



NEWS RELEASE

Malcolm Bruce MP

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Bruce meets new Disability Minister

Sir Malcolm Bruce MP met with the new Minister of State for Disabled People, Mr Mike Penning MP and brought a delegation from deaf organisations to explore the issues concerning the deaf community.

Covering a range of issues including, Access to Work, Personal Independence Payments and communication support for sign language users and those who use other forms of communications, Sir Malcolm and CEOs of Signature, NDCS and the BDA had a constructive discussion with the minister and his officials on the work of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).

The meeting followed on from a debate Sir Malcolm secured in Parliament last week on Deaf Children and Young People and precedes the Second Reading in the House of Commons of his Private Members Bill on Communication Support (Deafness) Bill on Friday 25th October.

Speaking after the meeting the Gordon MP said:

“I was encouraged by the Minister’s interest and awareness on issues affecting deaf people, particularly so soon into his new role. We raised a number of issues including:

- **accessibility to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) online,**
- **the policy regarding Access to Work support including Video Relay Service and voice recognition technology,**
- **the realities of Government officially recognising British Sign Language and,**
- **support for young deaf children and their families including access to sign language courses.**

CONTINUES

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“The Minister was receptive and agreed, without understandably making any firm budgetary commitments, to take up the issues where appropriate within his department and across Government. He also agreed to consult with the deaf community on policy issues that affect them.”

The Bill on Communication Support (Deafness) meanwhile seeks to secure communication and language rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people by setting up a review body which will look at the impact of communication support for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people which affects around 1 in 7 people in the UK today. Sir Malcolm raised the content of the Bill directly with the minister.

ENDS

- 1) Sir Malcolm Bruce met with Mike Penning MP, Minister of State for Disabled People at the Department of Work and Pensions on 23rd October. In the delegation (and the attached photo, next to Malcolm L to R) is: Susan Daniels, Chief Executive of National Deaf Children’s Society, David Buxton, Chief Executive of the BDA (British Deaf Association) and Jim Edwards, Chief Executive of Signature.
- 2) Sir Malcolm’s Private Members Bill on Communication Support (Deafness), Bill 24 is available on www.parliament.uk here: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/communicationsupportdeafness.html> . It is due to receive a Second Reading this Friday, 25th October.