



Name of Constituency	Epsom & Ewell			
Name of CPF Group	Epsom & Ewell CPF			
Name of CPF Coordinator	Frances Clarke			
Email address of Coordinator	treasurer@epsomconservatives.org.uk			
Number of attendees	Aged <25	25-39	40-65	>65
	Members:	1	4	
	Non-members:			
Date of meeting	19th November 2018			
<p><i>If you have a Conservative MP, please tick this box to confirm that you have sent a copy of this response to your MP:</i></p>				X
<p><i>Please indicate whether you used the accompanying <u>video</u> and <u>powerpoint presentation</u> and, if so, how useful you found them or in what ways you might suggest they could have been improved:</i></p>				
<p>Feedback: Various members had used the PP prior to the meeting; video clips used in meeting; useful to hear first hand and provides a variation on the means of communication useful to a varied audience.</p>				
	Video	Powerpoint		
We used it	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		
We did not use it	<input type="checkbox"/>	X		

1. Housing: How might we better build homes and buildings that everyone can access and use, so as to build a society in which all can participate fully?

Please see comments under 'Feedback'

The Group felt that the overall theme for each policy area and disability 'type' should be one of enabling, where Governments role should be to facilitate and encourage 'use of', 'access to' and 'participation in' through its regulatory & law making role, its own purchasing power and its influencing role on business and the voluntary sector.

The Group felt that building regulations could be written to ensure new builds have wheelchair friendly doors and steps, or a sufficient number within a development have such access. It was noted that as homes (& work environments) have more technological assistance this should help people with disabilities as well as the non disabled.

The Group felt that it was important to publicise how many houses are built following the relaxing of rules for local authorities to demonstrate the effectiveness of this change.

2. Transport: How might we better adapt our transport systems so as to offer people with disabilities the same access to transport as everyone else?

The Group noted the significant progress and proposed action under the Transport Strategy and as such did not discuss this policy area specifically.

3. Health: How might we more effectively reduce the health gap experienced by people with a learning disability, mental health conditions or autism, so as to help everyone to live full, healthy and independent lives?

The Group discussed the specific area around mental health and that MH professionals rarely think holistically, tending to ignore physical health as being irrelevant or for another to deal with.

The use of IT in the NHS in terms of the 'online GP' was welcomed, as this could offer greater opportunities for access to those whose disability makes it difficult to access services through a surgery. However, the question was raised as to whether this initiative was being evaluated for its impact on inclusion and the health gap mentioned above.

The Group noted the 'postcode lottery' of some NHS provision eg glucose monitors.

The division between medical & social care is still apparent despite both now coming under one Secretary of State; silo thinking still exists because of funding constraints and that will not assist those with disabilities, or who may become disabled, going forward.

4. Employment: How might we work more effectively with employers and people with health conditions so as to help as many as possible to get into and stay in employment?

The shift in attitude of GPs from 'sick note' to 'fit note' is welcomed and helping people - disabled & non disabled, realise what they can do, rather than what they can't do, should be extended to all areas and explained better within the sphere of UC too.

The Group did not discuss this area specifically.

5. Participation in Society: How might we better support candidates with disabilities to stand for public office, so that those elected better reflect the diversity of society?

Role models were seen as important, such as Robert Halfon MP, Jack Ashley & David Blunkett as well as some of the newer cohort of MPs elected in 2017. Often, the % of women or BAME people are given as indicators of what is happening or progress made, people with a disability should be 'promoted' in the same way.

In the context of local elected officials, expenses and allowances could be increased &/ or made available, to assist those who may face greater costs in participating as an elected official eg cab journeys to meetings, assisted technology.

6. Culture Change: How might we all deliver further positive change for people with disabilities, so that society does not miss out on the contribution of any person?

Television, film & radio was seen as a positive influencer on social attitudes through inclusive employment and programming. The 'soaps' eg Eastenders, Coronation Street, the Archers have all carried story lines that have raised awareness, broadened debate & helped in bringing about positive cultural change.

A negative impact on cultural change was considered to be the increasing expectations that people have of Government & Society. This can also be seen in the over medicalisation of what were once personality traits. This has increased costs, can never please everyone all of the time and feeds people's feelings of dissatisfaction.

There was significant action, with supporting policies, covering many areas seen within the papers. If not done already, there needs to be an annual progress report to demonstrate what is being done. It was noted that defining 'success' could be difficult and may not equate simply to parity of numbers.

The Purple shopping day was seen as an excellent initiative, harnessing the purchasing power of the 'purple pound' in a similar way to the 'pink pound' to encourage business change. However, it was noted that 10% of companies had a disability strategy - could it be mandated that all should have one? In addition, has this initiative been included in the work of those looking on regenerating the High Street?

7. Is there any other question you think should have been asked or observation you would like to make?

Universal Credit (UC) was a discussion point; a general point being made that the benefits of the policy were being drowned out & the, understandable, keenness of Ministers to accept the Opposition narrative that it was going wrong, drowned out the positives.

It was felt that some people in receipt of UC, either through their personal circumstances eg drugs or a specific disability, may not be ready to or ever be able to manage being paid directly &/or on a 4 weekly basis and that some scope should be given to phase this in for individuals, with reviews. Also the principle of paying recipients 4 weekly under UC didn't match the reality of work found, where payments are often weekly.

A area worthy of discussion would have been how to assist those with disabilities transition from childhood to adulthood, particularly where they or their families are reliant of local authority support.

FEEDBACK ON PAPER

What did you find useful?

The papers, video & links were, again, useful - not being too long, containing enough material to provide context as well as the position of the Government and progress made to date.

What did you not find helpful?

The Group found the brief to be very wide and found the discussion moved from high level points to highly specific examples, without being able to coalesce around an agreed position. Whilst this could be argued to be a function of the Group itself, it was very much the discussion topic being so vast. The needs of those who have disabilities can vary widely and to then discuss this across a broad range of policy areas was very difficult.

We felt the minister could have sought views for a particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable community with a specific disability and what they thought the policy area was that needed most addressing. This could be put back to CPFs for a more focused discussion.

The Group did consider inviting local groups to the local CPF meeting, however numbers of attendees from the Association were too low. It is however, only our second meeting, so it is an ambition of ours to invite local people along to provide more information &/or engage in the discussion itself.

Some of the figures were not helpful eg what does £20 million mean in the context of this discussion? Or 1 in 5 adults has a disability - this needs to be broken down so as to inform the discussion.

Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve future briefings?

Thank You. Please return to: CPF.Papers@conservatives.com