

## The Scottish Parliament

### CROSS PARTY GROUP ON DEAFNESS

*Meeting Notes of the Cross Party Group on Deafness  
held in the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh  
on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 5.30pm*

**PRESENT:** Dennis Robertson MSP (Deputy Convenor)  
Mark Griffin MSP  
Doug Bradley (Signature)  
Julia Braun (Action on Hearing Loss)  
Carly Brownlie (SASLI)  
Fiona Jarvis (RCSLT Scotland)  
Sheila MacKenzie (University of Edinburgh)  
Alison Brownlie (Deafblind Scotland)  
Katie Rafferty (NDCS Scotland)  
Mandy Reid (SCoD)  
Linda Sharkey (Hearing Link)  
Bert Smale (ATLA)  
Lilian Lawson (SCoD & CPGD Secretariat)

Also in attendance: Hayley Rando (Dennis Robertson's Intern), Roy O'Kane (Jenny Marra's Assistant), Andrew Dewey and Lisa Stapleton (BSL/English Interpreters) and Brenda Holliday (Notetaker).

**CPGD/366** **WELCOME REMARKS:** The Deputy Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that he was chairing because the Convenor was off sick. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**CPGD/367** **APOLOGIES:** Apologies for non-attendance had been received from Jenny Marra MSP, Annabelle Ewing MSP, Elizabeth Adam (Tayside Deaf Forum), Pam Bruce (Tayside Deaf Links), Graham Findlay (NESS), Delia Henry (Action on Hearing Loss), Avril Hepner (BDA Scotland), Anne Lennon (NDCS Scotland), Carole Lyons (Deaf Connections), Drena O'Malley (Deafblind Scotland), Donald Richards (Donaldson's School) and Liz Scott Gibson (Deaf Action).

**CPGD/368** **MEETING NOTES:** The Meeting Notes of the CPGD Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2012 were accepted as a true and correct record by Mark Griffin MSP, seconded by Doug Bradley.

**CPGD/369** **MATTERS ARISING:**  
**369a** **Ref: CPGD/357b: DCAMHS:** LL reported that the DCAMHS Campaign had been launched in the first week of February 2013 in the Garden Lobby, Scottish Parliament. She and KR had been busy lobbying MSPs and there had been a lot of interest and support from

MSPs for this campaign. NDCS Scotland had lodged a motion for debate which had gathered a significant amount of support from MSPs.

**369b**

**Ref: CPGD/363c: Review of CPGs:** LL informed the CPGD that she had attended a meeting with Sam Currie where they had gone through the revised Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidance. Sam Currie had advised LL that draft minutes should be sent to her as soon as possible after each CPGD meeting. LL was also reminded that the CPGD should have an AGM this year.

**CPGD/370**

**BSL BILL:** Mark Griffin MSP gave an update on the BSL Bill. He said that it had been a quiet time because the Non-Executive Bills Unit had been busy analysing the high volume of responses. He had just received the analysis results back – the main points of the analysis were that 97% of respondents had agreed with the general principles and 89% supported the need for legislation. This is clearly a strong mandate to take the BSL Bill forward. He had an interesting telephone call from the Minister for Languages (Alasdair Allan MSP) who had suggested that they and the Minister for Health (Michael Matheson MSP) should have a meeting when the report had been finalised. Mark Griffin MSP said that he did not know if the Scottish Government wanted to make some concessions to try and stop the legislation going forward or not. He could not speculate but it was now evident that the BSL Bill was now on their agenda.

Mark Griffin MSP concluded that he would share the finalised analysis report with the BSL Bill Sub-group then with members of the Cross Party Group. He would submit the motion and lobby MSPs to get at least 18 MSPs to take the BSL Bill forward to the next stage and then the committee stage.

**CPGD/371**

**WELFARE REFORM:** LL referred to a number of papers that had been circulated to the CPGD members prior to the meeting, in particular the Welfare Reform Update (March 2013) and SCoD's Update on PIP (07/03/13) which had been prepared by MR.

The Depute Convenor invited the CPGD to raise questions or points. MR informed the CPGD that she had received an email today from the DWP that states that deaf claimants can ask Atos to provide a registered BSL/English Interpreter or that the deaf claimant can take along a family member or friend to provide communication support. It was up to the claimant to ask for support, not the assessors. MR said that she had advised DWP to get in touch with SASLI information about registered interpreters in Scotland.

The Deputy Convenor suggested that a copy of the email should be sent to the Welfare Reform Committee in the Scottish Parliament.

CB reported that the DWP had not made contact with SASLI and it had been difficult to contact a right person in the DWP.

BS remarked that there had been a lot of discussion on BSL/English Interpreters and asked if deaf people like himself would have access to notetakers for meetings with assessors.

MR responded that electronic notetakers and Deafblind Guide/Communicators would also be provided. Atos has a contract with The Big Word which is a spoken language interpreter service and is working in partnership with Action on Hearing Loss. There is another problem –there is nowhere on the claim form to say what the claimants' communication support needs are. The Deputy Convenor reiterated that this information should be fed to the Welfare Reform Committee.

The CPGD agreed to LL's suggestion that she should write to DWP telling them that SASLI should be recognised as the main organisation for registered BSL/English Interpreters in Scotland.

In response to Mark Griffin MSP's question, MR stated that there had been two cases where deaf claimants had not been provided with communication support for their assessments, in spite of their request to Atos. After discussion, it was agreed that FJ should speak to her organisation and ask speech and language therapists to contact GPs about communication issues.

**CPGD/372** **EXPENSES FOR CPGD MEMBERS**: LL stated that she had not had a meeting with the Convenor to discuss this item.

**CPGD/373** **SENSORY IMPAIRMENT STRATEGY**: LL reported that she had contacted Peter Kelly of the Scottish Government for an update. It had been planned for the Sensory Impairment Strategy to be launched for consultation in the beginning of March 2013 but there had been a delay. Peter Kelly said that the strategy should be out by the end of March 2013. This should remain on the agenda.

**CPGD/374** **AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT CPGD MEETING**: It was agreed that the main agenda item would be "Teachers of Deaf Children and their qualification routes". It was also agreed that there should be an update on the Scottish Lipreading Strategy Group on the agenda.

LL spoke about Deafblind Scotland's request for the health needs assessment to be put on the agenda. The Deputy Convenor suggested that a MSP should offer to lodge a PQ on this item – this was agreed.

**CPGD/375** **AOCB – Accessibility of "Parliament Day"**: MR raised a concern about the Public Petitions Committee's workshop in Stornoway on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 because no arrangements had been made for deaf people

to access this workshop. She had got in touch with Sight Action which confirmed that they had not been aware of this event. She had raised the issue with the SP Bookings Department. MR had received an email from the team organising the meeting/workshop who said that this event would not be accessible, but in future they would make sure that all publicity materials state that individuals have to pre-book if they have a language or a communication support need. This is a discriminatory practice. The Deputy Convenor agreed to take this issue forward and report back to the next meeting.

**CPGD/376** **DATE OF NEXT CPGD MEETING:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 5.30pm.

**CPGD/377** **CLOSURE:** The Deputy Convenor moved the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for their attendance.