

Cross Party Group on Men's Violence against Women and Children

19th November 2024, 18.00-19.30 via Zoom

Minute

1 Present

MSPs

Rona Mackay (RMa) (Convener)
Beatrice Wishart (BW) (Deputy Convener)
Audrey Nicoll (AN)

Invited guests

There were none on this occasion.

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
Amber Cully (AC), Financially Included, GEMAP
Lucia Dahlby (LD)
Ann Fehilly (AF), ASSIST
Dawn Fyfe (DF), Wise Women
Bryony Foster (BF), SAY Women
Nicola Gilbert (NG), Scottish Women's Aid
Helen Heppenstall (HH), Central Advocacy Partners Falkirk
Rebecca Mason (RM), The Young Women's Movement
Susan McKellar (SMcK), Scottish Women's Convention
Gill McKinna (GMcK), Community Justice Scotland
Jan Macleod (JMacl), Women's Support Project
Chris Ringland (CR), Evangelical Alliance Scotland
Linda Rodgers (LR), Edinburgh Women's Aid
Christina Schmid (CS), NUS Scotland
Marsha Scott (MS), Scottish Women's Aid
Sally Sheail (SS), Church of Scotland
Linda Thompson (LT), Women's support Project
Colette Wormleighton (CW), City of Edinburgh Council, Community Justice,
Domestic Abuse Services

Apologies

Leonie McConnell, Close the Gap
Liz Gilchrist
Melanie McCarry

2 Cross Party Group Business

A AGM

- a. AGM 2023 - Minute approval
 - The minutes of the AGM of the Cross-Party Group on Men's Violence against Women and Children, held on 8th November 2023 were approved as an accurate record – proposed by Beatrice Wishart (BW) and approved by Marsha Scott (MS).
- b. Selection of office-bearers (Rona Mackay, Beatrice Wishart)
 - Convener
 - Rona Mackay, MSP was re-elected as Convener of the Group – nominated by Beatrice Wishart (BW) and seconded by Marsha Scott (MS).
 - Deputy Convener
 - Beatrice Wishart, MSP was re-elected as Deputy Convener of the Group – nominated by Rona Mackay (RM) and seconded by Marsha Scott (MS).
 - Secretariat
 - Scottish Women's Aid was re-elected as Secretariat for the Group, proposed by Rona Mackay (RMa) and seconded by Beatrice Wishart (BW).

B Approval of previous Meeting Minutes

- a. 17th September 2024
 - The minutes of the CPGMVAWC meeting, held on 17th September 2023, are to be approved at the first meeting of 2025.

C New Member Applications

- a. There were no new member applications on this occasion.

D Thematic Session

- a. The Limitless Project: Anne Robertson Brown
 - Anne Robertson Brown delivered a presentation about the Limitless project, a domestic abuse advocacy service for

girls, who have experienced domestic abuse/coercive control in their relationships.

- The presentation examined the issues dealt with by the project, looked at methods of engagement that have helped the project succeed and looked to future areas of work for the project.
- The presentation was followed by a Q&A session:
 - Linda Thompson (LT)
 - LT said she was struck by how much porn must be addressed in all primary prevention work, and the importance of a strong, consistent, effective message in this area of work - meeting young people where they are, but at the same time, challenging normalisation of the sex industry and pornography.
 - LT had concerns about current messaging, in particular where young men were concerned, where some framing was that it was acceptable/inevitable.
 - Marsha Scott (MS)
 - Drew attention to previous work, carried out by this CPG, focusing on pornography, where Gail Dines spoke to the Group.
 - At that point too, it was seen as a public health problem, exacerbated by the fact that it is an industry with international access. This makes it challenging for mechanisms dealing with it.
 - MS mentioned previous work around sexual assault that occurs in schools, which could be useful to consider at the next meeting of the CPG.
 - Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
 - ARB:
 - Spoke about the importance of adopting a contextual, safeguarding approach in certain situations.
 - Highlighted the work they had carried out over the past three years with public health, so that their sessions, delivered both to professionals and other young people, are informed by the experience of girls accessing the Limitless project.

- Marsha Scott (MS)
 - MS asked ARB:
 - What were the statistics about the age of the perpetrators?
- Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
 - ARB confirmed:
 - That perpetrators were peers (the same year, or year above that of the victims).
 - That girls repeatedly identified the use of the peer group as a means of further control and humiliation.
- Rebecca Mason (RM)
 - RM highlighted the work of Cindy Gallop 'Make Love, not Porn'.
- Ann Fehilly (AF)
 - AF spoke to:
 - The importance of embedding healthy relationship education.
 - The significance of misogyny at the heart of the problem.
 - The Inform Women, Transform Lives campaign, an initiative of the Carter Centre in the USA, working to empower women around the world, by providing them with access to information. The campaign recognises that women are often disadvantaged when it comes to information access and aims to address this inequality. The Carter Centre has partnered with Glasgow City Council Lord Provost Office to develop a campaign targeting young women who are experiencing abuse within their own intimate relationships.
 - The success, in evaluation, of the 'Don't be that Guy' campaign by Police Scotland.
 - Unintended consequences of the Child Care and Justice Bill.
- Amber Cully (AC)

