



**Minutes Cross Party Autism Group / Cofnodion Grŵp Trawsbleidiol Awtistiaeth
12:00-1:15pm February 12 Chwefror, 2014
National Assembly for Wales / Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**

1. WELCOME / CROESO

Chair of CPAG, Mark Isherwood welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2013, which was on the theme of autism and bullying. The meeting was also attended by the following Assembly Members: Aled Roberts and William Powell and representatives from the office of Kirsty Williams and Simon Thomas.

2. MATTERS ARISING / MATERION YN CODI

There were no matters arising and the minutes were agreed.

3. PRESENTATIONS / CYFLWYNIADAU

The CPAG first heard from Karen Thompson and her experiences of dealing with autism and bullying and then from Professor Judy Hutchings on an anti-bullying programme being trialled in Wales.

Karen Thompson described how she had been bullied throughout her life and wasn't diagnosed with autism until her late 30s. She explained how the bullying in her childhood, especially at school, had been the worst she'd encountered but that it had also extended into her adult life. Karen said that the bullying had led to her not being able to hold down a job and to feelings of failure in her life. Karen finished by saying that people needed to recognise that people with autism were bullied and that schools and workplaces needed to find solutions to prevent bullying happening.

Professor Judy Hutchings from Bangor University talked about her work in disseminating and researching the KIVA Anti-Bullying programme in Wales. KIVA, is an acronym of Finnish phrase which means 'against bullying'. It is also the Finnish word for 'nice'

The programme is practical tool for dealing with bullying and is implemented across the whole school. It includes whole lessons, strategies for dealing with bullying, support for parents and pupils and online materials.

It has proved remarkably successful in Finland. Take up of the programme in Finnish schools is now over 90 per cent and is financed by the Finnish Government. The programme was trialled in key stage 2 in 17 schools by Bangor University in 2012-2013 and included 13 Welsh schools that had received funding from Welsh Government.

Results of the trial are currently being written up for publication. Self-report by pupils shows a significant reduction in both bullying and victimisation. Teacher feedback suggested the programme had a positive impact on children's wellbeing, behaviour and class and playground atmosphere. Eleven schools are continuing with the programme.

Following funding from the BIG Lottery, the programme is being delivered and researched across all key stage two classes in a further 21 schools in Wales. The outcomes are being evaluated by Professor Hutchings in collaboration with the Dartington Social Research Unit.

A PowerPoint of Professor Hutchings' presentation is attached with the minutes.

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING / CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL BLYNYDDOL

The CPAG held its annual general meeting, in line with National Assembly for Wales rules on cross party groups. Mark Isherwood AM was confirmed as the groups Chair and secretariat will be provided by the National Autistic Society Cymru [NAS Cymru]

The CPAG Annual Report 2014 was presented and approved.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS / UNRHYW FATER ARALL

NAS Cymru Ystradgynlais Branch Member, Lisa Rapado, outlined a consultation by Powys County Council to revise its additional learning needs provision. This would involve shutting 16 units and four pre-school assessment centres for children with additional learning needs at primary schools. It is estimated that this will save the Council around £350,000.

Lisa urged CPAG members to respond to the consultation and join the Facebook page she has established [Hands Off Our Specialist Unit Powys.]

6. ACTIONS / PWYNTIAU GWEITHREDU

- Write to the Minister for Education informing him of Powys County Council's proposal.

7. NEXT MEETING / CYFARFOD NESAF

The next meeting will be at the National Assembly for Wales, 14 May 2014 12:00-1:15.