

**Minutes of Meeting of the Cross-Party Group for Learning
Disability held in the Scottish Parliament on
Wednesday 22nd June 2011**

1. People who were there



Jackie Baillie MSP
Jim Eadie MSP (part)
Mike Holmes (ENABLE Scotland)
Andrew Strong (ENABLE Scotland)
David Tawse (Ark Housing)
Sue Tait (Ark Housing)
Ian Hood (LDAS)
Colin Menabney (ENABLE Glasgow)
Sally Anne Elfverson (ENABLE Glasgow)
Pandora Summerfield (Down's Syndrome Scotland)
Kevin Toshney (Cornerstone)
Fiona Cowe (Cornerstone)
Heather Muldoon (RNIB)
James Fletcher (ARC Scotland)
Lynnette Linton (ARC Scotland)
Caroline Gray (Quarriers)
Alistair Welsh (Quarriers)
David Harford (Powerful Partnerships)
Sandy Cruikshank (Parent)
Sofi Taylor (Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board)
James McNab (People First (Scotland))
Abby Conlin (People First (Scotland))
Stephen Coulson (Edinburgh Development Group)
Erin Townhill (Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance)
Denis Rowley (Equal Futures)
Stephen Carlin (ACE Advocacy)
Ross Thomson (ACE Advocacy)
Sandy Thomson (ACE Advocacy)
Kirsten Hogg (Camphill Scotland)



2. People who were not there

Norma Curran (VIAS)
Sam Cairns (Equal Say)
Iain Cuthbertson (Quarriers)
Mig Coupe (Mindroom)
Faye Keogh (Turning Point Scotland)
Loretto Lambe (PAMIS)
Morven Campbell (User and Carer Involvement)
Robert Simpson (Ark Housing)

3. Matters arising from the last meeting

Since the last meeting there has been an election to the Scottish Parliament. Before every election the group has to stop. The group then starts again after the election.

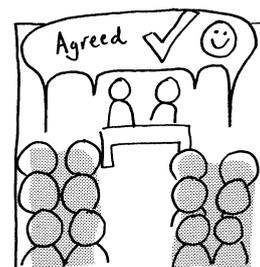
Because this is now a new group there are no matters arising from previous meetings.

3. Election of Office Bearers

At the start of every new group we have to elect the people who will run the meetings.

The group elected the following positions:

- **Convenor:** Jackie Baillie MSP (nominated by Sofi Taylor and seconded by Ian Hood)
- **Vice-Convenor:** Jim Eadie MSP (nominated by Jackie Baillie MSP and seconded by Mike Holmes)
- **Secretary:** Mike Holmes (nominated by Sofi Taylor and seconded by Colin Menabney)



The group congratulated the new office bearers. Jackie Baillie welcomed the new Vice-Convenor, Jim Eadie MSP, who is also a newly elected MSP. Jim said he was delighted to be able to take up a position on the group.

Pandora Summerfield asked if any other MSPs would be involved. Jackie Baillie said that we have invited a number of other MSPs to join the group and they will attend when they can.

Addendum:

After the meeting Alison Johnstone MSP agreed to join the group as a representative of the Scottish Greens.

4. Voluntary sector providers of care

Voluntary sector providers of care are having to make big changes in order to save money because their funding is being reduced.



Quarriers is an organisation that supports people with learning disabilities. Quarriers are trying to change the terms and conditions of their staff to save money.

A motion has been presented to the Scottish Parliament by Mary Fee MSP about Quarriers. The motion calls for an urgent summit to address a 'growing crisis in the provision of social care'.

Jackie Baillie asked if there were other examples of voluntary sector organisations which were having to make big changes because of money problems.

Heather Muldoon said that RNIB was also looking at staff's terms and conditions to try and save money.

Kirsten said that CCPS had produced some evidence on the impact of the recession on the voluntary sector and that this might be useful as evidence. You can read this report at:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/assets/files/Employment%20Conditions%20Report.pdf>



Local authorities tend to only provide services to people once they reach a crisis, rather than stopping a crisis happening. The group agreed that it was how good staff and services are that is important but that staff do not feel valued if their salaries are always going down.

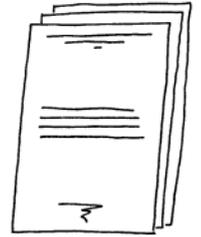
The group agreed to take the following actions to highlight these issues:

- Ask members of the group to email in where cuts in the voluntary sector are having a big impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities.
- Use this information to write to the following people outlining our concerns:
 - The Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy, Nicola Sturgeon MSP
 - Pat Watters CBE, President, COSLA

5. Care homes

i. People with learning disabilities living in care homes for the elderly

Ian Hood told the group that Learning Disability Alliance Scotland has published a report called “Stuck”. It says nearly 900 people with learning disabilities in Scotland live in care homes for elderly people. About 250 of these people are under 55 years old. Most people in care homes for the elderly are in their 80s and 90s.



The report gives some ideas about what needs to change. Learning Disability Alliance Scotland has sent these ideas to SCSWIS – which oversees the way care is run in Scotland – and to each of Scotland’s local authorities.

Jackie Baillie asked Ian Hood to draft a motion or Parliamentary Question that could be asked about the issues raised in the “Stuck” report.

