

MINUTES

24th May 2007

1.30 – 4.30pm

Eighty9 Albert Embankment, Vauxhall

Approach to the minutes

The minutes do not attempt to capture every point made, but provide a summary of the group's discussions and a record of required action points. Comments and points raised during discussion have not been attributed to individual members.

Terminology

In this paper:

- The Office for Disability Issues is referred to as “the ODI”;
- The Independent Living Review is referred to as “the review”;
- Members of the Expert Panel are referred to as “members”.

Attendees

Expert Panel members: Baroness Jane Campbell (Chair), Rob Greig (Vice-chair), Ian Loynes, Ray Johnson, Zoe Carter, David Gardiner, Saghir Alam, Elaine Morton, Frances Hasler, Rowen Jade, Fazilet Hadi

Ministers: Anne McGuire (Minister for Disabled People), Ivan Lewis (Minister for Care Services)

Officials: Craig Muir (Department of Health), Nigel Dotchin (Department for Transport), Mike Daly (Department for Work and Pensions), Jane Everton (Communities and Local Government).

Project team: Mary Helson, Rosalind Hook, Steve Strong, Jenny Morris, Helen Bowers, Maria Pardo, Huw Meredith

Apologies

Jean Willson, Jo Williams, Ian Basnett, Gerry Zarb, John Dixon, Bruce Calderwood (ODI), Tony Orhnia (Treasury), Hardip Begol (Department for Education and Skills), Sheila Evans (project team)

1 Welcome and minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 Jane Campbell welcomed members. The minutes and action points from the last Expert Panel meeting were agreed.
- 1.2 Jane explained to members that Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, and Ivan Lewis, Minister for Care Services, would be attending to meet the Panel to recognise the contribution they are making. She said that there would be a chance for members to ask questions later.
- 1.3 The Action Log noted that the review team would be preparing a draft response to the ODI indicators consultation on behalf of the Expert Panel.

2 Update on the programme plan (paper EP 6/3)

- 2.1 Mary Helson presented paper EP 6/3 and provided an update on the review's progress against the seven separate project strands that support the programme aims. She asked the Panel for their views on this paper. The discussion included the following points:
 - On the support, advocacy and brokerage work strand, it is important to plug the gap between rhetoric and the actual situation on the ground. Members felt that it was important to have drivers that move the situation forward, as well as clear ways of measuring progress. Jenny Morris explained that Department of Health officials are working hard to deliver on this.
 - Members asked if the project team would provide a paper setting out some of the thinking behind the legislation project strand. The project team recently held a roundtable discussion on legislation where it

discussed the current legislative framework and barriers to independent living, as well as the risks associated with changing that legislation. The final report will include a chapter on the case for and against new legislation.

- The project team agreed to send members a copy of the background paper for the roundtable discussion.
- Members were also concerned that the review had not considered education in enough detail. The project team will review whether they are doing enough to take forward this issue, especially in relation to employment and economic well-being.

3 Discussion session with Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, and Ivan Lewis, Minister for Care Services

- 3.1 Jane thanked the Ministers for coming to this sixth meeting of the Expert Panel.
- 3.2 The Ministers introduced themselves and spoke about their interest in the review. They thanked the panel for the invitation to attend this meeting, and restated the Government's commitment to delivering greater change to enable disabled people to make real choices, and to bring the voices of disabled people into the heart of Government.
- 3.3 The Ministers explained that independent living remains an important commitment in Government, as it is critical to the wider Life Chances' agenda. Independent living is a key priority that is fundamental to enabling achievement of the goal of equality by 2025.
- 3.4 Members had the opportunity to ask the Ministers questions and to listen to their responses on a range of issues.

