

Report of the Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) for the Education Sector held on Wednesday, 16 May 2018 at 10.30 a.m. in the Education Authority, Belfast

Present:

1. Alastair Donaghy	NEU
2. Angela Starkey	Dept. of Infrastructure
3. Ann Marron	AEP
4. Ann McAleer	Mid Ulster District Council
5. Brenda Callaghan	CCMS
6. Cathy Lavery	EA Equality Manager
7. Ciaran McCallion	Unite the Union
8. Claire McKeown	EA Equality Business Partner
9. Clare Duffield	EA Director of Human Resources
10. Conn Mac Gabhann	Inspire
11. Donal Collins	Equality Commission NI
12. Dr Peter Hamill	Church of Ireland
13. Elaine Morrison	GMB
14. Emma Patterson	EA Equality Business Partner
15. Fiona Cole	MENCAP
16. Gavin Boyd	The Rainbow Project
17. Gemma Attwood	NICRC
18. Heather Floyd	ALTRAM
19. Heather McKinstry	EA Trade Union Side Officer
20. Helena Macormac	NAHT
21. Janet McCann	EA Assistant Senior Education Officer (Children and Young People's Services)
22. John Collings	EA Director of Education
23. John Patrick Clayton	UNISON
24. Julia Buchanan	Barnardos
25. Kathryn Stevenson	Joint Chair JCF/ Children's Law Centre
26. Kay Doherty	GMB
27. Kelly Maxwell	Autism NI
28. Liam Gallagher	Unite the Union
29. Liam Ó Flannagáin	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
30. Lisa McKee	Belfast City Council
31. Lorraine McCann	EA Management Side Officer
32. Malachy Campbell	Save the Children
33. Mary Devlin	EA Senior Educational Psychologist
34. Matthew McDermott	Joint Chair JCF/ EA Head of Equality & Human Rights
35. Maxine Murphy Higgins	NASUWT
36. Monica Culbert	EA Board Member
37. Natalie Whelehan	NICCY

38. Nelson McCausland	Ulster Scots Agency
39. Nicola Doran	SAIL NI
40. Oliver McMullan	EA Board Member
41. Paddy Skates	Women's Forum NI
42. Pat Ward	EA Assistant Director in Pupil Support Services (Children and Young People's Services)
43. Paula McIlwaine	NICIE
44. Rosemary Rainey	EA Board Member
45. Sandra Douglas	NEU
46. Sheila Gamble	EA Adviser – Children and Young People's Services
47. Tara McCaughan	NIACRO
48. Teresa Moley	Equality Commission NI

1. Welcome and Overview

Matthew McDermott, EA Head of Equality and Human Rights welcomed members to the meeting. Matthew outlined briefly the agenda. He informed members that today would be an opportunity to feed into the EA consultations for the draft Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-22, and also for the Proposed Framework for Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN.

Matthew encouraged members to complete the consultation questionnaires currently available on the EA website. He confirmed the closing dates as 24 May 2018 for the Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN and the draft Equality & Disability Action Plans as 2 July 2018.

2. Transforming Education: The Role of Area Planning

John Collings, EA Director of Education provided an overview of the role of Area Planning in Education and EA's plans to transform education in the future. He explained that Area Planning is the process of strategic planning of primary and post primary education provisions, and explained EA's aim to transform these provisions to change and improve outcomes for children and young people, which is at the heart of EA's vision *'To inspire, support, and challenge all our children and young people to be the best that they can be.'*

John highlighted the three key elements in this programme of change to be:

- Systematic change (the Education system),
- Organisational change (EA services & schools),
- People and Cultural change (employees, stakeholders & partners).

He concluded by explaining that ultimately successful Area Planning would lead to EA having the correct amount of sustainable schools of the right type in the right areas. This will ultimately mean fewer schools overall with larger pupil numbers and in some cases schools coming together in partnership.

John opened up the floor to questions from members.

Question 1:

Paddy Skates (Women's Forum NI) asked why the transformation process is taking so long?

Response:

John acknowledged that the process will take time as it has to be done correctly and appropriately to meet the needs of schools, Principals and the young people concerned.

He highlighted that issues within schools can be challenging and it is important to take the time at this stage and get the process of transformation right.

Question 2:

Liam Ó Flannagáin (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta) enquired about getting the right number of school places in the right geographical locations and that forward planning and establishing baselines was key. Are we getting closer to improving on this?

Response:

John commented that EA are getting better and next year will be carrying out a review of the area planning process. He highlighted that EA need to do more to make the process more forward planning as opposed to reactionary.

3. Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN

Pat Ward, EA Assistant Director in Pupil Support Services (Children and Young People's Services) delivered a brief presentation on the Proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with SEN which is currently open for public consultation until 24 May 2018.

Pat explained that this framework follows a strategic review of the nursery provision in Special Schools. She explained the extensive period of engagement that took place with parents, young people, staff, medical practitioners and other key advocacy groups prior to this framework being drafted. Pat highlighted that the key principles underpinning the proposed framework were to ensure the framework and plans are all child centred, parent focussed, inclusive, flexible and developmental.

Pat concluded with a short video from the EA website about the proposed framework, and members then divided into workshops to discuss further and provide input and feedback on the plans.

4. EA draft Equality Action Plan/Disability Action Plan 2018-2022

Cathy Lavery, EA Equality Manager provided a short overview of the draft plans, which are out for public consultation until 2 July 2018. Cathy highlighted that both plans are in response to the EA Audit of Inequalities and have been developed following engagement with consultees.

She explained the key themes identified from the audit, which have influenced the actions within the equality & disability action plans to be – Access to Education, Attainment, Bullying, Data, Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing and Workforce.

Cathy gave examples of some of the key actions in both draft plans then invited members to divide into workshops to discuss both plans considering four key questions:

1. Do you broadly agree with the action measures in the draft EAP?

2. Do you broadly agree with the action measures in the draft DAP?
3. Are there any action measures that do not appear, that you would like to see included?
4. Any other comments in general?

Comments were collated and will be included in the final Consultation Report. Cathy thanked members for their input.

5. Concluding Remarks and Close

Kathryn Stevenson, Joint Chair of the JCF, thanked all the speakers at today's forum and thanked members for their contribution during the workshops. Kathryn commented that she found the workshops a useful tool in gaining member's views and feedback, particularly on live consultations and policy developments and encouraged members to contact the EA's Equality Unit to share their views on the new format of the Joint Consultative Group meetings. She invited attendees suggestions to improve on information sharing at future meetings.

All JCF presentations can be viewed at

<http://www.eani.org.uk/about-us/hr-equality-legal-services/equality-and-human-rights/equality-human-rights/joint-consultative-forum-documents/>