

**Draft minutes of the Annual Review held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 in the Marriott Hotel, Edinburgh**

**Present**

Ben Forsyth (chair), Jean Dunlop (vice-chair), David Armstrong, Claire Brennan, Grant Carson, Fiona Gray, Andy Groves, Margaret Hurcombe, Lucie McAnespie, Nicola Noon, Bobby Park, Margaret Simpson, Alex Stuart and Sandra Wilson

Also present: Jean Alcock (training adviser), Susan Burn and Steve Harvey (project workers)

**1. Apologies**

Mary Evans, Paul Ralph, Robert Sneddon and Carolyn Wyper  
Apologies were also received from Liz Breckenridge of Consumer Focus

**2. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Ben welcomed the three new members Fiona Gray, Margaret Simpson and Alex Stuart. He wished them a happy association with SAIF and welcomed the increased expertise they will bring. All those present introduced themselves to the new members.

Ben informed the meeting that Grant Carson and Paul Ralph had decided to resign from SAIF, although Grant was present and standing down after the annual review. Ben thanked them both for their contributions to SAIF, in particular Grant who was a founder member and had made a significant impact with both expertise and commitment on all aspects of the work of the organisation since 1997. These sentiments were echoed by other SAIF members and staff.

Ben highlighted a range of key issues on which SAIF had achieved progress this year including training, the new website, research and the publication about the Social Model. In addition there was an increase in our work with other organisations and a further rise in our profile. He reminded members that this coming year is one when we need to submit our funding application for 2011-2014 and this will require particular attention because of the economic downturn and the changes which have taken place at Consumer Focus. He concluded by thanking all members and staff for their valuable work throughout the year, particularly those who are on working groups.

### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

These minutes were agreed.

#### **4. Matters arising**

- a) Steve reported that UPDATE has not received any requests for the new on-line Formats Resource in other formats, including on CD.
- b) Steve reported on his meeting with Peter Russian, the Chief Executive of Investors in People Scotland. The main difficulties for liP incorporating SAIF Standards were described as:
  - liP are outcomes based whereas the SAIF Standards are process based
  - liP are concerned with internal performance rather than customer services.

Nonetheless Peter has written to liP London asking them to consider the SAIF Standards when they next review. At that review the Equality and Human Rights Commission will also be consulted.

Following the meeting, and on the suggestion of Peter Russian, Steve has written to Customer Service Excellence (formerly Charter Mark and run by the Cabinet Office) seeking a meeting with them.

- c) Sandra and Claire were unable to attend the British Standards Institute two-day training event in London in January – Sandra because of the weather and Claire because of work. They will attempt to attend a future event.
- d) Copies of the final draft of the easy-read guidance produced by Jean and Margaret were available at the meeting. Once the format has been finalised, it will go on the website and copies will be printed for distribution through our normal channels.
- e) The training review report was produced and sent out with the mailing for the annual review.
- f) Ben has attended two Access to Justice events and provided notes for project staff, he will continue to be involved when possible.

Other matters were deferred for discussion under relevant agenda items.

## **5. Draft Annual Report**

Steve introduced the report, in particular the sections on significant developments during 2009 and the suggested work plans for 2010.

The report was welcomed by the meeting with the following comments regarding the final report:

- It should be shorter with some sections put into appendices
- It should give greater emphasis to our achievements in the significant issues section.

The report will be amended to take account of decisions taken at this review and presented for final approval to the next SAIF meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **a) Standards Working Group**

Jean reported and the suggested work plan for 2010 was agreed. It was also suggested that we should attempt to get support or endorsement for the revised Standards once completed.

### **b) Local Strategies Working Group**

Margaret reported and the suggested work plan was agreed with the addition that the issue of getting accreditation for the training should be explored.

It was suggested that all forum members and project staff should attend the SAIF Raising Awareness training session run by Jean Alcock. This would be essential for forum members interested in doing training for SAIF in the future. This training session will run on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May from 11am to 1pm in the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.

