

All Party Group on Deaf Issues

2nd October 2013

Attendees

Ann Jones (Chair)
Donna Cushing (Minute Secretary)
Rachael Earp (Secretariat)

Representatives/Stakeholders

Richard Williams
Meryl Roberts
Norman Moore
Ross Evans
Nigel Williams
Nick Morris
Jim Edwards
Olivia Retter
Cerrys Hill
Jacqui Bond
Jonathan Arthur

Assembly Members

Joyce Watson
Mike Hedges
Mark Isherwood

Communication support

Rachel Smith (Interpreter)
Julie Doyle (Interpreter)
Grace Garnett (Lipspeaker)
Hilary Maclean (Palantypist)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Gill Hadfield, Kate Boddy, Paul Redfern, Debbie Thomas and Sue Williams.

Minutes of the last meeting 22nd April 2013.

The minutes of the last meeting held in Llanelli were accepted.

The Chair informed members the minutes are available on the AOHL website.

2. Actions from the last meeting in Cardiff

Minutes of the meetings are currently hosted on Action on Hearing Loss Website. Members were informed that no response had yet been received from the Education Minister. Additionally, no response had yet been received from the Health Minister regarding Mental Health and hearing loss. Both of these need to be followed up.

Further, in regards to the public meeting in April – Jim Edwards had done additional work in relation to education in the work place. This issue could be discussed in the next meeting as a substantive item.

3. Social Services & Well-being Bill (Wales)

A report on the above issue was previously distributed to attendees. Nick Morris wished to highlight 3 issues within the report relevant to deaf and hard of hearing people:-

- Assessments – How to ensure the single access point is accessible and that staff have the right level of knowledge and awareness of deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people. Eligibility – How to ensure the eligibility criteria recognise the care and support needs of deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people.
- Integration and collaboration – between social services and health boards. In particular issue with deafness and hearing loss which have a medical element to them but also a very clear social care and support element. Some people might want or need services to get the outcomes they want in their lives and the support they need to meet the outcomes.
- Capacity – When assessing an individual the local authority must consider not only the individual's needs and the outcome the person wishes to achieve but also the strengths and capacity of the individual, the family and others who may support them.

Those present discussed this issue at length and highlighted areas they wished covered within the Bill. Nick Morris informed attendees that the SSIA were advising on content and inclusion on the Bill and wished to make it as comprehensive as possible. Nick Morris stated they do not wish to have the Bill passed and then additions needed later.

The Chair stated that if members wished to comment on the report if they could submit them at their earliest convenience.

4. Access to Work Programme

Richard Williams introduced Cerrys Hill from the department of works and pensions who had been invited, at the behest of the committee, to discuss members concerns regarding Access to Work.

Cerrys Hill stated that there may have been some misconception in regards to her role. She stated that she wasn't anything to do with Access to Work but as an ambassador to work with disabled people's user led organisations to help them develop links and share good practice. Cerrys stated that she does however, work closely with Esta McVeigh and will ensure that she highlights the groups concerns in regards to Access to Work programme. She further stated that she agrees that hearing impaired could be missing out on opportunities due to insufficient awareness of Access to Work.

Cerrys informed the group of funding available from Office for Disability Issues and that the application process is quite simple and straight forward and would encourage organisations to apply as the turnaround is quite quick. She further stated what her role as an Ambassador was and that she was only employed for 22 hours a month.

Group members discussed issues in regards to Access to Work and Cerrys Hill's role as an ambassador and concluded to contact DWP on the Disability Roadshow to establish situation in rejuvenating it, to contact Job Centre Plus and invite them to one of the committee meetings to discuss the role of Disability Employment Advisors and to request an individual to come and talk in depth on Access to Work, what it will fund and how they make the general public and employers aware of its' availability.

5. AM update

Subtitling for televised Assembly coverage – The group were informed that S4C have started televising First Ministers Question time and that it is signed. It is televised on a Tuesday night.

6. AOB

New Cross Party Group rules – those present were informed of the new rules and that the group have to comply with. Minutes will be published on the Assembly's Website, AGM's have to be held and Annual Accounts have to be done.

Update on Access to Mental Health Services - Richard Williams informed members of a health service specialist network in North Wales which has been running for a year. During that time they have had 19 referrals most of which came from the voluntary sector and there appears to be an issue with receiving referrals from GP's and primary care. However, the service is doing valuable work and have managed to reduce delays for BSL users.

Update on Accessible Health Care – Richard Williams stated some years ago pressure was put on Health Boards to make accessibility of services for individuals with hearing impairment. The Accessible Information Standards for health services in Wales was devised and the health boards have been asked to implement it by the Autumn. When it has been launched and operational, then members of the public can challenge poor services.

Richard Williams had been requested by Jayne Dulson to request an update on "Close the Gap". The Chair informed the group that this had been done.

7. Close and date of next meeting

The next meeting of the APGDI in Cardiff will be the third week in November.