

## **Cross Party Group on Deaf Issues**

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

### **Cross Party Group on Deaf Issues Attendees May 2018**

Mike Hedges AM - Chair

Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care

Mark Isherwood AM

Dai Lloyd AM

Rhun ap Iorwerth AM

Graham Davies

Ryland Doyle

Paul Redfern, British Deaf Association

Sarah Matthews, Centre Of Sign-Sight-Sound

Louise McGrath, Wales Council for Deaf People

Jonathan Joseph, Audiologist

Jacqui Bond, Social Worker

Steve Haines, National Deaf Children's Society

Jayne Dulson, National Deaf Children's Society

Rebecca Woolley, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru

Llŷr Wilson-Price, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru

### **Communication Support**

Rachel Williams (Interpreter)

Julie Doyle (Interpreter)

Hilary Maclean (Palantypist)

### **Apologies**

Matthew Watts, Social Worker

Alison Bryan

Cathie Robins-Talbot

## **Welcome**

There was a delay in starting the meeting as the Minister and AM's were delayed in plenary. Discussions were held around whether to start the meeting without their presence and all voted to wait until they arrived before proceeding with agenda items.

Discussions were then held around the timing of the meeting, to avoid delays in the meeting start time and/or cancellation/postponement of the meeting, it was suggested and agreed that future meetings would be held during lunchtimes. Refreshments would also be organised for future meetings.

The Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care – Huw Irranca-Davies and other AM's then joined the meeting. The Chair welcomed them to the meeting.

## **General Discussion**

- **Impact on Social Services & Well-being Act**
- **Interpretation of the Social and Well-being Act in Conwy**

The Minister introduced himself as the new minister for children, older people and social care and thanked all for giving him time. He stated that they often get lost in strategies and documents and wanted to flag up the overarching document 'Prosperity for All', Huw Irranca-Davies explained it is a framework document of what we're trying to do within Government, amongst many things it references legislation around the Well-being and Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Well-being act. Huw stated this style of government is based on outcomes for people and they want a quality difference for people's lives and outcomes but measuring it becomes quite an issue.

He went on to say that he thought it was the right approach because it is based on a number of factors: flexibility for localised delivery, working with people to find out what is needed in terms of provision, support, strategy, finding out what people need and actually measuring whether it makes a tangible difference. He stated that it is putting the power downwards, asking how things should be delivered and giving the framework to make the right decisions.

Huw stated that there is a parliamentary review which reported recently bringing together a more seamless way to Health and Social care. They are looking at bringing together local authorities, health boards and health authorities etc. and how they can make it look and feel seamless for people, with hearing loss and deafness, who need support, advice or whatever is needed so they don't have to go to different places and people.

He also mentioned that they would be bringing forward a long-term health and social care plan which has never been seen in the UK before.

Huw stated that they will line up funding on the outcomes, in terms of support, advice, guidance, provision and sit together with people with hearing loss and issues around deafness to deliver. They want to see not just individual local authorities or health boards but having regional partnerships sitting together, forget who is holding the funding and focusing on the outcomes and put resources into it. He wants people to work jointly together to deliver outcomes and spread best practice.

Huw explained that the blueprint around this is the integrated framework for action for care and support for people who are deaf or living with hearing loss. The framework is in the context of being constructed collaboratively with people, not imposed on, and not dropped on from Government. He stated it was worked with service users, families, third sector, professionals and people who deliver services. The approach was from new-born screening right through to older people to ensure the appropriate services were in place. He also advised that there is still more work to be done.

The Minister also stated that work was underway with new models of audiology services with ABMU and Betsi Cadwaladr UHB's. Which is another change in direction focussing towards primary and prudent healthcare.

Huw told all that Head of audiology services at Cardiff and Vale UHB has redesigned the patient clinic at UHW with a patient drop off service that can be seen on the day. Deaf/hearing loss awareness training is to be developed for all Health boards and Social services, with links between hearing loss and mental health being included in core training modules.

Huw also mentioned that people living in care nursing homes will be identified and supported so their hearing needs are met through adequate provision of in house care and referrals, with regular hearing tests included in care plans.

Huw stated that to ensure all these actions are progressed, a project board has been set up to provide advise to Welsh Government, NHS and local authorities. The board met in March and decided on quick wins to action. The next meeting for this is in July.

The minister went on to mention other things the Government are doing; The standards for accessible communication and information for people with sensory loss, working with NDCS on issues related to hearing impairment and mental health, Framework for action on independent living which has 7 key priority areas, including people with sensory loss. He then stated that if we can work cleverer within current constraints, collaboratively in line with legislative framework in Wales, we can do amazing things.

Huw then asked were there any questions?

Paul Redfern from BDA answered yes, he informed the minister that he was excited by what he said and asked 'How is this going to affect those groups that are spread out geographically? He stated that numbers are small in particular areas. The main issue is access for those through their own language, how will you tackle that issue?

Huw Irranca-Davies replied telling all there were a couple of ways this could be done, one is if the focus is on the individual and the outcomes for that individual then it should not matter where they live, there is a duty within the legislative framework to provide for that isolated individual. He went on to say that it will differ from area to area depending on provision and service available but there is a duty to provide to everybody, wherever they are living. He stated if the provision is scarce and the population dispersed that brings its own challenges but he would be interested in thoughts on how to develop the two issues. One is the network, how we bring those people together or access those people so that their voice can be heard? Secondly, how do we make sure that individuals also have access to things such as advocacy, so that they have other people if need be to make their voice heard? And third is what

innovative ways can we learn from you and others who might not be part of a big network, about how we best provide those services?

