



SCoD Bulletin

February 2017

Scottish Council on Deafness Bulletin | Bi-Monthly Magazine for SCoD Members

SCoD Training

Our 2017 SCoD Training Programme kicked off with two Human Rights sessions from Carole Ewart.

Our second training session takes place on Friday...

Human Rights and Procurement Training Session on Friday 3rd February. Go to <http://www.scod.org.uk/public-procurement-and-human-rights-a-practical-training-session/> for more information.

If you missed these sessions, and you and your colleagues are interested in a bespoke session for your organisation, please contact Kirsty at kirsty@scod.org.uk and we will see what we can do for you.

We will be announcing other training course in the next bulletins...so watch this space!

SCoD “Connect & Capitalise*” Conference

The third SCoD Conference, ‘Connect & Capitalise’ will take place on **Thursday 9th March 2017** in Glasgow Doubletree Hilton.

The Minister for Mental Health, Maureen Watt MSP, will be our first keynote speaker at the Conference. Yvonne Strachan CBE, Head of

Human Rights and Equality at the Scottish Government and Martyn Evans, the Chief Executive of the Carnegie Trust UK will also be speaking on the day. For more information, go to the [SCoD Conference page](#).

We will have 9 different workshops and [ContactSCOTLAND-BSL](#) is our main supporter.

Tickets are on sale at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scod-connect-capitalise-2017-tickets-29816166958> and are going fast...

We still have a couple of sponsorship opportunities available; if you are interested, please contact us on admin@scod.org.uk and a member of the events team will be happy to discuss!

* This year's conference title "Connect and Capitalise" means that we are building on the connections and partnerships that have been made over the last three years and at our last two conferences. We all benefit or capitalise on these connections as we grow the Deaf Sector.

LATEST NEWS FROM SCoD

Membership

2017 is going to be a great year for SCoD. We are about to start a yearlong celebration of our 90th year of being...Join SCoD and join the party...Our members are drawn from the Public, Third and Private Sectors. We have organisational and individual options.

We have three categories of membership:

- Full members. These are the organisations that make up the National Council and can put forward nominations to the SCoD Board.
- Associate members - organisations. These are organisations who cannot be full members or do not want the responsibility of full membership.
- Associate members - individuals. These are individuals, people who are deaf or have an interest in deafness and want to support our organisation.

If you want to know more about joining SCoD and being part of the Deaf Sector, please contact our membership worker, Kirsty, at kirsty@scod.org.uk or telephone 0141 248 2474.

If you are a BSL user, you can use [contactSCOTLAND](#) to contact us.

Best wishes
Janis & the SCoD Team

GENERAL NEWS



DSP / BSL NAG Update

The DSP has gone through its first review of this funding period – we are on track for the consultation on the BSL National Plan.

The BSL National Advisory Group has been working with the Scottish Government to develop an online tool for people whose first or preferred language is BSL so that they can respond to the consultation on the BSL National Plan more easily and in their preferred language.

Sarah Davidson, Co-Chair of the BSL National Advisory Group has made a statement on behalf of the Scottish Government on its commitment to Tactile BSL as well as visual BSL.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2LfaX5akGo&feature=youtu.be>

If you have any questions about the BSL NAG or the DSP, please get in touch with Derek Todd, DSP Coordinator by email at admin@deafsectorpartnership.net.



Rights Committee

Scottish Parliament Equalities and Human

Disabilities and Universities Report

1. Following the change in our remit as a Mandatory Committee on 29 September 2016, to include responsibility for both equalities and human rights, we have taken a

decision to take opportunities in our work programme to promote and reinforce equalities and human rights wherever possible.

2. With this in mind, we took the decision to use our 2017-18 pre-budget scrutiny to examine how the university sector in Scotland is complying with its duties to disabled people and British Sign Language (BSL) users in terms of eliminating inequality and discrimination when applying to study at, or attending and graduating from, university.

3. We are also mindful of the importance a person's university experience has, not just in term of academic study and skills development, but also the wider social, cultural and emotional experience university can offer. This can be especially true for young people in terms of developing their sense of personal identity, physical and mental wellbeing and self-confidence.

To read the report, go to

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103134.aspx#b>



ScotRail is continuously looking to improve train services in Scotland and in order for this to happen, Stakeholder engagement at different levels is important and as such have launched an online panel giving everyone an opportunity to have their say.

We are therefore asking for you and or any members of the organisations you represent or friends and family members to take this opportunity to provide us with opinions and views you have on how we can improve train services. If you have already a member of the online panel there is no need for you to register again but you could ask others to register too.

In order to take part, all you need is to sign up to The Platform, ScotRail online research panel please register here...

<https://theplatform.e-luminate.net/welcome.php>. There are a few questions you need to answer. From time to time, you will be able to receive interesting surveys and you will be free to respond to the ones that matter most to you but most importantly you should know that it will be your views and opinions that will help ScotRail improve train services for the future. Therefore, taking part matters!

If you are including this in your newsletters or advertising to members, friends and family, please make sure the link is also provided so they can register.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015: Asset Transfer legislation now in force

The Scottish Government is happy to confirm that the asset transfer legislation under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 came into force on 23rd January 2017. <http://news.gov.scot/news/greater-power-for-scotlands-communities>

All the guidance, model forms and other useful stuff is available on their website at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/AssetTransfer>. This includes a new summary guide in simple language. The website will continue to be developed over coming weeks, in particular with model governing documents for community transfer bodies, and they'll be completing and updating the contacts for relevant authorities.

Queries about the guidance etc can be sent to assettransferguidance@gov.scot Please note they can't give advice on handling specific cases, but they can direct you to relevant bits of the guidance or legislation and other sources of advice.

