

Cross Party Group on Deafness

Meeting, Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 6pm.

Via Zoom (an online video conferencing platform)

Minutes - Present

MSPs

Convenor – Colin Beattie MSP (Scottish National Party)

Annabelle Ewing MSP (Scottish National Party)

Roz McCall MSP (Conservative)

Jeremy Balfour MSP (Conservative)

Invited Guests

Kirsten Abioye, Mike Henderson (FLAAG)

Hannah Tweed (The ALLIANCE)

Amanda McNamara (Teacher of the Deaf)

Douglas Lyons (Colin Beattie MSP staff member)

Gordon Dodds, Chloe Morgan, Aiden Reid – S. G. Dementia Team

Colin Heatherington – Deafblind Scotland

Lucy Stirling – University of Edinburgh

Non-MSP Group Members

Secretariat and Assistant: Janis McDonald, Amy White (The ALLIANCE)

Anita Grover (AVUK)

Cathie Finestone (BATOD)

Jacquie Winning (Forth Valley Sensory Centre)

Alana Harper (Deaf Links, Tayside)

Isabella Goldie, John Whitfield, Jonathan Reid (Deafblind Scotland)

Mark Ballard (NDCS Scotland)

Julie Ferguson (Education Institute for Scotland)

Rachel Mapson and Christine Johnson (Queen Margaret University)

Professor John Ravenscroft (Edinburgh University)

Teri Devine (RNID)

Jill Bradshaw (ATLA-Scotland)

Charlene Dolan (WSDCS)

Avril Hepner (BDA Scotland)

Brogan Ferguson (RCSLT)

Gary Quinn (Heriot Watt University)

Denise McClung (SISG)

Lyn Pornaro (DES)

Nicholas Orpin (Hearing Link/Hearing Dogs)

Individual Member

Donald Richards

Language Service Professionals

Andy Gardner, Bruce Cameron (BSL/English Interpreters)

Gail Richardson, Carol Shedden (Electronic Notetakers)

APOLOGIES

MSPs

Mark Griffen MSP (Scottish Labour)

Karen Adams MSP (Scottish National Party)

Non-MSP Group Members

Teresa Quail (BATOD)

Dumfries and Galloway Hard of Hearing Group

Tessa Slaughter (ASLI Scotland)

Enrique Canton (Deaf Equality and Accessibility Forum South Lanarkshire)

Philip Gerrard (Deaf Action)

Kath Cooper (Donaldson's)

Linda Sharkey (Scottish Audiology Heads of Service)

Deirdre Aitken (Sight Action Sensory Services)

Jane Gallacher (Scottish Cochlear Implant Centre)

Deborah Innes (Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People)

Amanda Wilson (NHS Highland Deaf Services)

Douglas Bryce (Disability Equality Scotland)

Glenn Carter (RCSLT Scotland)

Joanne O'Donnell (Sense Scotland)

Carla Marchbank, Graham Findlay (North East Sensory Services)

Jim Harrigan (Scottish Paediatric Audiology)

Gillian Heavie, Susan Shippey, Scottish Government

Agenda item 1 - Welcome and Introductions

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded people to say who they were and what organisation they represented before making contributions. Amy White reminded attendees about the communication supports and ensured everyone could access the meeting effectively.

Agenda item 2 – Attendance, Apologies and Members

Attendance and apologies noted in the minutes.

Membership: No change.

Agenda item 3 – Approve the minutes from last meeting and discuss matters arising

Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 6 December 2023 were approved. Matters arising are substantive on the agenda.

Agenda item 4 – National Audiology Review (NAR)

The Convenor noted he had recently had a brief meeting with the Minister, Jenni Minto MSP. He stated he had noted the “multi strands” relevant to those with lived experience of deafness, and that doing things piecemeal would not be as effective as a whole system approach. He invited Hannah to provide an update to the CPG, produce a briefing paper and that the Minister will engage with the group.

Hannah highlighted Jenni Minto's statement on 14 December 2023 that the Scottish Government welcomes the independent review, accepts recommendations in principle and wants to establish an implementation group. Hannah noted she had already been in touch with most of the group about a joint response. Hannah is hopeful, considering Colin's conversation with the Minister, that the input people shared on their key areas for immediate response could inform that paper. She plans to circulate a draft based on feedback shared with the ALLIANCE.

