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| **8th August 2013**  **Meeting with Minister of Education** | **Issues** | **Action Required by the Minister** |
| **What We Need** | Elluminate -Not functioning since 2011, and blocked by union for one year, for our most vulnerable children -stopping young people who cannot attend school getting **full and equal access to education** within an **acceptable time frame** when they are at home or in hospital and often in crisis and in need of the stability of continuing their education.  Children out of school are being abandoned to linger endlessly whilst systems respond | Implement Statutory Guidelines currently being used in UK titled  "***Ensuring a Good Education for Children who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Needs***.” Eventually make it Law.  Set the time limit of **15 day** max for access for children out of school. Parents and GP should trigger access. |
|  | Answers to our previous questions already submitted | * Make out of school children No1 priority for C2k * Tell people about it openly-everyone parents and professionals need to know * Find away around union blockage now * Don’t allow schools to veto * Provide a central contact point to help co-ordinate provision * Open it up to parents and children who had to de-register * Consult with parents and young people who need the service in the design of service – so it works well |
| **Why Is It Not Working** | * Dept of Education Failing to urgently prioritise those in critical need * No time limit for ensuring access * Myth that current statementing and other processes and procedures actually provide equal and effective education without major gaps for children in need – they take too long! * Unions allowed to damage development of children * Reluctance from Teachers – Dept Failure * Lack of knowledge –Dept failure * Lack of resources reported to us * Parents not being told * Parents and children of those de registered not being offered it as an option | * Find other ways immediately to make this work now before Sept * Connections to teachers in other unions * Connections to teachers on new contracts * Education of teachers * Examples of other teachers using in other areas and countries to be shared as good practice examples. * Use Elluminate for fast effective education of teachers. |
| **Issues That Need Addressing** | **Statements by the Minister in Letter to Mervyn Storey MLA**   * Claims about a perceived lack of knowledge * Parents to hear about it only if professional (who? /when?) considers it an option * Provision could be detrimental | * Most of parents involved are Professionals in their own right. * The reality is a lack of knowledge, confidence and willingness. * Parents responsible for child – wellbeing and education. * Dept responsible primarily for education * Parents have a right to know * Parents and GP should be trigger so no delay * Dept should not prescribe what is best for child only parents and medical –every child different not all cured after 6 months or year depending on health – not timescale. * Dept not health specialists – only parents with full knowledge of wellbeing know if child can cope – no timescale on health conditions. * Children getting home tuition – also isolated from peers – but limited unequal access to education * Primary responsibly of Dept of Education should be education – well being and development is parents primary responsibility. |
|  | **Response from Dept to our campaign**   * Codes of Practice, SENDO etc – * Statementing Process * Middletown * Home Tuition * Bullying and Suicide Prevention * Virtual School only considered when current C2k in place and after procurement and additional funding | * All outlined as currently in place and policies inc SEN – has not worked / is not working for those out of school – for many reasons – allows endless time adrift. * Statementing process- often not offered for a year then may take a year to be in place – too long * Statementing – not appropriate for many children with health needs * Statementing or policies do not cure children and make them able to attend if they cannot. * Middletown Centre for Autism recommended Elluminate for ASD child out of school. * Waiting lists for many professionals and assessments too long – GP and Parents should trigger access to Elluminate within 15days. * Home tuition – totally inadequate number hours sometimes for years– detrimental to child’s development * Home tuition –irrelevant and inappropriate compared to full access and connections via Elluminate * Bullying is a reality and suicide a fact often due to issues in school inc bullying is a happening. ‘Policies’ are failing.   Parents and young people need options so they can protect and still get education.   * Virtual school could be easily put in place now using new teachers / temporary teaching staff – there are children in need now – should not wait due to costs- as per UK guidance |
| **Questions That Need Answers** | Does the Minister understand the impact on a child of not getting their education?  Can the Minister acknowledge the current system is failing and discriminating against ill and disabled children?  Does the Minister understand this is not just about education – but also wellbeing, self esteem, confidence, hope and security for our most in need children?  If the Department is not educating and supporting teachers sufficiently in Elluminate delivery this how are they to provide for our children?  Children should not be without equal access to education due to cost and there should be no delay. Can the Minster provide other options that work immediately?  How many school age children are out of school in NI?  How many school age children in NI have been de-registered? Suspended?  What is he going to do to make it work?  How much longer will it be before all teachers are trained, educated, confident, reassured and committed to its use within 15 days of a child being absent?  Now a year of blockage, how much longer will unions be used as an excuse to fail our most vulnerable children in need?  When will some flexibility and creativity be used to meet urgent needs of children?  Is he comfortable with £170 million being spent as the icing on the cake for those in school when those out of school are often getting nothing?  How has that spend actually benefitted those in school?  Does he understand the costs of failing those which schools could not provide for or could not manage school?  Will the Minister ensure the UK Statutory Guidance for children out of school will be part of the Special Educational Needs Legalisation amendments coming before the Assembly in September / October?  Does the Minister realise that current failures are contributing to the number of NEETS? |  |