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Disability Equality Scotland

Annual General Meeting 2019



**Disability
Equality
Scotland**

Minute: 17 September 2018, 11:00 – 13:00

Norton Park Conference Centre, Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

Attendees:

Davis Paton, Whizz Kidz, Corporate Member

Louise Orr, Individual Member

Peter Joyce, North Ayrshire Access Panel, Corporate Member

Fraser Mitchell, Angus Access Panel, Corporate Member

Agnes Macfadyen, Individual Member

Bobby Park, Glasgow Access Panel, Corporate Member

Fred Hessler, Individual Member

Heather Pugh, Individual Member

Angela Leask, Individual Member

Caroline Fox, Individual Member

Tracey Clark, Individual Member

Paul Nicol, Tweeddale Access Panel, Corporate Member

Jackie Gormley, SPAEN, Corporate Member

Morven Brooks (MB), Chief Executive Officer, Staff

Emma Scott (ES), Operations Manager, Staff

Ian Buchanan (IB), Access, Training and Engagement Manager, Staff

James Davidson, Communications and Research Coordinator, Staff

Linda Bamford (LB), Disability Equality Scotland, Convenor

Dorothy McKinney (DMcK), Disability Equality Scotland, Vice Convenor

Colin Millar (CM), Disability Equality Scotland, Treasurer

Susan Fulton (SF), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Kenny Milne (KM), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Scott Stewart (SS), Disability Equality Scotland, Director

Linda Wilson, Notetaker

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1. Welcome

MB, Chief Executive Officer, welcomed everyone and declared the meeting to be quorate.

LB, Convenor, introduced herself and confirmed that there were neither appointments articles nor amendments to review and so no voting would be taking place. The agenda would cover an overview of key activities and the finances of Disability Equality Scotland. LB confirmed that the Board listened to the previous requests for open discussion and questions from the floor, and so time has been allocated for this.

LB confirmed that the Disability Equality Scotland Board and staff team have been working closely together, with staff invited to Board meetings, and a Strategy Planning Day was held to talk about priorities and ambitions for the organisation. The Board have also undertaken refresher Governance training.

LB confirmed that Disability Equality Scotland are working on their Strategy for 2020-2023 which will be available from January 2020 in which objectives will be developed into staff objectives from April 2020.

LB explained that Disability Equality Scotland would like to move from a position of working for its funders' objectives to one where it can listen to its members and take a more human rights-based approach. LB stated that Disability Equality Scotland has made a good start with our work with Transport Scotland and with Scottish Government Ministers.

The Weekly polls have been invaluable at gathering members' views, most notably on transport to health and Motability. LB stated that the Board and staff team need to consider whether these topics could become priority topics to take forward.

2. Morven Brooks, Overview of Annual Report

MB stated that last year (April 2018 – March 2019) the members, Access Panels and staff made an enormous contribution and that Disability Equality Scotland has continued to expand its areas of work to meet the needs of disabled people.

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The main objectives of Disability Equality Scotland over this year have been:

- Promote and raise awareness of equality and access Scotland-wide
- Improve access to participation and engagement for disabled people in issues which affect them
- Promote action to make Scotland, Scottish institutions and services more accessible to disabled people.
- Promote accessibility and disability equality with employers, encouraging meaningful and long-term employment for disabled people.
- Building good relationships with key players amongst disability charities and creating opportunities for partnership working.

MB also confirmed that membership has increased by 13% in the last year. Members had been given opportunities to contribute towards ten consultations as well as opportunity to attend six disability roadshow events across Scotland.

There has been an increase in resources for the Inclusive Communication Hub and Disability Equality Scotland had received the runner-up prize at the Scottish Sensory and Equality Conference Awards for its work in inclusive communication.

Accessible information has increased, as Disability Equality Scotland has grown its Easy Read service helping to provide the organisation a stable income.

Members have given their views on over 50 poll questions on a variety of topics.

There has been steady progress with the Accessible Travel Hub as Disability Equality Scotland reach out to more providers and the Hub was

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shortlisted for two awards at the Scottish Transport Awards in June 2019.

Accessible Travel events and hate crime events have led to the creation of a hate crime charter.

The Inclusive Design Hub has continued to evolve with additional resources highlighting best practice in inclusive design for planners, developers, architects and building professionals in Scotland.

Disability Equality Scotland also continues to support the current 35 active Access Panels across Scotland.

MB also announced Disability Equality Scotland has moved its office from Alloa to a new office location in Glasgow, at the Pentagon Centre, Washington Street, Glasgow, G3 8AZ. MB confirmed these premises are accessible, modern and central in comparison to the Alloa office space.

MB concluded with a reminder to members and supporters to continue to engage with Disability Equality Scotland, sharing opinions and views and promoting its achievements with other disabled people.

