

Diversity and Equality Steering Group

Minute of Meeting

Held at Western Isles Hospital on 23 June 2010 at 14.00pm.

Present

Helen Froud	Improvement Forum (Chairperson)
TK Shadakshari	NHS Western Isles
Calum Russell	NHS Western Isles
Lena Morrison	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Gordon Thomas	Lewis Access Panel
Donnie White	Lewis Access Panel/MS Society
Mandy Macleod	Crossreach
Carmen Morrison	Scottish Health Council
Kathryn Maciver	NHS Western Isles

Apologies

Lucy Macdonald	Harris Access Panel
Alan Ross	Harris Access Panel
Norma Morrison	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Roddy MacKay	Northern Constabulary
Isobel Mackenzie	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Iain Mackenzie	Third Sector Hebrides
Jenny Williams	NHS Western Isles
Denise Symington	NHS Western Isles

Minutes

The minute of the meeting of 21 April 2010 were checked for factual accuracy and approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to an amendment regarding the LAC consultation process. The minutes will be published on the DESG pages of the Comhairle website.

Matters Arising

NHS Western Isles Car Parking – Calum Russell is the contact person to liaise with regarding disability issues. There is a realisation that that working outside the hospital would have some impact but more consideration needs to be given to the users of the services – both for individuals accessing the services by foot and by vehicle. CR advised that the contractors carrying out the works have been made aware of the issues. It will be on the Agenda of the next DDA working group.

Implementation of the Single Equality Bill – It was noted that the implementation of the Bill is quite fragmented at present although there are lots of focus groups in operation at present to clarify matters. There would appear to be lots of last minute compromises and items which have been included and excluded. There is a general feeling that the EHRC will be greatly reduced and difficult to day what support will be available from them in the future.

*Guidance on the new duties should be available in October 2010 with new schemes in place for April 2011.

Establishment of a NHS WI Wheelchair User and Carer Group

In the absence of Denise Symington, Calum Russell updated the meeting. This has been triggered following receipt of a FOI request. There is a duty as a Health Board to have a Wheelchair User and Carer group in place. There have been two expressions of interest but the board would require considerable more interest and members to establish a working group. The FOI request has been responded to and it is on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan. It was noted that while people talk about being interested in forming a group this doesn't materialise. There is an avenue for people to make representations to DESG. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to provide an opportunity to clarify the position.

LGBT Meeting Update

The first meeting took place on the 28 May 2010 with 15 people in attendance. It was extremely well received and everybody appeared happy and comfortable with the arrangements which were made.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 25 June 2010 at the same venue. It was also noted that a Facebook page has been set up called "Out Out West". Scott Cuthbertson is staying involved at present to assist with capacity building and Caroline Snow will also remain in contact with the group.

Further down the line it is hoped that a representative from the group will join DESG. The question was raised as to who was controlling the Facebook pages – it is understood that this is a self determined group to open out a local forum. Andrew Robertson from the BBC was asked to set up the Facebook site.

The meeting on Friday 25 June will be the first independent meeting and is anticipated that the group will continue to meet on a monthly basis and will be very much a social meeting with the potential of every third meeting having more of a business focus.

Learning Disability Alliance Scotland Newsletter re LAC Service

Newsletter attached for noting.

CnES Budget Strategy 2011-2014 Consultation

A link to the Budget Strategy papers was shared with the group. It was noted that there will inevitably be changes to services and the way in which services are delivered but the Comhairle are committed to minimising the impact of funding reductions on service users. Comhairle members will be considering options available to them over the summer period and a number of public meetings will be held during September 2010 to engage with the wider community on proposals.

A general discussion took place regarding the impact that national cuts and proposals will have. The impact on Disability Benefits is anticipated to be substantial. It is anticipated that everyone is going to have to go through a medical and that 80% of appeals are not attended by DWP. The VAT increase may also have a disproportionate impact on disabled people (as well as other equality strands).

Carmen Morrison agreed to share 'Best Practice Guidelines' on consultation processes and methods to be shared with DESG members and wider as appropriate.

Access Panel Update

Lewis Access Panel – it has been agreed that ‘Vital Signs’ would produce the membership leaflet. Distribution points were discussed; the panel would explore the possibility of sending the leaflet to HHP for circulation to individuals in disabled housing.

Gordon Thomas attended a meeting in Glasgow with Transport Scotland – there was a discussion regarding the need for all buses to be accessible although it was argued that Coaches are not buses – even if this was the cases there would still be a requirement on the service provider to make reasonable adjustments.

The issues within the islands is that buses that are meet the requirements of being fully accessible can’t operate on the rural networks and it comes down to the question of providing no service at all or one which is compromised.

GT also advised of the production of a ‘guide’ for new parking in Scotland. There is a need for this as there is inconsistency regarding parking queries and responses provided by the Police and Local Authorities.

Draft Newsletter

It was agreed that the newsletters could be distributed (subject to clarification of the date, time and venue for the joint Access Panel meeting). A copy of the newsletter was also requested to be sent to Maggie Fraser, NHSWI.

NHSWI Annual Review

The Annual Review of NHSWI is currently underway and invitations have gone out to individuals to become involved. A meeting will take place with the Cabinet Secretary on 25 August 2010 at 10.45am, the Chair of DESG agreed to attend the meeting representing DESG.

DEWG/REWG

No meetings have taken place since the last reported meeting therefore there are no updates to share.

Date of Next Meeting

18 August 2010 at Western Isles Hospital at 2pm