

**Meeting of the
Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Disability**

**Wednesday 5th December
Scottish Parliament – Burns Room CR1**

Attendees

Jeremy Balfour MSP (convener); Stuart McMillan MSP (deputy convener); Alexander Stewart MSP; Julia Shillitto, Jeremy Balfour's office; Layla Theiner, Disability Agenda Scotland (DAS); John Ballantine; Keith Robson, MS Society; Emma Slavin, Skills Development Scotland; Michael McDavid, Skills Development Scotland; Andrew Fraser, Royal College of Psychiatrists; Frank Morgan, DG VOICE; Peter Carruthers, South Edinburgh Amenities Group; Stan Flett; Martin Hunt, Tartan Silk Public Relations; Janice Thomson; Robin Wickes, Edinburgh Access Panel; Callum MacGregor, Capability Scotland; Faye Keogh, Turning Point Scotland; Vivien Jayne, Down Syndrome Scotland; Tom Wightman, PASDA; Richard Baker, Royal Blind and Scottish War Blinded; Salena Begley MBE, Family Fund; Denis Shovlin, Scottish Churches Disability Group; Amanda Burns and Mark Magee, Quarriers; Kimberley Swan, FAIR Limited; Phyl Meyer, Inclusion Scotland; John Miller, Action Duchenne; Ryan Galloway, SPFA; Prof. David Kelly, Building Research Centre; Gary Kerr, Paisley Community Trust; Denis R Shovlin; Patricia Hewitt; John Speirs, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL).

Apologies

David Cameron, Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE); Andy Hyde, Go Upstream; John Sutherland MBE; Mike Harrison, Scottish Accessible Transport Association (SATA); Emma Pauley; Grant Carson, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL); Aurora Constantin, University of Edinburgh; Jenny Miller, PAMIS

Welcome and introductions and minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Jeremy Balfour welcomed the attendees. He asked if there were any comments on the minutes and there were none.

Housing for people with Dementia – Dr David Kelly (BRE)

Jeremy welcomed Dr David Kelly to the group. Dr Kelly talked through the work of the BRE and his work in developing housing for people with dementia and how the similarities and lessons for building housing for people with other disabilities. He mentioned that 2021 will be the 100th anniversary of the BRE and the BRE Trust employs 600 people. 80% of people with dementia continue to live at home, especially in the early stages. They are not experts in dementia but experts in housing and use a unique multi-disciplinary team approach. He outlined some examples of houses they have designed and relevant features.

He said given the ageing population and housing shortage, we need to build housing that can be easily adapted for people at every stage of their lives.

There were a number of questions including: about costs, and how they are covered (Jeremy Balfour MSP); the role of housing associations and local government (Stuart McMillan MSP); tenants participation groups (Denis Shovlin); and diagnoses for instance of autism (Patricia Hewitt and Tom Wiseman). John Miller mentioned the 'help to buy' scheme and early diagnosis for Alzheimer's.

The presentation Dr Kelly gave is attached to the minutes.

Employability – Phyl Meyer, Inclusion Scotland

Phyl outlined their approach and calling more for 'employerability' rather than 'employability', with a greater focus on the role of employers. Inclusion Scotland has expanded the internship programme from the third sector, to the public sector and the Scottish Parliament, and are now expanding into the private sector.

Maggie Ellis mentioned the challenging employment situation even compared to 2/3 years ago, and where there isn't good governance. Phyl mentioned the figures on Access to Work, which were first raised in a Disability Agenda Scotland (DAS) research report on employment matters in 2017. Phyl also highlighted the role of contracts and using the contracting process to better support and include disabled people in the workplace.

There were a number of questions and people mentioned the Department for Work and Pension's 'disability confident' initiative, a Down Syndrome Scotland congress, and also a Royal Bank of Scotland event being held in December.

Accessible Toilets – Maggie Ellis

Maggie highlighted that there are laws and regulations on the provision of accessible toilets, but these are often not met. Jeremy mentioned the Planning Bill that will be coming into force and positive aspects within it.

Action: Following a brief discussion about next steps, Jeremy asked Maggie and others to have a think what they would like to be calling for on this and other matters.

Maggie's presentation is included with the minutes.

Powerchair Football Update – Ryan Galloway

Ryan had been suggested as a speaker by John Miller. Ryan gave a talk and presentation about powerchair football in Scotland and its development over recent years. He mentioned the benefits it had had for his 12-year-old son including a sense of achievement and team work, as well as respect and friendship. He mentioned some of the challenges of funding.

Ryan's presentation was too large to attach to the minutes.

Any Other Business

Denis Shovlin raised an issue he faces. It is legal for a vehicle to protrude a bumper or boot into a disability parking bay, as long as the wheels do not protrude. This was intimated to him by officers of the Scottish police. He believes this is a weakness in the law extremely frustrating and would like to make it illegal to allow any part of another vehicle encroaching a disability parking bay. There was a brief discussion about this.