



## Cross Party Group on Disability

### Minutes

**Status: Approved at meeting on 3 December 2013**

<b>Date &amp; Venue of meeting</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2013 at Bro Myrddyn Indoor Bowling Club, Carmarthen.
<b>Present</b>	Rebecca Evans AM (Welsh Labour – Co-Chair), Paul Swann (Disability Wales – Secretary), Rob Wilson (The Rowan Organisation), Owen Williams (Vision in Wales), Rebecca Phillips (Vision in Wales – CPGD minutes), Norman Moore (Wales Council for Deaf People), Paul Warren (Diverse Cymru), Betsan Caldwell (Community Transport Association), Julie Thomas (Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People), Rhiannon Hicks (Ceredigion County Council), Tony Hawkins (Ceredigion Disabled People Together Coalition), Maggie Hayes (Neath Port Talbot Social Services), Kevin Pett (Carmarthenshire County Council), Bob Gunstone (Senior Volunteer), Genine Gunstone (Kevin Brown (PA to Janine Gunstone), Janine Gunstone (individual), Ivan Timmis (Enterprising Employment Wrexham), Clive Emery (Enterprising Employment Wrexham), Paul Warren (Diverse Cymru), Catherine Lewis (Disabled Children in Wales), Anthony Hawkins (Disability Action Group Wales), Paul Evans (Head of Rebecca Evans' Office).
<b>Apologies</b>	Henry Langen, Janice Powers, Simon Thomas AM, David Rees AM, Bethan Jenkins AM, Mark Isherwood AM, Rhian Davies, Ellie Hicks, Sharon David, Dylan David, Peter Jones, Andrea Gordon
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Rebecca Evans AM (RE) welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Disability (CPGD) and gave a quick summary of the purpose and background of CPGD. Members of the Group introduced themselves to each other.

<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising (18/6/13)</b>  The minutes were approved as a true record.  PS highlighted the various actions from the last meeting.</p> <p>He confirmed that the ‘Talking Points’ information, the Deputy Minister’s written statement on advocacy and the draft proposal regarding an amendment to the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill were circulated. He suggested that these be circulated again to benefit those who were not present at the last meeting.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> PS to circulate ‘Talking Points information’, written Framework on Advocacy and draft proposal of amendment to Social Services and Wellbeing Bill papers.</p> <p>PS reported that he had not yet invited Gwenda Thomas AM or Jeff Cuthbert to attend a meeting of the CPGD but will do so in due course.</p> <p>PS was also tasked with writing to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding audio recordings of Personal Independent Payments (PIP). A response was due by mid October, but this has not been received, as yet. He also added that he also wrote to Esther McVay, the Minister for Disabled People at the time. A response was received but it wasn’t conclusive.</p> <p>PS will keep the group informed.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the numerous issues associated with the PIP assessments.</p> <p>BG reported that a client was recently refused the right to be accompanied by an advocate. He also stated that Capita Tower, Cardiff is not accessible. He has requested a copy of the access audit via the Freedom of Information Act, but he has not yet received a response.</p> <p>RE offered to support BG to obtain the access audit and share with the group so that further actions can be discussed.</p>

	<p>NM added that the option of video recording the assessments for people with hearing loss has been refused.</p> <p>AH added that Disability Action Group Wales have submitted a number of case studies but have received no feedback. He asked whether the CPGD group could follow this up.</p> <p>RE suggested that the group write to the new Minister in the first instance expressing the discussion.</p> <p>RE added that if there came a point whereby disabled people's groups wanted to form a national campaign, then, the CPGD may be able to offer support.</p> <p>RE also suggested that a Statement of Opinion should be tabled at the Assembly to reflect the discussion.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> RE to table a Statement of Opinion for audio and audio-visual recordings of PIP assessments.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> PS write to the new Minister to highlight the group's concerns around PIP assessments.</p> <p>Some issues were raised around bedroom tax. However, due to time constraints, RE suggested that it be an agenda item for a future meeting.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Welsh Government's Framework for Action on Independent Living.</b></p> <p><b>Key Points</b>  PS briefly explained how the Framework for Action on Independent Living came about. He confirmed that the Framework was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> September. He noted that 'improved access to independent advocacy services' is still a major issue and needs to be taken forward in Wales.</p> <p>MH echoed Paul's concerns and added that as a Practitioner, she agreed that independent advocacy is needed especially for those with significant critical need.</p>

CL added that the Children's sector is also keen to push independent advocacy forward. Children in Wales currently co-ordinate an Advocacy Provider forum and suggested linking up to share expertise. CL will pass the details onto PS for circulation.

CL also added that there is currently an issue with regards to the role of Independent Advocacy within the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill. She recognised that the Minister has put out a statement but emphasised that more needs to be done.

**Action:** CL to forward details of the Advocacy Provider forum to PS for circulation.

### **Implementation**

PS informed the group that he, Jackie Nicholls (Welsh Government), and Catryn Holzinger (WLGA) are developing a monitoring and evaluation framework which will be circulated for feedback.

He added that the Framework is based on disabled people's views and that the engagement needs to continue. He noted that there are some areas within the Framework that are weak so it was important to ensure that it is a "living document" which is continually developed.

