

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON DEAFNESS MEETING

Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 15th March 2017

Present: Mark Griffin MSP (Convenor)
Graeme Dey MSP (Vice Convenor)
Alan Dalziel – Action on Hearing Loss
Delia Henry- Action on Hearing Loss
Jill Bradshaw - ATLA
Cathy Finestone – BATOD
Shaurna Dickson – Deaf Action
Twimukye Mushaka – Deafblind Scotland
Alana Harper – Deaf Links
Alison Coyle – Hearing Link
Katie Rafferty – NDCS Scotland
Gillian Mitchell - NHS Highland Deaf Services
Liz Kraft – RCSLT
Carly Brownlie - SASLI
Denise McClung – SISG
Audrey Cameron – University of Edinburgh
Janis McDonald – SCoD (Secretariat)

In attendance: Julie Carr (Scottish Government), Irene Bruce (Scottish Government), Clair Henderson (National Co-ordinator for Sensory Impairment), Amy Dawson (Skills Development Scotland) and Mandy Reid (SCoD).

Communication Support Professionals: Paula McGuire (Electronic Notetaker), Jacqui Donati (Electronic Notetaker), Andrew Dewey (BSL/English Interpreter) and David Milligan (BSL/English Interpreter)

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Mark Griffin MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made
- 2. Apologies:** Monica Lennon MSP, Annie Wells MSP, Jenny Marra MSP, Donald Richards (SCoD), Carol Thomson (BATOD), Avril Hepner (BDA Scotland), Sheila Mackenzie (Scottish Sensory Centre), Elizabeth Adam (Tayside Deaf Forum), Lindsay Foster (Signature), Graham Findlay (NESS), Layla Theiner (Disability Agenda Scotland) and Linda Duncan (ASLI).

3. **Minutes of the December 2016 meeting:** proposed-Mark Griffin MSP; seconded- Graeme Dey MSP. Accepted as an accurate record.
4. **New members – NHS Highland Deaf Services, Disability Agenda Scotland and ASLI** – all accepted as new members.
5. **See Hear Strategy – 3 years on:** Irene Bruce, Julie Carr and Clair Henderson all spoke to this item.

Context: See Hear is the national strategy for people with sensory impairment in Scotland. It is a long term strategy for 10 years for children and adults. It is the first of its kind with focus on hearing, visual and dual sensory impairment. Adults and children should expect the same access to support, employment, education, leisure health and social care as everyone else. What is sensory impairment? The strategy is defined in three areas - varying degrees of sight hearing or loss of both senses, people at risk of sensory loss and people living with a hidden sensory loss, for example, with learning disabilities. The strategy is three years old, launched in April 2013 and is in partnership with COSLA. The strategy has 7 recommendations around the themes of basic sensory checks, awareness training, awareness in the work force, service planning locally, maintenance and sharing of information, compliance with the Equality Act. It is being implemented in local areas in partnership with statutory and third sector organisations. Sensory leads are in place and working with partners to drive progress. Delivering See Hear is based on individual needs and is person centred so local partnerships will adopt local approaches within available resources.

Resources to support implementation was £2M over 2 years from 2014 to 2016. The money was to facilitate discussion, planning and action at local level. This current financial year, £320,000 was distributed across local authority areas to take forward priorities.

Progress made on basic sensory checks. Across Scotland a toolkit was developed through the partnership leads and specialists. The purpose was to give a basic standard of screening to be used to identify hearing or sight loss with the purpose of signposting them to services or support or highlighting a pathway to in depth assessment. The Dundee health and social care partnership have built in screening checks to care home providers. If a service user moves in, they are screened and signposted to the service they require. They are sharing this among the partnership leads so other areas are adopting the approach.

Awareness training for professionals and the general workforce, an initiative of e-learning modules for deaf awareness has been developed and now one on sight loss has been developed. The modules are available

to the health and public sector and any other service wanting to access them. They are used as a minimum standard. Face to face training is being delivered through sensory impairment teams in social work.

We have worked with Glasgow Caledonian University with partnership leads to develop **a course on low vision rehabilitation**. It is in place for the first year and we are looking at ways to develop a module on hearing loss for rehabilitation for children and looking to sustain it in the future.

Service planning, there is a sensory impairment lead in each local authority area. All these partnerships have conducted an audit of provision and staffing awareness levels and we are reviewing that across the partnership areas.

