

Disability Action Alliance Steering Group Meeting 30/06/2015

Attendees:

Justin Tomlinson (10.45-11.05)	Minister for Disabled People
Stephen Brooks	Disability Hate Crime Network (Chair)
Ray Ashley	English Federation of Disabled Sports (EFDS)
Cam Nicoll	Digital Accessible Centre
Chris Smith	Disabled Golf Association
Naomi Marek	Sky Badger
Charlie Willis	Independent Lives
Julie Jaye Charles	Equalities National Council
John Coxon	Office for Disability Issues (ODI, DWP)
Stephanie Harvey	Office for Disability Issues (ODI, DWP)
Kerry Williams	Disability Action Alliance (ODI, DWP)
Maxine Thompson	Disability Action Alliance (ODI, DWP)
Adrian Reed (Observer)	Office for Disability Issues (ODI, DWP)
Sharon O'Connell (Observer)	Jobcentre Plus (DWP)
Frank Shields (10.45-11.05)	Assistant Private Secretary to Minister (DWP)

Apologies

Liz Sayce	Disability Rights UK
Jim Edwards	Signature
Carol Pearson	Surrey Coalition
Sarah Yiannoullou	NSUN
Andy Rickell	ADWUK

Welcome and Introductions

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting, and confirmed the new Minister for Disabled People would be joining the meeting at 10.45 for a short time.

Previous Action Points (AP)

APs discussed:

14/01/15 AP3 – The guidance regarding accessible features for the website will be a video that DAC has produced. This will be added to the website as soon as possible.

25/02/15 AP9 – Kerry will speak to Cam to finalise any outstanding disclaimers. Additionally Cam offered website training to the secretariat.

25/02/15 AP14 – Maxine is now exploring options to fund the easy read.

08/04/15 AP7 – Steering Group members were sent information about Public Appointments to review. Some comments have been sent received, but late comments will be accepted up to mid July. Julie requested to join this group. Action closed.

08/04/15 AP9 – The secretariat has invited requested a guest speaker to attend a Steering Group meeting and will chase the response during July.

08/04/15 AP11 – Ray confirmed work is continuing on Charter for Change and that he will send information to the Secretariat during July.

08/04/15 AP13 – The Secretariat had added the ‘work’ project to website. They will add project volunteers and more information as this work developed. Action closed.

08/04/15 AP15 – Naomi confirmed “Pimp My Cause” are interested in working with the DAA. This will be picked up as part of the comms and marketing strategy.

19/05/15 AP 1 – Maxine confirm that the DPULO programme closed at the end of March 2015 and the ambassador roles also ended at this time. Action closed.

19/05/15 AP 2 – Evenbreak were invited to the first employment support project meeting in July, and have confirmed they will attend. Action closed.

19/05/15 AP 3 – The next Raising Disability Awareness amongst Children project group meeting has taken place. Action closed.

19/05/15 AP 4-7 – These action points were individual amendments to the Intersection checklist, all of which have been incorporated into the latest checklist. Actions closed.

19/05/15 AP 8 – Stephen produced a business case proposal for the future of the DAA. This will be circulated for comment ahead of the next steering group meeting.

Project Updates

Volunteering

Following events and online/social media activity during Volunteering Week, 20 new organisations have pledged to join the charter, with more expected to join during July.

Communications and Marketing

Maxine has been undertaking her induction, and should now be able to take this area forward, including taking forward AP 08/04/15 AP15.

Digital Engagement

DAA representatives attended the Alliance for Digital Accessibility meeting on 24th June, and agreed that the survey should now be progressed urgently.

Action 1: Maxine to work with Cam and the Digital Engagement project group to publish and promote the survey in early July.

Intersection

Charlie confirmed members’ comments have been incorporated into the draft intersection checklist. Work has begun to identify a wider project group to take forward work on the accompanying guidance.

Action 2: Intersection project group to invite wider membership to join project - deadline July.

Public Appointments

Stephen advised he is refreshing his contacts with LGA and central government to enable this work to go forward. He was particularly concerned there are only 4 disabled school governors in the whole of Lancashire, and thought more could be done to promote this type of role to disabled people.

Stephanie mentioned she had a meeting with DFE later in the week, and would be raising public appointments with them. Julie-Jaye Charles expressed an interest in the numbers of BME disabled governors. Stephanie agreed to ask DFE if this data is available.

Action 3: Stephanie to meet DFE and explore if the data requested is available – 3rd July.
Note – This has taken place.

Raising Disability Awareness amongst Children

Naomi confirmed this work is going very well and demand for disability awareness information is colossal. She anticipates outcomes of current SkyBadger work will be available in around 4/5 weeks; Naomi will share links with the DAA website, and asks members to share them around their networks. The DAA project group is continuing to engage with DfE. Additionally SkyBadger trustees have approved funding for a volunteer to pull together resources for the NASEN gateway as part of the DAA website.

Action 4: Naomi to share website links with the Secretariat, so they can ask members to share this around their networks - deadline 11th August.

Action 5: Stephanie to continue to engage on behalf of the project with DFE – 3rd July.
Note – This has taken place.

Sport and Physical Activity

The first project meeting took place on 16th June, during which it was agreed there is a need to improve and create networks in sports and non sports organisations to take this work forward. Members are considering how to get people interested/involved.

