

**Minutes of the Disability Equality Forum
Monday 4 December 2017, 11.30 – 13.00**

Conference Room C & D, Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

Julie James AM,	Leader of the House and Chief Whip
Paul Dear (Chair)	Welsh Government (Equality team)
Jackie Davies	Welsh Government (Equality Team)
Shona O'Shea	Welsh Government (Equality Team)
Andrea Adams	Welsh Government (Equality Team)
Wayne Crocker	Mencap Cymru
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Joanna Fashan	Whizz Kidz
Tracey Good	NHS Centre for Equality & Human Rights
Martyn Jones	Tai Pawb
Catherine Lewis	Children in Wales
Fiona Reid	Disability Sport Wales
Samantha Williams	Learning Disability Wales

Presenters

Ffion Jones	Victim Support Cymru
Graham Roberts	Department for Work & Pensions
Yasmin Sattar	Department for Work & Pensions
Vikki Butler + 3 colleagues	CARP Collaborations
Joe Powell + 3 colleagues	All Wales People First

Apologies

Owen Williams	Wales Council of Blind People
Rebecca Woolley	Action on Hearing Loss Cymru
Andrea Gordon	Guide Dogs Cymru
Rhian Stangroom-Teel	Leonard Cheshire Disability

1. Welcome

Paul Dear, Welsh Government

- 1.1 Paul Dear welcomed everyone and explained that Julie James AM, the Leader of the House and Chief Whip would be joining the meeting at 12:00.

2. Minutes and action points from previous meeting

Paul Dear, Welsh Government

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2017 were agreed as a true record.
- 2.2 There were four action points from the previous meeting:

1. *Action: Welsh Government to add disability hate crime to the agenda for the next meeting.*
2. *Action: Welsh Government to invite representatives from Victim Support Cymru to attend the next meeting and give a presentation on disability hate crime.*
3. *Action: Jody Mellor to discuss the possibility of presentations with the project leaders and let Welsh Government know if any of them will be able to come to the next meeting.*
4. *Action: Welsh Government to add Universal Credit to the agenda for the next meeting.*

2.3 All actions have been completed.

3. Disability Hate Crime ***Paul Dear - Welsh Government*** ***Ffion Jones – Victim Support***

- 3.1 Paul Dear introduced this topic by explaining the need for disability hate crime to move up collective agendas. The Disability Hate Crime Action Group has not met for some time and whilst disability hate crime has been mentioned at recent meetings of the Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board (HCCJB), it has not yet been a central theme of discussions like faith and LGBT which have both been the subject of full discussions in the last twelve months. There is the option to ask the HCCJB to take this forward or to possibly reconvene the Action Group depending on views of the group. Rhian Davies explained that the Action Group had initially been set up between Disability Wales and Safer Wales with cross-sector participation. There became an issue of how the group was resourced and who was responsible for what. Paul sought the views of the group on the best way forward.
- 3.2 It was suggested that the past minutes of the Action Group meetings could be revisited to see the issues that were discussed and to consider whether there would be a benefit in reconvening the Group
- 3.3 Ffion Jones provided an introduction to Victim Support's work. October 2017 saw 35 disability-related hate crime referrals, which is low compared to other strands of hate crime. This suggests under reporting. Victim Support is working closely with Disability Wales to try and increase reporting. Rhian Davies added that the focus groups they have run have been effective in reaching people. A report will be produced with findings.

3.4 The group discussed disability hate crime:

- There are issues that prevent reporting such as people not recognising they have been a victim of hate crime, not having the confidence to report, not knowing where to go or how to report,
- Services need to be accessible to people who use British Sign Language (BSL).
- What starts as bullying for young people can become Hate Crime in the future. It is important for disabled young people to understand what might be happening to them.
- Disabled people will need to challenge and have input into whatever group takes this work forward.
- Examples were given of disability hate crime that had been experienced.
- Caution is needed when interpreting a rise in hate crime figures. It is not always clear whether a surge is due to increased reporting, or an increase in hate crime. For example, the spike in numbers in October could be attributed to Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- Mencap Cymru are funding a research PHD around whether the changes brought about by the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014 are making people more vulnerable. The researcher is looking at whether the increased reliance on support from family, friends and the local community had led to an increase in hate crime in particular. Findings are expected to be reported soon.
- The third sector representative on the HCCJB was leaving the group and a replacement was being sought. This representative would cover all strands of hate crime and Forum members were invited to make suggestions as to whom it should be..
- It is important to view hate crime as a symptom of the wider discrimination disabled people experience.

