



Cross Party Group on Disability

Minutes

Status: Approved by the Chair

**Date of meeting**

27<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

**Present**

Mark Isherwood AM (Welsh Conservatives – Chair), Simon Connors (PHD Student), Rebecca Phillips (Wales Council of the Blind – Minutes), Simon Green (Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People), Kath Taporelli (Afasfa Cymru Committee), Sian Summers-Rees (Community Transport Association), Eli Hicks (Diverse Cymru), Damian Chick, Trevor Palmer (Disability Wales), Rob Wilson (the Rowan Organisation), Debbie Houghton (the Rowan Organisation), Clive Emery (Consultant), Ceri Cryer (Age Cymru), Steve Walford (Disability Wales), Rachel Williams (Parkinsons UK), Patrick Thompson (Capita), Dr Stephen Duckworth (Capita), Rhian Davies (Disability Wales), Paul Swann (Disability Wales - Secretary)

1.

**Welcome, introductions, apologies**

MI opened the meeting and welcomed the group.

**Apologies:**

Jennie Lewis, Robin Moulster, Owen Williams

2.

**Minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd September 2014 and matters arising**

The minutes were recorded as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

PS highlighted the Actions from the previous meeting.

**1. Invite the Police Commissioner to a future CPGD meeting.** PS reported that this had not been done but that the invite will go out in time for the next meeting.

**2. Write to the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.** PS reported that this had not been done but that it will be done in time for the next meeting.

In relation to this, PS passed on his thanks to MI from Jennie Lewis for raising the issues with the Assembly's enquiry into poverty and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. PS asked whether there had been any further feedback. MI confirmed no feedback has been received as yet.

3.

**New Members & Election of Co-Chair**

PS explained that the group must include Members from three of the political party groups. At present, MI is the only member, representing the Conservative Party.

Aled Roberts AM has offered to represent the Liberal Democrats and co-chair alongside MI. The Chair called for a motion for his nomination.

	<p>Nominated by: Sian Summers-Rees Seconded by: Kath Tarpelli</p> <p>PS informed members that they are engaging with Plaid Cymru and Labour to encourage representatives to the group.</p> <p>PS also noted that the group is required to produce an Annual Report and that a draft version has been produced.</p>
4.	<p><b>Independent Living Fund: Update following the Welsh Government's Consultation</b> – Paul Swann</p> <p>PS reported that the Fund will close in 5 months. There are delays in the Minister making a decision over the future of the ILF. However, PS was pleased to report a good response to the consultation and that the ILF Committee are hoping to submit a report to the Minister over the next couple of weeks.</p>
5.	<p><b>Capita's PIP Assessment Programme</b> – Dr. Stephen Duckworth OBE, Director, Disability Assessment Services (Health and Wellbeing Division)</p> <p>Dr. Stephen Duckworth OBE delivered a presentation about the PIP assessment process.</p> <p>Some of the key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In most cases Capita will carry out face-to-face assessments to process claims, although around 25% are being done based on the paper application form and evidence provided.</li> <li>- PIP awards are normally for a fixed duration, maximum of 10 years.</li> <li>- DWP are responsible for the overall policy and guidance of which Capita are tasked with implementing.</li> <li>- The DWP commissioned an independent review of how the PIP assessment is working. The review was published in December 2014 and highlights the improvements that need to be made. Capita are working with the DWP to implement the improvements.</li> <li>- Capita have appointed a new Chief Executive, Alan Cave.</li> <li>- 91% of the assessments are now being returned to the DWP within 5 days.</li> <li>- 70% of assessments are taking place in the home.</li> <li>- The backlog of claims has improved due to an increase in qualified auditors.</li> </ul> <p>Some of the questions from the floor included:</p> <p><b>Q. how long does the assessment process take from the time the application is received to the award decision.</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> Capita are contracted to complete the process within 30 days. From receiving the electronic information from the DWP to submitting the assessment report. Paul Gray, in his independent review, recommended that claimants should have the ability to track their claim. Something Capita and DWP are looking at in the longer term.</p>

**Q. Would the backlog be reduced if people with long term illnesses and degenerative conditions were exempt from being re-assessed.**  
**A.** Assessments for those with a terminal illness must be completed within 48 hrs. However, those with progressive conditions should be reassessed to ensure their condition hasn't worsened resulting in them being entitled to a higher rate. For those with a fixed condition unlikely to change, other factors, such as ageing could have an impact on their condition. It is also a policy decision by the DWP that there will no longer be open ended awards.

**Q. Who decides whether a person will have a home visit?**  
**A.** Capita's health professionals make this decision. However, individuals can express their preference but costs must be taken into account.

**Q. Training for assessors in specific conditions.**  
**A.** Capita have involved all the major single impairment charities and they have contributed summaries and guidance to the training package delivered to health professionals. Training is also delivered using an online training tool which can monitor whether the information has been read, how long the document has been open for and whether they have completed the test at the end.

**Q. Is this more of a medical model assessment rather than a social model assessment.**  
**A.** The legislation stipulates that only 5 professions can undertake the assessments. Doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Paramedics because they have to be able to interpret any further evidence that has been submitted by a health professional and the prognosis of the condition.

**Q. There are currently around 144,000 people on DLA in Wales. Can Capita cope with the level of migration to PIP and will this lead to an increase in appeals?**  
**A.** Figures show that 40% of people on lifetime DLA awards don't know about PIP. They will be running some focus groups with lifetime award DLA recipients to understand what they need to do differently to improve the system. They hope this will feed into the appeals process. Capita believe they have the capacity to deal with the increase.

**6. UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People:  
 Developing a Shadow Report – Rhian Davies**  
 RD reported that as a member of the UN Convention of the Rights of Disabled People, the UK is subject to a review by the UN Committee every 5 years and this was due to take place last year. However, due to some delays, this has been put back to September 2016 at the earliest.

Disability Wales are continuing its work with the Four Nations Group to develop a Shadow Report and to agree a set of questions the UN Committee should ask the UK Government.

Disability Wales are also in the process of developing Welsh Shadow Report and plan to run workshops over the summer to gather the views from disabled people.

7.	<p><b>Disabled People's Manifesto – Rhian Davies</b>  Disability Wales launched its Disabled People's Manifesto on 3<sup>rd</sup> December at an event in Cardiff, sponsored by Mark Isherwood AM.  They will be running three regional workshops around Wales so that disabled people can have their say.</p> <p>The key issues that emerged from event on 3rd December was the need for legislation around independent living and the general feeling of needing to strengthen the Framework for Action on Independent Living through legislation. In addition, there was a strong feeling that more work needs to be done around raising awareness of disability issues within the public sector.</p> <p>Details of the regional workshops are on Disability Wales' website.</p> <p>They have also circulated a survey to ascertain people's understanding of existing legislation.</p> <p>They are looking to launch the details of the Manifesto in June.</p>
8.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MI informed the group that he has been brought forward to hold a short debate at the end of business tomorrow, which will focus on Co-production.</li> <li>2. An invitation was extended to those present to attend the Cross Party Group on Community Transport on 11th February at 1pm, Dining Room 1.</li> </ol>
9.	<p><b>Future meeting dates &amp; themes</b>  Dates to be confirmed.</p> <p>Future themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of Strategic Equality Schemes</li> <li>- Disability hate crime</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed to write to all Welsh Police Commissioners to invite them to the next meeting.</p>
	<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite the Police Commissioners to the next meeting.</li> <li>2. Write to the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.</li> </ol>