

**Minutes of the Disability Equality Forum
Wednesday 27 June 2018, 10:00 – 11.30**

Conference Room A, Tŷ Hywel, Cardiff Bay

Attendees

Julie James AM, Paul Dear (Chair)	Leader of the House and Chief Whip Welsh Government (Equality team)
Rhian Davies	Disability Wales
Joanna Fashan	Whizz Kidz
Martyn Jones	Learning Disability Wales
Rebecca Woolley	Action on Hearing Loss Cymru
Peter Jones	Guide Dogs Cymru
Lisa Pollard	Welsh Government (Equality Team)
Elaine Hepple	Welsh Government (Equality Team)
Linda Davis	Welsh Government (Welfare Reform)
Lucy Oliver	Welsh Government (Welsh Treasury)
Melanie James	Welsh Government (SHELL)
Rachel Hellard	DWP
Lorraine Davies	DWP

Apologies

Daniel Biddle	Nationwide Accessibility Consultants
Andrea Gordon	Guide Dogs Cymru
Tracey Goode	NHS Wales
Catherine Lewis	Children in Wales
Danni Richards	Children in Wales
Fiona Reid	Disability Sport Wales
Daniel Hurford	WLGA
Maggie Hampton	Disability Action Cymru
Wayne Crocker	Mencap

1. Welcome

Paul Dear, Welsh Government

- 1.1 Paul Dear welcomed everyone and apologies were noted.

2. Minutes and action points from previous meeting

Paul Dear, Welsh Government

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 December 2017 were agreed as a true record.
- 2.2 There were two action points from the previous meeting:

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

2. *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, Karen Warner and Martyn Jones to be invited to the HCCJB.*

2.3 All actions have been completed.

3. Disability Hate Crime

Paul Dear - Welsh Government

3.1 Disability hate crime was discussed at the Hate Crime Criminal Justice Board Cymru (HCCJBC) meeting in January with some additional attendees from the Disability Equality Forum (DEF). The Board agreed that, instead of trying to resurrect the Disability Hate Crime Action Group (DHCAG), it would be better instead to ensure greater direct connection between the DEF and the HCCJBC. It was proposed that the DEF would have a standing item on hate crime, and the HCCJBC would receive feedback from DEF meetings and respond to it.

3.2 At the meeting, the Crown Prosecution Service reported on attrition rates – that is, the number of hate crimes being reported but not being taken forward to prosecution or conviction. There had been a decrease in the number of Disability Hate Crimes being prosecuted, with 33 projected for 17/18 (3 projected in Dyfed Powys, 4 projected in Gwent, 12 in North Wales and 15 projected for South Wales Police). Nationally, the proportion of reported disability hate crime cases that are taken to prosecution has fallen to 20%.

3.3 There was discussion around whether the current hate crime legislation is one of the reasons leading to lower numbers of cases taken to court. Contributory factors may include the fact that hate crime is difficult to categorise and the difficulty of cases when victims may be targeted because of disability but there is no obvious show of hostility making reference to a person's disability. CPS has lobbied for a change in the legislation but there is presently no appetite for this in the UK Government. Another reason for the drop off in prosecutions could be that CPS is being too cautious in its prosecution decisions.

3.4 An agreed action from the meeting was that the CPS and Police Forces would examine the "attrition rates" of a dip sample of disability hate crime cases, to look at where cases are failing to progress or are being disposed of in other ways, and analyse if and where action needs to be taken.

