

The Scottish Parliament

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON DEAFNESS

*Meeting Notes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Cross Party Group on Deafness
held in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh
on Tuesday 11th June 2013 at 6.00pm*

PRESENT: Jenny Marra MSP (Convenor)
Dennis Robertson MSP (Deputy Convenor)
Ann Robertson (NESS)
Dennis Arnold (Dumfries & Galloway Hard of Hearing Group)
Carly Brownlie (SASLI)
Sheila MacKenzie (University of Edinburgh)
Janis Sugden (University of Edinburgh)
Alison Brownlie (Deafblind Scotland)
Anne Lennon (NDCS Scotland)
Mandy Reid (SCoD)
Donald Richards (Donaldson's School)
Rebecca Norton (Hearing Link)
Liz Scott Gibson (Deaf Action)
Bert Smale (ATLA)
Carol Thomson (BATOD)
Lilian Lawson (SCoD & CPGD Secretariat)

Also in attendance: Willie MacFadyen (Hayfield Support Services), Donald Bethune (Deaf Action), Eleanor Hutchinson (BATOD), Robert Malone, Lotte Vanbricken, Ross McKenzie (Jenny Marra's Assistant), Andrew Dewey and Lisa Stapleton (BSL/English Interpreters) and Deloris Cowan (Notetaker).

CPGD/378 **MEETING NOTES:** The Meeting Notes of the CPGD Meeting held on 12th March 2013 were accepted as a true and correct record.

CPGD/379 **MATTERS ARISING:**
379a **Ref: CPGD/369a: DCAMHS:** LL reported that SCoD's DCAMHS Campaign Group had invited NHS National Services Division to their next meeting in August 2013 and also that the Royal College of Psychiatrists had agreed to invite the group to give a presentation at their annual conference.

The Convenor referred to the failed motion. It was agreed that she should try to lodge the motion again.

379b **Ref: CPGD/371: Welfare Reform:** LL apologised that she had not yet written to DWP but she would do so shortly.

379c **Ref: CPGD/372: Expenses for CPGD Members:** The Convenor told the CPGD that the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) would not allow CPG's to apply for funding to help pay members' expenses. She suggested that larger deaf organisations could consider making a donation. MR spoke about the Prime Minister's access funding for disabled people and thought the Scottish Parliament should set up a similar funding. The Convenor said that she would speak to the SPCB. DA suggested the National Lottery but the CPGD thought the National Lottery would not fund political activities. BS said that the expenses were not the main issue for him as it was the timing of the meetings. He asked if future meetings could be held at lunch time, so allowing members to get home at a reasonable hour.

After discussion, it was agreed that future meetings would be held at lunch time and in the evening alternatively.

379d **Ref: CPGD/373: Sensory Impairment Strategy:** It was noted that the consultation on the Sensory Impairment Strategy would end on 28th June. CPGD members were encouraged to respond to the consultation. LSG raised her concern about the Scottish Government not making a BSL version available at the start of consultation and also for not uploading the BSL video clips to the Scottish Government website. After discussion, it was agreed that the CPGD should write a letter expressing disappointment at this practice.

379e **Ref: CPGD/374: Agenda Items:** LL asked the Vice-Convenor if he had lodged a PQ about health needs assessments. He responded that there had been no progress.

379f **Ref: CPGD/375:AOCB- Accessibility of "Parliament Day":** The Vice-Convenor informed the CPGD that he had liaised with MR in raising the concern with the SPCB. The SPCB had given assurance that deaf people would have full access to future parliamentary events.

CPGD/380 **BSL BILL UPDATE:** LL informed the CPGD that Mark Griffin MSP had lodged his final proposal for the BSL Bill (Scotland) with the summary of consultation responses in the Scottish Parliament on 6th June. She asked the CPGD members to ask their local MSP to support Mark Griffin's proposal.

CPGD/381 **DEAF EDUCATION:** The Convenor invited Carol Thomson and Eleanor Hutchinson to talk to this item. They spoke about concerns about the qualification routes the Teacher of the Deaf had to take. There is the legal requirement for teachers who teach deaf children have the appropriate qualification. However their data has shown that there is a number of teachers still teaching deaf children for more than five years with no appropriate qualification. The data also shows that only one teacher had gone through and completed the competency route at Moray House School of Education. They said that there is no

one keeping the record of teachers and checking on their qualifications. So they suggested three action points:

- a) A register of Teachers of the Deaf should be set up by GTCS;
- b) A review of qualification routes; and
- c) Teachers working with deaf children should be included in school inspections.

Carol Thomson said that BATOD was concerned about the cutbacks which could make it easy for local authorities not to send teachers for training.

The Convenor said she was shocked at the data presented by BATOD.

JS asked if she could respond and talk about the competency route available at Moray House. She tabled her paper, copies of which were circulated. After giving her response, she admitted that there was no monitoring system in hand and the University of Edinburgh was planning to discuss how the qualifications would be recognised and look at the professional development.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Convenor would lodge a PQ about a register of teachers of the deaf in the Scottish Parliament. It was also agreed to invite JS back to report on a review of the competency routes at a next meeting.

CPGD/382 **FUNDING CUTS:** The Convenor invited Willie MacFadyen (Hayfield Support Services) and Donald Bethune (Deaf Action) to talk about the impact of increasing funding pressures on support services for deaf people. WMacF spoke about Hayfield Support Services and their clients and how support services had changed in the past thirty years. He was concerned that deaf people were losing out and ignored. They were now getting threats from local authorities to lower our costs or cut deaf people's hours or place people with other providers, whether or not the other providers had the staff/skills to work with Deaf people. Therefore their future is under threat.

As result, Hayfield Support Services were now working with managers and commissioners in social work and adult care services who had no understanding of deaf needs of deaf people. They seemed to work on the basis of numbers and pots of money and talk about doing assessment of need. He spoke about a woman who was deafblind, coming to their service 5 days a week. That was her choice but the local authority who placed her not only cut her hours by half to 2.5 days a week, they were charging her £58/week out of her benefits for those 2.5 days she was allowed to come. She is distraught.

They are ended up in a situation where some individuals are getting a full and beneficial service while others are getting their hours cut. It is causing lots of tension for staff and service users.

Donald Bethune spoke about how the funding cuts had affected deaf clients who had mental health problems. He mentioned different issues including block contracts, eligibility criteria, and transfer of funds to different providers, lack of deaf awareness and awareness of complex needs among commissioners, Self Directed Support, transitional housing benefit and Welfare Reform. He tabled a detailed paper, copies of which were circulated.

The Convenor thanked WMacF and DB for their presentations and invited the CPGD to raise questions. After discussion, it was agreed that SCoD should draft a paper on support services for a next meeting and that COSLA should be invited to a next meeting.

CPGD/383 **AGENDA ITEMS**: It was agreed that the future agenda items would be:

- Funding Cuts – COSLA (September 2013)
- Scottish Lipreading Strategy Group (December 2013)
- Welfare Reform (PIP & Universal Credit) (March 2014)

MR asked the CPGD to let her have any case studies so that she could raise them at a next meeting of DWP PIP Implementation Stakeholder Forum.

CPGD/384 **AOCB**: There was no other competent business.

CPGD/385 **DATES OF FUTURE CPGD MEETINGS**: It was agreed to have future meetings on the following dates:

- Wednesday 11th September 2013
- Wednesday 11th December 2013
- Wednesday 12th March 2014

Times to be confirmed when committee rooms are booked.