



Minutes / Cofnodion
Cross Party Autism Group / Grŵp Trawsbleidiol Awtistiaeth
Mehefin 10 June 2015
National Assembly for Wales / Cynulliad Cenedlaethol

1 WELCOME / CROESO

CPAG Officer and Acting Chair, Jeff Cuthbert AM, welcomed everyone to the second meeting of 2015.

The meeting was attended by the following AMs: Aled Roberts; and William Powell. Representatives from the offices of Suzy Davies and Mark Isherwood were also in attendance.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING/ COFNODION A MATERION YN CODI

There were no matters arising and the minutes were agreed to be an accurate account of the previous meeting

3 UPADTE ON THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S INTERIM DELIVERY PLAN ON AUTISM / DIWEDDARIAD AR GYNLLUN GWEITHREDU INTERIM Y LLYWODRAETH AR AWTISTIAETH

Meleri Thomas, NAS Cymru's External Affairs Manager, updated the group on the progress of Welsh Government's ongoing 'refresh' of it's Autism Strategy. Meleri informed the group the work is still underway within Government to assess the impact new legislation will have on the Autism Strategy and so have published instead an interim delivery plan for 2015-16 detailing immediate actions for the year ahead. The Interim Delivery plan can be found here:

http://www.asdinfo.wales.co.uk/resource/150518_ASD-interim-delivery-plan-2015-16.pdf

3.1 Queries were raised as to the details involved in a number of the Actions listed in the Interim Delivery Plan. Michael Williams questioned the reference to 'Dormant Accounts Money' that is proposed to pay for an autism employability programme. Jeff Cuthbert informed the group that this money is distributed by Welsh Government from money left in dormant bank and building society accounts.

3.2 David Malins questioned the effectiveness of the Community Monitoring Project as referenced in the Interim Delivery Plan. The action is to continue with the Project as it is.

4 DISABILITY SPORT WALES / CHWARAEON ANABLEDD CYMRU

Dan Bufton, the Disability Sports Officer for Merthyr Tydfil discussed the ongoing projects in the area and collaboration with the Merthyr NAS Branch. He said that in the past, there were very few opportunities for people with ASC but collaboration with the branch has opened up new possibilities for individuals with autism. The projects currently undertaken include Rock Climbing, Physical Literacy, Scheduling/PECs as well as wider autism awareness amongst staff at sport and leisure facilities in the county.

4.1 Jill Grange, Branch officer for NAS Cymru's Bridgend and District Branch spoke about the positive impact working with Disability Sport Wales in her area has had. The branch are now able to offer Judo, Golf, Swimming and Athletics to it's members.

4.2 Ann Fowler asked if there was an age limit for the individuals DSW could support. Dan Bufton said that there was no limitations based on age.

4.3 Alwyn Rowlands, who runs Gwynedd and Anglesey Autism and Asperger support group also agreed that the funding for DSW programmes is making a difference throughout Wales.

4.4 Alis Hawkings, NAS Cymru Family Support Worker queries that, with a global trend of many people with autism, especially younger people, not identifying themselves as 'disabled', whether or not this could be a barrier to them choosing to access these great services.

4.5 Theresa James, the ASD Lead for Monmouthshire CC said that the work going on in her area was particularly promising, with every leisure and sport facility undergoing basic awareness training.

4.6 Dan Bufton shared the story a young man with autism who is a DSW Young Ambassador and sits on the steering group. The impact that the sport programmes has had has been transformational for him.

4.7 Ruth Jones, Branch Officer for NAS Cymru's Merthyr Tydfil Branch said that while these programmes were making a big difference, particularly to those with Aspergers, individuals with Classic autism are not catered for in the same way. Ruth spoke about how difficult it was to get important Occupational Therapy, essential for her own son.

5 ARRIVA TRAINS WALES: AUTISM AND TRANSPORT / TRENAU ARRIVA CYMRU: AWTISTIAETH A THRAFNIDIAETH.

Arriva Trains Wales representatives Michael Vaughan and Ben Davies outlined the company's policies for ensuring accessibility for all. They spoke about a commitment to reduce social exclusion through a positive policy of improved access to services for customers with disabilities. They said they will work closely with rail industry colleagues to achieve this where they are responsible for the provision or ownership of facilities. They ended by promoting the Orange Wallet scheme, aimed at providing staff with an indication that an individual may have additional travel needs. Michael and Ben stressed that they were there to listen to problems and solutions and opened the debate to the floor.

5.1 Mat Mathias from NAS Cymru said that while anything that can help support people to travel independently, such as the Orange Wallet Scheme, could be welcomed, the nature of the training provided to staff to support people with disabilities was the crucial issue. Ben said that this is something ongoing, with refresher training for staff every 16 weeks.

5.2 Louise Rixon made the point that she is unable to use the train as a method of transport with her son as the toilet and changing facilities aren't compatible with their needs. Where there are changing facilities, they are only for very small children. Arriva Trains Wales said they are committed to making all stations and trains accessible moving forward and that as new services are developed, they will account for the changing needs of their customers.

5.3 Janet Williams spoke about a bad experience that her son had when dealing with staff at Swansea Train Station. She suggested the autism awareness and understanding isn't where it should be and present.

5.4 Colin Foster, from NAS Cymru Merthyr Tydfil Branch said that ASC Passports are being developed and asked if they were compatible with the Orange Wallet. Similarly, Alka Ahuja mentioned a mobile app that provides a pen-pic of an individual and their needs. It was suggested that anything that helps communicate the additional needs of an individual would be useful to staff.

6 CATH DYER

Cath Dyer wanted to update the group on her daughter Claire's progress since the removal of her Section. Claire has been thriving at home under her new support arrangements and sang at the Autism Hero Award Nominations and will do so again at the Award Ceremony. Cath said that she is enjoying being home, surrounded by friends and family and is glad to be supported by people who understand autism.

6.1 Jeff Cuthbert was glad to see Claire's progress and said there was much to be learned for this case.

7 ISSUES RAISED / MATERION A GODWYD

7.1 Keith Ingram spoke briefly about some work with Job Centres that is being undertaken and wanted to raise awareness of new resources available online. They can be found here: http://www.asdinfowales.co.uk/home.php?page_id=8722

7.2 A Cardiff resident wanted to raise a local issue. In the last review she had attended, her son's psychiatrist had told her that they were under direction not to see children with autism, who had no co-morbid condition. This would mean no diagnostic pathway for autism.

7.3 David Malins asked for more detail on Welsh Government's recent announcement of funding for CAMHS. He would like to know exactly how it will be spent and if it is funding that was previously allocated elsewhere. David also commented that post diagnosis services for adults are not available and cited his own situation as an example of someone with a diagnosis who can't access the support needed.

4. ACTIONS / PWYNTIAU GWEITHREDU

CPAG will write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to get more detail on the recent announcement on more funding for diagnostic services in CAMHS.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date and location of the next CPAG meeting: 11th September 2015 / Glyndwr University, Wrexham. Next Cardiff meeting 18 November 2015 at the National Assembly for Wales.