3.5 Gwent Police provided an update for this meeting; of 90 cases reported, 9 reached the CPS and only 1 was prosecuted with the Hate Crime uplift (2 other were prosecuted without the uplift)

- 3.6 Members of the forum expressed surprise and disappointment at the very high levels of attrition being reported. The Forum accepted the proposals in 3.1 for ongoing dialogue between the HCCJB and DEF on these issues and requested a further update on attrition rates at the next meeting.
- 3.7 It was noted that Matt Williams at Cardiff University and Gwent police are both currently working on Mate Crime

4. Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living Update *Paul Dear / Lisa Pollard*

- 4.1 Lisa Pollard outlined the work that is being done across Welsh Government departments to revise the Framework for Action on Independent Living.
- 4.2 The Independent Living Steering Group met in May to discuss the revised framework. It was agreed to move away from having a single document towards having a suite of documents, including the Framework itself , an action plan which could be kept up to date, good practice examples, FAQs etc..
- 4.3 It is expected that the main document – the revised Framework - will be published in the autumn, provisionally titled “Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living”.

5. Employment

- Employability Plan (Lucy Oliver, WG)
 - Apprenticeships (Melanie James, WG)
 - Access to Work (Rachel Hellard, DWP)
- 5.1 Lucy Oliver advised the Forum that the Welsh Government’s Prosperity for All: Employability Plan had been published in March. It sets out how the government will help people to build skills and confidence to find and stay in work. It will also help employers to find the workforce they require for their businesses to flourish. It has four main themes:
- an individualised approach to employability support.
 - the responsibility of employers to up-skill and support their staff.
 - responding to current and projected skills gaps.
 - preparing for a radical shift in the world of work.
- 5.2 They are currently developing a target on disability and employment and a roundtable event on disability, facilitated by the Learning and Work Institute on Friday 24 June, will inform this work.
- 5.3 Eluned Morgan, Minister for Welsh language and Lifelong Learning, is meeting with large employers in Wales and challenging them to become more inclusive.

- 5.4 An Employability Plan progress report will be published in September.
- 5.5 Melanie James provided an update on existing and planned activity to increase the number of disabled people accessing apprenticeships. (Annex A)
- 5.5.1 This led to discussion about the perceived barriers to taking up apprenticeships amongst disabled young people, including:
- A feeling that apprenticeships are not for them, attitudes of gatekeepers towards them.
 - Parents who are anxious that their children will not be able to succeed with this.
 - Essential skills, the need for employers to recognise what individuals can do rather than focus on their lack of qualifications.
- 5.6 Rae Hellard outlined what DWP is doing to support disabled people into employment. The DWP presentation and information leaflets about the Small Employer Scheme are attached.
- 5.7 Rae also talked about what DWP can do to help employers become Disability Confident.
- 5.7.1 This led to discussion on the need generally to educate employers to become Disability Confident in a meaningful way. This is particular difficult for Wales where 92% of Welsh businesses employ fewer than 5 people.
- 5.7 Julie James provided information about other initiatives that will help increase the number of disabled people in to work., including:
- 5.7.1 The Chairperson of the new Fair Work Commission will soon be appointed. There are wide variations in what different individuals, including those with protected characteristics, consider to be “fair work”. Intersectionality of employees in the workplace will be a consideration for the Commissioner.
- 5.7.2 “Better Jobs Closer to Home” pilots will be going live in the autumn. Officials will need feedback from the DEF to properly evaluate the effectiveness of these.
- 5.7.3 Welsh Government’s Economic Action Plan provides a mechanism for WG to encourage diversity and inclusion, e.g. a condition of an organisation receiving funding from the Welsh Government could be an undertaking for it to become a Disability Confident Employer.
- 5.7.4 The new curriculum will provide a focus on the abilities of disabled children; too frequently expectations are low for this cohort of learners.
- 5.8 Linda Davis raised the discouraging nature of most application forms which focus on what is “wrong” with an individual rather than what the barriers are to that individual becoming an employee.

6. Provision of habilitation for children with sight loss
Peter Jones Guide Dogs Cymru

- 6.1 Peter explained that the 2016 report on habilitation services for sight loss was based on 2015 data and since then provision in Wales has decreased. There are 7.5 specialist workers across the 22 local authorities and 7 local authorities provide no habilitation services for children.
- 6.2. Guide Dogs Cymru welcome the policy support provided by Welsh Government but in these times of austerity, local authorities are not undertaking their obligations in relation to group of people.
- 6.3 It was agreed that this item will be carried forward to the next Forum meeting in December when Daniel Hurford of the WLGA will be in attendance.
- 6.4 Julie James said that this should also be brought to the attention of Alun Davies AM, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services.