Health Care needs in Schools

Please find attached a link to the consultation on **draft guidance on Healthcare Needs in Schools**. This draft guidance has been developed in partnership with a range of key stakeholders representing children and young people, health and education services.

The consultation will run until **24th April 2017** and is available from <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/supporting-learners/guidance-on-healthcare-needs-in-schools/>

Responses can be provided online through the consultation hub or using the consultation response document. Details of where to send the response are contained within the consultation response document. All responses to the consultation will be considered no matter which way they are provided.



Evaluation of Voluntary Action Scotland

[An independent evaluation of Voluntary Action Scotland](#), the national network supporting Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), by APS Group Scotland (led by Blake Stevenson) has been published by the Scottish Government. The evaluation highlights weaknesses in the effectiveness of VAS, but concludes that the TSI network requires an intermediary body and that the Scottish Government should continue to support VAS, with new partnership agreements and the continuation of recent changes in its governance.

SCoD has been working with VAS and the TSI network to improve the access and citizenship opportunities for deaf people, with some success.

Glasgow Asian Deaf Club

In January 2017, Tasnim Sharif has taken on a new role as Project Coordinator for the Glasgow Asian Deaf Club.

'I am extremely excited about empowering our members and managing new projects that aim to decrease social isolation and improve connection and friendships within the Deaf Asian Community. I do hope that you will update your contact details and I really look forward to working with you all again'

Feel free to contact Tasnim on her email address: tasnim.gadc@gmail.com

EVENTS

The Scottish Sensory Awards 2017

Wednesday 15 February 2017
Stirling Management Centre



Following the great success of the 2016 Scottish Sensory Awards, we are delighted to host the 2017 awards with SCOVI, our sister organisation in the Visual Loss Sector. For more information go to <http://www.sensoryawardscotland.co.uk/>

For more information about the Scottish Sensory Awards, please contact us at scottishsensoryawards@gmail.com.

Information Hall

- Providing information on other deaf and local organisation
- Free bouncy castle and face painting
- Free tea and coffee
- All deaf and hearing people welcome

**Taking place at: Cathedral Primary School
171 Milton Street
Motherwell
ML1 1DH**

At 1pm – 6pm

Celebration Party

- Buffet
- Bar
- DJ
- **Over 18's only**
- Fun and Laughter
- Meet old and new friends

**Taking place at Daisy Park Community Centre
Cassels Street
Motherwell
ML1 1DX**

At 6pm – 12am

Thanks to Big Lottery Funding, Lanarkshire Deaf Club will be hosting a celebration event on Saturday 25th March. We are celebrating Loving Lanarkshire Deaf but we would like all Deaf and Hearing people to attend.

I would like to invite you to have a table in our information hall to showcase your organisation. This will be held in Cathedral Primary School, 171 Milton Street, Motherwell, ML1 1DH. Setup of the information hall would be 12-1pm with the doors opening to the public at 1pm. We would also love to see you at the evening party afterwards in the Daisy Park Community Centre.

Could you please let me know if you as soon as possible if you are interested in having a table and if you would need a British Sign Language Interpreter to assist with communication?

Tel: No - 01698 268700
07941687534

Web: lanarkshired deafclub.co.uk

Scotland's top chefs unite for unique Aberdeen foodie event 4th March 2017



Three of Scotland's finest chefs are teaming up to share their passion for food in a unique culinary experience, which is set to be a recipe for success for Aberdeen.

Nick Nairn, Ross Spence, executive chef at The Marcliffe Hotel & Spa and Paul Whitecross, executive chef at Trump International, will each present an individual course aimed at delighting the senses, showcasing their world-renowned gastronomic skills.

The trio are working together to cook-up Savour, a culinary feast which will take place on Saturday, 4th March, at the Marcliffe Hotel & Spa.

The event is being hosted alongside North East Sensory Services (NESS), a charity which supports people of all ages from babies to grandparents, who were born deaf or blind, or for those who have lost their sight or hearing.

The chefs will each create a course for the gastronomic adventure, focusing on the senses of taste, smell and sight, which coincides with the charity's work with people with sensory issues.

As well as a four-course dinner focusing on the senses of taste, smell, and sight, the evening will include a champagne drinks reception, a VIP auction and raffle, followed by entertainment and dancing.

Savour will take place on Saturday, 4th March, 2017, at the Marcliffe Hotel & Spa. Tables are priced at £950, with individual tickets available at £95, and can be purchased from neil.skene@nesensoryservices.org or by calling 0345 271 2345.



Community Development Alliance Scotland

Some time ago, I indicated to the Community Development Alliance Scotland Management Group my intention of retiring around the end of this financial year.

As a result CDAS is now seeking an independent consultant to continue to co-ordinate the network, provide a support service and help the Management Group to take forward its strategic priorities. Details of what we are looking for and how to express an interest (by Wednesday 15th February) are contained in this document:

<https://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/CDASBrief.docx>

Please bring this to the attention of anyone who is likely to be interested.

Peter Taylor

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www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Community-Development-Alliance-Scotland/336503436395933>



Deaf Action: Information Day (Deaf Sector Partnership) Saturday 4 February 2017

This will be a great opportunity for any young deaf people from 10-18, parents and adults whose preferred language is British Sign Language. Come along and find out more about the National Advisory Group (NAG), the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and what these mean to you

There will be BSL interpreters in attendance and lunch will be provided

The Deaf Action Youth Group will be running an activity alongside the information day at the museum – **Selfie Bingo!** (Young People work in teams to find items in the Museum to take a selfie with). This will be open for any young people who do not use BSL and do not want/unable to attend the Information Day. We will have our youth work team to support this group, so if parents want to attend the Information Day without worrying about their children, they can do so!

