

# **Joint meeting of the Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment and the Cross Party Group on Deafness in the Scottish Parliament**

## **Minutes of the joint Cross Party Group for Visual Impairment and Cross Party Group on Deafness meeting held on 04 December 2014 in Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament**

### **Present:**

Stuart McMillan MSP, Convenor of CPG on Visual Impairment

Jenny Marra MSP, Convenor of CPG on Deafness

Neil Bibby MSP

Nanette Milne MSP

Dennis Robertson MSP

James Adams, RNIB Scotland

Sandra Black, Angus Council

Angela Bonomy, Scottish Government

Carly Brownlie, SASLI

Catriona Burness, RNIB Scotland

Marion Butchart, Novartis

Alan Dalziel, Action on Hearing Loss

John Denerley, Deaf Connections

Andrew Dewey, Sign Language Interactions

Carole Dixon, Sign Language Interactions

Jane Donnelly, Insight Radio

Ruth Dorman, Deafblind Scotland

Graham Duff, BDA Scotland

Satya Dunning, RNIB Scotland

Kay Eadie, Allergan

Dominic Everett, RNIB Scotland

Catherine Finestone, BATOD

Jill Gallagher, SASLI

Ross Gilligan, DAS

Sheila Hands, Angus Council

Kellas McRobert, SCoD

Gillian Mitchell, Sight Action

Leighton Morris, Alcon

James Mowat

Rod Murchison

Drena O'Malley, Deafblind Scotland

Rachel O'Neill, University of Edinburgh

Vivien Parkinson, Tayside Deaf Hub

Sally Paterson, SAVIE

Hussein Patwa

Christine Polland

Gary Quinn, Heriott Watt University

Katie Rafferty, NDCS

Wendy Rankin, Guide Dogs

Ken Reid, Scottish Vision Strategy

Mandy Reid, SCoD

Ann Robertson, NESS

Terry Robinson, Describe Online

Hal Rollason, Optometry Scotland

Alan Russell, Insight Radio

Rosie Rutherford, SCoD

Fiona Sandford, Visibility

Janelle Scotland, ASTN

James Angus Scott, Eyecare Scotland

Kim Smith, SCOVl

Shona Street, Deaf Links

Ken Swa

Hilary Third, Scottish Government

Nigel Harvey, RNIB Scotland  
Richard Hellewell, Royal Blind  
Clair Henderson, RNIB Scotland  
Delia Henry, Action on Hearing Loss  
Colin Howie, SCOVI  
Caitlin Howie, RNIB Scotland  
(minutes)  
Clare Jewell, RNIB Scotland  
John Legg, RNIB Scotland  
Caroline Macleod, Haggeye  
Janis McDonald, SCoD  
Lewis McNaughton, Scottish  
Parliament

Jackie Thompson, Alcon  
Derek Todd, SCoD  
Julie Turner, Dumfries and Galloway  
Hard of Hearing Group  
Gill Wood, Sign Language  
Interactions  
William Wykes, Eyecare Scotland

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Stuart McMillan MSP, Convenor of CPG on Visual Impairment and Jenny Marra MSP, Convenor of CPG on Deafness welcomed everyone to the first joint meeting of the Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment and Cross Party Group on Deafness.

## **2. Apologies**

Jackie Baillie MSP  
Dr Richard Simpson MSP

Amanda Burt  
John Donaldson, Scottish Braille  
Press  
Jo Emblem, Police Scotland  
Graham Findlay, NESS  
Jane Horsburgh, Guide Dogs  
Paul McCloskey, CEC Libraries  
David McKerral  
Mary Rasmussen  
John Ravenscroft, University of  
Edinburgh  
George Reid

Susan Robinson Mhairi Thurston,  
University of Abertay  
Sandra Wilson  
Dennis Arnold, Dumfries and  
Galloway Hard of Hearing Group  
Jim Edwards, Signature  
Ronnie Hill, Alliance Scotland  
Donald Richards, Donaldson's  
Maggie Short, ATLA  
Bert Smale, ATLA  
Alana Trusty, Deaf Links  
John Urquhart, COSLA  
John Wilkes, Scottish Refugee  
Council

## **3. BSL Bill (additional item – Jenny Marra MSP)**

Jenny Marra MSP gave an update on the BSL (British Sign Language) Bill. The subgroup met with Mark Griffin who has noted his thanks for the support he has received. The Bill is supported by 43 MSPs across all parties and has

now been assigned to the Education and Culture Committee for scrutiny, with evidence to be submitted by 2 February. This will be discussed in detail at the next Cross Party Group on Deafness.

