

The Scottish Parliament

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON DEAFNESS

Meeting Notes (Draft) of the Cross Party Group on Deafness held in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh on Wednesday 11th March 2015 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: Jenny Marra MSP (Convenor)
Liz Kraft (RCSLT)
John Whitfield (Deafblind Scotland)
Alana Trusty (Deaf Links)
Dan Sumners (Signature)
Elizabeth Adam (Tayside Deaf Forum)
Delia Henry (Action on Hearing Loss)
Carly Brownlie (SASLI)
Alan Dalziel (AoHL)
Liz Kopp (ATLA)
Molly Berry (ATLA)
Dennis Arnold (Dumfries and Galloway Hard of Hearing Group)
John Denerley (Deaf Connections)
Cathy Finestone (BATOD)
Carol Thomson (BATOD)
Derek Todd (SCoD)
Mandy Reid (SCoD)
Janis McDonald (SCoD & CPGD Secretariat)

Also in attendance: Shona McEwan (RCSLT), Kim Hartley (RCSLT), Heather Iqbal (Jenny Marra's Parliamentary Assistant), Frank McNally (Mark Griffin MSP's Parliamentary Assistant), Daniel (Jayne Baxter's Parliamentary Assistant), Andrew Dewey, Sue Mowat (BSL/English Interpreters), Mel Coulter (Electronic Notetakers).

CPGD/428 **WELCOME REMARKS:** The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

CPGD/429 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies for non-attendance had been received from Mark Griffin (MSP), Jayne Baxter (MSP), Nanette Milne (MSP), Dennis Robertson (MSP), Donald Richards (Donaldson's), Graham Findlay (NESS), Chris Milne (Hearing Link). Bert Smale has withdrawn as an individual member. The Convenor would like to record thanks to Bert for his input to the group over the years on behalf of the group.

CPGD/430 **MEETING NOTES FROM 13th AUGUST 2014:** proposed – Delia Henry; seconded – Dan Sumners. Accepted as an accurate record.

CPGD/431 **MATTERS ARISING:**

a) Minutes of the Joint CPG on Visual Impairment and Deafness on 4th December 2014: the minute technically sits with the Visual Impairment

group and accuracy would be agreed today at their meeting. There were no issues from the minute. It was acceptable to the Cross Party Group on Deafness.

b. Access to Work/Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update:

Mandy spoke to this item. An **Access to Work** paper had been circulated prior to the meeting with the recommendations from the review that took place last year. The Minister for Disabled People has yet to give the government's response to the recommendations beyond saying that any progress will take place after the Election in May. A further paper on **PIP** had also been circulated. The natural roll out in Scotland is continuing with people who have been claiming DLA or are over 16 years old in Aberdeen, Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Perth, Inverness, Glasgow City, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh, Galashiels and Motherwell all being invited to apply for PIP. The other group of people being invited to apply for PIP as those who are reporting a change of circumstance. The first independent review has taken place and 14 recommendations were made in the review report that was published in February. As with the Access to Work recommendations, nothing much will take place until after the May Election.

Mandy is a member of the Department of Work & Pensions Implementation Stakeholder Forum Improvements Working Group. This group is making progress on improvements to the processes involved in applying for PIP. For example, keeping the email access for deaf people and asking for an online application process. As Mandy is the only member of this group from Scotland, she can take possible improvements to the group from any group of people in Scotland, not just deaf people. Organisations can email Mandy with anonymised information; individuals can share what they want to. Mandy's email is mandy@scod.org.uk

Dan reported that UK Council of Deafness has a special Access to Work interest group with lots of different deaf organisations which puts out updates on a regular basis.

CPGD/432 **NEW MEMBERS:** Nothing to report or discuss at this meeting.

CPGD/433 **BSL (SCOTLAND) BILL UPDATE:** Mark Griffin MSP gave his apologies to the meeting so Frank McNally, his Parliamentary Assistant gave the update on the passage of the Bill.

Mark appreciates the help done to promote the Bill and encourage as many people as possible to give their views on it. The evidence session held by the Education and Culture Committee saw representatives from deaf organisations attend. It was an excellent session with really good input and members of the committee were impressed with the remarks made and support shown.

