



Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board

**MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2008. 11.00 start.**

**Present**

**BOARD.**

Mrs Anne Spaight  
Dr Amit Arora  
Mrs Simone Baker  
Mrs Jean Cooper  
Mrs Judith Holt  
Mr Zubair Khan  
Dr Ben Ko  
Dr Mohammad Obaidullah  
Dr Ronald Pearce  
Mrs Sarah Playforth  
Mrs Clair Poole  
Mr Douglas Ross  
Mrs Alison Sargent  
Prof David Scott  
Prof Tom Sensky  
Mrs Sarah Vines  
Ms Teresa Waldron  
Dr Michael Webley  
Mrs Christine Whitehead

**VISITORS**

Dr Michael Curren – Vice Chair DLAAB (Northern Ireland)  
Dr. Martin Donnelly – Secretary to DLAAB (Northern Ireland)  
Ms Kim Archer – Disability and Carers Service  
Mr John Bergman – Disability and Carers Service  
Mr Mike Daly – Disability and Carers Benefits Division  
Mr Gareth Roach – Health and Benefits Division  
Ms Sharon Golder - palantypist for Ms Waldron  
Ms Carol Attfield - signing interpreter for Mrs Playforth  
Mr Stephen Hudson - signing interpreter for Mrs Playforth

**SECRETARIAT**

Mrs Gail Knowles  
Mr John Hicks

**APOLOGIES**

Sir Richard Tilt  
Mr Stanley Millar  
Ms Gill Saunders  
Mr Bruce Calderwood  
Mr Norman Cockett  
Mr Chris Booth

## **Agenda Item 1 – Opening remarks and Apologies.**

1.1 The Chairman opened by apologising for the late start. The Chair thanked Board members for their good humour while waiting for the room to be vacated. The Chair then announced that two Assistant Chairs had been appointed, Mrs Poole and Dr. Ko.

1.2 Three new members had also been recruited to the Board. Dr. Webley, Medical Practitioner, who has been a consultant rheumatologist at Stoke Mandeville Hospital since 1979; Ms Waldron, Disabled Member, who is a senior manager at Chesterfield Law Centre where she provides legal advice particularly on community care law; and Mrs Sargent, who fills the role recommended in the DLAAB review of a community worker with experience of learning difficulties, who is a Director of Education and Employment at Mencap where she manages three specialist care colleges and a number of supported jobs. All other guests were introduced.

1.3 Apologies were received from Sir Richard Tilt Chair and Ms Saunders Secretary of the Social Security Advisory Committee. Apologies had also been received from Equality 2025.

## **Agenda Item 2 – Minutes of the Full Board Meeting – Tuesday 12 February 2008.**

2.1 The minutes were agreed with three minor amendments.

## **Agenda Item 3 – Matters arising.**

3.1 As Sir Richard Tilt, Chairman of the Social Security Advisory Board, and the Secretary to the Board, Ms Saunders, had been unable to attend. The Secretariat was asked to invite Sir Richard to the next Board meeting.

**Action Point – Secretariat to invite Sir Richard to the next DLAAB full Board meeting to discuss the work of SSAC.**

3.2 Work on a possible revised Memorandum of Understanding had been taken forward and there would be further discussion later.

3.3 The proposed full Board meeting on 12 August will not take place as the extended remit for the Board had not been agreed.

## **Agenda Item 4 – DLAAB Paper 187 DLA and AA research.**

4.1. The Chair then invited Mr Daly to talk about his role and DLAAB Paper 187. Mr Daly joined Disability and Carers Benefits Division last July to lead on analytical work. This involved marshalling the evidence that the Department already had and instigating a vigorous programme of research. The evidence base for DLA/AA was

not as extensive as it could be; it will take time to fill the gaps and to get things up and running. More use must be made of existing DWP data and existing surveys.

