

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia  
held in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 17th May 2017.**

**1. Present:**

Margaret Mitchell MSP –Convener  
Tom Arthur MSP  
Elaine Smith MSP  
Stuart McMillan MSP  
Maurice Corry MSP

Katie Carmichael, Margaret Crombie, Aileen Orr, Nita Redfearn, Jay Kirkwood, Margaret Crankshaw, Dean Smith, Liz Roger, Helen Fleming, David Ward, Evelyn Littler, Owen Ferry, Emma Buchanan, Cathy Mcgee, Alasdair Sharp, David Sharp, A Jennings, Diane Smith, Dinah Aitken, Julie Ross, Robert Malcolm, Joe Moran, Rosemary Burke, Helen Johnston- Morris, David Jones

**2. Apologies:** Donald Cameron MSP

Prior to the start of business, The Convener informed the CPG of the death of Dr Catriona Collins and paid tribute to her outstanding contribution to teaching and supporting children and young people with additional support needs including dyslexia. She had been involved in the CPG and it was acknowledged that she had been leading authority in relation to dyslexia and had had a significant impact on both those she taught and trained.

**3. Minutes of last meeting:**

Minutes approved by Aileen Orr, Seconded by Helen Fleming

**4. Business arising from last meeting**

There was no business arising from the previous minutes.

**5. Dyslexia Scotland Employment Service**

Katie Carmichael, Dyslexia Scotland Employment Adviser gave a presentation about the Employment Service which had been recently

established in response to an identified need for information and support on: job search and recruitment processes; managing job centre appointments; progression issues and not knowing where to get help.

Over the initial twelve month period, the service had worked on a one to one basis with 32 adults. It also was involved in supporting the UK Government's Work and Health consultation representing the views of adults with dyslexia. It facilitated telephone interviews and held a number of focus groups.

CPG members raised a number of issues including the challenges facing those with dyslexia who are self-employed and the lack of available support.

The members noted that the service involved 1 full time adviser and a small number of volunteers and recognised that there would be capacity issues once the service was more established. There was some concern regarding the ability of the service to meet future demands.

A further issue was noted about IT support being available throughout school and then no longer available once a person leaves school and the impact this can have.

## **6. Adult Assessments – Presentation by Rosemary Burke, Dyslexia Scotland Adult Network**

Rosemary gave a personal perspective on the main issues around adult assessment. These included:

1. The low level of dyslexia awareness and for many adults this means they do not recognise it in themselves or others;
2. Barriers to assessment include:
  - a. Many people cannot afford the cost and employers may not be prepared to pay for it
  - b. The perceived consequences of assessment in terms of disclosure, impact on employment prospects and progression;
  - c. The lack of knowledge and information about how and where to get an assessment or what the process involves.

3. Lack of post- assessment support is a significant issue, in particular:
  - a. The assessment report is not explained in a way that is easy to understand;
  - b. Employers are reluctant or do not make reasonable adjustments and don't know about Workplace Needs Assessments and there is perception new technology will 'solve' the issue.
  - c. There are few tutors experienced in tutoring adults. For example, only 10% of tutors on Dyslexia Scotland's Tutors List work with adults.
  - d. Self- help materials are not often dyslexia friendly.

Rosemary made a number of positive suggestions about what would have helped in her situation.

CPG members raised a number of questions following the presentation particularly around:

- Employers and obligations in relation to workplace assessments and reasonable adjustments;
- The costs of adult assessments and whether this was a form of financial and employment discrimination;
- Whether, given the employment and health impact of dyslexia on adults, adult assessments should be funded through government resources

It was also noted that requests for information about adult assessments was being made to teachers by parents. Also GP practices were also making enquiries for patients where addressing dyslexia was seen as relevant in terms of the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Concern was expressed that there appeared to be no Scottish Government department coordination/ lead in relation to dyslexia. In terms of young people there were channels through education and inclusion e.g. Education Scotland, but with regards to impact on adults and issues such as adult assessments, there was not a coherent or identifiable contact.

**7. Any other business**

No other business raised.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting to take place take on 20trh September 2017.