The event starts at **11am on Saturday 4th February**, so please **aim to arrive at 10:30 - 10:45am** at the National Museum of Scotland, Chamber Street, Edinburgh.

If you have any questions then please get in touch with myself, at Alison.Hendry@deafaction.org

EdSign Lecture: Celebrating BSL storytelling as a traditional art: first steps in Scottish Studies

by Ella Leith

Tuesday 7th February

6:30pm - 8pm

Where:

**Paterson's Land, room LG34
Moray House, School of Education,
University of Edinburgh
EH8 8AQ**

Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/PDjcgLzviuH2>

INTERPRETATION: Lecture will be in BSL with spoken English interpretation

Please note: This lecture will not be live streamed.

About the lecture:

Scottish Studies research explores the cultural traditions of Scotland's different communities, yet signed folklore and 'culturally deaf' artforms are rarely if ever discussed in the same terms as Gaelic storytelling traditions or Scots ballads. Why is this, and how can it be changed?

This presentation draws on three case-studies showing different aspects of BSL storytelling in Scotland, and asks:

How do BSL traditional arts fit into existing ideas about Scotland's cultural heritage?

How do BSL traditional arts challenge existing ideas about Scotland's cultural heritage?

What steps can we take to integrate the study of BSL traditional arts into Scottish Studies at schools and universities?

About Ella:

Ella Leith is an ethnologist and folklorist who recently defended her PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh. Her research involves BSL intangible cultural heritage, particularly storytelling traditions, and the place of deaf culture within Scottish culture. She is currently the secretary of Deaf History Scotland, and involved in Deaf literacy work.

Money Skills by Barclays

Are you deaf or hard of hearing?

Aged 16 – 25?



Come along to this session where you

will be able to:

- How to save and budget
- Accessibility in the branch and how to approach staff
- Speak to our Action on Hearing Loss Welfare Rights Officer

When Wednesday 15th February 2017
Time 10.00am – 3.00pm
Where NDCS Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Empire House, 131 West Nile Street,
 Glasgow,
 G1 2RX

For more information contact

Julie-Anne Leggate, Employment Adviser
 Telephone 18002 0141 341 5350 (please use prefix number)
 Mobile 07436 836121 (Text Only)
 Email Julie-Anne.Leggate@hearingloss.org.uk



International Women's Day 8 March 2017

Event will take place at 10am – 4pm at Deaf Action's office in Edinburgh

Accessible and free!

For more information contact: keah.kalaitzi@deafaction.org

Friday Club



Friday 10th March – Action on Hearing Loss: Moving On service

- The Moving On Service works with young deaf people aged 16-25 and explores potential options into work and further education following high school. This session will let you find out more about the service and ask questions on how it can help you
- <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/movingon.aspx>

The Friday Club runs from **6:30pm – 8:30pm at Deaf Action, 49 Albany Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3QY**. Usually the Friday Club is open only for 14-18 year olds, but if you are interested in attended any of these, we can be flexible!

If you would like to put your name down or have any questions, please get in touch at admin@deafaction.org



Taste your Future Wednesday 1st March 2017

The British Deaf Association Scotland Deaf Roots and Pride Project is hosting a **Taste Your Future** careers event at **Glasgow University Union Dining Room, 32 University Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8LX** on **Wednesday 1st March 2017** from **10am – 2pm** for Deaf young people of secondary school age across central Scotland. The Deaf young people who attend will have the opportunity to meet Deaf adults who work in a wide range of different fields throughout the day. We hope to have many professions represented.

It may be beneficial to your organisation and to the Deaf young people if your organisation was to be represented at this event. We have a limited availability of space which will be allocated on a first come first served basis if you wish to attend or, alternatively, you can still provide us with your leaflets and information about your resources. We are happy to display these for the Deaf young people and schools to browse and take away with them.

For more information contact www.bda.org.uk

Getting to Know GIRFEC Workshops 2017

Following the Supreme Court Ruling on the Named Person Legislation and the success of our latest workshops, the ALLIANCE is providing further "Getting to know GIRFEC" events across Scotland.



These will be held in the following locations:

- Edinburgh (morning): Monday 13th February 2017, 10am - 12pm
Venue: Meeting Room 7, Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EG
- Edinburgh (afternoon) Monday 13th February 2017, 2pm - 4pm
Venue: Meeting Room 7, Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EG
- Stirling: Friday 10th February 2017, 10am - 12pm
Venue: Volunteer Scotland, Jubilee House, Forthside Way, Stirling FK8 1QZ

These Training the Trainer workshops are aimed at Third Sector organisations working directly with children, young people and parents. The workshops will bring participants up to date with Scottish Government policy and actions following the Deputy First Minister's statement on the Named Person to the Scottish Parliament in September. Participants will be equipped to cascade information to children, young people, parents and colleagues about:

- The Named Person
- Wellbeing
- The Child's Plan, and
- Plans to update the law and to put it into place.

Workshops and the resources will be available **free of charge**. Please note, these workshops are very likely to be oversubscribed and **early registration is advisable**.

The workshops will be facilitated by Ronnie Hill, The ALLIANCE Associate Director and Third Sector Implementation Advisor, Scottish Government GIRFEC Team.

Book your place via [Eventbrite](#). Please also advise us of any accessibility requirements

TRAINING



**Scottish Council on Deafness
with Carole Ewart**



Public Procurement and Human Rights

Friday 3rd February 2017 at 1.00 pm – 4.45 pm
Venue – Glasgow City Centre – to be confirmed

For more information, go to <http://www.scod.org.uk/public-procurement-and-human-rights-a-practical-training-session/>

The British Academy of Audiology North East Regional Group Study Day

The British Academy of Audiology North East Regional Group is holding their annual regional study day on **Friday 17th March 2017** at the **Durham County Cricket Club** in Durham.

