

DESF Meeting Minutes

22/05/15. NDCS, Castle House, London

Attendees: Martin McLean (MM), Nicki Harris (NH), Andrew Owen (AO), Jill Bussien (JB)

1. DESF survey

NH – Issues with CRIDE survey. Can only capture information about those young people in education and actively engaged with the sensory support services.

MM – NDCS would like to see more data around attainment post-16. Government does not currently publish stats in a detailed enough form for us to understand what is happening in FE.

NH – Suggests MM talk to Bob from NatSIP who is carrying out some work on achievement and attainment

Holding a dedicated all-day meeting on DESF survey discussed as would be insufficient time in a normal DESF meeting. Not September as too busy but before October half-term should be possible.

Agreed that duplication of CRIDE data should be avoided and survey could perhaps focus on collecting testimonials and case studies.

ACTION – AO to set up a poll to confirm a date to focus on the survey

2. Examination issues

AO – Talked about an issue in Greenwich where the exam officer expects the SENCO to input all the data regarding access. This is because it is now in the exam regulations that the SENCO must lead on access. AO wondered if this was happening elsewhere too.

NH – Issue they have is that SENCO is not passing on recommendations from the service to the exams officers. Some of the officers want to cut out using the separate invigilator. Separate rooms have not been booked or properly modified papers supplied.

No action needed at this moment but acknowledged that we should keep our eye on the situation. BATOD are doing a lot of work on these issues.

3. Disabled Student Allowance NMH manual

- NH has met with Elaine Underwood from BIS and Anthony Hill from Student Finance England to discuss the omission of ToD support from the manual and lack of information about qualifications of support workers. One student has not

had the support she has needed for a year due to SFE telling her she must go with the cheapest quote for notetakers. As a result her lecture notes were very poor. There appears to be a lack of quality control from SFE. NH has created revised descriptions for support staff for deaf students which were nearly complete and due to be shared with DESF members week 26th May.

- MM – Initially published guidance stated that radio aids were funded by NHS and should therefore not be paid for from DSA. MM emailed Elaine Underwood to explain that this wasn't true and she agreed to change the guidance quickly.
- **ACTION.** NH to share new support descriptions with Paul Simpson to review and then it will be shared with the rest of the group

4. Post-16 English and Maths Requirements

- MM. NDCS advising parents whose son, a BSL user with dyslexia taking an engineering apprenticeship and has been told to progress to an advanced apprenticeship he must pass Level 2 English due to government minimum standards. Is doing well in all other aspects of the apprenticeship including Maths and a BTEC. However, is unlikely to pass English. Policy could be discriminatory towards BSL users and NDCS is considering taking the issue further.
- JB. Has a student looking to take Level 3 Fashion. Very skilled at art but college are undecided whether she should progress to Level 3 due to her English skills. College happy for her to sidestep and take another Level 2 course. Could be prevented from taking Level 3 despite strong BSL skills.
- AO – Other examples on ADEPT forum
- JB – Next year funding mechanism will change. Achievement will be measured by taking into account English and Maths. If you have a Level 3 student struggling to complete Level 1 English then it pulls the results down.
- **ACTION:** Group to continue collecting case studies. NDCS may decide to challenge BIS on English and Maths requirements for apprenticeships.

5. University of Manchester report

MM – As a result of the report, NDCS are carrying out some work around transitions. Includes factsheets for young people and parents to increase awareness of the term. Young people need to have a better understanding of post-16 options available to them. In Scotland professionals can use Template for Success to support transitions and this will now be rolled out in England via NatSIP.

NH – Transition work can complement work on the Local Offer. Doesn't currently highlight post-16 provision.

6. FE funding, current situation and future

MM – Asked group for any information they have on the current situation and what might happen in the future under the new government

NH – Councils have changed as a result of local elections too. Could be significant. Not heard anything yet in Surrey. Main issue currently is that a couple of resource bases have been closed which means all students are now in the mainstream.

7. Ongoing cuts

MM - Little to report. Things have gone quiet but should become clearer once the government's spending review is completed

JB – A few cases where mild or moderate deafness hasn't been picked up.

NH – Went to a review and asked for Speech and Language report but was told they don't provide them anymore as there is not enough time. Parents will get a verbal report but nothing they can take away from the annual review anymore. Not enough SLTs and they are not allowed to recruit.

Some concerns raised regarding EHC plans and whether system is ready to process them. JB and NH said they had not yet received plans for their new students. Would have expected them by now.

General Updates

AO – Adept Conference coming up in June. Numbers appear to be down this year. MM said NDCS happy to help promote.

MM – NDCS has a MyFutures resource which will be published. Is a signposting resource for young people to give them an overview of their options post-16. Will support transitions.

Next meeting

- 19th October suggested or dates around that time. Can book a room at NDCS. Doodle poll to be sent out.