

C-19 Education Recovery Group
Minutes of meeting, Monday 4 January 2021

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)*
- Graeme Logan, *Director of Learning, Scottish Government*
- Carol Tannahill, *Chair of Advisory sub group on education and children's issues*
- Andrew Drought, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Jane Brumpton, *Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*
- Greg Dempster, *General Secretary, Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Sheena Devlin, *Executive Director, Perth & Kinross Council (ADES)*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Liam Fowley, *Young Person's Representative, Scottish Youth Parliament*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Gayle Gorman, *Chief Executive and Chief Inspector, Education Scotland*
- Gillian Hamilton, *Strategic Director, Education Scotland*
- Carrie Lindsay, *President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)*
- Alison Cumming, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Janie McManus, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Fiona Robertson, *Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)*
- Jim Thewiss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Margaret Wilson, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*

Introduction

DFM restated the FM announcement immediately prior to Christmas on new school holiday dates and remote learning plans as protective measures for schools returning. DFM described the current context regarding the new variant of coronavirus and confirmed Cabinet discussion to be followed by FM announcement.

Update from Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Children and Education

Professor Carol Tannahill offered feedback from the Advisory Sub Group meeting on 31 December, including their updated advice, based on pre-Christmas data. The sub-group will meet again on 6 January to consider most recent data. Current recommendation is based on a precautionary and cautious approach reflecting levels of community transmission plus unknown elements of new variant and transmission from / impact on children and young people.

Professor Marion Bain reinforced the clinical and public health messages.

Discussion of plans for the delivery of school education

CERG members agreed it was crucial to agree a sustainable solution that supports the health and wellbeing of children, including academic achievement. The mental health of young people was raised as a concern. All parents will have concerns about childcare and employment pressures.

The wide-ranging discussion covered options for new learning models, impact on national qualifications, role of children and young people in transmission, vaccination and testing. The need for clarity was highlighted on a number of issues such as the scope for any differentiation between mainland and island settings, and the definitions of vulnerable pupils and key workers.

Financial support for the sector and for working parents was also raised.

CERG members agreed on the need for better/clearer communications based on the position in Scotland, as opposed to media coverage of rest of UK.

The forthcoming meetings will continue to explore these issues in more detail.

Next meeting: Thursday 7 January 2021