

Project:	ELC Strategic Forum		
Date & Time:	10:30 – 12:30 Wed 16 November 2016	Meeting No:	4
Meeting Place:	The Dome Seminar Facility, New Register House, 3 West Register Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YT	Minutes By:	JM

Attendees:

Mark McDonald (Chair)	Minister for Childcare & Early Years
Andrew Shoolbread	Scottish Out of School Care Network
Sally Cavers	Children in Scotland
Clare Lamont	Education Scotland
Valerie Gale	Care and Learning Alliance
Jean Carwood-Edwards	Early Years Scotland
Vicky Crichton	Save the Children
Ann Henderson	Scottish Trades Union Congress
Cath Agnew	Care Inspectorate
Jane O'Donnell	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Laura Caven	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Bruce Robertson	ELC Strategic Evidence Group Chair
Clare Simpson	Parenting Across Scotland
Christine Stephen	Stirling University
Claire Schofield	National Day Nurseries Association Scotland
Maggie Simpson	Scottish Childminding Association
Gerry McLaughlin	NHS Health Scotland
Davina Coupar	West College Scotland

SG attendees:

Sam Anson	Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Alison Cumming	Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Euan Carmichael	Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Susan Bolt	Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
Jeff Maguire (Secretary)	Early Years Policy Delivery Unit

Apologies:

Anna Fowlie	Scottish Social Services Council
Satwat Rehman	One Parent Families Scotland
Irene Audain	Scottish Out of School Care Network
Kevin Mitchell	Care Inspectorate
Purnima Tanuku	National Day Nurseries Association Scotland
Lesley Brown	Education Scotland
Julie Wild	National Parent Forum for Scotland
Jim McCormick	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Lesley Gibb	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
Cllr Stephanie Primrose	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Fiona McQueen	SG Chief Nursing Officer

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE
1	Welcome and introductions (10 minutes)	MMcD
2	Minutes of last meeting (5 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of accuracy • Review of actions 	MMcD (Paper 04/01)
3	ELC policy update and discussion (60 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Overview • Blueprint 2020 consultation • 1140 Hours Programme Board first meeting feedback 	Sam Anson / All (Paper 04/02) (Paper 04/03) (Paper 04/04)
4	600 Hours Progress Update publication - lessons for 1140 hours expansion (20 minutes)	Susan Bolt (Paper 03/05)
5	Infrastructure design guide update (10 minutes)	Jeff Maguire (Paper 03/06)
6	Out of School Care consultation sessions (10 minutes)	Andrew Shoolbread, SOSCN (Paper 03/07)
7	AOB & Close (5 minutes)	MMcD

[Estimated Running Time -2 hours]

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair began by saying that it had been a hugely busy time for ELC policy developments since the last Forum meeting in July, with the launch of the delivery model trials, three ELC publications including the Blueprint consultation, a debate in Parliament and new research by Heriot Watt University on behalf of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

He said that the key focus today was to discuss our ELC blueprint for 2020 consultation, plus lessons learned from the previous expansion to 600 hours, and receive feedback from the group regarding these matters. Other agenda items were on our first 1140 hours Programme Board meeting, a new infrastructure design guide and an out of school care overview and forthcoming consultation events.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minute was approved with no changes.

3. ELC policy update and discussion, incorporating:

- Programme Overview (Paper 04/02)
- Blueprint 2020 consultation(Paper 04/03)
- 1140 Hours Programme Board first meeting feedback (Paper 04/04)

Sam Anson introduced paper 04/02 on the Programme Overview and paper 04/04 on the 1140 Hours Programme Board first meeting. He spoke about the importance of aligning the national programme for the expansion with local delivery programmes and plans. Two new LA forums recently established – the ELC Managers Forum and Senior Leaders Forum – will be crucial in this respect. He echoed the Minister's point of the need to “ride two horses at the same time”, as we consult on key policy decisions going forward but are already planning for workforce and infrastructure expansion now.

Sam then introduced paper 04/04 on the 1140 Hours Programme Board first meeting held on 28 October. The meeting focussed primarily on current arrangements for governance, planning, risk and engagement. A recurring message was the need to engage more widely on the programme e.g. with health, raising attainment and economic development interests.

