

**C-19 Education Recovery Group**  
**Minutes of meeting, Thursday 17 December 2020**

**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*
- 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)*
- Larry Flanagan, *General Secretary, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)*
- Eddie Follan, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- 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*
- Janie McManus, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Elizabeth Morrison, *Deputy Director, Scottish Government*
- Ken Muir, *Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)*
- Diane Stockton, *Public Health Scotland*
- Matthew Sweeney, *Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)*
- Jim Thewliss, *General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland (SLS)*
- Margaret Wilson, *Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)*

Apologies were received in advance from:

- Andrew Drought
- Liam Fowley
- Karen Reid
- Fiona Robertson

## **Surveillance data**

Officials provided an update on data for the previous week. This showed an increase in the number of cases amongst 2-17 year olds, most notably amongst pupils aged 16-17. The percentage of pupils not in school had also risen to 4.3%, largely due to parental decisions.

## **Surveillance programme**

Public Health Scotland provided an update on the recently-published education surveillance programme.

The Record Linkage Study considers the risk of teachers contracting severe COVID-19 or being hospitalised due to COVID-19 in comparison to the general population. It shows that teachers are at a lower risk of both than the general population. However, it also shows that teachers are more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than the general population. This may be due to teachers being more likely to be tested.

The Antibody Survey showed that education staff have antibody levels of 7.3%, which is in line with the ONS infection survey which sampled the general population. Rates were also shown to be higher amongst ethnic minority groups and school staff in non-teaching roles.

Data at the time of the meeting shows that 63% of schools in Scotland have reported a case of COVID-19. This varies between primary and secondary schools, with a higher proportion of secondary schools reporting cases.

187,000 children have been tested for COVID-19, with 8,400 receiving a positive test result (0.9% of children).

The group discussed the impact of schools being open on transmission rates, including the evidence that the R number has fallen whilst schools have remained open, and the impact of schools remaining open on wider society. It was noted that blended learning remains a valid contingency option for schools, but that a specific trigger point would be inappropriate due to case-by-case variances.

It was also noted that there may be further opportunity to gather information on teacher wellbeing, and Public Health Scotland are keen to play a role in providing further reassurance to school staff.

## **Workforce support**

Education Scotland colleagues provided an update on support available to the teaching workforce. Assessment has shown that there is a significant amount of support available both regionally and nationally. However, the message about the availability and accessibility of those resources should be strengthened. It was requested that the group take a collective approach to this.

It was noted that it should be recognised that school leaders are required to work additional hours to complete work on contact tracing, and that this will be a particular burden on schools that have had multiple cases.

## **Updated guidance**

Draft copies of updates to *School trips guidelines* and *Music guidelines* were distributed prior to the meeting. Attendees were requested to share any comments with Education Scotland colleagues.

**Next meeting:** January 2021