3.5 It was agreed that it would be helpful for disability hate crime to be discussed by the HCCJB. Catherine Lewis, Joanna Fashan, Miranda Evans (Disability Wales), Karen Warner (Learning Disability Wales) and Martyn Jones indicated they would like to attend this discussion.

Action: Forum members to send suggestions for additional Third Sector Representatives on the HCCJB to Welsh Government.

Action: Welsh Government will ask the Chair of the HCCJB to put Disability Hate Crime on the agenda for a meeting as early as possible in 2018. Catherine Lewis, Joanna Fashan, Miranda Evans (Disability Wales), Karen Warner (Learning Disability Wales) and Martyn Jones to be invited to the HCCJB. (If other members of the Disability Equality Forum would like to attend, they should let Welsh Government know as soon as possible.)

4. Cabinet Secretary arrives and Introductions

4.1 Following the Minister's arrival, members introduced themselves.

5. Universal Credit – an updated overview

Graham Roberts / Yasmin Sattar

Department for Work & Pensions

5.1 The DWP's presentation gave an overview of Universal Credit and the changes that will be coming into effect (presentation attached). This was followed by a Q&A session.

What is the provision for Deaf or Hard of Hearing people who want to claim independently?

The DWP are currently looking at the process and working with organisations to find out needs. At the moment, people who use BSL are already able to use the service. The DWP are considering a video message to explain Universal Credit for those people who use BSL.

There are concerns about situations where people with a learning disability may not have access to the internet and may be reliant on use of a shared computer for inputting personal information. Also concerns that housing benefit might be going directly to individuals rather than landlord, where the individual does not have budgeting skills, and is ending up with rent arrears.

As part of this process, there is a facility where social landlords can apply for direct payment right at the start of the process.

Feedback from Flintshire has been that rent arrears are escalating and this has had a devastating impact on people.

Private landlords can apply in the same way as social landlords. A flyer is being sent to every landlord to provide information on how to apply for direct payments so this situation should improve.

6 DRILL Research Projects

All Wales People First

6.1 Joe Powell introduced his colleagues and discussed the differences between advocacy and self-advocacy. The project used the MIRROR principles to measure self-advocacy for a consistent approach. The presenters talked about the focus groups they ran which touched on themes of public transport, hate crime, employment, culture and time banking. A separate part of the project focused on interviews with funders like local authorities. A draft toolkit was produced and was taken to the All Wales People First conference.

Due to another engagement, the Minister gave her apologies and left the meeting at this stage.

CARP Collaborations

- 6.2 CARP is a Swansea-based all Wales collaborative organisation. The DRILL project researches young people's experiences of friendships. The project has 8 paid, peer researchers who have been interviewing young people with learning disabilities. Their own personal experience has brought valuable insight to the process. They have also benefited from the experience of employment, interacting with new people and gaining an accreditation.
- 6.3 The research found the young people had experience of bullying, both in person and online as well as mate-crime. They experienced difficulty making and maintaining friendships and some people felt isolated. However other young people (mainly those with active family involvement) experienced more social interaction. There was often an expectation that friendships would be short term.
- 6.4 A clear finding was that the young people felt they had been failed by the Education system. Some people faced huge adversities in some settings. The researchers did encounter some examples of good practice, but this wasn't shared across regions.
- 6.5 The Chair thanked all the presenters for attending and sharing their experience.

7. Framework for Action on Independent Living – update ***Paul Dear / Jackie Davies*** ***Welsh Government***

- 7.1 A new draft of the Framework will be sent to the Steering Group ahead of their next meeting on Friday 8 December. A more substantive update will be given to the Forum at the next meeting.

8. Any other business / date of next meeting

- 8.1 Rhian Davies informed the group that Disability Wales' shortlist of inspiring disabled women had been announced and details were available on their website under the 'Embolden' banner..

<http://www.disabilitywales.org/blog/wales-most-inspiring-disabled-women-announced-iamembolden>