Paul responded by telling Huw that he thinks that using interpreters would be a good starting point, he then told all that BDA have lottery funding to establish Advocacy services, to support people to make sure their voice is heard. Paul Redfern told the Minister he was looking forward to working with him closely and feeding back on the questions.

Jacqui Bond, Social worker then introduced herself and made the point that information, advice and assistance generally is only accessible by telephone or email which is a problem for deaf people. Huw Irranca-Davies thanked Jacqui for her comment and said they would take it on board.

Sarah Matthews, Chief Executive for Centre of sign, sight, and sound stated that one of the agenda items is interpretation of the well-being act, she stated that there is a prime example in North Wales of misinterpretation of the act. Sarah explained how BSL users in Conwy have had their access to BSL interpreters cut and are now being told to apply for direct payments to pay for their own communication support to access services within the council. The local community have taken the issue to the Ombudsman, who has found it in the community's favour, however the council are not meeting the recommendations of the report.

Further discussions were held around the misinterpretation of the act and its discriminatory effect, it being a cost cutting act and the possibility of this decision being made in councils across the whole of Wales.

Rebecca Woolley, Director of Action on Hearing Loss in Wales introduced herself and stated putting power downwards coupled with austerity can lead to wrong decisions being made by statutory services. Rebecca said that she was interested to understand to what extent organisations can work with Welsh Government to ensure statutory providers are held to account to ensure equality of access and services are being provided. Rebecca then mentioned Regional Partnership boards and how difficult it is to engage with them if you are representing a small community of people or an individual, being such large structures, they need to be accessible to all.

Huw Irranca-Davies replied that the statutory framework has the potential to deliver but issues are having to be dealt with against the backdrop of austerity, and it should not be a factor with decisions on meeting the outcomes of individuals. We are evaluating the legislation and currently evaluating individual outcomes for people but we cannot get away from financial constraints.

Sarah Matthews asked the minister what she could take back to the Conwy community on next steps with their issue regarding lack of BSL support with the council.

Huw asked what stage they were at, and if they are back in negotiations with local authority?

Sarah replied saying the council have made an apology but not implemented any of the recommendations of the ombudsman's report, they are continuing down the direct payment route, people are being turned away unless they can pay for their communication support.

The Chair acknowledged that the minister had to leave for another meeting and asked that any emails are directed to him and he will ensure they reach Huw. Mike thanked Huw for attending the meeting. The minister was invited to attend the meeting in a years' time.

Paul Redfern raised the point that areas, Newport was used as the example have merged services to a one stop shop and so there is no one to communication with deaf people. The Chair asked that all specific examples are added to the list and emailed to him.

The Chair stated that he would like to see specialist social services available on the regional footprint, they will not be a specialised social worker available in every local authority but 3 or 4 available within a region.

Jayne Dulson from NDCS raised an issue around child safeguarding and the delays in developing child protection procedures, and the obligation in local authorities to provide a statutory assessment of deaf children. It is imperative that persons carrying out the assessments have an understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of deaf children and young people.

### **Welsh Government Framework of Action**

Rebecca Wooley updated all on the work to date around the framework and invited other third sector organisations to join the group. She also asked that all partners of the meeting to think about what priorities should be focussed on by the framework group. Jayne Dulson stated that some of the quick wins identified had been slow to progress. Further discussions were held with the suggestion of involving directors of social services and making sure this is built into the RPB'S and operational work. Jayne Dulson asked that education also be factored in. The Chair asked that the issues were sent to him to forward on to the Minister.

### **Monitoring and implementation of the All Wales Standards in the NHS**

Paul Redfern had prepared a report and stated that he would not discuss all of it, due to time restraints. Paul discussed details within the report and the problems deaf people are facing booking appointments, regardless of how ill they are, they still have to physically go to the surgery for an appointment.

Paul went on to compare some of the differences between Accessible Information Standards in England and Wales. England's standards are mandatory and he would like to see Wales' standards in the same format. Paul agreed to forward the report to the Chair who would share with all group members.

Mark Isherwood stated that there was a checklist produced as a practical supplement for communication information to people with sensory loss. The Chair agreed to share the checklist with everyone.

Discussions were held around difficulties deaf and hard of hearing people were facing, being able to receive communication support and difficulties booking primary care appointments. Jayne Dulson stated that despite reaching the fifth anniversary of the standards there are still

the same communication difficulties for people and suggested that the Minister is invited to address the group and inform them of what progress has been made. The Chair stated that he would forward any issues emailed to him, on to the minister, AM's and group members.

### **Any Other business**

Mark Isherwood referred to an email regarding Smart Energy GB in Communities, all group members were previously handed a copy of the email. Mark had chaired the group earlier that day, there is funding available for partners to deliver the project to the deaf community and information could be found on the website for organisations wishing to apply for funding. It was agreed that the project would be invited to the next meeting to speak to the group.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Cross Party Group would be on a Tuesday or Wednesday lunchtime. Ryland Doyle would find a suitable lunchtime between now and the end of term.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance.

This concluded the meeting.