

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability – Minutes 4 June 2014

Present:

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Michael McMahon – MSP | Pauline Nolan – Inclusion |
| Siobhan McMahon – MSP | Fiona Sinclair – Autism Rights |
| Annabelle Ewing – MSP | Gregor Sinclair |
| Iain Cuthbertson- Quarriers | Mike Harrison - SATA |
| Marie Redden – Quarriers | Margaret Hay – CIC |
| Margaret Robinson – Quarriers | Robert Parker – Barnardo’s |
| Stan Flett – SATA | Kirsten Stalker (speaker) |
| Terry Robinson – SATA | Chloe Swift (speaker) |
| Eric Mitchell – Capability Scotland | |
| Morven Brooks – SDEF | |
| Susan Grasekamp – SDEF | |
| Robert Ferguson – SDEF | |
| Rachel Le Noan – Down’s Syndrome Scotland | |
| Robert MacBean – National Autistic Society | |

Apologies:

Helen Hunter – Quarriers
John Ballantyne – SATA
Margaret Ellis – SATA
Maureen McAllister
Laura Delaney - Momentum

1. Welcome and introductions

Siobhan McMahon welcomed all members and explained that Michael McMahon had been held up in another meeting and would join the group as soon as possible. Due to Michael’s delay group agreed to go straight to speakers and hold AGM at end of meeting if time available.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were approved as an accurate record

3. “It Always Comes Down to Money” – Kirsten Stalker, Professor of Disability Studies

Following on from research published in 2012 which examined the use of eligibility criteria and assessment tools in services to disabled children and young people in Scottish Local Authorities further funding was granted in 2013 to gather the views of voluntary sector providers, disabled children, young people and their families.

5 different research methods were used:

- On-line survey of voluntary sector providers; 53 valid responses

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability – Minutes 4 June 2014

- 10 focus groups with parents, 9 recruited through voluntary organisations and 1 LA; 56 parents/carers took part
- 5 focus groups with young disabled people; 18 young people took part
- 1:1 session with a young person who does not use speech
- 3 case studies, conducted by telephone, with parents and a service user.

Kirsten gave presentation on the findings from each of the 5 research group/methods mentioned above, some of the main findings included:

- 87% voluntary providers reported cut in funding or change in allocation procedures by public funders although 72% said service was “ as good as 2 years ago”
- Parents reported withdrawals/reduction of support across services; increased charges and hidden costs
- 32% vol orgs reported changes in LA criteria; longer waiting lists; funding only for complex cases; some parents denied a service; focus more on children with complex needs and families in crisis
- Impact on families is greater incidence/risk of family breakdown; children more isolated, missing out, losing skills; increased parental stress, anxiety and depression

Conclusions

- Risk of children’s rights being eroded - public bodies must consult children and parents
- LAs must assess children's needs when parent asks
- Disabled children have right to services, under CSDP(S) Act, if assessed as needing them & eligible
- Unlawful to reduce support without proper review
- Low sense of entitlement / diminished trust
- ‘Progressive’ developments less welcome to some
- Findings must be seen in wider economic context
- And in changing context of social work

(link to research and findings)

<http://lx.iriss.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/it-always-comes-down-to-money.pdf>

4. Update from Commissioner’s office following publication of the research - Chloe Swift Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People

Follows previous research published by the Commissioner’s office which examined the use of eligibility criteria and assessment tools in services to disabled children and young people across Scotland conducted by Becki Lancaster. 52 separate recommendations which were wide ranging with various issues; work already happening on some of these and have been engaged with other organisations including Govan Law Centre, ARC etc and will continue with the core work.

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability – Minutes 4 June 2014

There will be round table set up and still deciding on composition of the group but will be formal thinking and helpful for LA's. Some of the main topics to be discussed include:

- Transitions
- Guidance
- Children's Act
- Medicines in school
- Digital print media
- Advocacy – Social Work complaints
- Welfare Reform

5. Questions and Discussion

Q. Was the potential impact on transition for young disabled children researched?

A. Transitions were not asked about specifically, focus was on reduction in services but some parents did highlight and were concerned about the void and are finding this very stressful

Q. Was focus on staff training any element of research?

A. No – this was not asked but some voluntary organisations did advise they had cut back on training for staff.

Discussion around staff training; although limited on funding there is need to ensure required training is being received due to constant need and requirement for this.

Q. What was the prevalence of disability on lower social groups; was there sense of whether needs met across Scotland dependant on social background?

A. 3 focus groups in disadvantaged areas were interviewed and it appeared that there was no differences between these parents and those in more affluent areas; all shown to be struggling with the same issues although no evidence base for this.

Q. In regard to occupational therapy and the lack of provision for small items of equipment – was there a theme or were these isolated incidences?

A. Voluntary organisations and parents both say equipment is much less available than before – was routinely available but now no longer happening.

Q. Can list of what SCCYP doing next be communicated out to voluntary organisations and parents?

A. Due to release findings of this on 20th June if interested Chloe will give further information if you contact her direct.

Q. Who is responsible for legislation and falling down on this and who will enforce?

A. Unsure must be training issue – SCSWIS pursue and if issue would ask parliament to follow up.

**Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability –
Minutes 4 June 2014**

Following was discussed/raised by members of the Group

- Discussion around implications of when one thing changes it pushes everything else out and the need to ensure everything is still interconnecting.
- Question raised for discussion re if have initial pot of money could this be used to ensure minimum set of standards are met and staff trained to this standard; some parents feel money is used to “mop up fall out” and this could be avoided if staff given proper training.
- Discussion re children (and adults) being prescribed antipsychotic drugs and potential impact or effects this is having on them; both medically (some research suggests shrinking of the brain) and socially as from parents perspective; rather than feeling Included this can lead to feeling of de-inclusion.
- Children in mainstream school (often on antipsychotic drugs) and the teachers not receiving training to specific standard; issue for children on both autistic and impaired vision spectrum. If children are given the tools to be included in society then there should be an agreed standard for teachers. Agreed to be kept on agenda for further discussion.
- MMcH stated that in regard to standards not being available there has been counter arguments from other parent groups as this can be seen as levelling down. Could propose something through National Care Standards Consultation Board; MMcM will draw up.

6. AOB

- 6.1** Stan Flett (SATA) – Stan raised issue for blind and visually impaired people using taxis and being unable to confirm that the taxi driver is fully licenced. He advised of scheme in Aberdeen whereby the taxi licence is laminated in yellow with black writing and on bottom right hand corner there is raised symbol so as blind people can check and confirm driver is licenced. Stan is willing to hand in replica to office for approval – Michael agreed anything Stan could send/hand in would be useful and he can look into this further.
- 6.2** Terry Robinson (SATA) - Waverley Train Station are not allowing public service vehicles into the station. This is causing safety issues due to traffic as very difficult and practically impossible to cross road safely no matter which entrance the taxi drops off passengers. Michael will raise this with Network Rail by way of letter for them to offer explanation and will report back and consider response at future meeting.
- 6.3** Disabled Living Scotland are holding exhibition on 11 September 2014 at Royal Highland Exhibition Centre between 9.30am – 4.30pm. Further information can be obtained from following link:

**Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Disability –
Minutes 4 June 2014**

<http://www.disabledliving.co.uk/Kidz/Scotland>

7. Michael thanked Kirsten and Chloe for their presentations and members of the group for attending; he apologised for AGM not going ahead, this will be set up for a later date and we will be in touch with the members of the group with further details.

Date of Next Meeting: 3rd September 2014 @ 5.30pm; Committee Room 1