STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS
COMMITTEE

REVIEW OF CROSS-PARTY GROUPS

WRITTEN SUBMISSION RECEIVED FROM SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON
DEAFNESS

The Scottish Council on Deafness represents over seventy organisations working with and on behalf of Deaf Sign Language users, Deafblind, Deafened (Acquired Profound Hearing Loss) and Hard of Hearing people in Scotland; and individuals who have an interest in deaf issues or are deaf themselves.

Our membership provides an effective working partnership between the Voluntary Sector, Social Work and Education Departments, NHS Trusts, Health Boards and the Government.

Background to Contribution

One in five of the population in Scotland has a hearing loss. This means there are over one million people in Scotland with a hearing loss, from the profoundly deaf to those who are hard of hearing. They have different communication needs.

There are approximately 6,000 deaf people whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL).

The majority of the Cross Party Groups are not fully accessible to people who have a profound hearing loss. Communication support is not provided as standard for the Cross Party Groups and paperwork is not necessarily sent out in plain English at least two weeks in advance.

Contribution

Question 12

The Code currently provides that there are limitations on the use of Parliamentary resources to support CPG meetings. What are your views on these limitations?

There does not appear to be any guidance on how to ensure that the group meetings are fully accessible in the Code and what resources can be used to make this happen. Is this an oversight? What does the Code say is a “reasonable adjustment” to ensure accessibility for members of the public who may be attending the meetings?

Who had responsibility to ensure that all paperwork for the group meetings is fully accessible for all who are attending? And who has responsibility for
providing communication support if it is required – for example, an Electronic Notetaker or Palantypist to project what speakers are saying so that people with a hearing loss can take part in the meeting?

Do all the committee/meeting rooms in the Parliament have integral hearing loops?

Has the Scottish Parliament signed up to the Independent Living in Scotland Principles of Inclusive Communication as published by the Scottish Government?

**Question 15**

*At present, the SPPA Committee has not delegated to the Standards clerks any role in ensuring that CPGs are aware of and comply with the key rules relating to the administration of the CPGs. What are your views on whether it would be of assistance to the CPGs if the Standards clerks were to perform such a role in relation to matters such as the notification of CPG meetings, updates to registration details and deadlines for submission of documentation?*

In order to ensure all CPGs are fully accessible to all citizens of Scotland as well as the MSPs, it would be helpful if the Standards clerks were available to the Convenors and Secretariat of all the CPGs. If it is decided that the Standards clerks will have more of a role in the administration of the CPGs, will they have responsibility for ensuring appropriate communication support is provided at the “mainstream” CPGs to ensure their accessibility.

**Other comments**

In the paper that was published and subsequently sent out to members of the CPGs for comment, it stated in the “how to submit your views” section

“Responses should be no more than four sides of A4 in length. We welcome written views in English, Gaelic, Scots or any other language.”

And

“Reponses should be sent, where possible, electronically in Word format to the following address...”

This is discriminatory against Deaf people who use British Sign Language as it is not a language that can be written down or produced in a Word format.

In the future, can the Scottish Parliament ensure that it does not discriminate against Deaf and Deafblind people in this way.