

Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia Annual General Meeting and Business Meeting held in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 20th September 2017.

Annual General Meeting

- 1. Convener's Report** – Attached
- 2. Treasurer's Report** – Attached
- 3. Appointment of Office Bearers**
Convener: Margaret Mitchell MSP
Deputy Conveners: Stuart McMillan MSP, Elaine Smith MSP
Secretary: David Jones
Treasurer: Martin Davies

Business Meeting

- 4. Present:**
Margaret Mitchell MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP, Tom Mason MSP, Tom Arthur MSP, Elaine Smith MSP, Oliver Mundell MSP, Emma Harper MSP
- 5. Apologies:** David Cameron MSP, Clare Haughey MSP, Maurice Corry MSP
- 6. Minutes of last meeting:**
Approved by Cathy Magee, Seconded by Stuart McMillan MSP
- 7. Business arising from last meeting**
There was no business arising.
- 8. National Developments in Dyslexia Scotland**
Cathy Magee, Chief Executive of Dyslexia Scotland provided a comprehensive positional statement on the work of Dyslexia Scotland. This included information on:
 - The progress of the Making Sense of Dyslexia Working Group in relation to the significant development of three training modules

for teachers, a series of workshops and masterclass events for 500 teachers;

- In conjunction with the General Teaching Council for Scotland, the piloting of a professional development initiative.
- Volunteering opportunities including local branches across Scotland and at the national headquarters in Stirling;
- Innovative developments using interactive comic characters which is being piloted in a small number of schools, supported by the Scottish Government;
- The key information sought through the telephone helpline;
- A review of all Dyslexia Scotland's information leaflets;
- Continued review and evaluation of the current Strategic Plan.

9. Dyslexia Scotland Young People Initiative

Helen Fleming from Dyslexia Scotland gave a presentation on key developments and events targeted at children and young people.

This included:

- Information on a study visit to Malta by a group of Scottish young people;
- Youth Day bringing young people together to get their ideas on Dyslexia Scotland's services from a young person's perspective;
- The Young Ambassadors initiative;
- The launch in November 2017 of a new dedicated website 'Dyslexia Unwrapped' which is targeted at young people.

10. Feedback from the Making Sense Working Group

David Jones, Secretary of the Cross Party Group has been attending meetings of the working group and provided an update on its work. It was noted that a significant amount of positive outcomes had been achieved by the Development Officer seconded to Education Scotland to lead on the work of the group. It was however highlighted that the term of the secondment was under discussion and it was hoped that arrangements would be put in place to enable dedicated support to continue.

There was some concern that there still seemed to be issues around the definition of dyslexia in some council areas and there remained

inconsistencies in the knowledge of and in the use of the enhanced online toolkit for teachers.

11. Open Discussion

Stuart McMillan MSP provided information on the Haggi, initiative for young people developed by the Royal National Institute for the Blind, suggesting that approaches and methods it has developed might be of interest to Dyslexia Scotland. Other issues discussed included an initiative being developed by the University of Stirling and the suggestion that the Professional Development Module 3 being piloted should be made mandatory for all teachers.

12. Any other business

There was no other business

13. Date of next meeting: Provisionally Wednesday 17th January 2018

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Convener's Report 2017

Following the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in May 2016, A successful submission was made to the Scottish Parliament to re-establish the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia.

28th September 2016

The Group met to agree its purpose and key priorities for the duration of the Parliament.

The members discussed the purpose of the Cross Party Group and agreed to adopt the key themes developed in the previous Parliamentary term.

The members agreed that there should be a continued focus on the impact of dyslexia in relation to:

- Education and learning;
- Health
- Behaviours
- Training and employment

Several specific areas of interest were identified for future exploration including assessments, teacher qualifications, dyslexia in the armed forces and the progress of the outcomes from the Education Scotland Review: Making Sense of Dyslexia.

7th December 2016

Making Sense of Dyslexia Review

Presentation by Fran Ranaldi, Development Officer, Education Scotland

Fran Ranaldi provided background information about the review and highlighted three key actions which had provided the framework for the work being undertaken:

- The establishment of a multi - agency working group (including representation from the Cross Party Group) which had developed work streams to address each of the five key recommendations.
- Two year jointly funded secondment between the Scottish Government and Education Scotland (December 2015 – October 2017)
- Re-development of the Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit for teachers

Key issues raised by the CPG members included:

- Changes in the ways assessments were being undertaken in a number of local authorities which was leading to classroom teachers being asked to undertake assessments without any training;
- The lack of monitoring the quality of assessors and assessments being undertaken;
- The continued debates over definitions of dyslexia in some local authorities;
- The reductions in additional support resources including classroom assistants.

1st March 2017

General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)

Presentation by Ellen Doherty, Director of Education, Registration and Professional Learning

The focus of the presentation was on:

- What is the role of the General Teaching Council Scotland?
- In what ways does and can the GTCS support the recommendations of the Making Sense Report?

Ellen informed the members of the purpose of the GTCS and the governance structure within which it operates. She highlighted the wide range of statutory functions and initiatives the GTCS was responsible for delivering.

- Initial teacher training
- Standards and self- evaluation
- Professional Recognition in support of Career Long Learning opportunities including Additional Support Needs

Key issues raised by CPG members included:

- Continuing inconsistencies in support and expertise of teachers within and across local authorities;
- Concern about the reduction in numbers of school inspections therefore inadequate support to teachers and pupils may not be identified;
- Concern that although there had been improvements in initial teacher training there was a gap in continuous professional development for existing teachers in relation to dyslexia and that this should be addressed by GTCS
- The issue of professional competences was raised as there was the view that teachers were being asked or instructed to undertake assessments

and made decisions on dyslexia for which they had not been trained and may not have the competences.

17th May 2017

Dyslexia and Adults

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.

Key issues raised by CPG members included:

- the challenges facing those with dyslexia who are self-employed and the lack of available support;
- The capacity of Dyslexia Scotland to respond to increasing demands as the Service develops;
- Continued levels of support post school

Adult Assessments – Presentation by Rosemary Burke, Dyslexia Scotland Adult Network

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

Key issues raised by CPG members included:

- The low level of dyslexia awareness and for many adults this means they do not recognise it in themselves or others;
- Barriers to assessment including:
 - a. Costs

- b. 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.
 - d. Lack of post- assessment support
 - e. Availability of tutors for adults
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- 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

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.

Margaret Mitchell MSP

Convener,

September 2017

Cross Party on Dyslexia

Annual General Meeting

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Treasurer's Report

2016 - 2017

Opening Balance:	23.00	
Memberships:	<u>130.00</u>	£153.00
Less:		
<u>Sodexo Catering</u>		
September 2016	20.40	
December 2016	20.40	
March 2017	35.70	
May 2017	20.40	
Paper and printing costs	<u>20.00</u>	<u>£116.90</u>
Closing Balance:		£36.10

