

Document 13 – d) Briefing on the STEP programme and Scottish Attainment Challenge

STEP PROGRAMME AND THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE - LINES TO TAKE AND BRIEFING

Lines to take:

- [Redacted - Out of scope]

IF PRESSED:

- I would like to see your pilot study report before I consider further.
- It would not be appropriate to commit to any further roll out until then.

BACKGROUND ON THE STEP PROGRAMME AND PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] and his fellow Step representatives explained the benefits of the Step programme to the Deputy First Minister during a meeting on 25 January 2017. At a further meeting on 15 March, the Deputy First Minister was invited to view Step in action and to consider writing to all local authorities.
2. The Step Programme is a programme of exercises performed twice a day for 10 minutes. The Step view is children who take part learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom. This programme is used as an additional support needs intervention in over 150 schools across the UK and US.
3. The programme was also raised at the Parliamentary Cross Party Dyslexia working group by the chair who attended the Step launch event. It did not receive an overly positive response from the group members, predominately due to concerns highlighted with the associated costs and reflections from the Dore programme (previously known as DDAT (Dyslexia Dyspraxia Attention Treatment)) in the 2000's, which Step has a connection. Although it was highlighted, the programme delivery method for Step was not the same.
4. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
5. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
6. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
7. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
8. [Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].
9. [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] lodged the following motion which was debated in Parliament on 11 January 2017. The motion read: *"That the Parliament is impressed by the STEP physical literacy programme; understands that its results have demonstrated that the children who take part in it have been proven to learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom; is encouraged that local authorities and schools throughout Scotland are showing an interest in the programme; considers that introducing it would be of benefit to all state primary schools in Mid Scotland and Fife and across the country, and notes the view that the Scottish Government, local authorities, teachers and parents should consider the merits of the programme for primary school children as a valuable contribution to pupils' education and self-esteem and to help close the attainment gap."*
10. The Scottish Conservatives also led a debate in the Scottish Parliament, on 18 January 2017, focusing on their new healthy lifestyle strategy which they launched on 11 January 2017. [Redacted - Out of scope].
11. There have also been several pieces of written correspondence to the Deputy First Minister from parents and grandparents seeking Government intervention in providing the Step Programme for their child or grandchild.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND VIEW ON THE STEP PROGRAMME

12. The Step definition of 'physical literacy' differs to the one used in Scotland, 'fundamental movement skills' is a very old, traditional definition that has not served well in the past. The costs for the Step programme are significant, with no reimbursement if a pupil drops out. Education Scotland therefore advise they would not endorse this programme due to its costs. The resource costs £360 per child, per year, with a minimum of six children required to be signed up (a total of £2,160).

13. Learning assistants need to be trained at a cost of about £600+ and the programme requires delivery of two, 10 minute sessions daily which will be a key barrier for a variety of reasons. Learning assistants get two and a half hours workshop training. They have limited back up support. There are concerns about Learning assistants ensuring adoption of correct posture and execution of exercises.

14. There are few statistics available but from Step's 2015 pilot study, they reported that from 106 students enrolled on the study, 60 remained at its completion. This made for a potential dropout rate of 43 percent. There is no endeavor to pursue 'missing data' to understand why pupils drop out or what happens to them. There is little robust evidence on the benefits of the programme. Poor teaching is often cited as the reason for pupils disengaging from the programme. No evidence is available on the allegation of poor teaching.

15. [Redacted - Out of scope].