4.2. There were five areas of research that Mr Daly wanted to speak about.

Disallowed Claims. This project was instigated by the Disability and Carers Service as a high proportion of DLA claims were disallowed as the claimant has no significant care or mobility needs. These applications are a burden to Decision Makers so research was instigated to find out why these claims were being made. Findings include: a poor understanding of the basic operational criteria for claiming DLA; the idea that DLA was an out of work benefit; and that eligibility was dependent only on being disabled. Ms Archer commented that research was based on interviews with a number of claimants whose application for DLA had not succeeded.

**Action Point – Secretariat to circulate information to Board members on this research when available. This report has now been published as DWP research report 490 – available at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep490.pdf>**

Take up of DLA and AA. This is a very complicated issue and work had been ongoing for some time. The difficulty is caused by the nature of DLA, the information collected in the course of a claim for DLA or AA is wide ranging and not quantified and there is no set rules for a Decision Maker to follow when considering a claim. A feasibility study looking at how a survey could assist in compiling accurate take up information might work.

International review of evidence. Past research on DLA shows virtually no reference to results in other countries. Research was needed to show if that was because there is little material of significance out there. A recently commissioned project was expected to show that that was the case.

DLA and employment. Some Board members would be aware of this as they sit on the project steering committee. There are a very low number of disabled people in employment who receive DLA. Research will look at whether DLA helps or hinders a recipient to be in work, does the widespread view that DLA is only payable to those not working stop people claiming the Allowance or stop them seeking employment. Concerns over data transfer and research ethics process has delayed this research, however a literature review is nearing completion and interviewing Job Centre plus advisers should start shortly. When completed it is hoped that research will show:

- What are the main barriers to work for DLA claimants;
- what might help DLA claimants move into work; and
- how this information differs from Incapacity Benefit claimants.

Impact of DLA/AA. The Independent Living Review recommended an investigation into the extent which DLA and AA contribute to independent living. Rather than looking at the unanswerable question of what are DLA and AA spent on. Research will investigate how receiving DLA or AA changes the lives of the recipients. A feasibility study was underway.

4.2 Ms Archer commented that it would be for Ministers to make any decision on the need to run a campaign to promote the take up of DLA/AA. Potential applicants need to know about DLA or AA at the point where their application has a good chance of succeeding. Clinicians have a prompting role although there was a need to avoid raising expectations. The new claim form was an improvement on the one it replaced.

4.3. The Chair thanked Mr Daly for his presentation and offered the Boards' assistance on any current or future projects. Mr Daly in turn thanked those Board members who were sitting on a steering group and suggested that he may seek volunteers for other steering groups in the future.

### **Agenda Item 5 – Update from DLAAB Northern Ireland.**

5.1 Dr Donnelly reported that The Public Administration Review Bill was due to have its first reading in the Northern Ireland assembly on 17 June, the second reading was scheduled for 30 June. There should be a definite decision on the future of the Northern Ireland Board in November 2008.

5.2. The most recent Northern Ireland Board meeting had included a presentation from Carers Northern Ireland and an awareness session on Employment and Support Allowance.

5.3 DLAAB (NI) looked forward to welcoming Anne Spaight to its meeting on 25 June.

### **Agenda Item 6 – Recruitment update.**

6.1. The Chair reported that the last recruitment exercise had been completed. It had not been possible to recruit a child psychiatrist as the panel had been unable to shortlist any suitable candidates.

6.2 Mrs Whitehead would complete ten years service to the Board in September 2008 so the Secretariat was now planning a further recruitment exercise to find a replacement. The Chair thanked Mrs Whitehead for all her hard work on the Board's behalf.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Dates of future Board meetings.**

7.1 Future meeting dates for the Board are:  
14 October 2008;  
9 December 2008;  
10 February 2009, and  
14 April 2009.

Board members were asked to take note. There was some flexibility over the December date depending on legislative processes.

**Action Point – Secretariat to inform all Board members of future full Board meeting dates.**

**Agenda Item 8 – Any other business.**

8.1 None.

Meeting closed.