Sharing information: now looking at who to share information with and the best way to do that and that is taking place. **Complying with the Equality Act:** contact SCOTLAND gives equity of service to BSL service users so they can contact service users themselves. **Children and young people:** Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People (VINCYP), in place since 2014, and about improving care for children and young people with visual impairment. Looking at pathways and integration and have developed standards and quality assessments that we are rolling out across Scotland. **Local record for deaf children:** A pilot ran in NHS Lothians and Taysid; hope to take that record forward nationally.

The **first phase of delivering the strategy** has focussed on set up, capacity building and ensuring the right structures are in place. Now reflecting on the 7 recommendations and the outcomes the strategy is seeking to achieve. It is a strategy for the long term and we are working with Evaluation Support Scotland for development of outcomes that will help us work together to prioritise our efforts to deliver outcomes.

Long term outcomes need partnership and collaboration to deliver the actions for the longer term. Government are keen to continue work with partners to raise awareness of the See Hear Strategy and what it means to people and what it seeks to deliver. See Hear highlighted the **gaps in the data and evidence base** and the need to fill the gaps in the evidence base. There are gaps around **service user perspectives and every day lived experience** of deafness. In the medium and long term, government have to make sure this is a core part of the strategy. The outcomes with Evaluation Support Scotland will give a platform for that. We are also building evidence gathering into new projects and any new projects are connected to the outcomes See Hear is seeking to achieve.

Questions: What model was used to influence the strategy? The strategy is person centred and focuses on people's lives. Moving into the next stage we will draw out much more in relation to outcomes focussed on the

person and the social and cultural context of people's lives. Education is a strand of the work being done.

The **local level strategy** is explained but See Hear is **cross-cutting** with a number of areas in the government, for example, with health and education.

Local partnerships have different ways of **engaging with users**. For example, in the Highlands, they have an annual event for service users to be involved with review and planning. The See Hear Team is linked to SCOV1 and SCoD.

There are gaps in data for numbers of teachers of the Deaf as the Scottish Government does not collect that data and there is little data on characteristics of children so forward planning can take place on workforce issues. The CRIDE survey that has just gone out and will provide more data.

Checking on the work of local authorities – how is this carried out? The government work with COSLA and there is a network of local See Hear leads who meet quarterly to look at the progress they are making. Each year, **a formal return** about the progress made in delivering the strategy is made to government.

We get information from organisations and have **service user feedback** or other intelligence that comes our way. We are building something more robust into the outcomes work and after that is set up there will be more of an evaluation framework to capture points. We are working with Evaluation Scotland to build a framework that works for everyone. We are in the early stages of work and service user's views will be central to that. Example of promotion in Ayrshire, the programme board are looking at service user groups. For the action plan, they are trying to reduce it to a format that has 5 priorities for service user groups to look at.

- 6. Employability/Modern Apprentices:** Skills Development Scotland produced a briefing that was circulated before the meeting. Amy Dawson attended to take feedback/questions back to the team.

There is a lot of work being done to **promote apprenticeships** to wider groups. From an employer's perspective, they require a certain level of English qualification which can be a barrier for young deaf people. How can young people be supported to acquire that. In England they are now accepting BSL qualifications and young people can get onto apprenticeships by showing they have a level of qualification in BSL. That might be something Scotland wants to look at.

There is an issue about access to interpreters for Deaf people wanting to volunteer to get work experience as Access to Work is not paid to volunteers only those in paid employment.

Skills Development Scotland does not offer volunteering programmes and so would not be the agency to raise this with.

Action on Hearing Loss Scotland has a project “Moving On”, supporting young deaf people into work. One of the young people was a Modern Apprenticeship with BBC Scotland and is on the SDS website and has completed the Modern Apprenticeship. It was a good experience. The BBC were good but they were worried about working with a deaf person and not being able to give him the right support. Action on Hearing Loss Scotland has a toolkit we share with employers and our advisors are trained in advice, guidance and British Sign Language.

Modern Apprentices are in paid employment so would qualify for Access to Work.

Questions to take back to SDS:

- What are the take up rates for Modern Apprenticeships for people that are deaf?
- What is the failure rate for applications to the ASN Fund?
- Is there anything that can be done to make the application for ILA Accounts more accessible for BSL users?
- What can be done to ensure the work that is contracted out from local authorities on the employer recruitment incentive has funds in the budget for language/communication support so that the provision of this is not passed down to Third Sector organisations?

7. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 14th June at 1.00 pm in the Scottish Parliament. Potential agenda items are: Education and Attainment; Welfare Reform; updates on the BSL National Plan; and extend an invitation to John Swinney to attend the next meeting.
8. Mark Griffin MSP informed the meeting of the debate that is taking place in the Chamber in the next few weeks on the “consultation on the BSL National Plan” and then **closed the meeting**.