Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment in the Scottish Parliament

Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment meeting held on Tuesday 7 February in Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament

Members present:
Stuart McMillan MSP; Neil Bibby MSP; Miles Briggs MSP; Colin Smyth MSP; James Adams, RNIB Scotland; Jayne Armour, RNIB Scotland; Paul Bartley, Optelec; Elaine Brackenridge, Royal Blind School; Ian Brown, RNIB Scotland; Catriona Burness, RNIB Scotland; Campbell Chalmers, RNIB Scotland; Pamela Chater, Macular Society; Matthew Clark, Haggeye; Helen Court, Sight Action/NHS Education for Scotland; Jamie Cuthbertson, Macular Society; John Donaldson, Scottish Braille Press; Jane Donnelly, RNIB Connect Radio; Dominic Everett, Royal Blind School; Anne Marie Fleming, RNIB Scotland; Richard Hellewell, Royal Blind; Adam Hillhouse, NESS; Jane Horsburgh, Guide Dogs; Caitlin Howie, RNIB Scotland; Bob Ironside, Vision PK; Laura Jones, RNIB Scotland; Jim McCafferty, Scottish Braille Press; Gillian Mitchell, Sight Action; Rod Murchison; Sally Paterson, SAVIE; Ken Reid, RNIB Scotland; Terry Robinson, RNIB Scotland; Hal Rollason, Optometry Scotland; Allan Russell, RNIB Connect Radio; Janelle Scotland, ASTN; Angus Scott, NHS Forth Valley; Cate Vallis, RNIB Scotland; Sandra Wilson, RNIB Scotland; Tony Young, RNIB.

Attendees present:
Professor Carrie MacEwan, Scottish Government.

1. Welcome and Introductions
Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2017.

2. Apologies
Valerie Breck, Visibility; Fiona Finlayson, Dundee Blind and Partially Sighted Society; Graham Findlay, NESS; Mairi Graham; Debbie
McGill, Optometry Scotland; John Paterson, SCOVI; Hussein Patwa, RNIB Scotland; Mary Rasmussen; John Ravenscroft, Moray House School of Education; Danny Sweeney, North Ayrshire Council; Mary Travers.

3. Minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Colin Smyth, seconded by Richard Hellewell and formally approved.

4. Matters arising

4.1. Football clubs: It was agreed to write to the 42 senior football clubs regarding accessible programmes.

Actions
• Stuart and Catriona to write to senior football clubs.

5. Certification Review
Carrie MacEwen thanked the group for inviting her to present on the findings from the certification review. The National Assistance Act was introduced in 1948 which allowed those with sight loss to both certify and register their visual impairment. Between 2000 and 2010 there was a reduction in registrations, and in 2010 the reporting of data in Scotland ceased.

The proposals for change in order to make the certification process easier are to update the paperwork and update the nomenclature from ‘blind or partially sighted’ to ‘sight impaired or severe sight impaired’. Adults and children/young people will receive different forms for completion. It is hoped to roll out the new process in early 2017. Work is ongoing with local authorities to encourage involvement.

With a change in administrative support half way through the process, links to social care have suffered. Discussions with local authorities are taking place to ensure their views on certification and data registration are captured.
Anne Marie Fleming queried how the children’s registration was carried out. However it was noted that this has already been widely circulated by VINCYP. The transition from child to adulthood is managed carefully, ensuring all requirements are met.

Ken Reid thanked Carrie for her input and queried whether blind and partially sighted people were asked about the proposed new nomenclature. Carrie replied that those on the group with sight loss were happy with the change, and it also ensures there is a consistent language between the four home nations.

It was queried whether Skills Development Scotland have been involved. This is to be checked.

Hal Rollason noted that optometry have been involved and support the view that parts of the registration process can be moved into community, however there is a reluctance to undertake the work. By law, it is the responsibility of consultant ophthamlologists, even following the Care Act in 2014.

Angus Scott shared his thoughts in that local authorities should hold information nationally with the use of the Community Health Index (CHI).

Gillian Mitchell noted that the Community Eyecare Review links in with the mapping of low vision services.

**Actions**
- Stuart and Carrie to check SDS involvement.

**6. AOCB**

6.1. Waverley Station vehicle access: Miles Briggs MSP updated the group on the issue of allowing accessible vehicles to drop off / pick up inside the station again. A members’ debate was held on 16 March with Humza Yousaf where it was proposed to allow dedicated taxi drivers for disabled people living in Edinburgh and Lothians
access into the station. Sandra Wilson asked whether the privilege would be extended to those outwith Edinburgh and Lothians and noted that Waverley is not disabled friendly.

6.2. CPG Secretariat: James Adams stepped down from his CPG Secretariat role due to his new position as Deputy Director of RNIB Scotland. Stuart McMillan expressed his thanks to James for his contribution in recent years and wished him every success in the new role he has with RNIB Scotland. Catriona Burness will undertake the role of Secretariat in place of James Adams. Stuart welcomed Catriona taking over the role and wished her well.

7. Future meetings
- Tuesday 9 May 2017 [to be confirmed]