



CELGIS Education Forum December Meeting

Key points

Linda O'Neill gave Forum members an update on Included, Engaged and Involved 2. Forum members, CELGIS and Scottish Government colleagues met in November to discuss recommendations around potential improvements to the document to ensure it is usable and robust for schools. Input from Forum members was welcomed by Scottish Government colleagues and many of the suggested changes have been incorporated. The document is due to be sent to schools in January 2017 and a series of implementation workshops will take place around the country to publicise the document and support local authorities with implementation. CELGIS will keep Forum members updated with any developments.

Linda Davidson, Permanence Consultant at CELGIS, gave a presentation on routes to permanence. Linda referred to research in 2011 which showed that for too many looked after children there is considerable delay in achieving a settled placement – either a return to birth family, or in kinship care, or adoption. Follow-up research in 2015 showed no improvement. Linda outlined the PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence) approach which involves bringing together all parts of the child care system (e.g. social work, education, children's hearings, judicial) together to explore ways in which improvements could be made, and designing 'tests of change' which can be applied. In her presentation, Linda invited Forum members to consider the implications for education staff, highlighting three key principles: understanding the child; representing the child; and sharing this knowledge to support the child.

Ben Farrugia led a discussion on sharing information in the education context in support of pupils who are looked after. It became clear that there is a range of views – undoubtedly reflecting differences in policy and practice – about the extent to which information should be shared with teachers. There was agreement that information sharing should be proportionate and that children should be actively involved in discussion about what should be shared and how. There were different views on whether all teachers, particularly in the secondary school context, need to know that a child is looked after. We agreed that there should be further work on this issue.

Graham Connelly outlined plans for CELGIS to conduct a survey of 'designated managers' (key staff in schools with responsibility for looked after children). The survey will involve completing an electronic questionnaire (taking approximately

15 minutes) comprising a mix of closed and open-ended questions about the role and functions of a designated manager. The questionnaire will be sent to all local authority and independent schools (addressed for the attention of the child protection officer) in late January. Forum members gave advice about the content and method of distribution of the questionnaire. Advice included giving a heads-up to local authority directorates and widening the sphere of influence to include responsibility for previously looked after (e.g. adopted) children.

Colin Morrison invited Forum members to visit the PINS (Pupil Inclusion Network Scotland) website at <http://pinscotland.org>. Looked After Children is one of PINS' themes and the website provides a gateway to resources, events and discussions related to inclusion of children who can be marginalised or excluded from full participation in education.

There were some brief discussions around topics of interest and suggestions for inputs to future meetings. These included children on the edges of care and those previously looked after, support for Additional Support Needs assistants and the impact of neglect. Forum members were reminded that they are very welcome to contact the education team at any time with suggestions for inputs to Forum members.