

Fulfilling Potential Forum

Background

In July 2013 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) published 'Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen'. It set out the Government's vision that disabled people should be enabled to participate in every aspect of society.

One aspect of this was the Government view there is a continuing need for independent, strategic, confidential advice to government.

Following a consultation exercise in autumn 2013 the DWP published "Better Working with Disabled People: The Way Forward" in January 2014. It set out new arrangements for delivering this advice function.

One aspect of this has been the establishment of the Fulfilling Potential Forum. It will meet on a quarterly basis to engage in themed discussions on strategic priorities and direction. These will be based on the original document 'Fulfilling Potential: Making it Happen'.

Action on Hearing Loss (Paul Breckell), British Deaf Association (David Buxton) and Sense (Richard Kramer) are three of the 41 members that have been invited to participate by DWP.

Summary of First Meeting

The first Forum took place on 3 April.

Following introductions from Hugh Pillinger (Deputy Director, Officer for Disability Issues) Mike Penning MP, Minister of State for Disabled People set the scene. He referenced the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group he has formed to make sure disability issues are discussed between relevant ministers on a regular basis. He hoped to invite a different government minister to each meeting for a themed discussion.

The rest of the day was mainly work in small groups on the theme of building inclusive and accessible communities. There was a note taker from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) at each table so this should all be captured and published on the ODI website in due course.

Norman Lamb MP, Minister of State for Care and Support, took a 30 minute question and answer session in the afternoon. He focussed on the Care Bill, the importance of linking Health and Social Care and the importance of personalisation in service design.

Links to the Forum

Forum papers and a summary of the discussion will be published on the ODI website.

Paul Breckell and David Buxton have agreed to be the link between the group, UKCoD and the wide range of organisations it represents. They will highlight when papers have been published and when there are opportunities to feed into the Forum.

It is becoming clear that the plan for future Forums will be to concentrate more closely on one ministerial brief. For example, a forum based on transport accessibility with the relevant minister in attendance.

Our suggestion is that as soon as we know the theme and agenda for the next forum we promote this and seek feedback via UKCOD. This will enhance and inform the brief UKCOD members take into the room, over and above the expertise and research and evidence they have to hand in their own organisations.

Paul Breckell, Chief Executive, Action on Hearing Loss

David Buxton, Chief Executive, British Deaf Association

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