

Meeting of key London Organisations of/for Deaf and disabled people

Thursday 27 January 2011 14:00 – 17:00
Committee Room 3, City Hall

List of Attendees:

See table below.

1. Welcome and introductions

Richard Barnes (RB), Deputy Mayor of London welcomed the attendees and asked the participants to introduce themselves.

2. Possible topics for Disability Capital 2011 (presentation)

Brian Oakaby (BO), Senior Event Officer, GLA, gave a presentation on the 2009 Disability Capital conference and mentioned the invited organisations which participated, such as RADAR, Inclusion London, the Bankers Benevolent Fund, LOCOG, Transport for London, London Skills and Employment Board and underlined the overall quality of the guest speakers.

BO reflected on the diversity of the topics in the 2009 program and suggested that the conference, scheduled to take place on 20 October 2011 include topics on London's accessibility, accessible transport, skills and employment, housing. BO proposed to the attendees that Disability Capital 2011 takes place on 20 October 2011 at the Excel London, alongside the Naidex National exhibition held on 19 and 20 October.

BO proposed that those who register for Disability Capital would get free entry to the exhibition as well.

BO expects that the 2011 conference will feature a mixture of subjects with guest speakers from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The GLA is considering topics and themes to include in the events and guest speakers to invite. BO pointed out that it is quite likely that a revised version of the Mayor's Equality framework 'Equal

Life Chances for All' will be available closer to Disability Capital and may be a workshop topic.

BO invited the attendees to put forward their views on the issues and subjects they would like to be raised and who may be invited as guest speakers.

Feedback and suggestions

- RB made clear that the Mayor has already been asked to attend.
- The attendees suggested a review to be done on whether Excel London is the most suitable for disabled and Deaf people in relation to the transport links.
- A sports session especially with London 2012 being a year away and covering legacy and participation of disabled people in sports after 2012. The session could highlight the important role of grass roots disability organizations in promoting the London 2012 Games and especially the Paralympic Games. This could be a panel discussion, which could be chaired by Sir Sebastian Coe.
- RB informed the attendees that he has written to all the broadcast media saying they are not highlighting or making prominent enough the London 2012 Paralympic Games. BSkyB said that they recognise the gap and they will cover it.
- A topic and possibly a media call on London leading the way to make journalists realise their responsibility in breaking down their negative attitudes towards people with facial disfigurements and promoting positive attitudes towards them.
- A session on the new Equality Act 2010 and how this impacts on disabled people in London particularly.
- A session to look at the changes going on at the moment in terms of access to benefits and services that are being

provided. How people that are affected are surviving the changes and how to manage those changes.

3. Debrief on the recent Liberty Festival

Brian Oakaby (BO), Senior Event Officer, GLA, debriefed the attendees on the recent Liberty Festival, which took place in Trafalgar Square on 4 September 2010.

Liberty Festival is an event that has taken place each year for the last 8 years on Trafalgar Square. It is an outdoor festival that happens every year in September, and features creative work presented by Deaf and disabled artists. Over the last couple of years, Liberty has supported a number of new commissions, new pieces of work, which are then presented in a number of different zones.

Each year a large number of people attend, including many Deaf and disabled people, and has become a regular feature of the London festival calendar. BO gave a slide show presentation of last year's activities.

BO informed the attendees that Liberty Festival 2011 is likely to take a slightly different route this year. It may be held at the South Bank, on 3 September, instead of taking place in Trafalgar Square. BO confirmed that there would be outdoor activities and possibly some indoor activities. BO mentioned that at the moment these plans are at the feasibility stage and no final decision has been made.

Feedback

The feedback from the attendees was as follows:

The move to a different location gives a chance to have more groups represented, as South Bank is a wider area.

A concern was expressed about the possible dissolution of the event, spreading too thinly and losing its effect.

On the other hand, the constant flow of passer bys gives the possibility to raise more awareness about disability issues by engaging more people.

4. Health Inequalities Strategy impacts (presentation)

Grant Pettitt (GP) – Senior Policy Officer (Health), GLA, presented the Mayor's Health and Inequality Strategy for London.

In the course of 3 years of consultation, 600 organisations have been consulted. The launch of the final strategy was in April last year.

The London Health Inequalities Strategy (HIS) is a framework document that has been endorsed by all key London partners, including the Regional Public Health Group (DH), London Councils and the LVSC. It is a 20-year plus strategy linked to the lifetime of the London Plan.

The strategy takes a largely social determinants approach; this is because social inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in the conditions of daily life - for example a person's education, income, employment and housing. There is a social gradient in health - the lower a person's social position, the worse his or her health. The HIS focuses its actions on trying to reduce this gradient.

The Mayor's five strategic objectives to address health inequalities are:

- 1: Empowering individuals and communities to improve health
- 2: Improving access to high quality health and social care services
- 3: Reducing income inequality and the negative consequences of relative poverty
4. Increasing the opportunities for people to access the potential benefits of work and other forms of meaningful activity
5. Developing and promoting London as a healthy place for all

The London Health Commission works in partnership with agencies across the capital to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and well being of all Londoners. There are currently two main programmes in operation, the first is Well London, a 4-year project building stronger local communities by getting people working

together to improve their neighbourhoods and their health and well-being.

