currently looking at leadership within the ELC sector. Leadership of and within local authorities will be vital too for change

management purposes, building on the successful work done for the 600 hours expansion. Effective partnerships across LAs would be helpful too.

- Agreed standards (para 20 in paper) should include qualitative as well as quantitative measures, and should draw on the range of existing standards as opposed to creating new standards. There is also a need to link to the National Improvement Framework. Standards on parental engagement and home learning environments could helpfully to be captured too.
- Important to capture the impact of ELC in tackling child poverty, particularly in terms of the new child poverty legislation currently being developed. Related to this, we need to better understand whether there is a potential stigma element that is contributing to the lower than expected take-up for two-year-olds entitlement and whether different delivery models may be required.
- More tailored ASN provision, multi-agency approaches and whole family support are all areas which should be explored further.

Item 5 - Communications (Paper 03/07)

The Minister said that he was encouraged to note that significant work has been put in place to ensure that we communicate effectively with those in early learning and childcare sector and the public at large. He was also delighted to be able recently to take part in interviews with publications by Early Years Scotland and the SCMA, and offered to do similar things (including 'Ask the Minister' input) in other publications.

Main points raised in discussion:

- It would be good to utilise Parentzone Scotland as well as the EarlyLearningandChildcare.scot website for communicating with parents.
- Highlighting good practice case studies, for example regarding greater flexibility, would be useful for communications purposes.
- Important that the bespoke parental engagement work reaches disadvantaged parents and carers.
- A dedicated comms and engagement strategy for parents would be useful to develop, emphasising the benefits and how to take up full entitlement.
- A planned social media strand to the work is currently missing, subject to a wider review within SG of use of Twitter, Facebook etc. Clearly there will be a key role going forward for a social media element to the comms work.
- Scottish Union Learning (funded by the SG) would be a useful conduit to engaging with both parents and workers.
- Comms and engagement with employers and ELC staff will be vitally important too.

Item 6 – AOB

There was no AOB, so the Minister closed by thanking everyone for their constructive input and wished them a safe onward journey.

Actions agreed in course of meeting

No	Description	Responsible
1	Kathy Cameron to liaise with Sam Anson on missing LA data from the SG's 600 hours implementation survey.	Kathy Cameron, CoSLA
2	SG officials to circulate membership lists of all three External Advisory Groups.	SG officials
3	Cllr Primrose to seek to have an item on the ELC workforce added to the agenda of the next Developing the Young Workforce National Steering Group.	Cllr Primrose, CoSLA
4	SG officials to revise draft ELC blueprint following today's discussion.	SG officials
5	SG officials and/or ADES to provide update on LA plans for 1140 hours impact assessments and mapping 1140 hours estate requirements at a future meeting.	SG officials