

C-19 Education Recovery Group

Minutes of meeting, Thursday 5 November 2020

Attendees

- John Swinney MSP, *Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Chair)*
- Councillor Stephen McCabe, *Children and Young People spokesperson, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Maree Todd MSP, *Minister for Children and Young People*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Alison Cumming, *Interim Director for Early Learning and Childcare, Scottish Government*
- Tim Wallace, *Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Sheena Devlin, *Executive Director, Perth & Kinross Council (ADES)*
- Greg Dempster, *General Secretary, Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Graeme Logan, *Director of Learning, Scottish Government*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- John Gallacher, *Regional Manager (UNISON)*
- Gayle Gorman, *Chief Executive and Chief Inspector, Education Scotland*
- Carrie Lindsay, *President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Gillian Hamilton, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Jane Brumpton, *Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*
- Janie McManus, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Margaret Wilson, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*
- Fiona Robertson, *Chief Executive, SQA*
- Andrew Drought, *Deputy Director for Workforce, Infrastructure & Reform, Scottish Government*
- Liam Fowley, *Children and Young Person's Representative, Scottish Youth Parliament*

Welcome:

DFM welcomed the group to the 31st meeting of the CERG and introduced Liam Fowley (Scottish Youth Parliament) as the newest member of CERG to represent the young person's voice on C-19 related education matters.

Ongoing monitoring:

There was a regular update on the management information data, with reference to the weekly infographic and dashboard. As usual, the infographic is published following the meeting.

PHS highlighted that surveillance work will be undertaken over the next month. The antibody survey of teachers has had a great response so far with 30,000 teachers signing up to it. 13,000 of those have already been tested. Testing will be repeated monthly to monitor if antibody levels are changing over time.

Reflections on “reducing risks in schools” guidance:

Members gave their reflections following the publication of the new guidance on 30 October:

- Generally, there were no critical issues reported around implementation thus far, but there was recognition that time was needed to allow the guidance to settle in alongside the Strategic Framework.
- The summary of changes to the guidance has been well received on the ground and the separate section with additional measures and mitigations that relate to levels 3 & 4 are very clear.
- School staff would appreciate minimal changes and more notice when changes are being made to further iterations of the guidance.
- Implementation of face coverings guidance, including in Level 3 areas, had largely been unproblematic, with compliance good and a willingness to wear them amongst pupils. Some parents had expressed opposition to the requirements, and there had also been questions raised by some senior phase pupils regarding why younger pupils were not required to wear face coverings.
- Discussions should continue around prevalence of cases and any requirement to consider a move to blended or home learning at level 4, which is where anxiety heightens in schools.

Feedback stocktake:

A paper was presented to the group, which highlighted the main themes/issues raised through regular weekly feedback forms submitted by members. Members gave their views on the summary of feedback and progress, which included the following key points:

- A forward look would be helpful, particularly around how the group can re-focus on supporting the improvement agenda within schools. Teachers have been pre-occupied with C-19 mitigations/preparations in school which has caused capacity issues.
- Feedback should be dealt with in separate workstreams where appropriate. CERG has to retain a strategic overview on C-19 education recovery in schools and should avoid micromanaging issues that are being taken forward within other governance groups.

Action - Governance/forward look paper to be discussed at next meeting.

AOB

An amendment has been made to the previous week’s minutes to include EIS concerns regarding physical distancing.

Next meeting: 12 November 2020