

**Scottish Commission for Learning Disability
Employment Task Group**



7 February 2017

**Lantern Room, Hamish Wood Building
Caledonian University
Cowcaddens Road
Glasgow
G4 0BA**

In attendance

Jim McCormick (Chair), Maura Lynch, Alan McGregor, Annette Pyle, Darren Tierney, Dominika Skrocka, Dougie Taylor, Gail Novek, Helen Tominson, Ian Tasker, Jamie Rutherford, Julie Bilotti, Lorraine Scott, Maureen Watt MSP, Michelle Gibson, Norma Curran, Patricia Rainey, Pauline Graham, Rachel Le Noan, Sarah Hart, Viv Sawers, Chris Maguire, Christine McBain

Welcome and introductions

Jim McCormick introduced the panel members: Maureen Watt (MSP Minister for Mental Health), Professor Alan McGregor (University of Glasgow) and Maura Lynch (Depute Chief Executive, SCLD).

Opening remarks

Maureen Watt, MSP Minister for Mental Health was pleased to have been invited to the Task Group. She informed the members in attendance that she and Jamie Hepburn, MSP Minister for Employability and Training, would be taking a very close interest in the work of the Task Group going forward.

Ms Watt stated that for far too long people with learning disabilities had not been recognised for what they had to contribute. Often the general public is more aware of people's disabilities rather than their abilities.

Ms Watt wished the Task Group well and hoped that the group would be able to contribute to the Scottish Government's thinking on employability services in Scotland.

Research undertaken by TERU University of Glasgow and Cambridge Policy Consultants (Professor Alan McGregor)

Professor McGregor was impressed that the Task Group had been set up so quickly.

He highlighted the importance of establishing baseline figures for the number of people with a learning disability in Scotland and then identifying the employment rate.

There is a significant responsibility for the further education sector as 52% of school leavers with a learning disability go to college, which is double the national average. The colleges could be significant contributors to the Task Group.

The Task Group should come back in a year's time to review what progress it has made, recognising that actual impact will take a number of years.

The Task Group will meet quarterly as highlighted at the end of the report.

Contributions from members on progress achieved to date

Members attending were asked for their comments on the presentation from Professor McGregor and the comments from the Minister.

- There was agreement on the need for a definition of "learning disability" to enable a consistent approach across Scotland.
- There needed to be an agreement on baseline data.
- Positive destination statistics can be misleading, we need to ensure that employment rates in particular are accurate.
- Employability should be taught as early as primary school; it should be fun and engaging.
- There is a need for more, well-qualified job coaches.
- In-work support is important and in particular the role of job coaches. The STUC offered to help develop a national solution to this issue.

Key Challenges

Overcome the low expectations held by parents, schools, colleges and employers

- Parents' attitudes can be shaped by the professionals around them. Low expectations can become lower through the sheer exhaustion caused by battling the system.
- In schools, careers advice should be reshaped to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities e.g. video CVs.
- Mentoring and support needs further examination. It should be available throughout school and beyond. There is a need to work with colleges too, to develop the young workforce, and co-ordinate activity to prevent duplication.

- Employers need to rethink the interview process, since an adapted process might enable more people to be successful.

Gather data more effectively, investing funding where people with a learning disability in Scotland secure both employment and support to develop in that job.

- There is a need to record data when people enter and exit programmes.
- We need to measure post Modern Apprenticeship destinations over time beyond first destinations or first roles.
- Once the definition has been agreed with Skills Development Scotland we need to see a breakdown of the actual number of people with learning disabilities in the Modern Apprenticeship programme.
- We need to agree when support should be withdrawn.
- There is a need to record data from employers, which would allow us to measure the impact on the employer of employing someone with a learning disability.
- Contracts should be quality checked every 3 to 5 years.
- Supported Employment requires to be measured differently than other employability services through the Scottish Government's Supported Employment Framework.
- There is a need to gather data to track people's employability pathway to ensure it works for them and is seamless.
- Focusing on what works and what is going well. Redirect funding to projects with outcomes of over 50% and remove funding from those with less than 50%.
- There needs to be further clarity on the length of time for a job to be truly sustained. We need to have an agreed timescale for a job to be considered sustained.

Use data to invest in post-school funding into services that can deliver employment outcomes of 50% as detailed in the report

- Supported employment providers should be tracking individuals.
- Programmes need to be longer, support needs to be available once individuals are in employment, over a minimum of 6 months.
- The Modern Apprenticeship pilots for people with learning disabilities need to be evaluated.
- People with learning disabilities should be recognised as talented individuals. This work is not charitable but the right thing to do.
- Shared funding models should be looked at, e.g. to assist in reduced productivity whilst the person is being supported.
- The NHS pay and grading system "Agenda for Change" ensures a consistent pay and grading approach across the whole of the NHS: job specifications and job descriptions are strictly governed based on those skills required for each job. If people with learning disabilities are to gain employment in the

NHS and the wider public sector there is a need to re-examine some of these posts in the context of (i) the changing demands in the workplace, and (ii) the skills of people with a learning disability who can be productive employees, but may not be able to meet all the skills needs in the existing job descriptions.

- A representative from Scotland's Colleges and the Scottish Funding Council should be invited to join the Task Group.

Recruit and train Job Coaches that can support people with a learning disability into employment and throughout their careers. Recognising Job Coaching as a profession that has quality standards that are monitored nationally

- There is a need to recognise Job Coaching as a profession with professional standards that allows career progression and is linked to an existing sector with industry standards e.g. education and social care.
- Job Coaches need to be able to link into existing resources to maximise the impact of their work e.g. access to funding: Access to Work, Flexible Support Funding and the new DEA posts through Jobcentre Plus and the resources currently held at colleges.

Terms of Reference for the Task Group

Maura Lynch asked the Task Group members to agree the Terms of Reference and the timetable highlighted at the end of the document.

The document and the timescale which had been previously circulated was agreed.

Progress achieved by SCLD from the agreed recommendations

SCLD has taken on the responsibility in the Task Group to promote learning disability in Scotland via its website and events.

In May 2017 there will be two specific events.

The first is Scotland's Learning Disability Week from 15 – 21 May and the second is the first ever Learning Disability Awards ceremony on 19 May.

Learning Disability Week 'Get Involved' packs are available on request from SCLD. Information on both events can be found on SCLD's website.

The Daily Record will be involved in a national campaign during Learning Disability Week. Outcomes and impact of the campaign will be measured.

Discussion then took place around the proposed definition of 'learning disability'

SCLD is part of a working group at Napier University looking at the definition of learning disability.

The following points were raised:

- The definition was a good starting point.
- 'Cognitive impairment' is not included in the first definition. Should it be included?
- With regards to 'before adulthood', what about acquired brain injury in adulthood?
- The definition on 'The keys to life' website does not refer to complex needs. Is there a difference between 'complex needs' and 'profound and multiple needs'?
- Remove the wording 'affected their development'
- There needs to be a definition of 'learning difficulty' also.
- From a commissioning perspective, what is being measured based on these definitions?
- How much support is required needs to be kept in mind when agreeing the definition.
- The definition should avoid formal diagnosis as a requirement.
- Should the person's primary barrier be included?

SCLD will note these remarks as part of the wider consultation with Disabled People's Organisations.

Closing remarks and date of next meeting

The Chair, Jim McCormick, thanked the members for their attendance and contribution to the first meeting of the Employment Task Group.

The next meeting will take place in May 2017, the date and venue to be confirmed. Dates of meetings for the rest of the year will also be confirmed.