4 The Independent Living strategy and involvement of the Expert Panel in the final stages of the review (paper EP 6/1)

- 4.1 Mary Helson introduced the paper, which set out a two-stage approach to developing proposals for the review. She thanked the Panel for their involvement in discussions around the review's emerging proposals to date, through meetings, workshops, regional events and one-to-one discussions.
- 4.2 She explained that although good progress has been made of the review, it has become clear that more time is needed to fully develop and agree all the detailed proposals that will make up the five year strategy. One reason for this is that the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement will now take place in October. Another reason is that the work programme coming out of the review is so extensive that it cannot be considered and agreed in full over the next few weeks, as this would mean achieving a less detailed strategy that would have less impact.
- 4.3 The review team proposed a two stage approach – by July a report to Ministers on the review's work to date and including a high level strategy. The second stage would include detailed policy proposals and a cross-government five year strategy by the autumn, which would also include the development of a delivery and implementation plan.
- 4.4 The Panel discussion included the following points:
- Members were generally content with this two stage approach. They agreed that the review is working to an ambitious timescale, and that a staged process might be necessary in order to achieve the necessary buy-in from all the different government departments it affects.
 - Members felt that there were a number of stages that the review needed to go through. Firstly, agreement to the principles or vision for independent living. Secondly, clarity over what needs to be achieved and by when. Thirdly, how these detailed proposals are to be achieved.

- Members thought that it was very important for individual departments to take ownership of the strategy. If there is no political commitment and cross-government buy-in, then ultimately it will be disabled people who will be let down. Giving departments longer to think about proposals will mean that the strategy will ultimately be more detailed and meaningful.
- It is important to emphasise the prevention agenda as a central element to the strategy, as this is critical in building the economic case for independent living. Jenny reminded members that they had seen more detailed emerging proposals at the last meeting of the panel, and that this paper only deals with the high level strategy.
- It is also important to acknowledge the wider context of what else is going on. For example, there may be a link with timescales for the work on renewing the Valuing People strategy, as well as with the timetable for decisions on Local Authority expenditure.
- Members said that where things can be fixed quickly they should be, and that it was desirable for something concrete and visible to come out of the review soon. Although the programme is complex and the timescales are ambitious, there are also a lot of things that can be done within existing resources.
- The project team needs to be clear and truthful about the new timescales and to make these public. The project team will also reflect the discussion of the Panel at the next ODI Board of Management meeting.
- It is important to find ways of alerting the outside world about the work of the review. It is very important to communicate the review's work clearly, and members agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting.

4.5 Mary asked the Expert Panel if they were happy to continue in their existing roles while the review is developing its

proposals. Members were content to do this. She also asked how best to involve the panel in consideration of the detailed five year strategy.

- 4.6 The Panel agreed to send their comments on both the high level strategy and the detailed proposals to the review team by email, post or phone. The main agenda item for the next meeting will be a discussion of the final report that is going to Ministers on the 19th July. This report will be the main focus of the review team over the next month.
- 4.7 Jenny asked members for their comments on the high level strategy as presented in the paper. The discussion included the following points:
- The high level strategy needs to convey the strength of feeling that many disabled people feel about the need to radically change the way support is provided, and to not even call it 'social care'.
 - It is helpful to contrast the vision of independent living for the future with the likely situation for real people at present, as this will help to show the difference that the strategy might make to the lives of disabled people.
 - The high level strategy should include a few examples of proposals that would help support independent living, in order to give a flavour of what the more detailed proposals might be.
 - The high level strategy needs to include legislation.
 - The strategy should acknowledge the contribution of people who attended the workshops and regional discussions. The input and contribution from disabled people is integral to developing the strategy, ensuring a more credible strategy that disabled people own.
- 4.8 Members agreed to send their comments on the high level strategy (EP6/1) and on EP6/2, the paper on regional forums and independent living action zones, to the review team in the next two weeks. They were also asked to comment on

the detailed proposals that were presented at the fifth meeting of the panel (EP5/1).

Action points

Project team:

- To present the report that will go to Ministers and a high level strategy for independent living, at the next meeting.
- To discuss the review's communication strategy in more detail at the next meeting.
- To reflect the discussion of the Panel about the two-stage approach at the next ODI Board of Management meeting on 5 June.
- To circulate contact details for the project team so that members can feed in their comments on the strategy and detailed proposals by email, post or phone.
- To respond to the ODI Indicators consultation on behalf of the Expert Panel.
- To send members a copy of the background paper for the roundtable discussion on legislation.

Members:

- To comment on the detailed proposals as set out in EP5/1 at the fifth meeting by email, phone or post.
- To comment on the high level strategy and EP6/2 about regional forums and independent living action zones within the next two weeks.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 5 July in London.