

## **Northern Ireland Assembly All-Party Group on Disability**

Virtual meeting via Zoom, 1.30pm, 11 May 2021

### **Minutes**

Attendees: Robbie Butler MLA (Chair), Kellie Armstrong MLA (Vice Chair), Andy Allen MLA, Pat Catney, MLA, George Robinson, MLA,

**Names Redacted**

### **Welcome and apologies**

Chair Robbie Butler MLA welcomed participants and guests and particularly welcome Tracy Johnston who is the Deputy Director, of Strategic Policy and Equality within the Department for Communities who will give a presentation on the Development of a New Disability Strategy.

#### **1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**

Minutes were agreed and there were no matters arising

#### **2. The Development of a New Disability Strategy**

Tracey outlined that there had been a previous strategy from 2012-2017.

A new strategy is in development which is intended to align with the

UNCRPD. The strategy involved a number of strategy development groups which includes an expert panel who have completed work which outlines cross-departmental recommendations. Tracy indicated that not all recommendations would be taken forward and work was being undertaken with a number of Departments in order to complete an assessment. There is a co-design group which includes 16 organisations. A cross departmental working group has been established with Senior representation across Departments. Final decision rests with the Executive. The strategy is at the drafting stage. It will have a 5-year lifespan and will be published in December 2021.

Following presentations there was time for questions and a discussion with participants.

Pat Catney MLA questioned whether the strategy would impact on the life of the parliament and whether there was value in amending the Disability Discrimination Act.

Tracey Johnston replied that amending the DDA would take a significant amount of time. The strategy will contain both long term and short-term commitments.

Andy Allen MLA raised a question as to whether the budget place pressures on the strategy.

Tracy Johnston replied that the emphasis was currently on identifying priorities and actions which would have most impact.

George Robinson MLA questioned whether the dynamics of aging and disability would be addressed in the strategy.

Tracy Johnston replied that the prevalence of disability increases the older people get and that it would be wrong to ignore that and noted that the strategy must be a pan-disability strategy.

### **3. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

To be agreed.

### **4. Close of Meeting**