The theme of this study day is 'Advancing Audiology: Non-Routine Adult Services' and is open to all Audiology professionals, you do not need to be a member of the BAA to attend.

There will also be a selection of companies from the Audiology sector in attendance

at the event.

This event is free for members and only £50 for non-members to attend.

Programme highlights include:

- Audiology for adults with learning disabilities
- Designing a service for adults with learning disabilities
- Multidisciplinary working for adults with complex needs
- BAHA and Middle Ear Implants
- Tinnitus
- Latest developments in CI plus a patient perspective
- Specialist Adult Rehab clinics
- Developments in dementia
- ... and many more!

For more information and to register your place visit:

www.baaudiology.org/events/calendar/baa-north-east-regional-study-day-2017

SSC

scottish sensory centre **SSC Course 25: Deafness and Additional/Complex Needs: Friday, 24th March, 2017**

This course is for all professionals working with deaf young people either in mainstream or specialist provision.

This course will explore:

- developing awareness of the incidence and range of additional needs that can accompany deafness;
- understanding the impact of additional needs upon the developing deaf child;
- effective audiological management and assessment of hearing loss;
- understanding of your role as the supporting professional.

These objectives will be achieved through:

- Interactive teaching sessions.
- Workshops.
- Practical activities.
- Sharing of good practice.
- Signposting to resources.

Presenter:

Jane Peters, (ToD), Senior Lecturer Mary Hare Courses & Course leader MA/PGDip Educational Studies (Early Years and Deafness)

Course fee:
£110

Applications are available to download from the following link:
<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/dmar17.html>

SSC **SSC Course 21: Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder - basics to management:** **Tuesday, 28th February, 2017**

scottish sensory centre

This course will be of interest to mainstream teachers, teachers of the deaf, speech & language therapists, support staff, early years workers, educational psychologists, parents; those working with pre-school/early primary school-aged children who are cochlear implant users or hearing aid users.

Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder is a condition where children can vary from normal functional hearing to profound hearing loss. Discussion topics will cover:

- presentation features, possible predisposing conditions, the tests which need to be done;
- guidelines for cochlear implant assessment and the recommendations;
- the need of multidisciplinary team and cases histories.

Participants should bring along anonymous case histories which can be discussed on the day.

Course fee: £110

Presenters: Dr Kaukab Rajput, Consultant Audiovestibular Physician, and Clinician for Paediatric Cochlear Implant Program, Great Ormond Street Hospital NHS Trust, London; and Ruth Merritt, Consultant Speech and Language Therapist, Kent

Applications are available to download from the following link:

<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/dfeb17.html>



2017 Deaf and Deafblind Awareness Training Dates

This 2-day course is a practical and nationally accredited course that will bring benefits to your clients and your organisation right from day one. This course will help you to have a better understanding of deaf people, their language and communication needs. It will show you can help break down the barriers for deaf people in practical ways which cost nothing, whilst making your service more

accessible not only to deaf people, but anyone who has a communication difficulty or for whom English is a second language. Using DVD presentations, fun activities and group interaction to reinforce the factual content, this course is of practical value to all agencies serving the public and an invaluable part of individual continuous professional development.

27th & 28th Feb 2017
27th & 28th Mar 2017
24th & 25th Apr 2017
29th & 30th May 2017
26th & 27th June 2017
28th & 29th Aug 2017
25th & 26th Sep 2017
23rd & 24th Oct 2017
20th & 21st Nov 2017
18th & 19th Dec 2017

Course Times: 9.30am – 4.30pm on both days

Location: Tayside Deaf Hub, the Old Mill, Taymills, 23 Brown Street, Dundee, DD1 5EF.

Cost: £135 per person inclusive of exam fee, lunches, refreshments

Course Content

- Language choices and differing cultures of deaf people
- How common is deafness
- Over coming barriers, improving attitudes
- What does deafness mean and the correct terms to use
- Tinnitus and help available for Tinnitus
- Barriers to communication
- Communication tactics
- Hearing Aids and technology which helps
- Professional communication support for deaf people

For more information please contact Alana Harper from Deaf Links:

Tel: [01382 201077](tel:01382201077)

Text: [07711462385](tel:07711462385)

CONSULTATIONS



UK Government Consultation:

The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper

The deadline for responding to the consultation is **Friday 17 February 2017**.

The government has launched a consultation on its newly published green paper 'Work, health and disability: improving lives'.

The green paper – which aims to achieve 'a more personalised and integrated health and welfare system' – proposes:

- a review of statutory sick pay and GP fit notes to support workers back into their jobs faster, and for longer;
- encouraging Jobcentre Plus work coaches to signpost claimants to therapy;
- reform of the work capability assessment with a view to ending the binary 'can work / can't work' groups;
- a new Personal Support Package;

- encouraging employers to work with their employees with long-term health conditions to stop them from falling out of work; and
- a wide-ranging debate about recognising the value of work as a health outcome

To read the green paper, go to <http://192.168.1.1/login/login.html> or go to the Scottish Government website <http://www.gov.scot/> for more information about the consultation and for information in Easy Read, go to the website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/work-health-and-disability-improving-lives%20>

The BSL version of the consultation is available here <https://www.youtube.com/oops>

VACANCIES

Apply Now for Young Persons and Mental Health Community Partner Roles

Following recruitment for the Lead Community Partner position, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is launching an exciting opportunity to help shape the support for young disabled people and people with mental health conditions in your area.

