

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON DEAFNESS (CPGD)

Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Meeting

Meeting Notes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Cross Party Group on Deafness held in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh in Committee Room 3 on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 1.00pm

PRESENT: Mark Griffin MSP (Convenor)

Graeme Dey MSP (Vice Convenor)

Annie Wells MSP

Janis McDonald (Secretariat) – SCoD

Delia Henry – Action on Hearing Loss Scotland

Jill Bradshaw – ATLA

Avril Hepner – BDA Scotland

Shaurna Dickson – Deaf Action

John Whitfield – Deafblind Scotland

Alana Harper – Deaf Links

Amanda Wilson – Highland Council Deaf Services

Lynda Campbell – NHS Highland Deaf Services

Liz Kraft – RCSLT

Carly Brownlie – SASLI

Donald Richards – SCoD

Gillian Mitchell – Sight Action

Kimberley Curry – Signature

Denise McClung – SISG

IN ATTENDANCE: Leah Thom (Guide Communicator), Derek Todd (SCoD), Claire Henderson (SCoD), Mason Dickson (SCoD), Philip Gerrard (Deaf Action), Jeanette Hagerstrom (Scottish Government), Nicola Sykes (Scottish Government), Morven Brooks (SDEF), Alex Thorburn (Vice Convenor SDEF), Paul Mullen (Skills Development Scotland).

LANGUAGE SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS: Andrew Dewey (BSL / English Interpreter), Mark Cross (BSL / English Interpreter) and Paula McGuire (Electronic Note-taker).

1. WELCOME:

Mark Griffin MSP, the Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Deafness. First part of the meeting will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and second part will be the ordinary meeting.

2. APOLOGIES:

Jenny Mara MSP, Monica Lennon MSP, Graham Findlay (NESS), Cathie Finestone / Carol Thomson (BATOD Scotland), Gary Quinn (HWU).

3. CONVENOR'S REPORT:

Mark Griffin MSP explained this is the first AGM of the cycle and that although he has been off for 5 months due to personal matters that the group has continued to promote the rights of deaf people, scrutinise the BSL (Scotland) Act and will now start to focus around issues of prevention too. We will now look for the Scottish Government to take a more proactive stance on prevention rather than emergency care and admissions, across the public sector and we will continue to improve inclusion and inclusive communication.

Action: take forward new priorities for the group.

4. AGM MINUTES:

No minutes of last AGM to approve due to the first AGM of the new cycle.

Meeting Notes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Deafness held in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh in Committee Room 3 on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 1.20pm

5. EMPLOYABILITY:

Jeanette Hagerstrom and Nicola Sykes from the Scottish Government (Fair Work Directorate) spoke to this item. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation.

Jeanette Hargerstrom spoke about devolved employment services – Work First Scotland and Work Able Scotland.

Aim is pan-disability and person centred approach with specific focus on individual's needs and skills.

Delivery of this programme commenced April 2017, Work First Scotland will provide employment support for up to 3000 disabled people. Work Able Scotland is managed by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) which is replacing the UK Government's work programme. In April 2018, programme Fair Start Scotland will commence.

Fair Start Scotland is a Scottish employability service set up to create a platform for future employability services and focuses on those furthest from the labour market. This is a 12-18 months pre-work support period and up to 18 months in work support. The model that will be used is in work support whereby people will be helped in their place of work by colleagues and a support worker. The will be delivered throughout 9 different areas. It will be a person centred approach focusing on integration and alignment. A plan will be published in the autumn that will set out the actions for this service.

In 2016, the Disability Action Plan was published and we are committed to reducing the disability employment gap by half. In early 2018, a congress will be held on supporting disabled people into sustainable work.

Community Jobs Scotland is in its seventh phase creating 700 opportunities in the voluntary service.

£30.00 education maintenance allowance still continues. The DWY is in its third year this has various recommendations and actions around support for veterans, young people with disabilities and care service leavers, working closely with Education Scotland and SDS.

Individual Training Accounts will replace ILA, work is ongoing with SDS to ensure it is accessible.

Nicola Sykes spoke about Modern Apprenticeships.

Modern Apprenticeships are funded and administered by Skills Development Scotland. Through this Foundations Apprenticeships will be promoted to school children who use BSL. SDS are committed to ensuring their services are accessible and have worked with providers to create an action plan. ASN access fund provides funding to support trainees with disabilities complete employability programmes.

At the end of the presentation there were some questions asked around the promotion of the schemes, sensory awareness within the service delivery teams and issues about people who are deaf accessing volunteering opportunities. Graeme Dey MSP, mentioned specific experiences from Tayside.

Two Actions were agreed:

- 1. To revisit these topics in about 18 months to review progress.**
- 2. The Convenor to write to the UK government specifically on the topic of access to volunteering for deaf people.**

6. INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION:

Morven Brooks, Chief Executive Officer from Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) spoke to this item with a presentation covering human rights, communication equality, person centred approach, Human Rights Based Approach and what is inclusive communication. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation.

Quality communication and inclusion are a human right and without communication, many people cannot enjoy their human rights because they find them difficult to understand & don't know how to exercise them.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a statement of the human rights of all disabled people and covers all areas of life – articles 9 and 21 in particular require disabled people to have access to information and communication in the forms that are particular to them.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to stop people accessing services, it requires public bodies to make reasonable adjustments, including information in accessible formats.

Public Bodies are being asked to provide a Human Rights Based Approach – it is common to use a PANEL principle; P is Participation, A is Accountability, N is Non-discrimination, E is Empowerment and lastly L is Legality.

There are limited resources for people to share and get advice, budgets being reduced, but Scotland can do better to be the first inclusive communication nation.

Inclusive Communication is about sharing information in a way that everyone understands. For service providers making sure people understand and can express themselves in their way. For people using services, expressing themselves in ways that meet their needs. Inclusive Communication includes all information – written, online, telecommunications, etc.

Inclusive Communication Hub is developed by SDEF working in partnership with other Third Sector organisations including SCoD. The Hub is the first resource of its kind, it's an easy to use online tool, lots of work is done but it's still an ongoing process with more resources being developed.

There were some questions at the end on who the Inclusive Communication Hub was aimed at and how it linked to the Knowledge Hub which were both “work in progress.

There was suggestion from the floor that we could / should have an Inclusive Communication Act – more discussion is required for this. We may need to find an MSP to start a bill on this.

Two Actions were agreed:

- 1. For the Cross Party Group on Deafness to continue to work on the topic of Inclusive Communication.**
- 2. To consider the need for legislation to support inclusion for deaf people and others with communication barriers.**

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

Mark Griffin MSP, the Convenor spoke to this item. It had been suggested we cover sport, audiology review and prevention. This was agreed by those present and will be factored in to forthcoming meetings.

The secretariat would discuss with other groups around timing and agenda for possible joint meetings: mental health, visual impairment / sensory and disability topics have all been mentioned in the past.

If anyone has additional suggestion(s), please contact Janis McDonald (Secretariat) admin@scod.org.uk and/or Mark Griffin MSP, Mark.Griffin.msp@parliament.scot.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 6 December 2017 at 1.00pm in the Scottish Parliament.

- 9. Mark Griffin MSP closed the meeting** thanking everyone for coming and hope to see them all again later at the Parliamentary Reception celebrating 90 years of SCoD and 70 years of West Scotland Deaf Children's Society (WSDCS).