

All Party Group on Deaf Issues

3rd December 2013

Attendees

Ann Jones (Chair)
Donna Cushing (Minute Secretary)

Representatives/Stakeholders

Richard Williams
Olivia Retter
Jacqui Bond
Jonathan Arthur
Michelle Fowler-Powe

Assembly Members

Mark Isherwood

Communication support

Rachel Smith (Interpreter)
Cathryn McShane (Interpreter)
Grace Garnett (Lipspeaker)
Ann Jones (Notetaker for Michelle Fowler-Powe)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the delay in the start time. The Chair further welcomed Michelle Fowler who replaces Paul Redfern.

Apologies were received from Barbara Rees, Ross Evans, Nick Morris, Nigel Williams, Susan Williams, Gill Hadfield, Paul Redfern, Norman Moore, Meryl Roberts, Jayne Dulson and Rachael Earp.

Minutes of the last meeting 2nd October 2013.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

The Chair informed members the minutes are available on the AOHL website and now the Welsh Government website.

2. Actions from the last meeting in Cardiff

The Chair informed members that the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill was still on-going.

Richard Williams informed members that Action on Hearing Loss were not satisfied with the language used in the Bill – Hearing Impaired. It is felt that individuals may have views on this issue and the language used. AOHL felt that the terms deaf and hard of hearing are more suitable to be used in the document.

It was agreed that the Chair would write a brief letter to Gwenda Thomas to highlight that the language was not appropriate.

The Chair informed those present that she had contacted an individual from Job Centre Plus who worked with Access to Work. They would investigate the work programme and report back findings when available.

Richard Williams wished to highlight an issue which has recently arose regarding Access to Work. It has come to his attention that Access to Work intend to ask people who are provided with support workers exceeding 30 hours to employ the support worker directly themselves. Members discussed this issue and Olivia Retter had recently received information from UKCOD pertaining to this matter and would forward it to members. In addition the Chair would write to Carwyn Jones to raise the issue with the Joint Ministerial Committee.

3. Audiology development across Wales

This item was presented by Jonathan Arthur. Jonathan Arthur gave an in depth presentation on how Audiological departments within NHS are demonstrating improvements in service provision and have been given a mandate to adopted Quality Standards.

In 2010 Adult services standards stood at 68% however, this went up to 89% in 2013. In 2011 another project was implemented to improve children's hearing services. Jonathan Arthur stated that it had been agreed to improve services across the board with Audiological Departments and to encourage collaboration between them. All Audiological Heads of Services meet 4 times a year, one of which, was attended by Richard Williams from AOHL. Attendees at this meeting were keen to improve services including dual sensory and assistive equipment and tinnitus. Patient engagement is a key and volunteer schemes are in the process of being developed. Departments are also looking at efficiency costs and delivering more services with less funds - A number of initiatives are currently in the pipeline.

Jonathan concluded that there are challenges ahead and trying to improve and promote services for patients.

Those present discussed this issue at length including:-

- Joint Working Groups and patients waiting re-assessments
- Patient satisfaction survey relating to quality of service
- Increase in population requiring Audiology services
- Patient reviews every 3 years

Chair suggested that Health Boards are contacted to enquire which of them are adhering to patient reviews every 3 years. Additionally, Mark Drakeford, Chair of the Health and Social Care committee or his officials are invited to attend a meeting to assist with issues in Audiological services. Richard Williams suggested if an invite is extended to Mark Drakeford a focused agenda is organised.

Richard Williams further suggested asking Dr Ruth Hussey the Chief Medical Officer to attend a future meeting.

4. Over 50's Health Check

Richard Williams informed those present that the Government's over 50's health check will be rolled out in March of next year. Currently there were questions on there for individuals to answer concerning issues regarding hearing impairment. Members expressed concern that many individuals will not actually acknowledge their own issues regarding concerns over hearing impairment and it might have been advantageous to put questions on the health check asking, "does your family or partner notice or comment on your lack of hearing?", or words similar. The health check is at <https://addtoyourlife.wales.nhs.uk/intro.cfm>

5. Close the Gap update

Jayne Dulson has offered her apologies, she is unable to attend the meeting.

6. AM update

Lipreading classes – Mark Isherwood informed those present that WEA funding had ended in July for classes in north wales however, NWDA are looking for alternate funding.

This issue was discussed and those present felt that classes should be free for individuals to attend and jointly funded by social services and health. The Chair will write to Equalities Minister to highlight the groups concerns regarding funding of the classes.

7. AOB

Michelle Fowler-Powe highlighted issues regarding the emergency number 999 and non emergency 101 number for all hearing impaired individuals. A report on this issue is currently in the process of being compiled.

Richard Williams informed those present that the All Wales Standards on Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss was being launched on Thursday. The Standards can be found at <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/guidance/standards/?lang=en>

Olivia Retter informed members that the meeting for the British Society Mental Health organised for October was cancelled due to lack of interest. This was a missed opportunity.

8. Close and date of next meeting

The next meeting of the APGDI in Cardiff will be held in the New Year – date to be confirmed.

The Chair wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.