

Cross Party Group Annual Report

December 2023

Cross Party Group on Disability

1. Group Membership and Office Holders

Mark Isherwood MS, Chair

Members:

- Altaf Hussain MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Delyth Jewell MS
- Sarah Murphy MS
- Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
- Sioned Williams MS

Megan Thomas (Disability Wales), Secretariat.

2. Group Attendees

Rebecca Phillips (Minutes), Cllr Teresa Carberry, Marg McNeil, William Fawcett, Tracey Blockwell, Trevor Palmer, Jan Thomas, Andrea Gordon, Shaun Bendle, Kerry Bevan, Branwen Jones, Owen Williams, Lesley Clarke, Lee Parsons, Matt Innes, Gareth Marshall, Sarah Hughes, Bethany Handley, Shahd Zorob, Cath Lewis, Morvenna Richards, Becky Ricketts, Ian Bellin, George Lockett, Miranda Evans, Kirsty Rees, Kelly Stuart, Liz Williams, Zoe Richards, Leandra Craine, Kat Watkins, Sioned Williams MS, Cari Jones, Amanda Say, Rhian Davies, David Rowlands, Ross Thomas, Joe Powell, Andrea Boyce, Petra Kennady, Chris Dunn, Christine Stewart, Hilary McClean (Captioner), Gary Simpson, Jenny Carroll, San Leonard, Monique Craine, Ian Patton, Sheryll Holley (Captioner), Jan Underwood, Ryland Doyle, Lara Warlow, Lorraine Cosgrove, Jack Dunne, Sophie Mason, Andrew Harper, Ann Pankhurst, Hannah Peeler, Lowri Bartrum, Maggie Hayes, Joel Weston.

3. Previous group meetings since last AGM

Meeting 1

Date: 16/02/2023

Speakers: Marg McNiel (See Around Britian), Lesley Clarke (DWP), Matthew Innes (DWP), Andrea Gordon (Guide Dogs Cymru), Cath Lewis (Guide Dogs Cymru), Sarah Hughes (SENCOM and Chair of Welsh Association of Vision Impairment Educators), Branwen Jones (Guide Dogs Cymru).

Summary of issues discussed: The group initially got updates on the ongoing work to promote See Around Britian. Lesley Clarke then gave a presentation on the work of the Disability Services Advocacy Team, whose overarching aim is to underpin the government's aspiration to support disabled people into work and to retain work. This was then followed by a Q&A session with both Lesley Clarke and Matthew Innes. Finally, Sarah Hughes, Branwen Jones, Andrea Gordon and Cath Lewis gave a presentation on habilitation services for visually impaired children and the current situation for habilitation services in Wales.

Meeting 2

Date: 08/06/2023

Speakers: Marg McNeill (See Around Britain), Cari Jones, David Rowlands (Tai Pawb), Ross Thomas (Tai Pawb), Shaun Bendle (Equal Power Equal Voice).

Summary of issues discussed: The group received another update on activity to promote the work of See Around Britian. David Rowlands gave a presentation to the group on the right to adequate housing, followed by a presentation from Ross Thomas of the legislative progress of the campaign. The resulting green paper was open until mid-September. Cari Jones presented next on the Scrap Care Charges campaign in England and proposed a similar campaign in Wales. Finally, Shaun Bendle presented on the Equal Power Equal Voice mentorship programme. For any other business, Mark Isherwood MS highlighted his work as Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration

Committee's enquiry into public appointments. He had also led a Senedd debate on a BSL Bill but needs to win the ballot to bring forward a Private Members Bill.

Meeting 3:

Date: 21/09/2023

Speakers: Marg McNeil (See Around Britian), Gary Simpson, Ian Stanton, Zoe King (Diverse Cymru).

Summary of issues discussed: The group received an update on the work to promote See Around Britian. Following this Gary Simpson presented on his experiences with public transport in Wales. Particularly, the issues with the inaccessibility of trains and railway stations in Wales and how difficult it is to apply for a bus pass. Ian Stanton then presented on the closure of Lloyds bank branches, how the loss of these services impacts him and that there is little to no consultation with residents before bank closures. In any other business, Zoe King promotes that Diverse Cymru are now Taith Champions, a Welsh Government-funded international learning exchange programme. The next call for funding opened on the 5th October.

Meeting 4:

Date: 07/12/2023

Speakers: Joel Weston (DWP)

Summary of issues discussed: AGM was held, with Mark Isherwood MS and Megan Thomas being re-elected as Chair and Secretary of the group respectively. Following this there was a presentation from Joel Weston on the response from the DWP to the cost-of-living crisis. Joel highlighted that they had a limited time to respond to the crisis but pushed the cost-of-living support payments that were made available, this was followed by a Q&A with other attendees that particularly highlighted problems with the existing system to access Personal Independent Payments, Universal Credit and Workplace Capability Assessments. Finally, Mark Isherwood led a discussion on a potential to

have a Welsh Disability Summit in 2024, inspired by the Scottish Disability Summit held last November.

4. Professional lobbyists and organisations met with

See Around Britain

Guide Dogs Cymru

SENCOM and Chair of Welsh Association of Vision Impairment Educators

Tai Pawb

Equal Power Equal Voice (Organisation is a coalition between Disability Wales, Womens Equality Network Wales, Ethnic Minority Youth Support Team and Stonewall Cymru).

Diverse Cymru

UK Government Department of Work and Pensions.

Annual Financial Statement

December 2023

Cross Party Group on Disability

Chair: Mark Isherwood MS

Secretary: Megan Thomas (Disability Wales)

Group Expenses		
	Palantype Hilary McClean -	£320
	08/06/2023	£160
	21/09/2023	£160
	Sheryll Holley-	£360

	21/09/2023	£180
	07/12/2023	£180
Cost of all goods		£680
Benefits received by the group or individual Members from outside bodies	None	£0
Any Secretariat or other support	Disability Wales serves as group secretariat	£0
Total Cost		£680

Services provided to the group, such as hospitality		
Date	Descriptor	Cost
None	None	£0
Total cost		£0