

**dis ABILITY Louth Steering Group**  
**Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in the Pastoral Centre Dundalk**

**Present:** Please see list below.

Olivia opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending.

### **1. Launch Review**

The Chairperson, Olivia, on behalf of the committee, thanked all those involved in the launch for their work and attendance.

The committee felt that they had learned a lot regarding the difficulties that existed and agreed that they should tackle one thing at a time.

The following comments were recorded:

- Hotel:** It was felt that the sound system was very poor and that this needed to be addressed.
- Loop System:** The hotel PA system had not worked with the loop system and this also needed to be addressed for any future meetings held at this venue.
- Access:** There were no problems
- Speakers:** All excellent
- Content:** It was agreed that the content from each speaker and booklet produced for the launch was excellent.
- Attendance:** 83 members had been invited and 38 non members. 70 individuals had attended the launch. Marian gave details of the numbers that had not replied to the invitation.

Opinions differed on whether local representatives should have been invited, but it was agreed that if one representative had been invited then all reps should have been. Time constraints disallowed an invitation going out to representative TDs and Ministers. It was also agreed that reps should be invited to attend meetings once a particular issue that was specific and measurable had been selected by the committee.

### **2. Correspondence**

- Secretary:** None received
- PR Officer:** David reported that he had written to Mary Capliss, Louth County Council regarding the 2008 – 2015 Disability report. The report had been uploaded back onto the website. David had also requested details of what objectives had been met from this report. This request had been forwarded to the Access Officer, and David would chase up on this.
- Marian:** Inclusion Ireland would like to meet with the group and Marian agreed to send on their newsletter to members of disABILITY Louth.. John Walsh, the new Disability Advocacy officer from Citizens Information became a member, but unfortunately apologized that he could not attend the Launch, however he would like to attend a committee meeting to outline his services.
- Chairperson:** Olivia advised that Mary Capliss had invited the group to join the PPN and had sent an application form.

Olivia read out information on the PPNs and a suggestion from the floor was to invite Mary Capliss to speak to the group to outline the advantages of joining the PPN. This was agreed and would be arranged for September.

### **3. PR Report**

#### **Press Coverage of Launch**

- 1) David advised that the remit had been explained to the reporter from the relevant newspapers before the event. However it had been individuals that had received coverage in the article rather than the objectives of the group. The article was in the Argus first and was to appear in the Drogheda Independent a week later.
- 2) The PR had written an article and forwarded this to the reporter to appear in the Drogheda Independent a week later but unfortunately the original article was used again which was disappointing as it was felt that the language used in the article was totally inappropriate and that required logos forwarded to the reporter were not used in either paper.

#### **Website**

- 3) David gave an overview of the two meetings that had been held with web designers. This website needed to be as functional as possible for persons with disability. The use of audio and colour change would be built in. Further meetings had been arranged and suggestions for items for inclusions on the groups' web were requested.
- 4) Marian gave an overview of how sign language on U Tube could be used effectively and linked to the website to outline summary reports etc.
- 5) It was noted that part of the objectives of the group had already been met as the web designers had never considered the needs of persons with disability but would now include the suggestion of these services in their packages when meeting potential clients.

### **4. Constitution and Policies**

- 1) Marian referred to the policy requirements of the group as detailed on page 5.
- 2) The financial policy was not required as yet and the PR policy needed to be stronger.
- 3) Marian agreed to work on the Data Protection policy and Damien offered to work on the Child Protection policy.
- 4) Damien, Marie, Catherine and Marian agreed to form a sub group to look at policy needs for the group.

### **5. Suggestions on Actions**

#### **Objective One: To improve physical, emotional and learning access for persons with disability who may have additional requirements.**

- 1) A survey of available venues within the county was ongoing. This survey would recognize the suitability of venues around various access and inclusion requirements.
- 2) The families of individuals with learning disabilities need to know that there are additional supports available and that services exist but it is important to get the information out there. This may be possible through the website when up and running.
- 3) Identification of emotional needs is being undertaken by some groups but it was felt that an educational themed meeting should be arranged for Oct with representatives from LMETB, O'Fiach College, DKIT, National Learning invited to attend to discuss the issues that existed in accessing suitable levels and time schedules for training needs.

**Objective Two: To better enable persons with disability to use talents and skills to benefit society in Louth, to focus on ability rather than disability.**

- 1) Marian suggested that the group become aware of the skill set of the members of the group in order that they could be considered for tutors for future training programmes. The group was asked to find out from their own groups, anyone with particular skills who would be interested in delivering training. Progression was there for everyone and the Community Office could offer a Train the Trainer programme if there was enough interest.

**Objective Three: To enable full participation by ensuring that communication methods used within the group do not exclude any member.**

- 1) It was suggested that members of the committee feed back into their organisation if relevant.
- 2) The website will assist in communicating information to all members and interpreter was referred to for meetings and on the website.

**Objective Four: To ensure inclusiveness to persons with disability through engagement with statutory bodies, enterprise and employment organizations, education and training providers, the commercial sector, community organizations and local decision making bodies.**

- 1) Educational representatives would be invited to the October meeting to discuss various access issues. Through discussion within the group it was learned that a one year course can be delivered over a 2 year period if the person has some learning difficulties. However the same may not suit or is not available for a person with no learning difficulties but whom may have physical difficulties which does not allow for full attendance.
- 2) It was also mentioned that FETAC level 4 is not on offer and a jump from level 3 to 5 can be very difficult for some students with additional requirements.
- 3) The meeting in November could invite representatives from local Agencies or the Chamber of Commerce.

**Objective Five: To raise awareness of the challenges faced by persons with different types of disability and highlight how small changes can promote inclusion.**

- 1) Marian outlined how training application forms in the past made no reference to disability or additional requirements and she felt that this may have excluded some. Marian asked if the question 'Do you have a disability or additional requirement? Should be on the Training Application Form. After discussion it was agreed that training application forms should be changed to read "Do you have additional requirements/considerations?"
- 2) Comments and suggestions on awareness could be addressed through the website and possible facebook page.
- 3) It was suggested to ask persons with disability what small change would be beneficial to them to reduce exclusion. No decision was made on how this would be achieved.

**Objective Six: To increase our membership, to better ensure a wider representation of disability and to have a stronger collective voice.**

- 1) Five new members had joined the group since the Launch.
- 2) It was agreed that committee members should be asked if they knew of anyone in their groups or outside their group that would like to join. Emphasis was put on the fact that persons with disability should be encouraged to join to ensure the membership balance.
- 3) Membership application form will be emailed to the full group by LLP so that it can be passed on. However the membership must be returned to LLP for data protection reasons..

## **6. AOB**

- 1) It was noted for recording that three resignations had been received from assistant officers and that these positions would need to be filled.
- 2) It was suggested that visits to individual groups by officers could be arranged. Stephen Caragher from RehabCare extended an invitation to the group to visit there facilities and services.

The dates for committee meeting were scheduled for:

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September,**

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October and**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November** in the downstairs room of the Pastoral Centre.

A full meeting of dis ABILITY Louth was provisionally scheduled for either the 28<sup>th</sup> Nov or the 5<sup>th</sup> Dec.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

### **Attended:**

Catherine Kieran  
Damien Mackin  
David Larkin  
Joseph Reilly  
Laura McShane  
Marie Flynn  
Maureen Gaughran  
Olivia Shiel  
Patricia Wright  
Stephen Caragher  
Eimear Marron  
Mary Reilly  
Marian Finegan

### **Apologies:**

Brendan Moore  
Corinne Kilkenny  
Mairead Mathews  
Naoishe Duffy