Sam also talked about the ELC Blueprint consultation (Paper 04/03), launched by the First Minister on 15 October, which sets out our vision for the expansion to 1140 hours, and a range of key questions on which we are consulting. The Blueprint builds upon the following high level themes: Quality; Flexibility; Accessibility; and Affordability. He said that we were grateful for the contribution of the Strategic Forum to earlier drafts of the Blueprint and for their input in helping to shape the vision. He emphasised that the move to 1140 hours is not about an expanded version of business as usual - it is about delivering a transformative change in how ELC is delivered. This might require some radical alternative policy approaches. The

consultation document sets out some of these radical and innovative alternative approaches and the key policy choices that we face, including:

- Potential alternative funding model approaches, including the potential to move towards a funding follows the child or a childcare account approach;
- Ensuring fair and sustainable funding for all ELC providers;
- Promoting the Living Wage and Fair Work across the ELC sector;
- Supporting higher uptake amongst two-year-olds;
- Supporting children through their transition stages;
- Strengthening qualification routes and career paths for ELC practitioners;
- Promoting and supporting the involvement of childminders; and
- The potential for phasing in the expanded provision.

Sam said that we are genuinely interested in people's views on these matters, and encouraged Forum members to promote the consultation with members and networks etc, it closes on 9 January.

Ensuing discussion - key points made:

- It was felt useful to have health representation on the Programme Board.
- DWP have an important role in the expansion – they are already involved in our Strategic Evidence Group.
- The programme needs to aim at promoting behaviour change e.g. amongst parents.
- Wider engagement is needed e.g. with large companies and public bodies (Forestry Commission, SNH etc). Also need to explore aspects such as business park-based ELC provision.
- Trials evaluative work should commence early, with key learning shared with key players in an ongoing fashion. The newly appointed Trials Team will do this.
- Important to consider impact of expansion on other staff e.g. allied health professionals, HR, estates management personnel etc.
- When considering funding models, quality of the child's experience has to be paramount – innovation needs to be about quality, not for its own sake. Quality is the key issue for the expanded workforce needed, as well as good training and career pathways.
- The interdependencies within the programme and with the Governance review are crucial and need to be explored.

Actions:

- 1/ SG officials to circulate more details of the trials.**

4. 600 Hours Progress Update publication - lessons for 1140 hours expansion

The chair introduced this item by saying that the focus on delivering 1140 hours needs to take cognisance of implementation of previous expansion, and learn lessons from this. He then invited Susan Bolt to introduce paper 04/05 on the 600 hours progress update publication.

Susan summarised the Progress Update's main findings - pulled together from an interim survey of LAs undertaken earlier this year, plus other data sources e.g. SG and Care Inspectorate annual surveys and GUS:

- The majority of local authorities have built, extended, adjusted or integrated services; with more than half also planning further build or change.
- 95% of providers of all early learning and childcare (funded and unfunded) are graded good, very good, or excellent against care standards.
- Satisfaction with funded ELC was very high in the first 6 months after expansion to 600 hours, with 72% of parents very satisfied and 25% satisfied with the overall standard of provision that their child was receiving.
- 96,000 children were registered for their entitlement to ELC at September 2015, including 97% of eligible 3 and 4 year olds.
- 4,321 of two-year-old children (7.3% of whole two-year-old population) were registered for their entitlement to ELC at September 2015. Across the year, 27% of all two-year-olds are eligible.
- All local authorities have undertaken consultation with their local populations; and, 90% have consulted since August 2014; however, fewer than half of those who consulted have published their response.
- The majority of local authorities have increased flexibility through a wider range of choice and options - 81% of local authorities increased flexibility in 2015; and, 71% plan to increase or further increase flexibility.
- 2,500 providers deliver the funded entitlement, only around 2% (84) childminders deliver the funded entitlement..
- 74% of 3 and 4 year olds were registered with local authority provision and 26% with partner providers. 81% of two-year-olds were estimated to be registered with local authority provision and 19% with partner providers.
- 966 partner providers worked with local authorities to deliver the entitlement.
- 39,450 staff work in the early learning and childcare sector; and an estimated 23,000 deliver the funded entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Around half the workforce work are part-time. Just under 6,000 workers have started active employment within a service providing the funded entitlement within the last two years.

