



## Cross Party Group on Disability

### Minutes

**Status: Approved by Co-Chairs**

**Date of meeting**

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013**

**Present**

Rebecca Evans AM (Welsh Labour – Co-Chair), Mark Isherwood AM (Welsh Conservatives – Co-Chair), Paul Swann (Disability Wales - Secretary), Rhian Davies (Disability Wales), Fiona McDonald (Disability Wales), Trevor Palmer (Disability Wales), Ruth Coombs (Mind Cymru), Jennie Lewis, Ruth Crowder (College of Occupational Therapists), Paul Sourfield (Vale of Glamorgan Council) Ele Hicks (Diverse Cymru), Sue Dye (EHRC), Peter Jones (Guide Dogs Cymru), Clive Emery (Enterprising Employment), Owen Williams (Vision in Wales), Julie Thomas (BridgeVIS), Bill Scott (Inclusion Scotland), Heather Fiskin (Independent Living in Scotland), Hilary Third (Scottish Government), Tracey Good (NHS Centre for Equality & Human Rights), Richard Williams (Action on Hearing Loss), Rob Wilson (The Rowan Organisation), Ruth Dineen (Coproductio Wales), Anne Collis (Barod), Mal Cansdale (Barod), Alan Armstrong (Barod), Jonathan Richards (Barod), Tom Raines (National Development Team for Inclusion), Matthew O’Grady (Tai Pawb), Bob Gunston, Karen Warner (Learning Disability Wales).

**Apologies**

Simon Thomas AM, Bethan Jenkins AM, Kirsty Williams AM, Norman Moore (Wales Council for Deaf People), Jim Crowe (Learning Disability Wales).

**1.**

#### **Welcome and introductions**

Mark Isherwood AM welcomed the group to the meeting and to a day of events talking place to celebrate the UN International Day of Disabled People. He explained that the format of the meeting will be to discuss the business items

	<p>first followed by three presentations.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting (18<sup>th</sup> October 2013) and matters arising</b>  The minutes were agreed as a true record</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b>  PS read through the list of actions from the previous meeting.</p> <p>PS confirmed that the ‘Talking Points’ information, the written statement on the Framework on Advocacy from the Deputy Minister and the draft proposal of amendments to the Social Services and Wellbeing paper were circulated.</p> <p><b>PIP assessment recordings</b>  PS reported he had written to DWP regarding audio recordings of PIP assessments and a response had been received from James Bolton, Deputy Chief Medical Advisor, and PS read key points from the letter.</p> <p>In addition, PS reported that the Cross Party Group on Disability also wrote to the Minister, Esther McVay about the same issue. A response was received. and again, PS read key points from the letter.</p> <p><b>Capita Tower</b>  PS explained that at the previous meeting, an issue was raised over the accessibility of DWP’s Capita Tower building in Cardiff. RE agreed to follow up on an outstanding request for a copy of the access audit. During this process, it was discovered that it was the Swansea building that was of concern, not Cardiff. This will be corrected and followed up.</p> <p><b>Statement of Opinion</b>  PS confirmed that RE had tabled a Statement of Opinion for audio and audio-visual recordings of PIP assessments and PS read the Statement to the group. The Statement has been signed and supported by 10 Assembly Members.</p> <p><b>CPGD’s letter to the new Minister</b>  PS was tasked with writing to the new Minister to highlight</p>

	<p>the group’s concerns around PIP assessments. He confirmed that the letter had been drafted, approved by RE and MI and will be sent within the next few days.</p> <p><b>Under Occupancy Penalty</b>  Concerns over the lack of one bedroom properties available for people wishing to downsize to avoid the so-called ‘bedroom tax’ was raised at the previous meeting. However, due to time constraints the topic could not be discussed fully. However, in the meantime, RE’s team carried out a piece of research which identified that providers of housing to over 20,000 households affected by the under occupancy penalty have only 280 one-bedroom properties currently available for people to downsize to.</p> <p>RE issued a press release to reflect this in October.</p> <p>RE has also issued a press release in regard to PIP assessment recordings.</p> <p><b>Advocacy Provider forum</b>  PS was awaiting information about the children and young people’s Advocacy Provider forum.</p> <p>PS was tasked with circulating the link to the Welsh Government’s amendments to the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill. PS reported that this had not been done but that he will do so following today’s meeting.</p> <p>At the previous meeting, RE offered to ascertain how many people were in receipt of ILF before 1993. The results showed that there are roughly 183.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p><b>UN International Day of Disabled People 2013 theme – Rhian Davies</b>  RD firstly gave a summary of the events taking place to celebrate the UN International Day of Disabled People. She then gave a presentation on this year’s theme for the day, ‘Breaking barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society for all’. She reflected on the barriers and achievements since the UN International Day of Disabled People began</p>

	in the 90's.
4.	<p><b>Independent Living Fund – Implications of the successful legal challenge – Paul Swann</b></p> <p>PS informed the group of the ongoing concern with regards to the ILF. He ended by saying that the current situation is that the Government have yet to decide whether to continue ILF. He asked whether the Cross Party Group felt they would like to write to the Minister of State for Disabled People to express their view in light of the Court of Appeal's ruling. This was agreed. MI, RE and PS will draft a response.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> MI, RE and PS to draft a response to the Minister of State for Disabled People expressing the views of the Group.</p>
5.	<p><b>Disability and Tackling Poverty – Vaughan Gething AM</b></p> <p>At this point, Vaughan Gething AM joined the meeting and spoke about disability and poverty. He highlighted the impact that Welfare Reform will have on disabled people, Social Services and other public services. He said that the Welsh Government will do what it can to mitigate the adverse impacts in Wales. He added that they will continue to support recipients of ILF in Wales to live independently, whatever decision is made about the future of the Fund. He also expressed support for the Employment Support Grant which was set up to assist former Remploy staff who were made redundant to return to work.</p> <p>The Deputy Minister responded to several questions before leaving the meeting.</p>
6.	<p><b>Equality, Inclusion and Independent Living in Scotland – Hilary Third (Scottish Government Equality Unity), Heather Fiskin (ILiS – Independent Living in Scotland) and Bill Scott (Inclusion Scotland)</b></p> <p>Hilary Third opened the presentation and set out the context for the presentations before handing over to Heather Fiskin and Bill Scott to give practical examples of the work they have been involved in together.</p> <p>The presentation detailed their approach to independent</p>

	<p>living; where they are now and where they want to be. Heather Fiskin focussed on the importance of co-production and highlighted some examples. Bill Scott explained that Inclusion Scotland is Disability Wales' sister organisation in Scotland. They are a national Disabled People's Organisation and funded by the Equality Unit. They have been working on the Social Care Self Directed Support Scotland Bill and he was pleased to share that for the first time, certain rights to independent living have been enshrined in a piece of British legislation.</p>
7.	<p><b>AOB</b> There was no other business</p>
8.	<p><b>Future meeting dates &amp; themes, including AGM</b></p> <p><b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 6.30pm at The Pierhead, Cardiff Bay.</b> Theme – 'Employment'. PS reminded the group that an action from a previous meeting was to invite Jeff Cuthbert AM to attend. The group agreed.</p> <p><b>AGM</b> The AGM will be held at the beginning of a general meeting as an agenda item. Date and time TBC.</p>