About the roles

The [Young Persons Community Partner](#) will act as a role model to inspire young people, deliver targeted support and support families through parents' forums. You will work collaboratively with young disabled people, their parents, local support services and employers to develop a holistic employment plan and a tailored network of support. The Young Persons Community Partner will form part of a team of

Community Partners, working collaboratively with the third sector in strengthening disability awareness within Jobcentre Plus across a range of specialisms.

The [Mental Health Community Partner](#) will help shape the support people with mental health conditions receive, support the development of a national mentoring network, and build relationships with organisations specialising in mental health in your area. You will work collaboratively with Jobcentre Plus staff, third sector organisations and employers to develop a holistic package of support for customers.

About you

You will have a lived experience or in-depth understanding of working with young disabled people or people with mental health conditions, and the barriers they face in everyday life and may encounter when seeking and sustaining long term employment.

You may be interested in a fixed-term appointment opportunity or a secondment from your current organisation. Both fixed-term appointments and secondments are available for 12 months with a possible extension for a further 11 months. Organisations are also invited to offer secondment opportunities to their staff, with roles available across Scotland, England and Wales.

The deadline to apply is Friday 10th February 2017.

Salary:

£26,959 - £31,635 (National)

£30,886 - £35,694 (Inner London)

To apply:

Visit: <https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/>

Young Persons Community Partner Reference: [1522942](#)

Mental Health Community Partner Reference: [1522934](#)

For queries:

Email: Community.Partners@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Call: 0207 867 3186/0774 747 2709

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subtitles@yourlocalcinema.com

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<http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/appdownload.html>

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, MOTIONS AND DEBATES



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare (Meetings)

S5O-00572 Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government when the joint ministerial working group on welfare will next meet and what will be discussed.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities (Angela Constance):

The next joint ministerial working group on welfare meeting is scheduled to take place on Monday 20 February. The agenda for that meeting is still to be finalised.

Mark Griffin:

The Scottish Government has announced a welcome consultation on using flexibilities in universal credit to make more frequent payments. What discussions about split payments have there been at the joint ministerial working group? Why is the Government not progressing with a consultation on that measure at the same time? It could, for example, prevent the social security system from forcing a woman who is experiencing domestic abuse to be financially dependent on her abusive partner.

Angela Constance:

I assure Mark Griffin that we are looking very closely indeed at split payments. Some intensive work and discussion are going on between Scottish Government officials and Department for Work and Pensions officials.

We are also taking the time to consider all the consultation responses—there were more than 500—on the way ahead for social security. Split payments was one of the issues that people pressed home hard to the Scottish Government as part of the consultation. We are examining the issue closely. We have to find ways to enact political will—we have to find the delivery mechanisms—and will keep Parliament and the Social Security Committee fully informed as we proceed.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10737>

Children with Additional Support Needs (Support for Teachers)

S5F-00754 Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government considers that appropriate resources are in place to support teachers of children with additional support needs.

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are very clear that all children and young people must get the support that they need to reach their full learning potential. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places duties on education authorities to identify and provide for the additional support needs of their pupils, and although the Scottish Government has published statutory guidance to support education authorities in fulfilling those duties, it is for education authorities themselves to show that they have the appropriate resources in place to do so.

Jeremy Balfour: Additional support needs workers are essential to the Scottish Government's getting it right for every child policy, but a survey that was published this week by Unison Scotland shows that staff working in additional needs are under enormous pressure, are exhausted and feel undervalued, stressed and lacking in training and support. Does the First Minister accept that the report is, after a decade of Scottish National Party management, clear evidence that the Government is simply failing front-line staff?

The First Minister: No—I do not think that that is a fair characterisation of the position. I acknowledge the pressure and stress that are, by definition, associated with the job of teachers who support children who have additional support needs. I know that Jeremy Balfour takes a very close interest in these matters, so he will know that since 2004 there has been a fundamental change in how children with additional support needs are catered for in the education system, with the vast majority of pupils now being in mainstream education.

The other point to stress is that although teachers specifically for pupils with additional support needs are vital in our system, it is the job of all teachers to ensure that all pupils get the care and support that they need. That is why this Government is putting such emphasis on supporting schools, with the additional

resources through the attainment fund going directly to schools. We will continue to work with local authorities and teachers to ensure that support exists when and where it is needed.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): Since 2010, almost 500 additional support needs teachers have been cut. As the First Minister knows, if we are really to close the attainment gap, we must support young people who have additional support needs. Will the Government use the tax powers that it now has and amend its budget proposals to prevent local authorities from being forced to make cuts, many of which will fall on education and will result in even fewer additional support needs teachers in our schools?

The First Minister: Of course, a key part of the budget is the £120 million that is going directly to schools' headteachers, so it is for them to determine how to invest that money in order to raise attainment and close the attainment gap. If headteachers want to use the money for additional support needs, that option is available to them. That is part of our determination to get resources not just into the education system generally, but direct to schools and headteachers in order to ensure that resources have the biggest impact. I hope that members across the chamber will support that.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10737>

Concessionary Travel Scheme (Eligibility Age)

S5T-00336 Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to increase the eligibility age for the concessionary travel scheme.

The Minister for Transport and the Islands (Humza Yousaf): As previously mentioned in the chamber, we will undertake a consultation with key stakeholders about ways to ensure that the sustainability of the concessionary travel scheme is maintained for our older and disabled people. People are, of course, living longer, staying healthy for longer and staying in work later in life. We want to ensure that our successful concessionary bus travel scheme continues to benefit those who have the greatest reliance on free bus travel.

We want to extend concessionary travel to young modern apprentices and, later on, to young recipients of job grants, so we need to look at the longer-term sustainability of the scheme. We must not prejudge the outcome of the consultation, and we will, of course, listen to the range of views that are put forward across Scotland.