PS highlighted ways of developing and strengthening the implementation of the Framework:

- engage with Commissioning Managers so that the Framework can be implemented in a practical form.
- engage with Framework "enthusiasts" (i.e. those who are committed to taking the Framework forward).
- involve the former National Steering Group.
- look into how to embed it into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reporting cycle, particularly in relation to Article 19.
- a shadow report in Wales to submit to the UK

Government alongside the Welsh Government's own report.

- look at how the Framework can be used to influence development of Strategic Equality Plans.

PS added that the Welsh Government's Equality and Inclusion Grant, the deadline for which Oct 31<sup>st</sup> prioritises the development of disabled people's organisations.

RE said the framework is a testament to the importance of engaging with people, co-production and the strong third sector in Wales

### **Feedback and discussion**

CL stressed that the framework is weak where children and young people are concerned. One particular concern was the lack of support during their transition from children to adulthood.

CL expressed her interest in being apart of the implementation group.

GG identified that the framework should include disabled parents and young carers.

CE reported that his experience, with regards to employment of disabled people, was that Welsh Government offer good advice and understanding but that this becomes weaker at local authority level.

MH was delighted that the document has a strong focus on the Social Model and Independent Living.

BC was pleased to see that one of the actions is to improve access and transport and emphasised the importance of engaging with other organisations as well as commercial transport operators.

PS summarised and stated that it is a document to work on and develop, particularly in relation to children and young people, and mental health.

	<p>RE suggested that the group keep a watching brief, but its progress be reviewed annually.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Brief updates</b></p> <p><b>Social Services &amp; Well-being (Wales) Bill</b>  PS said that there are a lot of Welsh Government amendments coming forward.</p> <p>RE explained that the Bill is there to shape Social Services for the future. She outlined the various stages of the Bill. Stage I was completed last week and the committee have now entered stage II.</p> <p>PS added that the Citizens Panels avenue is also available for those wishing to share views and feed back to Welsh Government.</p> <p>RE informed the group that the Minister wrote to the Chair of the Social Services committee and Children’s committee. The information is available online and lists some of the areas in which government amendments will be forthcoming. PS to circulate the link.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> PS circulate link to Government Amendments</p> <p>CL expressed her concerned that section 17 of the Children’s Act is going to be repealed, where disabled people are automatically regarded as children in need. She hoped that safeguards will be put in place in the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill to ensure there is no regression of services.</p> <p><b>Independent Living Fund</b>  PS explained that the ILF is for people with a higher level of support needs. The UK government decided to scrap it and responsibility for Wales has been devolved to the Welsh Government.</p> <p>A consultation will be launched in mid November for 12-14 weeks and consultation events will be held. Ministers will confirm their decision in Spring, leaving about a year to put the new arrangements in place in Wales.</p>

	<p>The possible options include distribution to local authorities without ring-fencing, distribution to local authorities as a special grant, or establishing an independent organisation to undertake this work.</p> <p>MH expressed her concern about those claiming ILF before 1993.</p> <p>RE offered to will find out how many people would be affected by the pre 1993 issue by local authority and ask PS to circulate.</p> <p>RW added that consideration should also be given to those who have been denied access to ILF in the past.</p> <p>RE suggested that the group respond to the UK government at the appropriate time.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> RE to find out the number of pre 1993 ILF recipients.</p> <p><b>Personal Independence Payment</b> PS felt that this had already been covered sufficiently under item 2.</p>
5.	<p><b>Launch of Disabled People Together Coalition</b> TH gave a presentation to the group about the Disabled People Together Coalition. He began by giving some background information as to how the organisation came about. The organisation was launched on 18<sup>th</sup> September. He explained that it is a coalition of individual disabled people, disability organisations and other interested parties in Ceredigion. It represents the interests of people who live work or study in Ceredigion, working particularly for those with physical, sensory and neurological impairments and long term chronic health conditions to improve quality of life, equality of opportunity, social inclusion and access to services in the County.</p> <p>RE Thanked TH for his presentation and offered her support to the group.</p>

	<p>PS informed the group about the Community Voice Big Lottery project currently running in Pembrokeshire. At a certain stage of development, the plan is to link up with the Ceredigion and Carmarthen projects. PS suggested that they contact him for further information.</p>
6.	<p><b>UN International Day of Disabled People</b>  PS announced that the UN International Day of Disabled People on 3<sup>rd</sup> December will begin with a CPGD meeting from 8.30am – 10am. This will be followed by a series of events throughout the day by various groups and organisations. Disability Wales will be running a session on ‘how to transform public services so they deliver what matters’ from noon to 1.30.</p>
7.	<p><b>Future meeting dates and themes</b>  RE explained that the new Cross Party Group rules request that the groups are formally constituted. Therefore, the role of Secretary was due for nomination.</p> <p>PS was nominated and, in the absence of other nominations, all agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Vision in Wales agreed to continue to offer their support with the production of the minutes, which PS acknowledged is invaluable.</p> <p>PS added that at the next CPGD meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, Vaughan Gething AM, Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty, will be speaking about disability and poverty in Wales.</p> <p>PS also stated that Mark Isherwood AM is keen to have an employment themed meeting in March.</p> <p>Date of next meeting to be confirmed.</p>