3. Colin Millar, Treasurer's Report

CM stated that financial performance in the year to 31 March 2019 had exceeded trustee's forecasts and expectations; there is an increase of income over expenditure of £4,821 for the year, compared to the year to 31 March 2017.

CM reported that the company's balance was £48,775 at year end, an increase from last year's balance of £43,954. CM commended all involved for this tremendous achievement.

The income receipts for the year totalled £296,492 an increase from the previous year due to successful funding received from Awards for All to undertake a pilot project with Investing in Access.

The expenditure for the year fell within budget at £291,671.

The General Fund is unrestricted and is used for the day-to-day running of the organisations. The unrestricted reserve is set by Trustees and is

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£17,427, which is the equivalent of one month's running costs for the organisation. The reserve is held to allow the organisation to offset fluctuations in income receipts and provide for contingencies. It is prudent to maintain a reserve, but Disability Equality Scotland continues to create income opportunities. CM reported that securing external funding is becoming more difficult and that long-term future of the organisation is difficult to guarantee.

CM confirmed the accounts were approved and adopted by a meeting of the Board on 3 September 2019.

4. Appointing External Examiners

CM reported that the Board have appointed Community Accountancy Scotland as the new accountant. They are a community interest company who reinvest in smaller voluntary agencies in Scotland. They are a social enterprise and any surplus earned is donated to charities who further the role of the Third Sector.

Proposer: Bobby Park, Glasgow Access Panel

Seconder: Louise Orr, Individual Member

5. Approval of Fees and Subscriptions

CM confirmed these remain unchanged.

Proposer: Bobby Park, Glasgow Access Panel

Seconder: Louise Orr, Individual Member

6. Approval of previous Minutes, 17 October 2018

Proposer: Scott Stewart, Director

Seconder: Louise Orr, Individual Member

7. Comfort Break

The meeting paused for a comfort break, to accommodate Notetakers present.

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8. Members Questions and Suggestions

Time was set aside for member's questions and suggestions.

A member of Glasgow Access Panel asked how much Disability Equality Scotland gave to the Access Panel Network last year and how many Panels benefitted from grants.

MB reported that Disability Equality Scotland receive £45k from the Scottish Government to distribute to Panels and £23,349.47 was claimed from Access Panel Grant applications.

MB also reported that there was some challenge in getting Access Panels to claim their grants and Disability Equality Scotland's role was to encourage Panels to claim, otherwise the overall grant would be reduced.

MB also confirmed that the full accounts would be available on the Disability Equality Scotland website.

An individual member asked where the new Disability Equality Scotland offices were located.

MB reported that the office was in Washington Street, in Glasgow City Centre. She confirmed that the offices were accessible, and that parking was available.

A member of North Ayrshire Access Panel asked if Glasgow Access Panel had been involved in conducting an access audit of the new premises. MB confirmed that our staff are trained in accessibility but that the Panel were welcome to visit and offer any advice on access.

An individual member asked about the public transport links to and from the new office and the condition of the pavements. MB confirmed that the new office was accessible by public transport.

There were questions about the Access Panel Grant process and MB reiterated that Disability Equality Scotland receives £45k from the Scottish Government and the funding year runs from July- June. There are currently 35 Access Panels, and so each panel can apply for around £1,000 each, with money left over for panels who wish to pursue specific

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projects. The money has to be applied for, and there is a process for doing this. It involves submitting a narrative in advance, with receipts and evidence of what has been spent. MB stated it was vital that the money was accounted for.

An individual asked a question about the weekly poll topics of Transport to Health and Motability and whether there was funding for each panel to work on these?

LB said that the Board will discuss these topics further and that Disability Equality Scotland will be involved in a roundtable discussion on 21 November 2019 to which representatives of Scottish Ambulance Service, health boards, local authorities and Community Transport Association and Access Panels will be invited. The aim is to hear experiences and share views to allow the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) to advise Ministers on this topic.

Disability Equality Scotland will also be involved in the 2nd roundtable discussion with Motability, hosted by the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) on 5 Nov 2019. Minutes of this meeting will be shared and the report from the first meeting is available on the MACS Website.

A member from North Ayrshire Access Panel asked for an update on the East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Panels. IB stated that he had been working on establishing these Panels. In East Ayrshire, the uptake from the community has been positive and in South Ayrshire, Ian has been working with Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) to set up a new panel. NAAP confirmed they are happy to support new Panels and would ultimately like to host pan-Ayrshire meetings.

There followed several members' questions on various aspects of public transport.

An Individual Member from Clackmannanshire asked whether Disability Equality Scotland can help disabled people influence the design of buses to ensure they are accessible for disabled people?

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MB stated that the Access Panel in Clackmannanshire is being established with help from the CTSI and will be looking for new members.

