

Cross Party Group on Vision

Notes of the meeting 30 September 2015 – Annual General Meeting

Media Briefing Room, Senedd, 12pm

In attendance

Sandy Mewies AM (Chair),
Ceri Jackson (RNIB Cymru),
Peter Jones (Guide Dogs Cymru),
Andrea Gordon (Guide Dogs),
Catrin Edwards (Sense Cymru)
Marcela Votruba (School of Ophthalmology)
Mike Hedges (AM)
Janet Finch-Saunders (AM),
Miriam Martin (CEO, Action for Blind People)
Emma Sands (RNIB Cymru)

1. Minutes of the last meeting, 11 February 2015

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2. Education Update

Ceri Jackson, RNIB Cymru Director gave an update on the work of the group since the last meeting. Sandy Mewies AM and Ceri Jackson had attended a meeting with the Education Minister, Huw Lewis who had assured them that a report would be produced by December 2015 on the short, medium and long term issues raised.

Sandy Mewies suggested that the group write to the Minister to advise how they would like to receive this update, whether it is through the Third Sector Additional Learning Needs Alliance (TSANA) or through the cross party group.

Catrin Edwards advised that the TSANA group were advising on the code of practice for the Additional Learning Needs Bill at present.

Marcela Votruba stated that Cardiff University would be interested in helping where possible with the University course and it was

suggested that Emma Sands raise this with Nicola Crews at RNIB Cymru.

3. Review of the work of 2014-15

The timings of the Cross Party Group were discussed.

Mike Hedges discussed the numbers of all party groups in Westminster versus the National Assembly and the difficulty of getting Assembly Members to attend.

Sandy Mewies spoke about the possibility of joining up with different Cross Party Groups around issues which were pertinent to others.

Catrin Edwards spoke about the joint conversations which were already happening within sensory loss and therefore that some meetings could be held together.

4. Election of Chair and Minutes Secretary

Ceri Jackson took the role of Chair whilst the election took place.

Sandy Mewies made it clear that if she was re-elected it would be only for one more meeting as she is standing down at the 2016 National Assembly Election.

Mike Hedges nominated Sandy and Janet Finch-Saunders seconded her.

Emma Sands suggested that she would prepare a legacy and evaluation report for the CPG group over the Fourth Assembly and circulate to Members.

Catrin Edwards nominated RNIB Cymru to continue as Secretariat.

5. Future agenda items and dates of meetings

Ceri Jackson put forward the dates of:
Wednesday 27 January, Wednesday 22 June and Wednesday 19 October for the year 2015/16

And the future items for discussion:

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act and its implementation after April 2016; and the Built Environment.

Sandy Mewies suggested bringing in people with the skill set to advise such as local councillors.

Peter Jones spoke about the opportunity to influence the guidance on the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act in November by sending out a briefing paper to all Assembly Members. It was decided that this would be drafted through the Wales Vision Forum and then sent out to the Cross Party Group.

Janet Finch- Saunders raised the issue of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and the long waiting times for cataract surgery in her constituency.

Sandy Mewies raised the issue around awareness about having a regular eye test.

Marcela Votruba agreed about the huge amount of work that goes on to raise awareness and asked how could the CPG support this?

Ceri Jackson spoke about optometry and ophthalmology partners linking up to raise the profile of National Eye Health Week, and that RNIB Cymru as secretariat would prepare a paper about the issues the CPG could raise and support.