

DESF meeting 17th October 2014
NDCS Office EC2A 4LS

Attending:

Paul Simpson *BATOD*
Jill Bussien *Adept; BATOD*
Andy Owen *Adept*
Martin McLean *I-Sign*
Freya Riddel *NDCS*

Agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Notes of last meeting
3. Actions from last meeting and other matters arising not on the agenda
4. I-Sign project update
5. DESF survey [amended to 'Future of DESF']
6. Examination issues
7. DSA – recent developments
8. Ongoing effects of cuts
9. Updates from the organisations
10. Any Other Business
11. Date and venue of next meeting

Item 1

Apologies:

Nicki Harris- Surrey County Council
Jenny Summers- Advisory ToD, Greenwich
Judith Hutchinson- CHESS
Emily Davis- Action on Hearing Loss

Simon Thompson, Mary Hare

Maria Bailey – has unfortunately withdrawn her participation in the forum. Those in attendance acknowledged her huge contribution from the beginning of the forum, and expressed gratitude for all her support.

Grateful too to NDCS for providing a room for the meeting

Item 2

Notes of last meeting: Agreed they are a correct record of the meeting in May

Action: send BSL document to Andy **Action: Paul**

Item 3

Other Matters not on the agenda:

The matter of Oral Language Modifiers (OLMs) was discussed, specifically their poor implementation and reporting of mistakes. Awarding bodies do not consider them favourably. There is a requirement to have 2 adults per each Oral Language Modification- which in practice begins to seem unreasonable, particularly in cases where there is a large cohort of students requiring an OLM.

The need to have a Scottish representative in DESF was raised; it was suggested that Rachel could participate via Skype. **Action: Paul**

DESF survey: Simon not in attendance and has not sent anything.

NRCPD notes to Jill: 19th November NatSIP (BSL coalition) focus group on national occupational standards (e.g. if they were to exist, what would they be?)

Item 4

I-Sign project [update from Martin]

NDCS Regional Directors are monitoring Local Offers, assessing the relevance and value of their information for deaf children, young people and families. Local Offers should include what BSL provision is currently available in the area. There are very few examples which even make mention of BSL provision; the information provided is very generic.

FOI requests were sent to all Local Authorities to find out how much consultation was done. The responses were highly variable. Even in cases where consultation was reported, it was not necessarily reflected within the Local Offer.

The message from government has been that Local Offers have a long way to go and need to be developed with ongoing consultation with families. NDCS will be heavily reliant on the involvement of parents to give feedback, given that these will have the greatest influence.

Martin has produced factsheets for parents about Local Offers; currently there is little awareness of Local Offers among parents.

I-sign is currently collating BSL case-studies. Martin requests that people provide him with the examples they encounter. By the end of March he hopes to publish 5 Case Studies of Local Offers.

Martin has also been looking at case-studies for personal budgets for parents. There are very few examples for any reason, least of all BSL. There are some examples of personal budgets used for BSL tuition or CSWs – but this has been through social care avenues.

I-sign have been evaluating the CSW development fund. It is not yet completed, but so far:

82% of children and young people reported improved understanding in class

57% reported improved peer engagement

CSW pilots- ERADE; and UCLAN: student feedback has been positive, despite 3 students having to withdraw from UCLAN due to personal circumstances.

I-sign project ends 31st March. Questions being considered include methods to improve sustainability of the project; and what remain priority issues.

Renewed funding from I-sign could be a possibility, however the isolated emphasis on BSL was questioned; Family sign language and CSW development don't necessarily sit

neatly within it. It was considered whether there could be a more comprehensive approach.

Evaluation of the I-sign project can collectively draw recommendations.

Action: Put '*CSW qualification: the future*' on the agenda for the next meeting, and invite Signature, in particular, to attend for this. **Action : Paul**

Item 5

The Future of DESF (amendment on 'survey')

Adept proposed an offer to formally sponsor DESF. This offer was received positively, noting that Adept was a comprehensive organisation, which represents all mediums of communication. The affiliation would provide stability to the forum.

It was however acknowledged that not enough members of DESF were present to make an official decision on this matter.

Action: The next meeting of DESF to be scheduled sooner rather than later in order to discuss the future of DESF and respond to this offer promptly

Item 6

Examination Issues

Regulations published this year present no big surprises, other than tightening the eligibility criteria to an OLM.

Jill explained how she invigilates the OLM to ensure quality - which some consider not to represent a practical or efficient system.

None of the changes to GCSEs are to the advantage of deaf students

Use of BSL in exams was discussed at latest meeting with Ofqual and updates were given. The action arising from that meeting was: GCSE and A Level providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, JCQ, BATOD and NDCS **to consider?** the use of BSL in answering assessments at GCSE and A Level; with a view to submitting a paper to the next Forum meeting with a way forward proposed by the boards that has due regard to the views of BATOD and NDCS

Item 7

DSA: recent developments

Freya provided update on the changes to DSA: although a postponement was announced, regulations and guidance have been recently published.

Nicki's email requesting advice/help (re: the new banding being implemented prematurely) was read aloud to the attendees

Action:

Nicki to write a statement and/or request for advice and help which can then be disseminated via the various forums

Item 8

Ongoing effects of cuts

NDCS Stolen Futures Campaign- greatly appreciated by ToDs

Item 9

Updates from other organisations

Adept: Had their first trustee meeting since the merge, at which they initiated the planning of next year's conference.

Action: NDCS to send an electronic copy of the audiology report to attendees.

BATOD: currently looking at reviews of Teaching Assistants (prompted by Ofsted report). BATOD's message has always been: if teaching assistants are properly trained they can have a very positive influence.

Conference in Edinburgh, March 14th Saturday: Supporting deaf children and young people in the 21st Century

Item 10

Any Other Business

What actions should be taken with the DESF survey? It would be helpful to gather current information.

Action: Make DESF survey an item on the next agenda **Action: Paul**

Action: Andy to send previous survey results to Martin **Action: Andy**

Item 11

Date/Venue of Next meeting

Agreed it should take place in January, preferably on a Friday 1-3pm. NDCS offered to provide venue again.

Action: NDCS will send a shortlist of possible dates for consideration **Action: Freya**