

All Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness

Meeting | 15 November 2016

2pm, Committee Room 5, Palace of Westminster

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 19 July meeting (for approval)
3. Update on the Subtitle It! campaign
4. Draft Terms of Reference for inquiry into the cost implications of minority language status for BSL (for agreement)
5. Briefing on Ofcom selling off mobile phone spectrum and the interference this may cause to hearing aids and assistive listening devices
6. Any other business

All Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness

Meeting | 19 July 2016 | Minutes

Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House

Present

- Jim Fitzpatrick MP (chair)
- Baroness Howe
- Sir Alan Meale MP
- Ian Mearns MP

Apologies

- Debbie Abrahams MP
- Peter Aldous MP
- Caroline Ansell MP
- Stuart Donaldson MP
- Roger Godsiff MP
- Kate Green MP
- Lady Hermon MP
- Baroness Howe
- John McDonnell MP
- Madeleine Moon MP
- Teresa Pearce MP
- Stephen Phillips MP
- Baroness Randerson
- Tommy Sheppard MP
- Lord Shipley
- Eilidh Whiteford MP

In attendance

- Molly Berry, Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults
- Lidia Best, National Association of Deafened People
- Jim Edwards, UK Council on Deafness
- Lorraine Gailey, Hearing Link
- Rob Geaney, Action on Hearing Loss
- Anita Grover, Auditory Verbal UK
- Jill Jones, Deaf Ex-Mainstreamers
- Tony Murphy, Phonak UK
- Jessica Reeves, National Deaf Children's Society
- Joy Rosenberg, Mary Hare School
- Harjit Sandhu, National Community Hearing Association
- David Stockdale, British Tinnitus Association
- Dan Sumners, Signature (minutes)
- Sarah White, Sense
- Roger Wicks, Action on Hearing Loss
- Chris Wood, Action on Hearing Loss

Minutes of 21 March 2016 meeting

1. No Members commented on the minutes when they were circulated. The Group accepted them as an accurate record of the meeting.

Adjournment debate

2. On 30 June, MPs debated the NHS England action plan on hearing loss and the adult hearing service commissioning framework. The debate highlighted the need for action in terms of
 - a. the impact of untreated deafness and hearing loss on individuals and society as a whole, particularly the economy;
 - b. North Staffordshire clinical commissioning group's decision to cut funding for hearing aids, and similar proposals by other CCGs;
 - c. the National Screening Committee decision not to recommend an adult hearing screening programme; and
 - d. the fact these proposals and decisions contradict the recognition of the action plan that hearing loss has an enormous personal, social and economic impact, and more needs to be done on prevention, early diagnosis and support for those who had permanent hearing loss.
3. In its briefing for MPs, the UK Council on Deafness urged the Government to work towards a nationwide public health campaign about deafness and hearing loss.
4. Lilian Greenwood MP asked the Minister for Community and Social Care if "there is a role for raising public awareness to empower patients not just so that we improve GPs' understanding - that might be the issue - but so that people are a bit more demanding and recognise that hearing loss is not an inevitable consequence of growing old that has to be put up with but something that can be addressed."
5. The Minister responded, "there may be more to be done through charities, the third sector, the Royal College of General Practitioners and perhaps the British Medical Association, certainly about the thing that people have in the back of their mind and do not always raise".

Priorities for 2016/17

6. The Group agreed its priorities for 2016/17 are to
 - a. make sure the provision of subtitles on video-on-demand services continues to increase;
 - b. monitor the impact of the adult hearing service commissioning guidance on the provision of hearing aids;
 - c. secure a nationwide public health campaign on deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus; and
 - d. develop work on adult education and employment.
7. An inquiry into the cost of minority language recognition for BSL will be kept on the Group's agenda. The Group will monitor developments elsewhere to take advantage of any opportunities to conduct a high profile and effective inquiry.
8. Deaf Ex-Mainstreamers was interested in making sure the inquiry was done at the right time. The NDCS Youth Advisory Board had made BSL access one of its priorities. The Group suggested Deaf Ex-Mainstreamers and NDCS work with the British Deaf Association – which made a presentation to the Group on minority language recognition of BSL on 7 December 2015 – to start to plan an inquiry.
9. Sir Alan Meale MP said the Group should consider an amendment to the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Compensation and benefits for people who lost their hearing due to work were limited to certain circumstances. The Chair would write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.
10. The British Tinnitus Association would publish a report in 2016/17. It would present it to the Group at one of its meetings.