Let me be unequivocally clear that anyone with a bus pass will keep it, will be unaffected, and will remain eligible for the benefits of the scheme.

Mike Rumbles: The national concessionary travel scheme, which was guided through Parliament by my colleague Tavish Scott, has been a great success. It promotes social inclusion, helps older people to lead more active lives, encourages people to leave their cars at home, and is good for the environment. That is a win-win situation. The scheme gives freedom and, for some, a lifeline.

People will not be impressed by the Scottish National Party's attempts to sweep changes under the carpet until after the council elections in May, as noted in an article in the Sunday papers. What is preventing the Scottish Government from coming clean now so that people know exactly where it stands on this?

Humza Yousaf: On a consensual note, let me first agree with Mike Rumbles on the scheme's benefits. I remind him that the Government has funded the scheme for almost a decade, and we are very proud to do so, despite the various pressures on our budget. I agree with him on the benefits that he has highlighted. He should not believe everything that he reads in every Sunday newspaper.

It would be very illiberal and undemocratic if we did not go out to consultation, listen to people and take their views. We will go through a methodical process. Pre-engagement with stakeholders is important to form our views on any consultation. We will then let the public have their say on the scheme.

Mike Rumbles will understand that our aims to extend the scheme to modern apprentices and young people on job grants are very noble. We have to look at the scheme's long-term sustainability, but we will do that very much bearing in mind what the public have to say and the scheme's benefits, which Mike Rumbles articulated very well.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10747>

Health Advice (Accessibility to People with Hearing Loss and Deafness)

S5O-00584 Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it takes to ensure that the health advice it produces is accessible to people with hearing loss and deafness.

The Minister for Mental Health (Maureen Watt): The patient charter clearly sets out what patients can expect when they use NHS Scotland services and receive care. That includes the right to be given the information that they need in a format or language that they can understand. Under the Equality Act 2010, NHS Scotland is required to provide translation and interpreting services and written material whenever that is possible and reasonable. All NHS boards have a published accessibility policy and arrangements in place to support such needs. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can access Scotland's national health and information service, NHS inform, by using the contactSCOTLAND-BSL service, by textphone or by web chat, which is available on the NHS inform website.

Emma Harper: Does the minister agree that taking steps such as subtitling Government videos is important to ensure that people with deafness benefit fully from health advice?

Maureen Watt: I fully agree with Emma Harper and I assure her that the Scottish Government is committed to providing health information in formats that are accessible to people with hearing loss and deafness. All Scottish Government campaign websites are tested for accessibility as standard, and subtitles are added to videos that are posted on YouTube.

In addition, all reasonable efforts are made to ensure that top level and main contact pages on the Scottish Government website comply with World Wide Web Consortium standards that cover a range of disabilities, including auditory disabilities. NHS 24 is working with partners to ensure that videos that are displayed on the new NHS inform website have language options, including British Sign Language and subtitles, as seen on the Care Information Scotland website.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): **The British Deaf Association Scotland 2016 health review said that people with hearing loss found that communication was easiest in local primary care services that they were familiar with and was more difficult in secondary care settings. What plans do ministers have to improve healthcare for deaf people, specifically in secondary care settings?**

Maureen Watt: As I said in my previous answer, people with impairments should be able to have access. It is a case of ensuring that, before a patient goes to receive secondary care, the letter that is sent to ask for an appointment for them makes it clear that the person has hearing loss or another impairment. Such issues are being worked on as a result of the BSL legislation that the Parliament passed.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10749>

Employability and Sanctions

The Convener:

Item 2, which is the main item on our agenda, is an evidence-taking session on employability programmes, including sanctions. We have two panels of witnesses, with 45 minutes each for questions and answers. I welcome our first panel: Rachel Stewart, senior public affairs officer at the Scottish Association for Mental Health; Dr Sally Witcher, chief executive officer at Inclusion Scotland; and Tommy McDade, assistant director of employment, training and skills at Barnardo's Scotland, who is here on behalf of the young persons consortium.

I will open with a general question to the panel, and then other members will come in with questions. What is your view of the Scottish Government's proposals for schemes for those with disabilities? I should say that Mr McDade should feel free to respond more generally on the issue of the long-term unemployed. Who wants to go first?

Dr Sally Witcher (Inclusion Scotland): Our starting point is that, to deliver successful schemes for and with disabled people, we first need to really understand what prevents disabled people from getting into employment. The basis of our case is that the barriers are often understood as having something to do with the individual—for example, an individual's lack of skills or lack of confidence, their health condition and how they self-manage it and so on. That might be so for some people but, for a lot of disabled people, none of that applies, because those are not the reasons why they cannot get into employment.

Down the years, employability support services for disabled people have been based on the—we feel—limited understanding that the problem is something to do with the person. If that is what is meant by a person-centred or whole-person approach, we have a bit of a problem with that. Disabled people can also be stopped from getting into employment by, for example, employer attitudes, the fact that employers do not have the information or the support to know how to advertise roles in an accessible way or to frame job descriptions in a way that does not inadvertently discriminate, and the fact that employers do not know where to go for information. Employers can create a whole load of barriers, but employers can also experience barriers when it comes to employing disabled people. Unless equal weight is given to that part of the jigsaw, quite a lot of the point will be missed.

Alongside that, people often talk about employment as the route to inclusion. However, we suggest that inclusion should be dealt with before getting to the issue of employment, because it is about things such as the environment in which a person lives—the inaccessibility of buildings and transport—and all kinds of attitudes. It is also about other services. If someone does not have the personal assistance support that they need through social care to get up at the right time in the morning, they will not be able to get into work at the right time. It is therefore really important that we look at how those services come together. I am not necessarily suggesting that they should be integrated, but they should certainly be co-ordinated and aligned.