Action: Secretariat to liaise with WLGA to collate information in preparation for the next Forum meeting.

Action: Secretariat to ensure that feedback is provided to the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government & Public Services.

7. Any other business / date of next meeting

- 7.1 Martyn Jones wanted to commend the Welsh Government for the vision and strategy set out in the Improving Lives Programme.
- 7.2 The date of the next meeting in December will be confirmed nearer to the day.
- 7.3 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 11:25.

Welsh Government's Apprentice Unit Update on existing and planned activity to increase the number of disabled people accessing apprenticeships.

IMPROVING ACCESS AND REACH

Operating the Working Health and Apprenticeship Programmes concurrently: The Apprenticeship Unit has been working collaboratively with Remploy to match their clients onto apprenticeship opportunities. Workshops have been held at Remploy offices across Wales to facilitate relationships between our network of providers and Remploy case workers. A Remploy Pan Wales Apprenticeship Co-ordinator facilitates our joint approach.

Targeted Marketing: Last year we implemented a marketing campaign concentrating on case studies featuring people from protected groups. This year we will be developing a marketing campaign concentrating specifically on apprentices with Mental Health conditions.

Equality and Diversity Toolkit: In June 2018 an Equality and Diversity Toolkit was published and containing a range of resources and useful information including guidance; tips; worksheets; informative videos, web-links and social media links. It aims to assist Providers to practically apply their knowledge and understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the Work Based Learning environment.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Disability Action Plan for Apprenticeships: This follows on from a recommendation made in the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's Apprenticeship Report (February 2018). Recognising that the success of the Action Plan will be dependent on input and commitment on stakeholders, officials held the first 'Inclusive Apprenticeships Disability Round Table' event on 6 June. External stakeholders included: The Shaw Trust; Remploy; Disability Wales; Elite Supported Employment; Leonard Cheshire; RNIB; National Children's Deaf Society and Cardiff University's Centre for Mental Health.

The Round Table identified that action needs to concentrate on:

- **Marketing and raising awareness**
- **Role Models**
- **Incentives**
- **Flexibility Entry and Exit Criteria**
- **Data and disclosure**
- **Support for Individuals**
- **Support for Employers**
- **Support for Providers**

Subsequently, officials have established an Inclusive Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group consisting of internal and external stakeholders which will meet fortnightly during the summer months. The aim of the Group will be to develop and produce an Inclusive Apprenticeships Disability Action Plan which will be published in the autumn.

STAKEHOLDER ACTIVITY

Joint event with Equality and Human Rights Commission: Officials are planning to hold an event targeted at SMEs to look at the benefits of a diverse workforce. During this event we will share good practice models on recruitment and the positive benefits to employers of having a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Equality and Diversity Champion (NTFW): Welsh Government has been funding NTFW Equality Champion since June 2016. The aim of the role is to provide the Work-Based Learning (WBL) provider network with a supportive structure to assist them in increasing the take up of Apprenticeships by individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and people with disabilities. Through our Equality and Diversity Champion, we are working with our network of training providers to increase take up from those who are from protected groups and to identify practical ways to open up access to the Apprenticeship programme so that any individual, regardless of background, can succeed. The funding for this role was recently extended to 2021.

Equality and Diversity training: Earlier this year we funded bespoke Equality and Diversity training for the network of training providers. The informative and interactive sessions were well attended and covered an overview of the Equality Act and Equality Duties for Wales; Disability; Mental Health and Autistic Spectrum Disorder Awareness and Gender Stereotyping.

WORKING CROSS-GOVERNMENT

Employability Programme - Equality Work-Stream: Apprenticeship Unit officials are contributing and participating in the cross-government Employability Programme - Equality work-stream to ensure a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to addressing the needs of disabled people.