

# Disability Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011

**Present:** Gael Campbell, Holly Curless, Ann Diment, Viki Galt, Jan Gardiner, Fanney Kristmundsdottir, Emma Meehan, Ronnie Millar, Steve Norman, Suzanne Spalding, Rio Watt (SM), Sheila Williams

1. **Apologies** Wilma Alexander, Abigael Candelas, David Casey, Lorna Hume, Hazel Marzetti, Gordon McDougall, Jessie Paterson, Martin Reekie, Dave Renton, Sheila Riddell, Callum Robertson, Melanie Scott, Peter Scott, Anna Souhami, Lesley Stokes, Lorna Thomas, Siobhan Tolland, Graeme Trousdale, Sharon Young

**Sleeping Members (receive papers only):** June Adamson, Norma Begg, Pam Clouston, Bruce Darby, John de Courcy, Nick Johnson, Andrew Kirk, Joe McGeough, Geoff Pearson, Eileen Prentice, Hazel Robertson, Karen Scott, Kathy Smith, Elisabet Weedon

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 February 2011:** The minutes were approved.

### 3. Matters Arising

#### a. Membership

Most of the Committee members had responded to the email asking if they wished to remain full member or become sleeping members with 23 remaining full, 14 becoming sleeping and 8 still to confirm. Gael to send another email to the eight who are still to confirm. **GAEL CAMPBELL**

#### b. HR Update

Viki had heard from Denise Boyle in HR that they were refining the Equality Impact Assessment forms and will Viki will email the forms to the Committee once they are updated. **VIKI GALT**

#### c. Meetings with Schools and Colleges

Sheila had contacted all the School Administrators in January (a reminder in March) and has had a response from 15 of the 22. The Disability Office Advisors had each been allocated with a number of schools to engage with to get a better understanding of how the schools function. This is an ongoing project which Sheila will update the Committee on through her Director's Report. **SHEILA WILLIAMS**

#### d. Support for students on distance learning courses

This issue was now being discussed widely through the University's Distance Education Initiative.

#### e. The Co-ordinators of Adjustment (CoA) Manual

The Senatus Quality Assurance Committee had now set up a Teachability Task Group to look at the whole area of inclusive learning and teaching. The results of this Task Group would feed into updates to the CoA manual. As a result there had been a delay but for a very positive reason as the issue will be taken forward at a corporate level.

#### f. Policy on Recording Small Group Teaching

One of the Disability Office Advisors was taking on this project and would produce something in time for the next academic year. **DISABILITY OFFICE**

**g. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)**

Sheila had drafted a letter outlining the concerns regarding PEEPS to be sent to Angus Currie, Director of Estates and Buildings which she would discuss with Viki before sending. **SHEILA WILLIAMS**

**4. Convenor's Report**

The Equality Act: Some key differences were emerging between English and Scottish treatment of the Equality Act. England has reduced the procedures around Single Equality Schemes however Scotland is being stricter with interpretation and templates are being drawn up for Single Equality Schemes. Work on the University's Single Equality Scheme has been going on and the Scheme is almost ready to be published.

The Sub-Group Convenors were due to meet in July to discuss remits and membership issues.

**5. Director's Report:** The Director presented her quarterly report as circulated.

**6. Students' Report**

The following comments were made on the circulated report:

- Suzanne would raise the issues regarding OLL student access with OLL management. **SUZANNE SPALDING**
- Steve reported that Careers didn't necessarily have the expertise to advise OLL students but could point them to external online resources.
- Historically and for resource reasons the services have only supported matriculated students.
- Support is provided for post graduate students via Careers, Counselling and Disability Services but PG students can sometimes fall through the gaps in other services
- The Disability Office Advisors have been discussing adjustments with the Schools. Sometimes the meaning of adjustments has not always been clear to recipients of the Learning profile (which lists adjustments). More questions have been asked about implementation of adjustments on the Disability Office evaluation this year which should hopefully provide more information about which adjustments are not being implemented, and where. Generic Disability Awareness/Equality training is being rolled out for staff.

**7. Reports from the Sub Groups**

**a. Access and Facilities Sub Group**

It has been discovered that "Disabled Go", a company who produces online data that disabled users would need when visiting a building has already been working with eca on information for their buildings and David Casey was looking into expanding that project to the University buildings.

The planning permission for ramp access alterations to Teviot had been refused again and proceeding for an appeal had begun. Sheila was meeting with the CEO of EUSA to discuss interim measures and the proposed long term solution.

There is no current policy on the use of scooters within University buildings at the moment and work was being done to develop written guidance.

There are issues with parking at the Old Medical building with cars parking too close to the dropped curb and disabled parking spots. A yellow box needed to be painted to stop people parking in the wrong areas. Ann will raise the issue with the Parking Office (Sheila and David happy to back Ann up on this issue). **ANN DIMENT**

**b. Accessible Information Working Group (AIWG)**

The circulated report was presented.

Viki had asked the University Printers to ask clients to add a strap line to their publications stating that it was available in alternative formats. The Printers were happy to do this but some of their clients have reacted badly and refused to add the strap line. Some have reacted so badly they have taken their business elsewhere without consultation. The Printers have explained that they will not be asked for a high volume of alternative formats and also what form these alternatives come in. The Printers cannot afford to lose business and are therefore in a difficult situation. The Committee felt this was something that should be addressed. Viki and Sheila to look into how to take this forward. **VIKI GALT, SHEILA WILLIAMS**

The Group had felt that the University should have an annual award for good practice in regards to accessibility. Viki had contacted Communications and Marketing to find out what the official process would be. The Committee agreed this would be an excellent way to highlight good practice as well as provide positive publicity for accessibility.

**c. Mental Health Sub Group**

The circulated report was presented.

Ronnie noted the Sub-Group's thanks to Lynne Duff who had taken the lead in revising the Code of Practice on Student Mental Health.

**d. Specific Learning Difficulties Sub Group**

An update report is circulated with these minutes.

**e. Technology Sub Group**

The circulated report was presented.

**8. Disability Policy Update**

The policy needed to be updated and a small working group set up to do this. Viki to contact Eildh Fraser in HR regarding setting up a group. If anyone would like to be involved they should contact Viki. **EVERYONE & VIKI GALT**

**9. Any Other Business**

The Disability Office would be moving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Main Library on 18 July and would be opening as the Student Disability Service on 1 August 2011.

**10. Date of Next Meeting:** 29 November 2011, 10am–12pm, DHT Conference Room

**If you require these minutes in an alternative format please contact Gael Campbell on 0131 650 9163 or email: Gael.Campbell@ed.ac.uk**