Our starting point is therefore the need to take a wider lens to the issue and to go beyond a sole focus on the person to look at the variety of different players and the different barriers that will never be resolved by the person themselves and which lie beyond their power to do anything about. An individual disabled person cannot change employer attitudes or put accessible transport in place. That, in a nutshell, is why sanctioning disabled people is unjust. They are being penalised for barriers that are not of their making and which they have no power whatever to do anything about.

Tommy McDade (Barnardo's Scotland on behalf of the Young Persons Consortium): I will start with a wider description of the young persons consortium, which is essentially a partnership between Action for Children Scotland, Barnardo's Scotland and the Prince's Trust across Scotland. The original driver was having the ability to deliver across local authorities quite a large-scale European programme that had—as is obvious, given what the three charities are about—a focus on helping young people.

As about 25 to 30 per cent of the young people whom we support have declared some kind of disability, we welcome the focus on a disability-specific programme.

However, such a programme does not provide the whole answer to the question of how we help young people and adults who present with a disability of some sort. Someone might describe themselves as having a disability, but that can mean a wide range of things.

I echo Sally Witcher's point about support. In any of our programmes for supporting young people, whether they have disabilities or whether they have particular disadvantages or needs—they might have been in the care system or be ex-offenders with convictions—we ensure that the right level of support is available not just to the young person but to the employer. Some employers might have a certain attitude to recruiting young people with disabilities or from particular vulnerable backgrounds, but we find that the vast majority of employers do not think it a bad idea to take on a young person, regardless of any issues or capabilities that come with them. Employers really appreciate the huge level of support that comes with that. That is not just about supporting the young person to gain employment; it goes beyond helping them into the initial phase of employment to helping them to stay and grow in employment and develop their skills. We see that as one of the key tools in improving the economic vibrancy of the Scottish economy.

We therefore very much support a specific focus on disabled people, but there needs to be a wider look at what is out there to support disabled young people and other young people from underrepresented groups. We have seen the data in the developing the young workforce strategy reports on, for example, participation in modern apprenticeships, and we have been encouraged by what looks like an increase in participation by underrepresented groups. However, there is more to do.

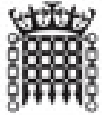
Rachel Stewart (Scottish Association for Mental Health): I very much echo my colleagues' remarks about the structural discrimination that people with disabilities experience and the need to ensure that all aspects of society are mindful of not having a blinkered view in respect of, say, a certain person getting a certain job or of it all being on the person themselves to do this.

We very much welcome the language that the Scottish Government has been using since it started consulting on its fairer Scotland employability programmes and wider social security benefits. We hope that, with the use of terms such as fairness, dignity and respect, those ideas will be realised by the new programmes. That will mean taking a much more holistic approach to an individual who starts on a programme. For example, any initial assessment should take into account all the barriers that they face, whether they be a result of their disability or another reason—or multiple reasons—why they are not in employment.

People with mental health problems make up an enormous cohort of those who will be supported in the new programmes and, as far as people with disabilities who are out of work are concerned, their rates tend to be among the highest. As a result, we were really pleased by some of the language that the Scottish Government used about the 2018 programmes, including the use of individual placement and support for individuals with fluctuating conditions or severe and enduring mental health problems. Such support will require quite a lot of co-ordination with the national health service and a lot of integrating with, talking to and working with employers both before and after an individual has been placed.

We look forward to seeing more detail when the tender information comes out in March, which the Minister for Employability and Training referred to in the letter that the committee received from him last night. We welcome the proposals for a more specialist disability service in the third and most intensive tier, but the devil will be in the detail.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10759>



www.parliament.uk

Early day motion 862

Falkirk Forth Valley Sensory Centre

Sponsor: John McNally (SNP, Falkirk)

That this House congratulates Falkirk Forth Valley Sensory Centre in its continued pursuit of providing highly valued services that greatly promote integration in the community; acknowledges that the sensory centre's partnership with Slimming World is a truly innovative service, proving popular with the deaf, hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted people who attend a weekly group at the Camelon Centre, alongside other members of the wider community; and supports and applauds the initiative made in establishing this as the first sensory friendly Slimming World group in the UK, thereby providing a fantastic opportunity for many to take part in a group that might not otherwise be available to those people who have a sensory impairment.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/862>

DWP Policies and Low-income Households

Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): I beg to move,

That this House is concerned at the impact of policies pursued by the Department for Work and Pensions upon low-income households; notes the negative impact on those with low-incomes disclosed in the roll-out of Universal Credit; expresses concerns about cuts to Work Allowances under Universal Credit; believes that the closure of JobCentre offices in Glasgow and other areas will create difficulties for many people in accessing services; and calls on that Department to suspend the roll-out of Universal Credit and the JobCentre closure programme.

According to the UK Government, universal credit was supposed to bring fairness and simplicity, and I ask hon. Members to hold that thought when I share the experiences of some of my constituents, of people trying to help them and even of Department for Work and Pensions staff trying to navigate them through universal credit. Inverness was a pilot area for the roll-out, meaning that we were suffering the bitter effects and chaos of the full service earlier than other areas. Universal credit is hurting the people who need help the most. I know that if Government Members

could see at first hand the grief that it causes, they would understand why I am so passionate about it.

