

Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia Annual General Meeting and Business Meeting held in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 7th February 2018.

1. Present:

Margaret Mitchell MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP, Oliver Mundell MSP, Emma Harper MSP, Maurice Corry MSP, Tom Mason MSP

2. Apologies: Donald Cameron MSP, Elaine Smith MSP, Tom Arthur MSP,

3. Minutes of last meeting:

Approved by Cathy Magee, Seconded by Andy Laverty

4. Business arising from last meeting

There was no business arising.

5. Dyslexia and its impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Dr Jenny Guise, gave a detailed presentation based on her experience as a Chartered Psychologist on the key impacts dyslexia can have on the daily lives of children and young people. She provided a range of research based evidence which identified working memory, concentration, fatigue and stress management as major issues for children and young people and highlighted some of the approaches that can address these within and outwith the school environment.

6. Dyslexia and its impact on the health and wellbeing of adults

Colin Baird, Assessor and Coach from Genius Within gave a presentation about improving wellbeing and productivity in the workplace with a focus on neurodiversity and mental health. He highlighted some of the key challenges faced within a working environment and the importance of appropriate reasonable adjustments being in place which can significantly enhance self- esteem and confidence.

He illustrated a range of measures and adjustments which can be taken to support employees to assist them to fulfil their working potential, including the role of mentoring and coaching.

7. Open Discussion

Members asked a range of questions in relation to both presentations but also raised concerns about the consequences of local authority cuts to classroom assistants and other additional support for learning resources. These were viewed as key staff in identifying and addressing health and wellbeing issues of children and young people with dyslexia and the reduction in these resources was leaving a gap which was having a negative impact.

There were also concerns that issues relating to the early identification of dyslexia and the wider issue of delayed assessments were having an impact on the mental health of children, young people and their families.

It was suggested that an invitation be extended to Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) to seek further information about the national response of education authorities to addressing health and wellbeing issues for children and young people with dyslexia beyond literacy support.

8. Any other business

There was no other business

9. Date of next meeting: Date in April to be confirmed

**Cross Party Group on Dyslexia
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 20th September 2017**

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
-
- 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

Wednesday 20th September 2017

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

