

MINUTES OF APIL NI REGIONAL MEETING
11TH NOVEMBER 2016

Time: 12.00 – 2.00 pm
Venue: Europa Hotel

Attendees: See list

Introduction, Peter Jackson, welcoming everyone to the meeting and introducing Gayle Baird of the Child Brain Injury Trust, established in 1991 and is designed for assisting children and families where the child has a traumatic injury on the brain.

There then followed a very interesting talk by Gayle Baird. It is the one charity in Northern Ireland that only deals with children. They can be found on Facebook and Twitter. They are currently under the HSCB contract where they receive 75% of their funding but the balance is fundraised. They are an organisation which supports parents, siblings, carers and peers. They provide training for health, education, social service and medical profession. They support community and voluntary sector organisations. They are for an individual up until the age of 24 where afterwards the person is transferred over to adult services.

The referrals come following RTAs, assaults, falls or blows to the head through illness, for example meningitis, stroke or brain tumour, poisoning, near drowning incidents or asphyxiation.

The support offered for children extends to social events, training and awareness sessions for children and their siblings, home and family support, visits for both the children and the siblings. There is peer support online and through social media. School visits provide training for teachers and classroom assistants as approximately 75 kids with a brain injury are still in main stream school. There is provision for books and DVDs for children and siblings. There is also grant programmes. For parents and carers they provide emotional and practical support, health and wellbeing events, grants programmes, they attend school meetings, they have training and awareness sessions for parents. They would attend meetings with parents for example hospital visits or discharge meetings and they give support with accessing benefits and other financial resources although they don't currently have a member of staff who can provide assistance with the completion of an application for benefits. This is something NI still needs. They do have a Northern Ireland only family support group. In Northern Ireland there is no group for brain injury kids in the Trust at all so this charity is the only organisation that offers this.

For professionals there are books, DVDs and information resources, training events, an annual conference, assistance with discharge planning meetings, placement opportunities and advocacy with families.

Gayle encouraged anyone with any queries at all to feel free to email her at gaylebaird@cbituk.org. She is the stakeholder communications co-ordinator or Gerard Anderson who is one of the two child and family support co-ordinators. His email address is gerardanderson@CBITUK.ORG

The first contact would be through the Belfast Office which is 02890 817145 and they can be found on the web on www.childbraininjurytrust.co.uk and when you phone that telephone number you would speak to either Lauren or Gayle in the office who would then refer the case to one of the two case workers. Northern Ireland is divided between both of them.

The organisation also have a placement in the Royal Victoria Hospital and Craigavon Hospital but currently not in Altnagelvin.

The final note was that webinars are provided by the organisation and hosted by local professionals for example giving advice on how to claim for benefits. That is something maybe our members could help with in the future.

There then followed a talk by Martin Hanna with the EC update. He had just returned from the cross-jurisdictional meeting in Cardiff which took place before the EC meeting. He suggested that in Scotland the pattern has developed where a regional meeting is incorporated into the PI update to make it easier for people to attend. Martin reported that many of the items discussed in England are not relevant to us but of those that are, he then gave a short summary.

Lord Justice Gillen's report is now out. It needs commented on and responded to as does the Justice Committee Report.

He advised us that the next conference is going to focus on all jurisdictions and urged people to attend.

He updated us in relation to the "Calm the Spam" APIL campaign which is directed against unregulated claims management companies.

He then went on to say that in April 2017 his EC position will be up for election. The idea would be going forwards for people in the regions, there would hopefully be more phoning in to meetings and less travel in the role so that perhaps the meetings needed to be attended would be 3 per year as opposed to the original 6 so he urged people to consider going forward for this post.

The final EC issue discussed was in relation to the HMRC records in Industrial Deafness and Asbestos Cases. He reassured the group that APIL are doing all they can. There is a possibility in the future that solicitors can pay a small fee for the information which would aid recruitment and speed the whole thing up.