Hannah will also be looking for people to sign it off as signatories over the next couple of weeks. If anyone else has things to contribute, please e-mail sensory@alliance-scotland.org.uk

ACTION: A joint response to the Minister to be developed by Hannah/the ALLIANCE

Agenda item 5

Definition of Deafblindness

Annabelle Ewing MSP introduced the report from the working group. She noted the efforts made by Isabella Goldie, Julie Ferguson and the group participants. A declaration has been drafted. Julie Ferguson spoke to the key elements. Isabella spoke to the action points.

Julie Ferguson noted the four main sections to the Declaration. It starts with the Nordic definition, as it is used internationally. The definition is that Deafblindness is a combined vision and hearing impairment of such severity it is hard for the senses to compensate for each other. It covers aspects of life affected by disability, the human rights of every person including Deafblind people and a summary of the legislation. The third

section is the commitments we ask counter signatories to agree with on inclusive education, communication, rehabilitation and support services, participation in decision making, public awareness and advocacy. The final part is next steps. We want the definition adopted, establish pathways for assessment and have a centralised system of notification.

Isabella described the intentions more fully, seeking broad support, building on current connections, developing a communications pack and building momentum. She noted a Parliamentary members debate was being organised for February and an event in the Parliament on June 26 2024 to raise awareness and the action phase of this work. The Cross Party Group on Deafness then endorsed the definition and made commitments to support next steps.

ACTION: Deafblind Scotland will lead communications and next steps to launch the declaration and definition of deafblindness in Scotland.

Agenda item 6

Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and Attainment

Mark Ballard presented the latest data which came out in December. A presentation is attached for information. He described a slight uptake in Teachers of the Deaf with mandatory qualifications, but it is still a 37% reduction from 2011. There has been a bigger jump in total to 174. There seems to be an increase in Teachers of the Deaf who are qualified teachers **but** don't have the mandatory qualifications to be a Teacher of the Deaf and are not studying towards them. Amanda McNamara from BATOD explained why that increase in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf who are not qualified or studying for the qualifications is problematic. She noted the rigorous training teachers of the deaf receive to be able to cope with the range of challenges presented by deaf children. She noted that teachers without that specialist training, including BSL, are not sufficiently equipped to meet needs. Discussion noted the trend to replace specialist teachers with non-specialist and the consequences that has for deaf children.

Mark Ballard noted the subgroup work has been a bit slow lately as NDCS and others have been working on BSL Action Plan, See Hear Strategy refresh and the National Audiology Review. The subgroup has been linking up with four nations work carried out with BATOD. It has been very useful to compare issues around things like rate of pay for Teachers of the Deaf, particularly with England. Teachers of the Deaf outside of Scotland receive an additional payment in recognition of specialist mandatory qualifications. We are still waiting for the Scottish

Government to start competency framework consultation. GIRFEC doesn't always work well for deaf children.

ACTION: The working group strands are now going to restart and report back to CPG on Deafness at the meeting on 20 March 2024.

Agenda item 7

Deafness, Dual Sensory Loss, and Dementia

Roz McCall MSP introduced a new subgroup on sensory care and dementia. Overview: The subgroup aims to provide three reports to improve sensory care. Terms of Reference have been drafted and circulated for information. Phase 1 - care homes and care at home. Phase 2 - midlife sensory screening and Phase 3 - supporting maintaining employment. Roz McCall will chair the subgroup and will be supported by Amy White from the ALLIANCE. Membership will be drawn from CPG on Deafness and others, for example Age Scotland, Alzheimer's Scotland and Scottish Care. Invitations will be made soon aiming for the first meeting of the subgroup to take place in March 2024.

Amy White gave a short presentation with examples of relevant lived experiences and a wide-ranging discussion developed. Key issues noted included wax removal, hearing aid care, BSL and accessibility measures, awareness and training, data and evidence, review and standards.

ACTION: To commence the working group and initially report back to the CPGD by December 2024.

Agenda item 8 Any other business

Information on Lipreading classes circulated.

Agenda item 9 - Date of next meeting and closing remarks

The next scheduled meetings are:

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Wednesday 26 June 2024: Launch of Definition of Deafblindness
"Declaration"

Wednesday 4 September 2024

Wednesday 11 December 2024

End of document.