Jean presented the training review report. In summary the external training programme was not as successful as anticipated, partly perhaps because of the economic downturn. Bookings were too low for some of the courses to go ahead although a small profit was made. On the other hand, in-house training was more popular and delivered to four organisations with more in the pipeline. This looks like the way forward, with on-line training also to be investigated.

### **c) Ecommunication Working Group**

Sandra reported and the suggested work plan for 2010 was agreed. The group has 3 pieces of work coming to an end in the next month or

so which will be published on the website and also printed and distributed. These are a paper on social networking and accessibility, a revised poster pack and some new, colour postcards with slogans promoting accessible information and communication in conjunction with Communication Forum Scotland.

#### **d) Promotional Strategy**

David reported. The draft annual report contained no suggested work plan but it was agreed the short-term working group would meet at least once more to finalise the communications strategy for SAIF and consider next steps.

David suggested that future work may include:

- Consideration of how to make voting and the election more accessible
- Consideration of new organisations to target
- Making contact with the Microsoft Foundation which is looking at accessible information
- A look at the accessibility of the big retail websites.

#### **e) Other objectives**

The draft annual report was agreed with some additions to the outcomes of strategic objective 5c.

#### **f) Working Groups**

New members Margaret and Alex joined the Standards Working Group and the Ecommunication Working Group respectively.

### **6. The Future of SAIF beyond March 2011**

Steve and Susan presented the discussion paper they had produced and included in the mailing for the meeting.

Lucie then facilitated an afternoon session during which the meeting broke into four groups to consider the issues raised in the paper and then each fed back the results.

The following key issues were agreed:

- SAIF should continue and should be funded, all the evidence told us progress had been made but there is still much to be done and it is an important issue within the equalities agenda
- The main strength of SAIF is its board members and staff

- SAIF publications remain very important but in future should provide guidance which is more brief and targeted
- We need to strengthen partnerships with consultation work and networking remaining a priority
- The website should also remain a priority and be properly resourced to ensure our publications can go on in HTML in line with best practice – the main target for SAIF is service providers – whilst also recognising that not everyone has access to ecommunication
- We should consider not delivering training ourselves but instead develop partnerships with trainers to whom we would refer people. In addition we should explore the potential for on-line training
- We should target all of the public sector with the need for accessible information policies and practices, not just local authorities with the promotion of local accessible information strategies
- We should continue to liaise with mainstream quality assurance systems and not develop separate accreditation for the SAIF Standards
- We should continue and seek to develop our partnership with Consumer Focus
- We should apply for a further 3 years of Section 10 funding and consider other funding options if there are any
- We should seek to maintain current staffing levels.

In summary, it was agreed we need a 3 year development plan and budget. This will then be included in our funding application which makes the arguments for the continuation of SAIF and demonstrates how we fit into Scottish Government policy priorities. Work on this should start soon to allow time for discussions with Consumer Focus before the application submission date in October.

A short-term working group of Ben Forsyth, Jean Dunlop, Margaret Hurcombe, Sandra Wilson, David Armstrong and Lucie McAnespie was agreed. Project staff will draft a budgeted development plan and funding application for consideration by the working group.

## **7. SAIF Membership**

Although Grant and Paul had resigned it was agreed not to go through another recruitment exercise at this time as we did so at the end of 2009. Membership will be monitored at each SAIF meeting.

## **8. Dates for 2010 SAIF Meetings**

The following dates were agreed:

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November

All the meetings will start at 11am and be followed by a buffet lunch at 1pm with the meeting continuing if necessary.

All the meetings will be in the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.

When we are clearer about the budget for 2010/11 we will make a decision about the venue and dates for the 2011 annual review.

## **9. Next meetings**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April, 11am – 1pm, GCIL – SAIF meeting

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 11am – 1pm, GCIL – Raising Awareness Training