

All Party Group on Deaf Issues

30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

### **Attendees**

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

### **Representatives/Stakeholders**

Rebecca Woolley  
Catrin Edwards  
Jane Dulson  
Wendy Marshal  
Jim Edwards  
Jon Day, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (representing Jonathan Arthur)

### **Assembly Members**

Mark Isherwood

### **Communication support**

Joanne Manneh (Interpreter)  
Nikki Williams (Interpreter)  
Francis Barrett (palantypist)

### **Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Jonathan Arthur, Mike Hedges AM, Richard Williams, Patrick McNamara, Cathie Robins-Talbot, Sian Morgan, Nigel Williams and Jacqui Bond.

### **Update on Access to Work**

Jim Edwards updated members on the proposed Cap on Access to Work. An update was previously distributed to members on the outcomes of a meeting which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 between disability groups and officials from DWP. Jim informed members this has now been delayed until October and existing customers have been delayed for a further 3 years. There were concerns however, regarding self employed individuals who do not earn enough to justify DWP paying for provision.

The Chair will write to the Minister and Liaise with Jim Edwards regarding this matter.

### **Save the Hear to Help**

Rebecca Wooley from AOHL informed members that the Hear to Help only has one year of funding left for this service. It is a community based service run by volunteers. Rebecca Wooley gave an historical background to the service and the reasons why it was originally set up.

Rebecca Wooley stated that this has become a valuable service across Wales and statistics show that it is well-used and takes some pressure off the audiology departments for minor repairs.

There is a high level of satisfaction in the service and for people accessing it, not only in terms of proximity to home, but having peer support from somebody else understands the situation.

The Service is currently funded by the Big Lottery but this comes to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Members suggested a cost benefits analysis is done to see the extent to which the service has contributed to the statutory sector. Rebecca pointed out that AOHL are currently carrying this out and will have the results in the coming months.

Members discussed this matter at length and AOHL outlined that they would not be seeking any further funding streams, but will be speaking to Local Health Boards to see if they will fund this service, as part of audiology aftercare in future. The APGDI will support the service as required.

### **Cost of Lipreading Classes**

Donna Cushing gave an in-depth analysis of the differing costs from Authority to Authority for provision of Lipreading Classes in Wales. There is no uniformity to the cost and it is the Wales Council's belief that this skill should not come under Education but under the remit of the Health Authority. It is a life skill and should be part of rehabilitation.

Classes are proving too costly for many of the older generation and these are the individuals who are primarily affected by this. Wales is an aging population. Donna Cushing stated that the terminology of Lipreading Classes should be change to Lipreading Skills, thereby, this takes the onus away from Education and could be organised via Audiology, offering direct referrals for individuals requesting/requiring the skill.

Members discussed this issue and the Chair stated that she will research this as it may possibly come under the new Social Services Act and Re-ablement.

### **Date of Next meeting**

The next meeting of the APGDI will be held on the second week of June. This meeting will incorporate the AGM.

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### **Public Meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the various individuals of the APGDI. The Chair gave a brief overview of the group and its objectives.

The Chair introduced Jon Day – Audiologist with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.

### **Presentation: Audiology in North Wales**

Jon Day gave an overview of the types of services provided via the Health Board across Wales and where they are located.

Jon Day highlighted some of the complex needs of patients and how they can achieve their goals. The Health Board endeavours to make the most of technology and assisted devices to help patients. Additionally part of their work involves implantable devices such as cochlear implants and bone anchored hearing aids.

Jon Day gave an in-depth presentation on the various issues regarding hearing loss and how various sectors and departments work closely on joint working groups. The Health Boards appreciate the volunteers involved in assisting with minor repairs to hearing aids.

The Health Board have quality standards they have to achieve and adhere to and a satisfaction survey for patients is distributed.

There are a number of areas that the Health Board are involved in, including patients with multiple disabilities and chronic health issues.

Jon Day believes the challenges for audiology is to ensure it stays on the agenda. A collective and coordinated approach from everyone around the national audiology plan is required. Using this approach will emphasise the impact of hearing loss and have a knock on impact of communication difficulties on our wider health, social and educational needs of individuals.

Attendees asked a number of questions including Lipreading skills for hearing impaired, young people and hearing aids – their image and a possible link between dementia and hearing loss.

Assembly Members present and Jon Day answered all questions to attendees satisfaction.

### **Public Q & A session to group members**

Members of the public were invited to ask group members questions. A number of questions were raised including:-

- Access to information regarding Tinnitus Clinics throughout Wales via the GP.

Members suggested contact be made to primary care via the Local Health Boards and practitioners and ask them to highlight this information in GP practices.

- Individuals with hearing loss participation in non-profit group meetings or activities.

Members gave a number of options open to these individuals including asking a communicator to attend and do it for free, using benefits such as DLA to subsidise, or even asking the non-profit group to assist as under the equality act they may have a duty of care to provide communication support.

- The closure of Hear to help service when funding ends in 2016

The Chair stated that this was discussed in the earlier closed meeting and it was agreed that the group would lend its support to AOHL. AOHL will work with the Local Health Boards in Wales to continue the service and will put together a cost benefit analysis on how much it is saving the NHS.

- APGDI meetings primarily being held in Cardiff and only periodically being held elsewhere across Wales excluding hard of hearing and profoundly deaf people from on-going and continued participation.

The APGDI is an additional toolkit that the Assembly uses in the provision of information and campaigning for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. It does not have direct funding from the Welsh Government. All funding is provided by the Assembly Members who attend and comes out of their budgets including that of communication provision. Both the Chair and Mark Isherwood are from North Wales and do all they can to support the issues for those with a hearing impairment in this area. AOHL and Wales Council for Deaf People provide the secretariat and minute secretary of the meetings. We draw on the expertise of the members who attend these meetings and use this knowledge to influence Ministers. The group are starting to travel more across Wales however, they are heavily reliant on its group membership, primarily consisting of the volunteer sector, and their ability to attend. It is hoped that more public meetings will take place in the future.

- Why aren't North Wales Deaf Association part of the APGDI.

The APGDI comprises of members who represent National Organisation or report to National Organisations and that is written into our constitution.

- Facilitation of lipreading classes across Wales.

This issue has already been discussed and the Chair will oversee a paper on the matter.

- Communication provision within the NHS and deaf awareness training of staff.

This issue was discussed at length and various attendees iterated their own personal experiences of this issue. AOHL and Sense are currently working on a report regarding the issue of communication and awareness training within NHS. The group continue to campaign with the Minister over the issue.

Additional experiences over communication provision and barriers were relayed to attendees.

Following on from this interesting insight into attendees experiences the Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.