

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Disability
Wednesday 6th December 2017
Mary Fairfax Somerville Room (CR2)
The Scottish Parliament

12.30pm-2.30pm

In Attendance:

Jeremy Balfour MSP (Convenor), Stuart McMillan MSP (Vice-Convenor), Alison Johnston MSP, Julia Shillitto (Jeremy Balfour's Office), Katie Mackie (Jeremy Balfour's Office), Rhona McGrath (Jeremy Balfour's Office), Michael McMahon (Secretary – DAS), Lorraine Gillies (Audit Scotland), Zoe McGuire (Audit Scotland), Heather Melvin (Self Directed Support Policy, Scottish Government), Carlyn Miller (Self Directed Support Policy, Scottish Government), Margaret Wheatley (Independent Living Fund), Robert Wylie (Scottish Government -Transport), Linz Connell (SIAA), Patrick Garratt (SIAA), Fiona Souter (PAMIS), Asleigh de Verteuil (Leonard Cheshire Disability), Heather Noller (Carers Trust), Donna Nicholson (Learning Disability Alliance Scotland), Ewan Hamilton (Learning Disability Alliance Scotland), Salena Begley (Family Fund), Julie Halliday (Butterfly Day Centre), Jennifer Robertson (Stirling Voluntary Enterprise), John Miller (Action Duchenne), Mike Harrison (SATA), Stephanie Fraser (Bobath Scotland), Scott Gillies (Edinburgh Access Panel/Scottish Churches Disability Group), Cate Vallis (RNIB Scotland), Michelle Coup (MECOPP), Morgan Jones (MECOPP), Asha Singh (MECOPP), Chris Purnell (Lead Scotland), Robert McGeachy (Camphill Scotland), Maureen McAllister (Arthritis Care), Nada Shawa (Equality and Rights Network), Carolynne Hunter, Charles Litster

Apologies:

Pauline McNeill MSP, Jackie Baillie MSP, Avril Hepner (BDA), Peter Scott (ILF), Helena Cant (Scottish Churches Disability Group), Emma Scott (Disability Equality Scotland), Clare Johnston (Edinburgh Access Panel), Maggie Ellis, John Sutherland

Introduction

The Convenor welcomed the speakers from Audit Scotland, SDS Policy Unit, ILF and Transport Scotland who would be making presentations throughout the meeting.

He also welcomed Michael McMahon to his role as secretary during Layla Theiner's absence on maternity leave.

Presentations

Self Directed Support

- 1) **Audit Scotland – Self Directed Support Progress Report 2017** Lorraine Gillies from Audit Scotland outlined the methodology used in the study and identified the main points of the report. The report identified evidence of many examples of good progress in implementing SDS with the enthusiasm of staff dealing with SDS being noted as a positive and many examples of new and effective support delivered. However, problems were also evident for individuals accessing SDS, the requirement for better information, the slow pace of change, a need for improved data and health and social care integration not in place and diminishing. Carers also required better information to help access services.
- 2) **Scottish Government Response** Heather Melvin welcomed the report on behalf of the of the Scottish Government and stated that there was already an awareness of some of the issues

such as the 'pot code lottery' in service provision. She stated that the Government was doing a lot to overcome barriers and was working with social work departments across the country and trying to improve leadership. The Government was especially keen to develop good practice, additional resources had been provided to fund social work services and a lot of work was being done to increase access to information.

- 3) **Independent Living Fund** Margaret Wheatley outlined the role of the new fund which was transferred to Scotland in July 2015. The fund is aimed at people with complex disabilities to help them live at home. The fund will be open soon with eligibility defined by the Equality Act and should be as broad and inclusive as possible. Examples were given of what it can be used for such as driving lessons, job coaching and evening classes. It cannot be used for personal or medical care and not for services provided by other agencies. There will be a Transition Fund to help those going through particular transition periods including moving into adulthood or moving out of the parental home. An assessment of how the Fund was operating would be made after the first 500 applications had been made with pay outs beginning in early 2018.

Discussion and Questions

The Convenor began by commenting on the impression of SDS which had developed from the experience of his constituents. This indicated to him that the outcome of SDS decisions was based on those identified by staff rather than the requests of service users. Audit Scotland replied that there were some good and bad examples and that this was dependent upon local leadership.

Stephanie Fraser (Bobath Scotland) raised concerns that health and social care integration was increasingly becoming part of the problem with people falling between two stools. The Scottish Government officials replied that it was the responsibility of local authority to address this issue while Audit Scotland stated that they had also noted this issue in their report and had raised this as a matter to be addressed by the Scottish Government and local authorities.

Individual Comments on Experiences

Julie Halliday stated that her experience of SDS was that costs were prohibitive and that day centres were not available as required to provide the necessary support to meet the needs of individuals.

Carolynne Hunter informed the meeting that her daughter had complex needs, that she required 2 to 1 nursing care, that she enjoyed school and had great support from her local education authority. Her concern was over what would happen when her daughter turned 18 as she believed that the level of care required would not be available from adult services.

John Miller commented that support from the Scottish Government for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy had improved dramatically but that he remained concerned over the provision of respite for adults as no progress had been made in this area since the debate which took place in the Scottish Parliament in 2014

The Scottish Government officials responded that the Care Inspectorate had been asked to look at current practice and how these issues could be addressed and improved upon.

At the conclusion of the discussion it was agreed that the CPG should monitor this issue and come back to it at a later date. It was also agreed that CoSLA should be invited to the next meeting to be given the opportunity to respond to the criticisms levelled at local authorities.

Blue Badges

Robert Wylie of Transport Scotland stated that his department was keen to listen and develop policy and would welcome the opportunity to come back to the CPG at some point in the future.

John Miller commented that the 32 local authorities each had different criteria for providing blue badges and that some councils charged for applications while others did not. Mr Wylie agreed that there was an inconsistency and that Transport Scotland was always in dialogue with councils in order to reduce the differences. However, he stated that local decisions were influenced by local circumstances.

AOB

Robert McGeachy from Camphill Scotland drew the CPG's attention to the motion lodged at the Westminster Parliament on the issue of Brexit and encouraged members raise awareness of this issue and to push as many MP's as possible to support this motion.