

Access Delivery Group

Wednesday 19 June 2019, 10:00 – 12:00

The minute of the seventh meeting of the Access Delivery Group, held at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh.

Present

Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education & Science (Chair)
Professor Sir Peter Scott, Commissioner for Fair Access
Alastair Sim, Universities Scotland
Professor Petra Wend, Queen Margaret University
Liam McCabe, National Union of Students Scotland
Fiona Brown, Forth Valley College (*attending for Ken Thomson*)
Murdo Mathison, University and College Union Scotland
Greg Dempster, Association of Head Teachers and Deputes in Scotland
Jim Thewiss, School Leaders Scotland
Stephanie McKendry, University of Strathclyde
Neil Croll, University of Glasgow
Alistair Gaw, Edinburgh City Council
Russell Gunson, IPPR
Linda O'Neill, CELCIS
Joan MacKay, Education Scotland (*attending for Alan Armstrong*)
Lynn MacMillan, Scottish Government
Laura Duffy, Scottish Government
Anna Green, Scottish Government
Karen Frew, Scottish Government
Lynn Brown, Scottish Government
Julie Anderson, Scottish Government (*attending for Murray McVicar*)
Elaine Drennan, Scottish Government (*attending for Mick Wilson*)
Fiona Burns, Scottish Funding Council
John Kemp, Scottish Funding Council

Apologies

Susan Stewart, Open University in Scotland
Professor Sally Mapstone, University of St Andrews
Liz McIntyre, North East College Scotland
Dr Ken Thomson, Forth Valley College
Linda Somerville, National Union of Students Scotland
Alan Armstrong, Education Scotland
Shona Struthers, Colleges Scotland
Professor Vikki Boliver, Durham University
Mick Wilson, Scottish Government
Murray McVicar, Scottish Government
Roddy MacDonald, Scottish Government

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and conveyed apologies for those unable to attend. He also introduced and welcomed the five new members to have joined the group: Alastair Gaw, Neil Croll, Linda O'Neill, Russell Gunson and John Kemp. It was noted that Petra Wend is retiring and this meeting would be her last. The Chair thanked her on behalf of the group for her valuable contribution.

The Chair noted the recent positive media coverage on widening access and thanked group members for their contribution towards this progress, noting that there is still work to do.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minute of the previous meeting was agreed, with no matters arising.

It was noted that of the nine actions arising from the previous meeting, four are complete and three are ongoing: discussions regarding Pupil Equity Fund working group and Free School Meals (FSM) take-up; the Commissioner for Fair Access's forward work plan; and Further Education loans research.

The Chair invited updates from Alastair Sim on the remaining two actions. Alastair stated that HEIs are currently looking at the core contextual indicators of SIMD and care experience and that once better information on FSM is available it will become core. Alastair also confirmed that Sally Mapstone and Vikki Boliver had met to discuss admissions data; they discussed a range of options and agreed that whilst minimum entry requirements should be set ambitiously and consistently across institutions, it was also important that people were not set up to fail.

3. Commissioner for Fair Access: Annual Report

The Commissioner provided an overview of his second annual report, which was published on 13 June. This was followed by a discussion which included the following points:

- Whilst recognising good progress, it will be important to remain aware of other issues which may have an impact, such as Brexit, the Augar Review, and perceptions around displacement.
- Universities have increased their offers to SIMD applicants however this does not always translate into increased acceptances due to competition and a limited pool of students. It will be important for the Commissioner to look at schools to ensure a whole-system approach. The Chair stated that he will consider further at the schools dimension of access, which was welcomed.
- The consideration of Free School Meals (FSM) as a measure of deprivation will make a big difference. It was noted that access is not, however, just about low income but living in low decile areas also limits options. The FSM work is in progress and options are to be mapped around data flows; SG officials will report back to the group within six months of the meeting
- The numbers of pupils coming through schools will change again shortly. FSM uptake is very important however it is difficult to encourage parents to register for it. This issue is also complicated by factors such as Glasgow City Council extending FSM to P4 children. It was noted that various analyses into this issue is currently in progress.
- SFC has been modelling where university students come from for Outcome Agreements (OA) and has noted an uneven distribution of SIMD20 across Scotland – e.g. Glasgow 47%, Moray 1%. This is feeding into SFC's future planning.
- SFC acknowledges the slow progress regarding articulation and the need to push harder; for example considering other methods instead of OAs and persuasion.
- The National Articulation Forum is looking into how we drive articulation further and it will produce a report at the turn of the year.
- It will be important to ensure better HN curriculum alignment and also to recognise that many students change their subjects when progressing from college to university.

- As data shows that HN students don't always fare well, University of Glasgow is trying other controlled, learner-centred programmes rather than articulation with full credit.
- It is right that any displacement has not been statistically proven however it is also right that this issue is closely monitored.
- Caution should be exercised around changing the targets.
- Consideration should be given to the root cultural element around widening access work to ensure progress sticks and doesn't reverse once the targets are met; need to ensure the spirit of intensification is not lost. Pressure should be maintained at all levels. If messages from HEIs to society are inclusive it will filter through that everyone is part of society. As students have different needs and all need support, a holistic approach is required.

Action 1: The Chair to consider issues around schools [R Lochhead]

Action 2: Update on FSM work to be provided to the group in six months [E Drennan]

4. Framework for Fair Access

Stephanie McKendry delivered a presentation on the Framework for Fair Access, which includes a Toolkit and Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners (SCAPP). The subsequent discussion included the following points:

- The Framework has got off to a good start and the work going forward will be key.
- The SCAPP should lead to more evaluation and collaboration.

5. Coordinating and Monitoring Delivery

Laura Duffy led the agenda item and noted the following points:

- Across the programme there are 45 live recommendations and sub-recommendations and 199 milestones have been set.
- Over the course of 2018, 69 unique milestones across 36 of the 45 recommendations and sub-recommendations were scheduled to be achieved. Of these, 38 were achieved over the course of the year, 36 to the original schedule and 2 to a revised schedule.
- 31 were outstanding as at the end on 2018. Of these 10 were rescheduled for completion during Quarter 1 of 2019, 7 were rescheduled for completion during Quarter 2 of 2019 and 2 were rescheduled for completion beyond that. 12 milestones were delayed due to Lead Delivery Partner absence and are currently being rescheduled.

The group agreed that paper 7/3 was an ideal overview of the progress of the recommendations and that it should be published on the Access Delivery Group web page.

Action 3: Officials will consider developing an authorising framework for reporting progress of the recommendations and milestones and discuss at a future meeting [L Duffy].

6. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

Suggestions for agenda items for the next meeting were invited. The group agreed to discuss the findings of the CELCIS survey of care-experienced students in Scottish colleges and

universities, 'Being a student with care experience is very daunting' which were to be published on 26 June. It was also agreed that the next meeting agenda would include Bridging Programmes.

A plea was made for estranged students to be considered in a similar policy context as care experienced students. The Chair stated that he met with estranged students stakeholders recently and considerations are underway.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting.