

C-19 Education Recovery Group
Minutes of meeting, Thursday 7 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)*
- Maree Todd MSP, *Minister for Children & Young People*
- Sam Anson, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Marion Bain, *Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Scottish Government*
- Jane Brumpton, *Chief Executive, Early Years Scotland*
- Alison Cumming, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Greg Dempster, *General Secretary, Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland (AHDS)*
- Sheena Devlin, *Executive Director, Perth & Kinross Council (ADES)*
- Andrew Drought, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Lynda Fenton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Liam Fowley, *Scottish Youth Parliament*
- John Gallacher, *Unison*
- 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)*
- Graeme Logan, *Director of Learning, Scottish Government*
- Ben McKendrick, *Scottish Youth Parliament*
- Janie McManus, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Malcolm Pentland, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Fiona Robertson, *Scottish Qualification Authority*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Matthew Sweeney, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Carol Tannahill, *Chief Social Policy Advisor, Scottish Government*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Dr Grace Vickers, *Solace*
- Margaret Wilson, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*

Surveillance and feedback

School attendance data is not available this week due to the Christmas break, however officials are working with SEEMiS and local authorities to support capturing attendance data during the period of remote learning.

Public Health Scotland provided an update on COVID-19 across the national population. This shows an increase in numbers of people contracting the new variant of COVID-19 across all age groups, while numbers of people contracting the original variant remain stable across all age groups.

It was recognised that data with regards to in-school transmission will be harder to capture while schools are implementing remote learning, but that Public Health Scotland are working to better understand any differences in impact of the new variant.

With schools open to children and young people who are vulnerable or have key worker parents/carers, it was recognised that a balance will need to be struck to support eligible pupils whilst ensuring that numbers in school are kept to a minimum from a public health perspective.

It was also raised that the ASN school sector are seeking further clarification on the implementation of guidance in ASN settings.

Ongoing concerns were raised about the impact of remote learning on the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

Update from the Advisory sub-group on education and children's issues

Data continues to be monitored on the new variant of COVID-19 in a Scotland-specific context, particularly on whether the new variant is any more transmissible between children, and between children and adults, than the original variant. The group remains confident that the advice to move to remote learning was the right decision, however highlighted the importance of addressing social harms that may result from this.

The group agreed on the importance of considering differentiated approaches to returning to school for different groups of the population.

Updated schools guidance

Officials updated that the latest amendments to the guidance have now been published, recognising updates in terms of student teachers and probationers, as well as pregnant members of staff.

Remote learning

Education Scotland colleagues shared ongoing work to develop the principles of remote learning, highlighting that remote learning does not only comprise of online learning, and recognising the opportunity to build upon plans from May/June 2020. The importance of professional learning for education staff was raised.

Education Scotland also highlighted the need to capture information on good practice taking place across the country, as well as where further support can be provided. The group discussed options for taking this forward, as well as the potential impact on education sector staff, concluding that further development will be necessary.

Next meeting: 14 January 2021