The Bill is moving to the end of Stage 1 proceedings. There will be a final evidence session to the Education and Culture Committee on Tuesday

17th March. The Minister and Mark will both give evidence. Should the Committee and Parliament support the principles at Stage 1, it moves to Stage 2 and that is when we see amendments made to the Bill. Mark is open to the suggestions for amendments made by the Scottish Government. Frank then went through these amendments:

1. Translating all BSL plans into BSL which is a good move.
2. Increasing the timescale for development of the national plan from 12 months to 18 months. The reasoning behind this is that they want to have a more effective consultation for the first national plan.
3. There would be still technically be a lead minister for BSL but the Government is keen to highlight that all ministers are accountable for BSL. BSL will be added to Alistair Allan's portfolio as Minister for Scotland's Languages and he would play an active role in relation to the BSL Advisory Group and will be involved with that group to develop the first national plan.
4. The replacement of authority plans with authority statements - this was raised at the Committee. The Government's thinking on this seems to be that if the authorities have to produce statements, they would be following the guidance set out in national plan set by advisory board. Mark is reasonably comfortable with this and feels it achieves the same ultimate goal. Listed authorities would be encouraged to engage in joint working. This is a welcome amendment - the advisory board would encourage public authorities to work within community planning and would take in Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and the NHS; this would ease pressure on public authorities and give a more strategic plan. Another welcome suggestion would be increasing the number of public authorities amongst the existing authorities. So the Bill would include Transport Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and Creative Scotland among others.
5. The performance review. The Bill had proposed a 4 year cycle which is a Parliamentary term; the Government that set the national plan would be held accountable to it at the end of the term. A new Government would then mean a new plan if necessary. Experience from the Gaelic Language Act suggests 4 years is not long enough. The Scottish Government is concerned about giving themselves and authorities enough time to produce the plans, to consult on the plans, and to try and enact the changes within the organisations before it comes back to the Parliament. They don't think it's achievable within a 4 year cycle. That is something we are open to looking at but we will take advice from members of the CPG as well.

Mark is happy to take on board comments or suggestions if you wish to make amendments. He is also happy to meet to discuss if it is possible to make amendments. The only thing organisations should think about is: would we need an amendment to what would be primary legislation; could this be achieved within the advisory group; and would they be able to achieve something without having to amend the actual Bill. Mark is keen to speak to as many people as possible before the Bill gets to Stage 2.

The CPGD had thought that the Bill would take until autumn 2015 to become law but the Non Government Bills Unit believe if all goes to plan, it won't take too long at Stage 2 and could be enacted by the summer recess in June.

Jenny explained the passage of a Bill through the Scottish Parliamentary process:

Stage 1: when the bill goes before the Education and Culture Committee, written and oral evidence is gathered and MSPs have an opportunity to question those who submit evidence. The end of Stage 1 is the debate in the chamber on the proposed bill and evidence heard in committee. This takes a full afternoon. The political parties then usually say what their position is on that proposed bill.

Stage 2 - is the key stage to lobby for amendments. If anything you think needs to be changed in the Bill, Stage 2 is the time when that happens. It goes back to Education and Culture Committee and MSPs can move amendments to the Bill. Then there is a vote on them. Amendments can be accepted or rejected.

Stage 3 - it goes back to the full chamber for debate. Amendments can be inserted at Stage 3 as well.

If you want to make any changes or additions to the Bill, it would be ask for them before Stage 2, which is why Frank invited people to speak with Mark now. They can also be revisited at Stage 3 if Presiding Officer accepts them.

The Committee will publish a report at the end of Stage 1 before the Bill goes to the chamber for debate.

Carly who gave evidence at the Education and Culture Committee told the meeting that it was very positive experience and felt the response from committee members was very good and they seemed to be well aware for the need for the Bill.

CPGD/434 LIPREADING STRATEGY UPDATE: Delia Henry, who is the Chair of the Lipreading Strategy Working Group, spoke to this item. The report - On Everybody's Lips - will be formally launched on the 26th March 2015 by the Minister, Jamie Hepburn, who is responsible for joint sensory impairment services in Scotland. The launch will take place at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre. More information about this will be circulated. The research tells us that people find out about lipreading through massive amount of different sources, including audiology.

The Strategy Group is the mechanism for partnership working and

researcher, Dr Linda Armstrong, carried out a piece of research into how people access lipreading classes and what they get from attending.

For the last 30 years, there have been concerns about the lack of lipreading classes in Scotland. Action on Hearing Loss and SCoD were campaigning on this issue separately. In 2013, several deaf organisations got together and formed the strategy group. The group has produced several publications to publicise the benefits of lipreading. For example, the British Audiology Conference took a poster and a magazine article. Linda Armstrong presented to heads of audiology in Scotland. While audiology was being told it is not the only source that people are finding out about lipreading, they are an important profession to sign post people to it.

A comparison can be made with the situation in Canada where the Canadian Association that supports deaf and hard of hearing people has had government funding to support development of 50 lipreading tutors. Learning from Canada can be applied when looking at mechanisms of how people can access lipreading in rural areas.

What people do when they get to lipreading classes? They find they have people to share their problems with and it almost feels as if it's a new thing for people and they feel as if they are very much on their own. These messages need to be publicised and reinforced by deaf organisations and others supporting deaf people who would benefit from lipreading classes.