- Highlighted the importance of investing in work with parents, as well as with young people.
 - AC suggested work needed to start early in school.
 - Audrey Nicoll (AC)
 - AC confirmed she would be happy to support the work following the evening's discussion.
 - Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
 - ARB shared that she has used the New Zealand bystander programme, as part of their own programme in Angus.
 - Susan McKellar (SMcK)
 - SMcK highlighted work being done by Michael Conroy with school-age boys, through his organisation 'Men at Work'.
- b. Young Women Know: Rebecca Mason, The Young Women's Movement.
 - Rebecca Mason delivered a presentation about the Young Women Know project, a partnership project between NSPCC Scotland, The Young Women's Movement and young women, designed to tackle peer sexual abuse, unhealthy relationships and sexual harassment, through peer-led campaigns.
 - The project includes three local youth-led campaigns, with young women, aged 16-18, between 2020 and 2024. The areas covered have been Dundee, Perth & Kinross and Angus.
 - The project has resulted in the creation of an informative package of resources, co-designed by young people, and for use by their peers, professionals, parents and carers.
 - The presentation was followed by a Q&A session:
 - Rebecca Mason (RM)
 - RM spoke about the launch of the Fairness campaign on sextortion, which emphasises the importance of getting to grips with the rise of technology.
 - Sally Sheail (SS)
 - SS asked about the work that is being done with boys, to educate and inform.
 - Rebecca Mason (RM)
 - RM responded that the Young Women's Movement work with boys, aged 10-11 in Glasgow schools,

talking about gender equality. However, schools have to enrol in the programme, rather than it being a roll-out. RM also mentioned that some parents were uncomfortable with the topic being covered in schools.

- RM emphasised the importance of including young boys in these conversations, without embarrassment. The Young Women's Movement have asked male role models to step into this space, with the support of the Young Women's Movement.
- Christina Schmidt (CS)
 - CS asked if there was any co-operation with universities, or awareness of the growing problem, especially where 16-18 year-olds are concerned, perhaps in their first year at college.
- Rebecca Mason (RM)
 - RM highlighted:
 - Emily Test, as one of the largest organisations working in that area.
 - Activism surrounding alleged and sexual offenders, who have been found guilty, being on campus, without the knowledge of other students.
 - The conversations the Young Women's Movement are having with students' unions, though the main area of work for the Young Women's Movement in this respect, is with schools.
 - Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
 - Spoke to their children's service, which delivers prevention programmes in schools to boys and girls. The programmes include healthy relationships and non-consensual sharing of intimate images. They also work with the local college, delivering sessions to mixed classes, as part of prevention work.
 - There are other local services, but what is needed is a comprehensive programme across the country, so that every child and young person is getting the same information.
 - ARB also said there was a piece of research to be carried out as to who would progress the work with the young perpetrators.

- Marsha (MS)
 - Marsha responded that it has been a large topic of conversation for the Childcare and Justice Bill, involving safety issues around the way the Children’s Hearing System operates.
- Gill McKinna (GMcK)
 - GMcK, of the Caledonian Programme:
 - Spoke to their work with offenders who are 18 and older.
 - Emphasised the benefits, if work were rolled out across health and social care.
- Marsha Scott (MS)
 - Asked RM if they had a way of monitoring take-up of the toolkit.
- Rebecca Mason (RM)
 - RM confirmed they are monitoring engagement.
- Colette Wormleighton (CW)
 - CW emphasised the importance of adopting a systemic, joined-up approach within the Children’s Hearing System.
- Marsha Scott (MS)
 - MS added that violence against women and girls is a causal consequence of women’s inequality, in terms of access to power and money. Therefore, it is vital to acknowledge that before deciding on interventions with victims and perpetrators.

E Member Updates

- Marsha (MS)
 - SWA’s focus for 16 Days is the violation of children’s and mothers’ human rights in the context of child contact. SWA has just completed a conference on the subject, and will be sharing the case studies, social media.
 - SWA is also creating a theory of change to investigate how we can work differently to lead to change in this area.
 - SWA convened a roundtable of children’s rights organisations recently. The next roundtable will focus on bringing justice organisations together to discuss the

role of police evidence-gathering, prosecution and child aggravations, given the evidence emerging from the survivor reference group and other survivors in the SWA service network.

- MS invited anyone in the Group to get in touch if they would like to participate.
- Sally Sheail (SS)
 - SS shared the Church of Scotland's participation in the Red Chair project during 16 Days, across the parishes in Scotland.

F AOCB

- There was some discussion around themes for meetings in 2025. Two potential themes emerged with the most support:
 - Funding
 - It was suggested that a representative of the Scottish Government be invited to attend the meeting, to talk about what it was going to do to change its practice around funding decisions that put services across the violence against women sector at risk, with funding decisions about the next financial year not yet known, due to the way the current system operates.
 - Follow-up to the themes of the two presentations at the AGM.
 - What can this CPG do about pornography in Scotland?
 - An enquiry on the effect of pornography.
 - The new legislation in relation to places that do not recruit young people in justice and the implications for the safety of and support for young women going through that process. In addition, the safeguards in place, where cases are diverted to Children's Hearings

3 Date and Time of next Meeting

- a. The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.
- b. The next meeting will be on the Teams platform.