Before I share some of my constituents' experiences, I shall tell Members of my recent meetings with citizens advice bureau officers Leslie Newton and Elaine Donnelly. They have, respectively, 40 and 17 years' experience of dealing with some of the most challenging situations we could imagine—folk at the end of their tethers, and sometimes even at the end of their lives. They have seen it all and had to deal with it. When I met them last week, they were moved to tears telling me about their universal credit case load. They told me about the suffering they were witnessing. They told me that the roll-out is a shambles, and that nobody in the system communicates with each other. They told me that the process simply does not work. They see neither fairness nor simplicity.

The transitional protection is limited and will not protect new claimants. It will be lost if the household undergoes changes in circumstances, and it does not protect people against the anguish and suffering that lengthy delays are causing them. Again, the disabled are some of the hardest hit by the move to universal credit.

Graham Evans (Weaver Vale) (Con): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Drew Hendry: I am going to make some progress because other Members wish to take part.

The loss of the severe disability premium has taken nearly £62 a week out of the pockets of the most critically disabled. Cuts to the disabled child addition mean that 100,000 disabled children stand to lose up to £29 a week. Cuts to the severe disability premium mean that disabled lone parents with young carers stand to lose £58 a week. Those in the work-related activity group who receive employment and support allowance will lose around £30 a week.

Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP): Does my hon. Friend share my concern about the lack of information and data that the Department for Work and Pensions has on its own activities, particularly when it comes to the most vulnerable claimants? On 10 January, I asked the Department to provide me with the number of people who had had their benefits withdrawn or suspended in the process of transferring from disability living allowance to personal independence payment. It wrote back on 13 January to say that it did not know; is that not shocking?

Drew Hendry: It is shocking.

Disabled people who have been found unfit for work by the work capability assessment are still expected to take steps towards finding work. That group includes those who have suffered serious injuries, those in the early stages of progressive conditions such as multiple sclerosis, and those with learning disabilities. Disability unemployment is a long-standing, unique issue, and the universal credit process is creating more barriers for the disabled people in the workplace.

The Prime Minister has been talking about JAM—the so-called “just about managing”—but thanks to universal credit, many families' income is about to be toast. I suggest the Prime Minister comes to Inverness and talks to my constituents about her shared society—to those families with children who will be up to £2,630

per year worse off, according to the Children's Society; to the lone parents and people with limited capability for work under the age of 25 who will lose £15 a week; and to the young people and their families who will be pushed further into poverty because of reductions in standard allowances. The four-year freeze on support for children will see the value of key children's benefits cut by 12% by the end of the decade. Universal credit will not only fail to lift children out of poverty; it will push them further into poverty.

Citizens Advice has said:

"Universal Credit is failing to live up to its promise...from the outset people have experienced problems...delays to claims and errors in their payments."

The Public Accounts Committee found that the systems were "underdeveloped", and said there was increasing pressure on DWP staff. My team and I see it every day, day in, day out. Only yesterday, a constituent, Laura Shepherd, got in touch. She was at the end of her tether. Her 20-year-old son, Douglas, has severe autism, and has been on the waiting list for a work capability assessment since the end of September. During this time, they have had no disability support, just the minimum level of universal credit of just over £200 a month. Quite understandably, the family are trying to get this sorted out—they want their claim backdated to cover a period when they were incorrectly given child tax credits instead of universal credit. The universal credit team cannot even give Laura any dates for a disability work assessment for her son, because assessments of that nature are done by an external contractor. The team actually told her in writing to contact me, as her MP, because they were at a loss as to what to do.

The wife of an officer serving in our Army has now been waiting five months for assistance with childcare costs—she has had no payments for five months—and has suffered a catalogue of errors and very sporadic communication. She could not get her problem sorted out because even DWP staff working on universal credit are not allowed to talk to the service centre or claims manager. Everything has to be duplicated by email, leading to confusion and lost information.

Then there is this so-called helpline. Who on earth thought that it was a great idea to make it a premium call line? It is shameful that people with no money are being made to spend their last pennies on premium lines. What do they do if they have no credit on their mobile phones—that is if the phone has not had to be pawned to make up for the money that they are not getting through waiting for their payments? Many constituents have come to my office to call the helpline because they have no money. When they do call, they are left on hold while DWP staff try to sort out errors for more than 20 minutes. We asked CAB to monitor calls, and it found that none was under the Government's stated waiting time of three minutes 27 seconds. In fact, all 36 that it logged were for longer than that. The longest was a staggering 54 minutes and 17 seconds. Sometimes, people are offered a call back. If it happens and they get to their phone in time, they are lucky. They only get one shot at that. It is like a universal credit version of *Catch 22*. The transfer of universal credit to full digital has already been halted, and the halfway house that has emerged is ripe for confusion.

People are required to make some online claims, yet need to take the original copy of letters to the jobcentre at their own cost. A report detailing the impact of the controversial new scheme in Glasgow shows not only that claimants are struggling, but that services and jobs are being put at risk. There is a lack of understanding and explanation of the general requirements of a claim, and those who have special needs are often left to struggle and to face the sanctions that follow. Where is the fairness or the simplicity?

The system is manufacturing debt and despondency. In Highland, the council has a framework agreement for the temporary homeless accommodation services. It is £25 a night or £175 a week. One of my constituents, Gavin, has been living in homeless accommodation. Under the old system, he would have been awarded £168 housing benefit, leaving him a small difference of £7 a week to pay out of his other entitlements. Under universal credit, he has the same housing costs, but gets only £60 a week, which means that he has to pay £115 a week out of his other allowances—but he does not get £115 a week. Even if he gave up food, heat, light and everything else and spent every single penny he would still be short. Gavin and others will always be in arrears. The system is flawed by design

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-17/debates/B8EEB96C-261A-4773-9F97-77AE7911065C/DWPPoliciesAndLow-IncomeHouseholds>



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