

All Party Group on Deaf Issues

8th July 2014

Attendees

Ann Jones (Chair)
Donna Cushing (Minute Secretary)
Katie Chappelle (Secretariat)

Representatives/Stakeholders

Michelle Fowler-Powe
Norman Moore
Meryl Roberts
Jayne Dulson
Nigel Williams
Jacqui Bond
Richard Williams
Paul Redfern

Assembly Members

Mark Isherwood

Communication support

Rachel Williams (Interpreter)
Julie Doyle (Interpreter)
Grace Garnett (Lipspeaker)
Hilary Maclean (palantypist)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave her apologies for her non-attendance at the last meeting due to her medical appointment. The Chair expressed her appreciation to members for her re-election.

Apologies were received from Barbara Rees, Jonathan Arthur, Olivia Retter, Jim Edwards, Dan Sumners and Ross Evans.

Minutes of the last meeting 6th May 2014.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

2. Actions from the last meeting

Annual accounts have been submitted for evaluation but in line with the Presiding Officers request this will be done on the required form. There are no formal expenses as each party takes responsibility for refreshments and the communication support is provided under equality.

Michelle Fowler informed members that she had met with Alun Michael, Police Commissioner for South Wales, to discuss the non-emergency 101 number. He stated that he was aware of the issues and he would look at different ways to text the non-emergency number. The Chair had also recently visited North Wales Control Room and they are also looking at this issue.

3. Future Work Plan

Members were informed that Mr Moore will be retiring in September and the next meeting will be his last.

Members made a number of suggestions for discussion under the forward work plan as follows:-

1. TV Access in Wales
2. Volunteering for people with hearing impairment and challenges
3. Pathway for Lipreading
4. Sensory - Deaf and Blind experiences of housing in Wales – assistive equipment.

Jane Dulson requested members support and lobby on the following items:-

1. Mental Health – Children and Adults
2. Acoustics in Schools
3. Audiological Standards – Paediatrics and children

Members stated that they will look at Digital TV in the first meeting in September. Norman Moore informed members that he is currently working with Deluxe Media and Red Bee monitoring live subtitles. Richard Jones stated that he will discuss this issue with Norman Moore prior to September's meeting.

Richard Williams stated that Jonathan Arthur had suggested the group have a session looking at prudent healthcare and implications for audiology. This would align with Jane Dulson's suggestion on Audiological Standards. Jane Dulson agreed with the suggestion.

4. AOB

Hearing Aid Re-assessment waiting times – A recent article appeared in the South Wales Echo regarding above - Members discussed this issue at length and concluded that the group would contact the Health Minister to establish the statistics on waiting times to include reassessment figures and age related wait times.

Members further discussed issues regarding individuals losing their hearing aids and the cost implications to them if this happens.

Update – Tinnitus; services for patients who are deafblind – Jonathan Arthur and Ross Davies are currently in the process of refining the document pertaining to this matter, however, they have written to Mark Drakeford AM, Minister for Health and Social Services and awaiting a reply.

Launch of Sensory Engagement project - The sensory engagement project aim, as mentioned previously, is to look at housing related issues, in the main round, assistive equipment and GP services in Wales. This will sit alongside accessible healthcare work and to develop the BDAs guide. In addition the project will look at social services in Wales through the eyes of people who see those services. The idea of the project is that people will share the stories and a report will come out with recommendations on how to improve services along with a web-site to capture stories and best practice for future services to use. Richard Williams asked if any members knows someone who wants to get involved with that project, as it is based on people sharing their stories, contact Katie Chappelle at AOHL. People are needed from all over Wales to be involved sharing their stories so improvements can be made.

BSL Improving Access to Psychological Therapies research group – Jacqui Bond informed those present that Improving access to psychological therapies is currently not available in Wales, only in England. Manchester University has a grant to investigate and conduct a controlled trial and the idea is that they would like to get people through a pathway, so, if they need to have psychological therapy, they will be assigned either a deaf therapist or a hearing therapist with an interpreter. The Department of health isn't keen on it being done any other way and the idea is basically to find out whether the outcomes are better for deaf people with an interpreter or with a trained deaf therapist. It's a 2 year research trial and they need to get enough participants.

Members discussed this issue at length and as this service is not available to any individual living in Wales they concluded to flag it up with the Health Minister and to keep a watching brief of when and if this service is rolled out that Wales is included.

Access to Work – This matter will be discussed at a later date when Jim Edwards is able to attend to give members an update.

Assembly website/Senedd TV accessibility – Mark Isherwood informed members that he had received a series of emails from a group calling themselves DARG (Deaf Action Research Group) expressing their concerns regarding Senedd TV not meeting the requirements in terms of signage or accessibility for deaf people and whether we should be raising this with the Commission? Additionally on a related matter they raised with an issues with the Assembly web-site stating, that the terminology regarding sensory loss is incorrect.

Members were informed that Wales Council for Deaf People are currently working with S4C and the Welsh Government over accessibility to re-instatement of FMQ. Following transmission on S4C this will be available on YouTube with an explanation stating the reasons for using hearing interpreters rather than deaf interpreters, due to time constraints. There will be an explanation distributed to deaf people across Wales regarding this issue in due course.

Members discussed DARG writing to the petitions committee regarding this issue and concluded that any queries from the committee can be referred to the professional users group and the Equalities Unit within Welsh Government to follow up. The Chair will contact the Presiding Officer regarding the issue.

Petitions Committee – School Building Acoustics – Jayne Dulson highlighted her frustration with the Petitions Committee regarding this issue as they submitted the petition a year ago and it is still waiting on the Final Phase to be discussed at committee. Members discussed this matter and the Chair stated that she will highlight this with members of the Petition Committee.

Jayne Dulson additionally, informed those present, that the consultation on the White Paper on Additional Learning Needs will conclude on 25th July. The consultation should be available to review sometime after that date on the Welsh Government Website. Jayne Dulson stated that NDCS will be involved in the Bill and Code of practice in relation to the Bill.

5. Date of Next meeting

The next meeting of the APGDI in Cardiff will be held on 23rd September 2014.

The Chair wished everyone a good Summer.