

**Minutes of the 6th meeting of the H&F Disabled People's
Commission**

Thursday 16th March 2017 at Hammersmith Town Hall

Present:

Tara Flood (Chair)
Patricia Quigley
Martin Doyle
Victoria Brignell
Kate Betteridge
David Isaac
Ramona Williams
Jane Wilmot
Ali Buhdeima

Apologies

Mike Gannon
Cllr Vivienne Lukey, Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social
Care
Kevin Caulfield, Policy & Strategy Officer (Disabled People's
Commission)

Also Present:

Cllr Sue Fennimore, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion
Mary Hicks, DeafPlus
Gwen Presley, DeafPlus
John, Safety Net People First
Faisal, Safety Net People First
Sheryl, PA for Safety Net People First
Peter Gay, Support Worker

H&F Officer Support:

Peter Smith and Fawad Bhatti, Policy & Strategy Team

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Patricia asked that changes be made to her statement on page 10 of the minutes and these were then agreed.

Review of actions (including updates from previous meeting):

Kevin to contact Lee Fitzjohn (Head of Insight & Analytics).
Milan Ognjenovic of the Insight and Analytics Team is attending the next weeking to give feedback on the survey results. Gwen Presley has not received the survey.

Action: Survey to be circulated to DeafPlus and their clients and contacts.
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Draft Strategy on Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness to be circulated.

This has been done.

Henrietta Doyle's presentation on Inclusion London to be circulated.

This has been done.

Tara to meet with Bathsheba Mall from Committee Services to see how the Commission can fit into the work programme of the HASCSI PAC.

Tara has not had a chance yet and will follow up in the next week or so.

Action: Tara to meet with Bathsheba Mall from Committee Services to see how the Commission can fit into the work programme of the HASCSI PAC.

2. Evidence Session: DeafPLUS

2.1 Tara introduced Mary Hicks from DeafPLUS, who explained that the organisation want inclusion for deaf and hard-of-hearing and for blind and for Deafblind. All of DeafPLUS's staff are deaf so there are no communication problems with clients.

2.2 The organisation has offices all over the country but locally it has supported people that have been deaf in Fulham for over 15 years, with an average of 30 clients seen each year. The number of clients is small due to a lack of funding. Mary went on to set out the services provided to clients from the Ealing area.

2.3 Tara introduced Gwen Presley, a client of DeafPLUS. Gwen explained that she lives in Acton and uses the DeafPLUS drop-in centre, which is close to her home. She had used DeafPLUS services for 15 years before funding was cut. She bemoaned the lack of interpreting services at the council and hospital.

2.4 David asked Mary to expand on the most common problems experienced by deaf people in the borough. She said that the main problem was one of communication and access to information – a lack of interpreters when needed. She also said that many deaf people have low level reading skills so may have problems in understanding letters – a further communication barrier.

2.5 Ali asked Mary what the funding relationship was with H&F Council and she explained that the funding that DeafPLUS received was for the provision of information and advice services, not for interpreters, and that it amounted to about £20,000.

2.6 Mary agreed to answer any further questions from commissioners by email. Cllr Fennimore agreed to look into the funding situation regarding DeafPLUS.

2.7 Jane highlighted the importance of the statutory information standards that came into force on 1 August 2016. Any evidence of hospitals or GP practices failing to comply with those standards should be sent to Action on Hearing Loss.

Action: DeafPLUS to circulate survey questionnaire to their clients and other contacts.

Action: Cllr Fennimore to clarify DeafPLUS funding from H&F Council.

3. Evidence Session: Safety Net People First

3.1 Faisal explained that Safety Net People First (SNPF) have been asked to talk about how people with learning disabilities are involved in decision-making and policy setting. He stressed that SNPF don't think they are in this borough. He said that there are forums and groups like National People First and Advocacy forum and that these groups ask us for our views and feed them back to the decision-makers.

3.2 Martin went on to explain that SNPF is a disabled

people's organisation run by people with disabilities or difficulties and for people with learning disabilities. He described the organisation's main aims as to make sure people are in control of their care needs and support and to make sure people are active in their community and included, not isolated.

3.3 John then went on to state that people with learning disabilities do not have a voice in the borough but that they do sit on a number of groups, forums and boards to make sure people with learning disabilities have a voice. He explained that Safety Net People First sit on the housing sub group that Hammersmith and Fulham set up. Commissioners and councillors sit on that group as well and SNPF has provided training for housing officers to make sure that they understand the needs of people with learning disabilities.