The project hopes to invite the Minister for Disabled People and Minister for Sport to a launch event for Charter for Change, and would be continuing to capture good practice via case studies and champions.

Action 6: Ray to send information on becoming a champion and good practice case studies to the Secretariat to be promoted via the website/newsletters/twitter. – deadline end July.

Transport

Stephen confirmed the transport group is currently looking at working with the rail industry in the North East, and is beginning to work with Blue Assist on transport issues.

Possible new project

Julie Jaye asked if there is a way of starting a new project on what financial support is still available for disabled people given the closure of ILF. Members mentioned there is lots of research currently being taken forward in this area. This discussion was not concluded as the Minister arrived.

Proposed new project: Hostility towards Disabled Children

Stephen and Naomi reported that they had held a meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service on this subject, and agreed to bring a written proposal to the next meeting.

Action 7: Stephen and Naomi to write the proposal for discuss at the next meeting. – deadline 3rd August.

Action 8: Secretariat to include this project on the agenda for the next meeting.

Session with the Minister for Disabled People

Justin Tomlinson MP introduced himself and thanked the group for allowing him to come along to meet them. He mentioned his love of sport and strong belief that everyone should have the same opportunities.

The Minister outlined that his priorities are:

- Working towards halving the disability employment gap; he acknowledged lots of good work has been done, but more needs to happen.
- Giving employers more confidence to employ disabled people; He referenced Disability Confidence as key to this.
- Engaging widely using digital technology and social media to extend his reach.

Summary of Points Raised by members'

Chris mentioned the Disabled Golf Society is having difficulties setting up an apprenticeship scheme, and asked if the Minister would speak with the Minister for Sport about it. Chris was invited to write directly to the Minister about this.

Cam mentioned the work the DAA is taking forward on accessible digital communications, and asked if the Minister would champion this best practice. The Minister confirmed he has Twitter/LinkedIn accounts which he uses, and agreed this is an important area.

Julie stated that her organisation is working with local JCP offices to provide support to their disabled clients. Julie suggested discussing this in more detail with the Minister when they meet later in the year. The Minister advised Priti Patel MP leads on employment, but felt local initiatives are key as one size doesn't fit all.

Charlie endorsed the work the Office for Disability Issues is supporting on 'Journey in to Employment'. The Minister had visited one of these projects and agreed they are good. Charlie suggested the Minister could endorse how important it is for disabled people to live independently. The Minister agreed that independent living is crucial, and that local solutions are often the right way to go.

Stephen and the Minister agreed on how important networks can be, and that they should be utilised well to share knowledge and build partnerships.

Reflections on session with the Minister for Disabled People

Members were delighted the Minister had been able to join the meeting and agreed they were keen to continue communicating with the Minister. They hoped he would come to a future meeting.

Members wanted to inform the Minister about their organisations, or give more detail about the issues which were discussed.

Action 9: Members agreed to send the secretariat information about their organisations and issues raised to pass on to the Minister where appropriate - deadline 15th July.

Stephanie advised members that the Minister is already supporting and engaging with the DAA via social media, and has re-tweeted several DAA tweets during his first few months in the role.

Steering Group Refresh

Kerry introduced the paper, which had been sent to members, seeking agreement to a process for the next Steering Group refresh which is due now.

John clarified this was based on the groups terms of reference (TORs), and discussions which have taken place with the group in the past about refreshing the membership to encourage fresh ideas and approaches, and ensure other organisations the opportunity to take a turn on the group.

Summary of Points Raised by members'

- Concerns about the TORs statement of ensuring that around 3-4 members step down. For this reason and several others below, the secretariat agreed to review the TORs.
- Members asked to see some information on the current makeup of the group, perhaps a skills/participation matrix before the next meeting. It was later agreed that there could be personal circumstances which affect participation would have to be considered; this action will not be taken forward at present.
- Concerns were raised about their ability to run projects if they did not remain on the steering group. Kerry clarified DAA members who are not Steering Group members can, and do already run projects.
- Members felt that one year is a very limited time to learn about the role, develop good links/networks and drive action forward.
- It was suggested that some future projects could be developed with shorter timescales to ensure clear tangible outcomes are possible to attract new steering group members who may only be able to remain on the group for a short period of time.

The benefits of a refresh, which is open to the wider membership, was recognised and agreed to be taken forward on the proviso that standing down is on a predominantly voluntary nature and that existing work is not be lost. The following actions were agreed:

Action 10: Secretariat will email members inviting them to step down – deadline 10th July.
Note – This has taken place.

Action 11: The steering group to identify any areas where expertise is missing following receiving any 'stepping down' responses at the next steering group meeting – deadline 11th August.

Action 12: Secretariat will run a mini open recruitment exercise for any vacancies where members have stepped down, or vacancies already exist, following the next steering group meeting – deadline 21st September

Action 13: Secretariat will review the DAA TORs based on members comments, and ensure the revised TOR are put on the website to ensure transparency - deadline early November.

Any Other Business

Cam advised she is talking with Barclays, who may be willing to host a future DAA event. Stephanie offered to discuss this with her after the meeting.

Action 14: Stephanie to discuss a potential event with Cam on 6th July. Note – This has taken place.

Cam mentioned her organisation had launched a Welsh Fund from her office. Maxine asked for a story to add to the website on this.

Action 15: Cam to send Maxine the launch story by 17th July.

Meeting closed 1pm.