Colin Menabney told the group about a woman from Glasgow. When her mother died she was taken to a care home in Kilmarnock and told she would be there for 10 days. She was actually there for nine and a half years.

Pandora pointed out that half of people with Down’s Syndrome over 60 have early onset dementia. We don’t know how many people who live in Scotland have Down’s Syndrome. If we did know we could better plan dementia services for people with Down’s Syndrome.

Jackie Baillie will ask a Parliamentary Question about the number of people with Down’s Syndrome in Scotland.

ii. Panorama and care home abuse

The group talked about a recent Panorama investigation into a care home in England. The programme highlighted abuse being carried out by care staff to people with learning disabilities.



Pandora passed around a copy of a letter that has been written by the National Development Team for Inclusion. The letter says that it is inappropriate that people should be being placed

in specialist hospitals. The letter has been signed by 86 individuals and organisations and has been sent to the Prime Minister, the First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy.

The group agreed that leaving people in hospitals and care homes risks 'dehumanising' them. James McNab said that he lived in a number of different hospitals. Often the authorities say that hospitals have been closed, but they just reopen as something different. Sandy said that there is not enough housing for people with learning disabilities. Kirsten said that we should try to link the increasing use of care homes to the need to save money.

Colin pointed out that abuse did not only happen in care homes and people suffer abuse in the community or living with their parents too. Colin also said that many small care homes are very good.

Jackie suggested that we should write to the author of the letter and express the Cross Party Group's support.

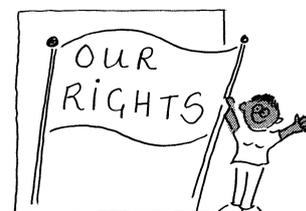
We should send this letter to the First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy.

Jackie said that we should also invite the new Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson MSP, to speak to the Cross Party Group. Jackie asked that we try and be flexible about dates so that the Minister can attend.

We should also write to SCSWIS and invite them to a future meeting to explore how the quality of care is being monitored.

6. People First Citizens' Grand Jury

In January, People First held an event where people explained why things were not working for people with learning disabilities.



They discussed 3 main issues:

- Why people with learning disabilities are not prepared for work and adult life through the education system

- Why people with learning disabilities are much more likely to be victims of crime
- Why the law isn't equally applied to people with learning disabilities

James McNab told the group that People First have produced a report on the findings of the event. This was launched at an event earlier in the day. The report makes 23 recommendations to the Government and other organisations.

A copy of the report will be circulated to the group.

7. Teacher training campaign

ENABLE Scotland has written a report and started a petition about training for education staff on learning disability and autism. At present, people training to be teachers and support assistants can choose to have this training but they do not have to.



Children with additional support needs are five times more likely to be excluded from schools than other children. ENABLE Scotland thinks that if education staff were properly trained on learning disability and autism this could change.

Jackie Baillie encouraged members of the Cross Party Group to sign the petition and encourage other people to sign it. You can sign the petition at:

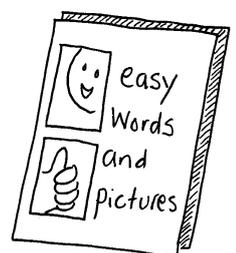
<http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/enablescotlandteach>.

The group suggested that ENABLE Scotland could also consider talking to the STUC about getting trade unions to support the campaign.

8. Accessible information and Disability Living Allowance changes

Caroline Gray from Quarriers told us that Disability Living Allowance is ending. It is being replaced with the Personal Independence Payment.

The Government has produced draft criteria for the assessment of the Personal Independence Payment. You can



read a copy of this here: <http://goo.gl/70Pwj>

The Quarriers Discovery Group wanted to talk about this. They were told by the Department for Work and Pensions that they do not have an easy-read version of the document. They said that this was because the technical language could not be properly explained in easy-read.

The Department for Work and Pensions said that they recommend face-to-face meetings for people who need easy-read versions of the paper. Quarriers invited them to come to a face-to-face meeting but they weren't able to do this.



The group agreed that this was wrong and that people with learning disabilities should be given the opportunity to make their views heard.

The group suggested every organisation on the Cross Party Group writes to the Department of Work and Pensions asking for an easy-read version of their consultation paper on the assessment criteria for the new Personal Independence Payment.

You can do this by email to:
PIP.ASSESSMENT@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK



Or by post to:

DLA Reform – Assessment Development,
Department for Work and Pensions,
2nd Floor, Area B,
Caxton House,
Tothill Street,
London,
SW1H 9NA.



Jackie Baillie said that the Cross Party Group should write to the Minister responsible for the Department of Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith MP.

We should also ask Margaret Curran, the Shadow Minister for Disabled People and MP for Glasgow Baillieston, to ask a Parliamentary Question about this.

9. Anything Else?

“The Same As You?” evaluation

The group asked whether the ‘The Same as You?’ evaluation has now been published and whether an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.



An Equality Impact Assessment is a way of making sure that different groups of people are all being treated fairly.

Mike Holmes said that the report was being written by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability. The report has been submitted to the Scottish Government but not published yet.

The Cross Party Group will speak to Lisa Curtice from the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability to ask if an Equality Impact Assessment was done as part of the assessment.

10. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be flexible to make sure the Minister for Public Health can attend. Everyone will receive notification of the date and time soon.



The group also agreed that it was better to hold meetings at lunchtime in future.