3.4 John said that SNPF believe that disabled people should be more involved in decision making about disabled housing. They also want an improved health service. Safety Net People First sit on the health sub group that Hammersmith and Fulham set up and they also sit on the learning disability health steering group. Safety Net People First are also involved with HealthWatch and attend the NHS England learning disability and autism forums.

3.5 Faisal stated that being involved in other DPOs networks is important to have a strong voice. Safety Net People First work alongside local DDPOs and is part of a DPO network in Hammersmith and Fulham that meets regularly.

3.6 Tara asked why SNPF do not feel they have a voice

when they are involved in so many different consultative forums and boards - are they just not working? John stressed the importance of disabled people going out to vote in elections to make sure their voice is heard. Faisal suggested that the forums and boards are responsible for little changes but not big changes. John highlighted the cuts in Disability Living Allowance as the big changes that the local forums and boards are unable to address.

3.7 On the subject of voting, Ramona noted the problems that those with a visual impairment have in seeing voting papers and the lack of support at polling stations to assist disabled voters.

3.8 Patricia asked what SNPF want the Council to do and Faisal said that the Council needs to listen and act on complaints about benefits cuts, although he noted that he is not clear on the Council's role in that area.

3.9 Cllr Fennimore said that she hopes that DPOs have seen a completely different approach from the Council over the past two and a half years, with a commitment from this administration to ensuring that disabled people do have a voice. She accepted that sometimes there is a failure to explain why something can't be done and agreed that communication is vital. She stressed that the Council wants to hear the views of disabled people and wants to know how it can improve things. She emphasised the fact the Commission is tasked with trying to make this the best borough in the country to live in if you are living with a disability.

3.10 On the subject of benefits, Cllr Fennimore explained that the DWP is run separately from local government and that councils have absolutely no powers to affect benefit

cuts.

3.11 Jane explained that she is a lay member for the commissioners of health care in Hammersmith and Fulham and she is concerned to hear that SNPF doesn't feel that it is being heard because locally, in Hammersmith and Fulham, people with learning disabilities are a priority. So actually, I'm quite concerned to hear what you have had to say. Jane agreed to submit questions to SNPF to clarify the issues with health care commissioning and follow these up.

3.12 Victoria asked SNPF how user friendly and accessible they find the Council website. Martin agreed to take the question back to SNPF and test it as they haven't been on the Council website as yet.

Action: Jane to submit questions to SNPF on health care issues.
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4. Public Consultation Events

4.1 Patricia reported that the first event is on Saturday 29 April at Saint Paul's in Hammersmith Broadway from 2 to 4.15 pm. The second event will be on Wednesday 24 May (date tbc) at the White City Community Centre from 6.30 to 9pm.

4.2 There is enough space for about 60 people to attend each event. There will also be at least 10 others including commissioners, BSL interpreters, Palantypists and general assistants. The tables will be laid out in cabaret style.

4.3 Commissioners are being asked to do registration, facilitate and take notes for both exercises. Publicity for the St Paul's event is being distributed tomorrow or Monday at the latest.

4.4 The subject of the workshop at each event will be decided after the survey results are known. For this reason, commissioners are asked to attend the event on Saturday 29 April at 1pm so Tara can give a briefing.

4.5 Ramona suggested that, as well as name badges, commissioners should select a vibrant, common colour in order to be easily identified on the day.

5. Update on Surveys

5.1 Tara reported that the deadline for resident survey returns is being extended from 20 to 31 March. She thanked SNPF for the job they have done in creating an easy read version. Peter S reported that, as of last week, there had been 83 responses from staff and 67 for residents – a good return from staff but not so good from residents.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Victoria asked about the process of writing the Commission's report and Tara suggested that this be a discussion item at the April or May meeting. Tara also suggested that the Tackling Isolation and Loneliness report be an item for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

Wed 19 April, Courtyard Room, Hammersmith Town Hall
Thurs 18 May, Courtyard Room, Hammersmith Town Hall
Mon 19 June, Dawes Road Hub, Fulham

Tues 11 July, Small Hall, Hammersmith Town Hall
Wed 23 Aug, Courtyard Room, Hammersmith Town Hall
Tues 12 Sept, Courtyard Room, Hammersmith Town Hall