

## DESF Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015

### NDCS Office EC2A 4LS

#### Attending:

Paul Simpson - BATOD

Jill Bussien - ADEPT/BATOD

Martin McLean- i-Sign

Nicki Harris - Surrey/ASLI

#### Apologies:

Judith Hutchinson - CHESS

Simon Thompson - Mary Hare

Andrew Owen – ADEPT/Greenwich

Jenny Summers - Greenwich

#### Minutes:

Read and accepted by those present

#### Actions from previous meeting not on the agenda:

Paul to follow up on a Scottish representative for DFES. – **ACTION PS**

DFES Survey – deferred to next meeting – Andy still to send previous DFES survey to Martin – **ACTION AO**

#### Agenda items:

I-Sign – Martin advised there are only two months left of this project and there were no plans to continue. CSW Development Fund is in the NatSIP bid and an outcome is awaited. He reported that a BSL video has been produced for deaf parents to understand the reforms in education – this has been produced in partnership with the BDA. There is on-going work on EHCPs and Factsheets for the young people to understand the different stages – some I-Sign funding was used for this.

Work is continuing on researching Local Offers and how many are accessible in BSL so far only 8 identified. Case studies requested. Martin to send the link to DFES members. – **ACTION MM**

Case studies on Personal Budgets are at present on hold as so few are available. There are NDCS factsheets available on these. Discussion followed about the use of personal budgets and parental choice eg some employed support workers are also working directly with families where they choose to use their personal budget – be aware of conflict of interests.

OLM: There is an issue with the number of staff and rooms required for individual OLMs for exams. One school required 25 invigilators, OLMs and rooms and are reluctant. This was raised with Ofqual who suggested a roving OLM. JCQ state there are no qualified OLMs and all agreed here is a rooming issue.

GCSEs – Ian Noon and Brian Gale have researched and found a drop rate for deaf students since the changes to GCSE assessments – this new structure (eg more literacy skills required in English; all assessment at the end of the course) is not deaf friendly and this is reflected in the statistics. The final assessment system is a concern as it is detrimental to the deaf student. Ofqual is interested in further information about this as they recognise it has had more effect on the children with language difficulties than originally thought – despite equality impact assessments.

I-GCSEs are not included in the league tables but Jill reported that these are more accessible to the deaf students as they are done in small ‘chunks’.

Martin requested case studies for students who have been disadvantaged by the new structure. Paul has already asked MH and will add this request to the ToD Forum and Jill will do the same with ADEPT. Paul suggested NDCS send the data to Ofqual. **ACT ION PS**

NDCS also investigating staffing issues due to the cuts.

DSA: Paul had sent out a statement to DFES members from BATA informing of a challenge to the proposed reforms – this has NDCS backing.

Nicki outlined the issue of the SFE banding having already been put in place, despite SFE stating to NDCS that this would not come in to practice yet. There is an example of a student being denied appropriate access to professional support as unqualified note-takers had been allocated by SFE in their letter of entitlement – the student has complained to both the university and SFE. SFE replied that if the student wanted another supplier they would have to pay the difference in the hourly rate from their own pocket. The student has asked for meetings with the university but to date these have been booked and then cancelled – the student is pursuing this and NDCS is aware. Ian Noon has been in contact with SFE and has a written reply which does not correlate with current practice. The general feeling of the meeting was that although a challenge has been raised regarding the proposed

changes to the DSA, the cuts have already been implemented by SFE introducing the banding system. Major concern about the lack of quality assurance. Nicki to write a briefing note to go on the ToD forum and on ADEPT to ask for examples of similar cases. Martin to ask Ian if there is potential in pursuing this with politicians and the group thought contacting SEEHEAR and Radio Four, You and Yours, might be other avenues to follow. Nicki to write to NatSIP and ask for their support.

### **ACTION NH**

Cuts: Jill stated that FE tutors were losing their jobs as not enough deaf students were enrolling. CSW recruitment is also an issue.

Martin explained the current work on CSW qualifications and Jill voiced concerns on the current available course. Work has started on a CSW Apprenticeship and discussion followed on the elements of the current Signature course and where there were issues. Martin explained the difficulties of having qualifications where no NOS were in place. Jill explained that most CSWs were older than the usual apprentice and the right recruitment is essential for our cohort of students. Martin explained that CSW support in the SW of England is in question as LAs are advising BSL pupils to go to Exeter. Paul suggested this was due to peer group perhaps. Martin said the parents are unhappy with the lack of choice. This might also have an effect on the number of ToDs who might lose jobs.

NRCPD meeting: Jill and Nicki attended. The draft outline of the meeting was yet to be published. There was much discussion at this meeting on TAs and their/lack of qualifications.

ADEPT: At the December meeting working groups were set up. These are financed by membership. There is a conference on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in East Berkshire College. Paul to check this is on the BATOD website. Small training days had been set up and were successful as a low cost. **ACTION PS**

ASLI: Nicki explained that a new website is up and running but there are concerns about the communication channels from the Board – these are being addressed.

BATOD: The conference is in Edinburgh on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2015. There has been a good response. The MQ consultation period expired but no outcome is known as yet. It is expected a document will be produced for tenders but thoughts are that current providers will remain as they are for the deaf MQ. A new version to start in 2015 is unlikely so current students will remain as they are now. The Govt will need to be involved but at present they have not indicated that there is no need for an MQ. The sector will look at the tenders. There is a danger that courses might 'drop out'. At present in the UK there are 4 courses, in Scotland 1 course and in Wales 1 course. NDCS is campaigning and Paul thanked them for this.

Date and Venue of next meeting: Martin offered NDCS and that he would create a doodle poll to find the most suitable time. **ACTION MM**