**South West Rehabilitation Workers meeting**

**Minutes**

**18th September 2017 from 10am – 4.00pm at**

**Millbrook HealthCare Wellington Somerset**

**Attendees:** Josh Freehan, Andrea Doyle, Denis Davis, Carol Leese, Karen Sadler, Alyson Badnell, Nicky Searle, Sheila Matthews, Rebecca Gulley.

**Minute taker:** Andrea Doyle

**Apologies:** Diana Fonseka, Blind Veterans

**Areas Attending:** Somerset, Devon and Cornwall

**Welcome and introductions:** Josh Freehan from RNIB welcomedall and discussed

* Start of these meetings – the group decided we would like there to be quarterly meetings – Devon is hosting the next meeting date agreed for w/c 22 January 2018. More final arrangements can be agreed then.
* Knowledge of this SW meeting needs to reach more people who are not on the RWPN Facebook page. Contact will be spread wider for the next meeting via sensory managers and current attendees.
* Content of meetings might include guest speakers, local societies and be ROVI focused.
* RWPN representative for south west agreed – Andrea Doyle Somerset and Denis Davis Devon

**Update from RNIB: Josh Freehan**

* National Strategies that RNIB are promoting. Information Sharing across the country for supervisors and managers. RNIB is restructuring at present. Focus is still on 3 areas –

1. eye health – link with Specsavers
2. RNIB connect – community links for people with sight loss via databases. There are online platforms to speak to others and coordinators help steer in regions
3. Promoting IT access – sight loss advice service, funding of ECLO’s in areas and connections with sight loss societies.

* RNIB research and campaigns - this year focus on Children and Young people, Rehab services and eye health. You can receive information on these by signing up for updates.

RNIB south west regional network manager is Steven Weymouth. RNIB are challenging some cuts to low vision services across the country. Some Low vision services are being passed to local societies or ROVI’s though we are not optometrists.

RNIB are potentially looking into partnership with services to deliver research projects such as social prescription service – access to local community classes- and how this is delivered. In the south west this is tricky because it is primarily a rural area and access to transport can be hit and miss in some areas. RNIB has regional coordinators and the project can fund for year 1 for a provision with the expectation of it becoming self-funding by year 4.

Volunteer visiting service can help but in Somerset this is in high demand with a limited amount of volunteers, Cornwall and Devon do not have this service. Isolation can be a bigger issue in the South west. Local societies – Eye sight Cornwall, Devon insight and Somerset sight. Some have community outreach workers that are assessing in clients home like ROVI’s. Some referrals to ROVI’s are being missed.

* RNIB future projects –

1. Raise awareness of VI Rehab with NHS commissioners
2. Raise standards
3. Empower people with sight loss to know what they are entitled to.

* Josh shared his presentation on the cost effectiveness of VI rehabilitation.
* Dr Tom Margrain from Cardiff university has completed some research on home based Rehabilitation for people with VI.
* Current project on falls related to sight loss – Josh to provide outcomes when they come out.
* 2017 RNIB projects - The good practice principles on the RNIB website, working together with GP’s, the new changes to CVI’s, CPD courses across the country, Access to technology – online today. Suggested a course be held in the Somerset or Devon area as this would be attractive to all SW ROVI’s.
* Update on the apprentice standards and how this would help with recruiting. This should be attractive to all authorities as they get government funding towards apprentices.
* BCU ROVI course highly popular and successful.
* Suggest to RNIB to consider a research project in the SW area whose rural location has an added impact to people with sight loss.
* Registration with RWPN really helpful for support with CPD and sharing information and questions.
* Update on Vision 2020 will be Vision UK. Their priorities remain society inclusion and integration and promotion of eye health in the UK.
* Some feedback for RNIB from SW ROVI’s - that not all clients can access telephone options as they are deaf or Hard of hearing, more clarity needed on who is following up some employment referrals that Action used to deal with. Josh to look into.

**Guest Speaker:** Neil Howe Guide Dogs – Community engagement officer, covers SW region**.**

1. There is now no age restriction for a Guide Dog referral.
2. My Guide service to help with mobility or engaging in activities. They are currently recruiting volunteers.
3. GD provide children’s service in Bath and North east Somerset, Plymouth and Cornwall
4. Current campaigns are meet your MP days, pavement parking, using buses with audio announcements and tactile paving awareness to highways engineers.
5. Currently in SW there are 55 people waiting for guide dogs and it is likely to take about a year.
6. Access issues with GDogs can be challenged with GD campaigns.

**Peer review:** Case studies were presented by Josh Feehan. Groups shared answers on practice and training.

**Working with service users affected by stroke:** Group discussedissues faced by service users with stroke, it is a rising need, hospitals can miss sight loss, practice and training around stroke effects was discussed.

**Rehab Workers Professional Network rep: Andrea Doyle Somerset and Denis Davis Torbay**

**AOB:**

**Future meeting dates:** W/C 22nd January in Devon via Alyson Badnell