MB also said that Disability Equality Scotland host a number of accessible travel events throughout the year, seeking feedback on disabled peoples' views and feeding this back to transport providers.

ES will ensure this member is invited to future transport events and IB will update on progress of the Clackmannanshire Panel.

Several members agreed with the poor design of buses, making it difficult to navigate in wheelchairs or powerchairs.

MB stated that the benefit of an Access Panel is that relationships can be established with local transport providers and sharing experiences. ES will take details and keep in touch about upcoming accessible travel events held by Disability Equality Scotland.

An individual member shared their experience of navigating buses and trains, which are very tight for wheelchair users. They reported that there are guidelines on the internet for wheelchairs about weight restrictions and turning circles.

MB said that this is information that Disability Equality Scotland can share on the Accessible Travel Hub.

LB summarised the many questions on transport by stating that it was clear accessible transport remained an issue for members and that as an organisation, Disability Equality Scotland will ensure that transport is in the strategy for 2020 – 2023.

It was clear that members felt strongly that the designing for public transport (including bus layout, train layout, timetables, routes and infrastructure to get from door to public transport) had to include engagement with disabled people to tap into their direct and lived experience of using the services.

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In relation to some of the issues raised about bus provision, LB confirmed that the Public Sector Vehicle Access Regulations had not been updated since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. The review date was set for 2027 but there are calls to bring this forward. She also confirmed that, to feed into this review, other guidance was also being reviewed, such as wheelchair and scooter dimensions for safe carriage on buses.

MB stated that JD can put together some 'top tips for travel' onto the Accessible Travel Hub that covers issues raised by members, including calling providers such as LNER and Virgin Trains directly rather than using the website for booking accessible tickets.

An individual member from North Ayrshire Access Panel asked about training and recognised accreditation for access auditing and whether it was feasible to have one member of each Panel accredited to ensure Panels are taken seriously. This should be different from NRAC qualifications as Panels do not get opportunities to influence the large-scale developments needed for evidence of experience for NRAC.

MB agreed that as Access Panels are volunteers and already do so much with their time, NRAC is unrealistic, but an SQA course is something Disability Equality Scotland could look into taking forward.

An individual member asked a question about Hate Crime, and the work being done to counter Hate Crime on transport. ES leads Disability Equality Scotland' work on hate crime and reported that Disability Equality Scotland had been working closely with Transport Scotland and Police Scotland to deliver on the Accessible Travel Framework outcome to ensure all disabled people can travel free from hate crime.

Disability Equality Scotland has held public consultation events, gathering peoples' experiences of hate crime on public transport and has drafted a Hate Crime Charter which it is now piloting with key transport providers, ahead of national roll out in 2021.

A member from Angus Access Panel asked how they attract new members to the Panel?

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MB said that Disability Equality Scotland can help with posters, social media and training courses to enhance Panels' presence. IB reported that following the Access Panel Conference in June 2019, Disability Equality Scotland were trialling a social media course with deafscotland which includes how to set up a Facebook page, how to tweet, etc. IB confirmed he was happy to visit Angus to offer hands-on support.

An individual member asked the name of the UK Minister for Disability. This was confirmed as Mr Justin Tomlinson. In Scotland, the remit for disability falls under the equality remit of Ms Christina McKelvie, Minister for Older People and Equalities.

An individual member asked whether Disability Equality Scotland were looking at the Health and Safety at Work Act. LB stated that, her understanding was that a consultation was being launched to seek views on this and once it was open for public consultation, Disability Equality Scotland will promote it through the usual channels.

Finally, an individual member asked the Board of Directors to introduce themselves. In attendance were:

- Linda Bamford who is the current Convener of Disability Equality Scotland, the Convener of MACS, Commissioner with the Poverty and Inequality Commission, Ambassador with Spinal Injuries Scotland and Member of the Poverty Alliance. Her background is in Health and Emergency Services, Business Administration, Operational Management, Governance, Business Continuity and Risk Management,
- Dorothy McKinney who has served for two years and has a background in Human Resources, mediation and conflict resolution.
- Susan Fulton who has served for two years and has a background in inclusive design. She is a member of MACS and a NRAC Consultant.
- Scott Stewart who has served for two years and is the manager of Disability Information Scotland; and has a background in

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supporting communities is deeply rooted in his roles in the public and third sector

- Kenny Milne, who has served for two years and works for NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Kenny has a background in various management structures at different levels including site manager on a busy pharmaceutical site.
- Colin Millar who has served for two years as the CEO of The Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network (SPAEN). Colin worked in a number of senior civilian roles within the Scottish Police Service including Head of the Criminal Records Bureau for Central Scotland Police before leaving to work in the voluntary sector.

9. Thank You and Close

The Convenor thanked the members for attending the Meeting.

Close

List of Attendees attached.