The last meeting of lipreading strategy group is next week. This meeting will look to the future and what else needs to happen to keep the momentum going. Several tools have been developed and these need to be publicised. There needs to be investment to continue to grow the numbers of lipreading tutors. Accreditation for the course is being considered.

Kim Hartley thanked Delia and the Strategy Group on behalf of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists for recognising the work of one of their members. Speech and language therapists share a lot of the competencies and have developed knowledge and skills in supporting people with communication support needs. As a professional body, they are keen to work with partners that are on strategy groups and are pursuing that within the college at the moment, in consultation with Delia and Linda, and hope that will lead to more lipreading tutors.

Dan from Signature asked the CPGD for information on whether there is an increasing demand for lipspeaking with signed support. Signature is looking at this from the point of view of the provision on lip speakers and training.

Alana from Deaf Links reported that she is a lip speaker but has not had work in this area for quite some time. She also told the meeting that since

the only lip speaking tutor died, there has been no-one in Scotland with the skills and experience to train lip speakers.

CPGD/435 AOCB

i) Support for Meetings In terms of support for meetings, Interpreters and Notetakers will continue to be provided. SCoD and the Convenor will be trying to work with people to support these costs but it won't interfere with the support offered at the meetings; and will also continue to ask the Parliament and others to look at this cost in terms of inclusive access. Jenny has spoken to the Chief Executive of the SPCB about this. But as CPGs are not officially part of the Parliament's function, they convene at arm's length from the Parliament and are not an active function of Parliamentary activity; they do not have to be resourced. If the SPCB start to provide one group with financial support, then other groups would want the same. This may change in the future and Jenny will raise the matter again.

ii) BATOD Letter to the Minister There has been communication from the British Association for Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) to the Minister, Angela Constance, in relation to cuts in provision in particular areas in Scotland. This has been raised for information only as there has been no response as yet from the Minister. If necessary, the matter can be discussed at a later meeting.

iii) ContactSCOTLAND-BSL This is the service that was the NHS 24 online BSL Interpreter access pilot. It has now been rolled out to other public services. The website is www.contactscotland-bsl.org It is accessible through that website and also through the SCoD website. More information will be available in due course. Most organisations and people round the table will receive information directly from the government. In the first week of use, there has been significant increase in usage. This access is being monitored and will allow, in the longer term, access to a number of public bodies for BSL users in a way that has not happened in the past.

iv) Joint Cross Party Group Meeting with the CPG on Mental Health After some discussion, it was decided that the Convenor should approach the CPGMH for a joint meeting in the autumn – possibly September 2015.

v) Equality and Human Rights Commission and NHS Tayside One of the Deaf Links service users successfully worked with Equality and Human Rights Commission and took NHS Tayside to task regarding not providing NHS interpreters in hospital stay. Deaf Links is working with NHS Tayside to look at an improvement plan. There will be approximately 2 years of working to get that put into place and they hope it will have a positive impact for Deaf people across Scotland.

Jenny asked for information so she could put down a Parliamentary motion and try to get some attention for it.

vi) Children and Young People's Act Guidance For organisations that have interest in children and young people with speech and language needs, the statutory guidance relating to Children and Young People's Act is out for consultation. There are a lot of good things in there about well-being; and placing speech and language at centre of well-being outcomes; but there are also weaknesses around named person competencies. Named persons working for children up to age 5 years need to know about speech and language needs and development needs; and after that age, there will be no requirement and statutory guidance for the named person. This is draft statutory guidance. Organisations with interest in those age groups should ask for those competencies among the named persons for older children and young people to apply for those children under 5.

The Convenor asked Mark Griffin MSP to take over the chair of the meeting as she had to leave the meeting.

vii) SCoD Conference Taking place tomorrow in Glasgow. 170 people altogether are attending. This is the start of an annual event that will bring together the Deaf Sector and partners in the Connect and Thrive programme that SCoD has embarked on. Next year's conference is already in the planning stages.

viii) The See Hear Strategy Nothing much appears to be happening in Tayside. Work is taking place in the Highlands - most of the available money is invested in training and the new See Hear Education and Learning Service (SHEL) will be developing training to be rolled out across the whole of Scotland for all statutory bodies. Angela Bonomy from the Scottish Government will be invited to a future meeting to discuss progress.

ix) BSL (Scotland) Bill Facebook Group There was some discussion about which organisation should monitor the Bill's Facebook page once the Bill has run its course.

CPGD/436 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING Wednesday 10th June 2015 from 5.00pm to 7.00pm. The AGM will take place before the meeting. The main topics for the meeting will be a presentation from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and an update of the BSL (Scotland) Bill.

Mark Griffin MSP closed the meeting.