

Access Delivery Group

Wednesday 15 November 2017, 10:00 – 12:00

The minutes of the second meeting of the Access Delivery Group, held at Scottish Government, St Andrews House, Edinburgh.

Present

Shirley-Anne Somerville, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education & Science (Chair)
Susan Stewart, Open University in Scotland
Prof Sally Mapstone, University of St Andrews
Jodie Waite, NUS Scotland
Peter MacLeod, Renfrewshire Council
Jim Thewliss, School Leaders Scotland
Dr Kirsty Conlon, Universities Scotland (*substituting for Alastair Sim*)
Prof Peter Scott, Commissioner for Fair Access (observer)
Dr Ken Thomson, Forth Valley College
Shona Struthers, Colleges Scotland
Katie Burke, Scottish Youth Parliament
Conor Ryan, Sutton Trust
Murdo Mathison, UCU Scotland
Professor Vikki Boliver, Durham University
Greg Dempster, AHDS
Lynn Graham, Scottish Government
Laura Duffy, Scottish Government
Lynn Brown, Scottish Government (secretariat)
Jon Gray, Scottish Government
Roddy MacDonald, Scottish Government
Murray McVicar, Scottish Government
Carole Teale, Scottish Government (observer)
Colin McAllister, Scottish Government (observer)
Michael Cross, Scottish Funding Council
Fiona Burns, Scottish Funding Council

Apologies

Professor Petra Wend, Queen Margaret University
Alastair Sim, Universities Scotland
Linda Somerville, NUS Scotland
Liz McIntyre, North East College Scotland
Dr Rebekah Widdowfield, RSE
Mick Wilson, Scottish Government

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the group's new members, thanking them for agreeing to participate. The Chair also conveyed apologies for those unable to attend and welcomed substitute members.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed. The Chair stated that it would be published on the Scottish Government (SG) website, along with the agenda for that meeting.

The proposed amendment to the draft Terms of Reference which inserted a reference to attainment was agreed. The Chair highlighted that although the Group will focus on the Commission's recommendations, it will remain live to other on-going relevant policy work and issues.

The Chair noted that good progress had been made on the nine action points from the previous meeting, with all but two having been completed. Actions 6 and 9 remain on-going.

3. Universities Scotland Work Streams Report

The Universities Scotland work stream leads Sally Mapstone and Susan Stewart gave a presentation on the Universities Scotland report 'Working to Widen Access', which was published on 13 November. A discussion on the Report then followed.

The report was generally welcomed and the following key points from the discussion were noted:

- *On articulation:*
 - Universities have a duty of care to students once they have started their course, whether in first or third year;
 - Universities are now recruiting students that may not previously have gone to university and that these students may need additional support;
 - There may be an opportunity for a tertiary grouping of college and university student support, possibly allowing for re-articulation. This will be addressed by the new National Articulation Forum;
 - The Chair asked that universities take action now towards meeting key milestones on articulation and not wait for the National Articulation Forum;
 - The report has been published against the backdrop of Outcome Agreement targets;
 - It will be important for colleges to establish relationships with all universities to allow breadth of choice, guidance and support to students.

- *On contextual admissions:*
 - All universities have at least one core indicator and SIMD is best viewed amongst others when identifying disadvantaged students;
 - Going forward the Scottish Government will set up a group with the Scottish Funding Council and Universities Scotland on data;
 - Schools are already collecting data around the attainment gap such as free school meals and clothing grants and it is important that the whole system is connected;
 - The Chair queried the timeline on contextualised admissions and asked what percentage of courses already have contextualised admissions and how it is anticipated that will change in the next year;
 - There is a need for time to ensure that candidates understand minimum entry requirements;
 - It would be useful to get feedback on this at a later date;
 - Greater transparency on the current contextualised admissions offer would be helpful;
 - The care experience guarantee is a very important commitment.

- *On bridging programmes*
 - It is better to look to streamline the current offer and deliver that more effectively and efficiently;
 - Clarity on next steps on the bridging programmes work stream would be helpful;

- Regional collaboratives could potentially be an effective way to bring together schools to look at this agenda and ensure coherence of approach, which is at the heart of taking a whole-systems approach;
- It would be helpful at this stage to have an indication of the key widening access areas that schools should look at, which can be set out when approaching schools on this matter.

Action 1: Explore whether it is possible to monitor the numbers presently entering university with lower grades i.e. not just the number of access students but those entering on a reduced offer [SM].

4. Review of the Learner Journey

The Chair invited Jon Gray to provide an update on the Review of the Learner Journey. In terms of the broader discussion that followed the key points below were noted:

- Looking at the development of broad general education and how it is being used would be useful. Within that there is an opportunity to work with regional collaboratives;
- Offering choices to learners regarding the best routes for them will be important in maximising talent;
- It is also important to offer support to those who are unsure and to recognise that existing systems don't always work well for all young people. Richer pathways need to be provided to tackle bias in the system.

5. Coordinating and Monitoring Delivery

The Chair invited SG Access officials to provide an update on progress on coordinating and monitoring delivery of the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access.

Members were thanked for completing their individual Recommendation Implementation Overview Report (RIOR) templates. It was noted that they will provide a strong starting point in ensuring the alignment of expectations, but that they will require further development as part of an iterative process to get them to where they need to be. As they are not static, they can take account of changes over time.

A sub-group was proposed to enable further development of the RIOR templates to be driven forward at pace. The sub-group will help to establish clear timelines and milestones for the recommendations and agree a vision for implementation, which will be brought back to the next Delivery Group meeting. The sub-group may also discuss and develop the KPIs as a whole, at a later date. The Group's recommendation leads were asked to provide officials with sub-group nominations in early course.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in late February or early March. Dates will be circulated shortly. The Chair noted that the first annual report of the Commissioner for Fair Access would be the main topic for discussion at the next meeting. Members were also invited to submit further suggested agenda items for consideration.

The Chair thanked members for their participation then closed the meeting.