Stuart McMillan MSP noted the importance of public engagement and encouraged the group to send individual submissions for consideration. Evidence via video is also accepted and DVDs about the Bill can be obtained from Mark Griffin, SCoD (Scottish Council on Deafness) and the Scottish Government. Information can also be found online.

### **Action**

- BSL Bill to be added to next CPG on Deafness agenda.

## **4. Equality, Access and Inclusive Communication**

Hilary Third, Scottish Government, thanked the group for inviting her to the meeting. Hilary noted the importance of those who are sensory impaired being able to communicate with others and to be understood. As she spoke about the principles of inclusive communication, she mentioned that in Scotland there was a drive to ensure people were able to participate fully in society, make decisions that affect their lives and articulate their needs.

There are currently 7 “cross cutting priorities” to support a human rights approach, the information of which the Scottish Government will ensure is accessible to everyone. She mentioned links with Equality legislation and ensuring people were involved to make better policy. She also spoke of the UN Convention on Disability, the references within it on BSL and the appreciation that whilst many Deaf BSL Users would not identify themselves as disabled, it was a positive support to a social model creating change in the future. A Cross-Government Delivery Plan will be produced in the New Year in an effort to improve the outcomes for disabled people. A consultation will take place before summer, with the final plan submitted before the end of the year.

She noted the Scottish Government believes BSL is a linguistic access issue and the BSL (Scotland) Bill is sitting with the Education and Culture Committee. The Bill’s transit is likely to influence the understanding of deafness more generally and the government officers are currently working with the BSL and Linguistic Working Group to improve access to information for deaf people and the Scottish Government has been quite radical in setting up a facebook page to support good engagement and involvement of BSL Users in the process.

## **5. Joint Sensory Strategy update**

Angela Bonomy, Scottish Government, noted apologies from Maureen Bruce and gave the group an update on the Joint Sensory Strategy, 'See Hear'. Many organisations are represented on the Steering Group, including the Scottish Government, COSLA, and sensory organisations. The main focus is to ensure that efficient and effective care and support is given to those with a sensory impairment. The strategy has 7 recommendations, ranging from basic sensory checks to the scrutiny of the Equality Act at a local level. Local partnerships have been formulated, including health, service users, third sector and education. Local Authorities have each been allocated a proportion of the budget to be used between April 2014 and March 2016. Local plans have been established and it is anticipated improvements will be seen in year 2. Partnership Leads have been identified and group meetings are held quarterly, with links having been made with a variety of contacts. It was noted that the diagrams on the care pathway documents are not accessible to screen readers. Anyone having problems accessing the documents should raise this with their local team.

The joint Convenors thanked Angela for her input and opened the item for discussion. It was noted that the issue of technology has been raised at previous CPGs on Visual Impairment. James Mowat outlined his experience on access to technology information from Local Authorities. It was noted that RNIB Scotland and Apple Stores can provide training and support for the use of devices, such as smart phones.

The issue of talking buses was discussed and John Legg highlighted the national campaign on accessible buses which Haggeye are involved in. Progress has so far been made with First Bus. Jenny Marra MSP also noted that buses without screens can be problematic for deaf people.

Dennis Robertson MSP, Convenor of the CPG on Heart Disease and Stroke, highlighted the importance of ensuring that communication is also accessible to those from black and ethnic minorities. A Disability Delivery Plan should be developed to ensure communities are being reached.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

- 11 March 2015 (CPG on Visual Impairment)
- 11 March 2015 (CPG on Deafness)