Ensuing discussion - key points made:

- Recognised that while parent satisfaction is generally very high, indicating a generally successful implementation of the 600 hours programme there are on-going issues of pace of change for some working parents.- Key finding that while local authorities had consulted, less than half had published responses. This, along with more parent guidance and communication at a national level, could improve understanding of the policy, especially in relation to flexibility and choice; and, LA plans to reconfigure services.
- Also in relation to consultation, LAs need to engage with families affected by disability and minority ethnic families; which could also be reinforced at a national level through guidance on consultation .
- Utilising the full 600 hours may not suit all children – important to see it as an entitlement, not an obligation.
- Alternative arrangements may be better for some. Officials are currently exploring options to widen the definition of entitlement provision. Revised statutory guidance will address these issues.
- A breakdown of the additional workforce was requested if available.

Actions

2/ Susan to work with ADES to consider communication strategies, including more local and national information which is transparent and updateable; and, more national guidance on consultation. Also, Susan to check with analysts whether 6000 new staff figure can be broken down by gender, race etc.

5. Infrastructure design guide update

Jeff Maguire spoke to paper 04/06 on this item by saying it's important that new infrastructure to accommodate the expansion adopts good design principles, to ensure environments are conducive to modern learning, development and care for children. We are committed through the Programme for Government to develop new guidance on good design by next summer. Officials are working closely with the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Futures Trust to develop the guidance, which will capture good practice as well as providing advice on the various regulatory and statutory requirements to consider when building new settings, or refurbishing existing ones, including Care Inspectorate, building control and environmental health considerations.

Ensuing discussion - key points made:

- Various members offered to send Jeff links and documents which would help with developing the guidance, including in areas such as play, community empowerment, staff working conditions, inclusive education and the Schools Consultation Act.
- Well-designed space for parents is important too.
- Important to consult with children as well as other key stakeholders in developing the guidance.

6. Out of School Care overview and consultation sessions

The chair introduced the final agenda item by stating that we are committed to developing a new policy framework for out of school care (OSC), and that the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) are a key player in helping us to develop such a framework. He said that he was going to visit an OSC provider in Musselburgh that afternoon.

Andrew Shoolbread, SOSCN, introduced paper 04/07 on out of school care, reminding everyone that the Forum's remit covered overseeing strategic direction for out of school care as well as early learning and childcare. There was currently a danger that OSC might slip off the agenda with so much focus on the expansion of ELC. Important to consider the two together and look to integrate provision, otherwise we may miss a trick.

Andrew said that SOSCN are about to embark on four consultation events with Out of School Care practitioners and managers to help shape the framework and ensure that it is fit for purpose, determine what is needed and capture current good practice from around the country. He posed the question that once 1140 hours is delivered, what will happen when a child begins school?

Ensuing discussion - key points made:

- Many parents struggle to access OSC, particularly as public provision represents a small part of the sector overall.
- Childminders provide around 20,000 OSC places, so important not to overlook their contribution to the sector.
- The status of OSC as vital learning and childcare provision for school aged children is vital – staff are often more highly-qualified than within the ELC sector.

Actions

3/ Andrew to liaise with Jane O'Donnell, CoSLA, on SOSCN's forthcoming survey on local authority support for OSC provision.

7. AOB & Close

There was no AOB. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and contribution to driving this agenda. The energy and momentum that people bring to Forum meetings is greatly appreciated. He reminded members that next week Sam Anson will be moving on to a new post in Economic Policy and that Alison Cumming will now be Early Years Policy Delivery Unit Unit Head, which includes responsibility for the Strategic Forum. Sam was thanked for his contribution towards driving this agenda forward.

The Chair suggested that the next meeting should take place after the SG's response to the Blueprint consultation is published, making the next meeting in late March or early April. He concluded by wishing everybody a safe onward journey.

Summary of Actions

1/ SG officials to circulate more details of the trials.

2/ (Re 600 Hours Progress Update publication data) SG officials to work with ADES to consider communication strategies, including more local and national information which is transparent and updateable; and, more national guidance on consultation. Also, policy officials to check with analysts whether 6000 new staff figure can be broken down by gender, race etc.

3/ Andrew to liaise with Jane O'Donnell, CoSLA, on SOSCN's forthcoming survey on local authority support for OSC provision.