

Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time

26th March 2024 6.00 pm Virtual Business Meeting

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Collette Stevenson MSP

Invited guests

Julie O'Hare, Sylvia Price, Argyll & Bute Rape Crisis

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Health & Social Care Adviser, Co Convener, Secretariat, Stuart Allardyce, Stop It Now Scotland, Secretariat, Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence, Emma Bryson Speak Out Survivors, Jackie Dow, Psychotherapist, Karen Garland, Natalie Gibb, Health in Mind, Fay Maxted, The Survivors Trust, Dr Sarah Nelson, University of Edinburgh, George Scott, Campaigner: Abuse in Private Schools in Scotland, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer & Researcher, Alison Wales, NSPCC, Carol Willson, Student

Apologies

Daniel Johnson MSP Depute Convener, Brian Whittle MSP, Whitney Barrett, Wellbeing Scotland, Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Andrew Campbell, Student, Leigh McFarlane, Thirtyone:eight, Janine Rennie, Campaigner, Rukshana Saleem, Moira Anderson Foundation

Agenda item 1

Approval of Minutes 5th December 2023

Approved: Stuart Allardyce

Seconded: Sharon Belshaw

Agenda item 2

Matters arising

Letter with request to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. We have not as yet had a response. Fulton will follow up. **Action Fulton**

Letter with request to meet with the Minister for Social Care, Mental Health and Wellbeing & Sport. We have not yet had a response. Fulton will follow up. **Action Fulton**

Sibling Sexual Abuse. The final paper has been produced and Fulton has drafted a motion that Anne and Stuart will read and comment. The Motion will be laid down in the parliament for a future debate. He will keep us informed of its progress. **Action Fulton**

Ipscan and Childlight Conference. Stuart, Sarah, Leigh and Anne met to discuss the issues that arose from the Ipscan conference and Childlight not contacting the CPG or survivor agencies. The conference was promoted as being about CSA which led to confusion. Survivors felt let down as they had no knowledge, nor opportunity to comment. Ipscan and Childlight are aware of our concerns and they recognise that they should have engaged with us. It was agreed that we let the group know of any relevant events in the future.

Letter to Stephen Timms on Work & Pensions Committee. The response from Stephen's office noted: "Thank you for taking the trouble to contact me about contribution-based Employment Support Allowance. I led for the Opposition on the Committee stage of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and so challenged numerous features of it.

Access to social work files for application to Redress Scheme. It was agreed that we raise this when we meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

Agenda item 3

Failings of FAI's for Traumatized Young People: Dr Sarah Nelson. Sarah opened a discussion on this important issue and it was agreed she put together a paper for the group to consider and comment at our next meeting. **Action Sarah**

Agenda item 4

Mandatory Reporting and Child Protection Scotland: Update

The Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise response to our letter enquiring about Scotland's position on Mandatory Reporting.

The response mentioned the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, the Promise foundations, the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law, and Scotland's GIRFEC (Getting it Right for

Every Child) approach, and proposals that would change our current responses to child sexual abuse would need to be carefully considered within the Scottish policy and practice landscape.

They are giving consideration to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse for England and Wales, where these are relevant for Scotland. Officials have already been conducting a wide range of engagement around mandatory reporting with relevant Scottish stakeholders. This engagement has highlighted the complexity and potential risks of implementing a mandatory reporting requirement and that further consultation and consideration will be required. The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is gathering a wealth of information about the views and experiences of adult survivors. They are reviewing the evidence from the Scottish Inquiry and will also carefully consider its recommendations.

There is also a new strategic group being created. The aim of this group will be to enhance the cross-sector response to improve prevention and identification of child sexual abuse and child exploitation in Scotland.

The first response was who the officials were engaging with as none of the survivor agencies present had any request for feedback or input. Alison was aware that a group was being set up by the government and that NSPCC had submitted a response, but there was no mention of mandatory reporting mentioned.

We agree that there is a wide range of views in the field and that there are concerns at the parameters of MR duty, but we can't keep waiting for a final consensus.

Thirtyone:eight had a presentation from Alexis Jay. We cannot rely on children disclosing and fears of an 'overload' of disclosures is not the case as there will be a peak in the short term but eventually will level out. If Westminster is just giving a nod to MR, no point in doing it.

We agreed we would take this forward asking why survivor agencies and CPG had not been consulted and why has the government not talking to us before they set up this group?

We agreed that once we know who the Strategic Leadership Group is and what their remit is we can respond.

Agenda item 5

Groomed Play Event: Update.

Anne fed back that we now have a date for this event for Tuesday 8th October at the Scottish Parliament from 6.00pm to 8.00 pm. Sandra and Anne will email the date to

the full membership and be in touch nearer the time with programme and practicalities. **Action Anne and Sandra**

Agenda item 6

AOCB

Stuart suggested we might request Tam Baillie, former Children's Commissioners in Scotland, who now chairs Child Protection Scotland attend a meeting with the CPG to discuss his thoughts on social work responses in accessing case files and mandatory reporting. This was agreed. **Action Fulton and Stuart**

Date of next meeting: TBC