The second programme is called London Works for Better Health and has three fundamental and ambitious aims:

- promote healthy employment in London
- improve health and reduce health inequalities in London through work and enterprise
- gather and disseminate intelligence on work/health related research and activities

The strategy is linked to all Mayoral strategies. The First steps to delivery are 2012. The strategy has 30 high level commitments, it has 84 actions and about 150 first steps, but even that is a very small part of what needs to be done over the next 20 years.

The strategy needs to ensure that whatever the new system does look like, the Health Inequalities Strategy, which is a statutory strategy, remains firmly embedded with it and can support local authorities and local action and that everything is properly aligned and people are working together, because it is only by aligning these strategies and plans, the regional plans and local plans that will ultimately make a difference.

There is an acknowledgment of the role that social care plays in terms of prevention and rehabilitation in reducing health inequalities and they are looking at the overlap between NHS commissioning, social care services, and public health. There is a real recognition around the centrality of social care to reducing health inequalities.

5. Feedback from attendees on current Government Consultations

Disability Living Allowance consultation (presentation)

Rob Downey (RD) – Senior Policy Officer (Diversity & Social Policy), GLA, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the DLA and asked the attendees to engage in a debate on the Disability Living Allowance and encourage organisations to respond to both the consultation and the call for evidence on disability and employment

support. RB asked for the views from this group that will potentially help form a response from the GLA to the government's consultation.

RD, after summarizing the main changes, invited the attendees to give their feed back and most attendees expressed their concern.

In particular, concern was expressed that the assessment seems to be overly focusing on the medical model of disability, and the feeling is that the focus on a person's function or ability as a measure of whether they get DLA or not would be a backward step.

Concern was also expressed about the Government's proposals to remove the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for those receiving state funded residential care, as this will mean that they will not be able to see their family, visit friends, take part in community and social activity and in the long run will lead to a greater level of isolation leading to less people being included in the community.

If the DLA is reduced, some disabled people will not be able to work and therefore will not be able to contribute fully to society as they do now.

It was also pointed out that there is concern about the qualifications of doctors who are going to be chosen to run the checks when they start in 2013.

Finally the attendees expressed doubts about the planned assessment and the criteria of assessing the needs.

(b) Specialist Disability Employment Support (presentation)

Rob Downey (RD) – Senior Policy Officer (Diversity & Social Policy), GLA, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the Specialist Disability Employment Support and asked the attendees to engage in the debate.

Attendees pointed out Remploy's plans of shutting down and the possible impact to the employees.

Concern was also raised that the new approach could focus on those with the least complex needs first leaving those with the most complex situations being marginalized.

Attendees expressed their doubts on the effectiveness of the private companies carrying out the programme, given that they do not necessarily understand the needs of disabled people.

RD invited the attendees to send their comments to the consultation and call for evidence to David Haralambidis, Diversity & Social Policy Officer, GLA.

6. Debrief on Disability Equality Scheme consultation feedback (presentation)

Huma Munshi (HM) – Senior Policy Officer (Diversity & Social Policy), GLA, gave an overview of the consultation responses to the Draft Disability Equality Scheme and briefly outlined the next steps. A report that has been published on the GLA website.

The Mayor is going to publish a revised Equal Life Chances for All framework and within that there will be an action plan with specific objectives.

The Mayor has convened a round table with Annie Lennox, the unpaid ambassador on HIV and Aids, and key organisations working on the issue, to tackle stigma and taboo particularly in the media. An exhibition on this took place at City Hall on World AIDS Day.

The Mayor is looking at combating the issue of bullying of disabled pupils.

The Freedom Pass will continue, but is unlikely to be extended given the complications involved.

One issue raised was the different needs for accessible transport and how to approach it in regards to the different forms of disabilities.

The range of issues around sports included awareness of the needs of disabled people by fitness instructors.

There was a call to provide exercise classes specifically for blind and partially sighted people in all boroughs. The Mayor is currently funding an initiative called the Inclusive Fitness Initiative.

GLA as an employer: the target is for the number of disabled people employed by the GLA to be in proportionate to the number of disabled people in the capital.

Going forward the GLA will no longer publish a Disability Equality Scheme but seek to develop equality objectives, which correspond to the protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. The authority will publish objectives, which will indicate how to deal with gender, race, sexual orientation, trans community issues as well as objectives around disability equality.

The GLA will publish a revised Equal Life Chances framework this year, which will have very specific equality objectives, including a delivery plan, which will set out how the GLA will deliver on these objectives.

7. AOB

Nothing further was raised. RB closed the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 27 July 2011, 15.00 – 18.00 at City Hall, Committee Room 3.

List of Attendees

Representative	Organisation
Alan Kerr	Artsline
Andrew Little	Inclusion London
Ben Hockliffe	National centre for Independent Living
Colin Brown	RNIB
Claire Glassman	Winvisible
David Lanegan	F2F Events
Jamie Robertson	Scope
Maria Zedda	Opportunity Through Inclusion
Nicola Jacob	National Aids Trust
Sally Mbewe	Changing Faces
Stewart Lucas	Interactive Disability Equality in Sport