

# **The Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**

**Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 21 September 2016  
Scottish Parliament**

## **In attendance:**

Margaret Mitchell, MSP (MM)  
Fulton MacGregor MSP (FMac)  
Monica Lennon MSP (ML)  
Alison Harris MSP (AH)  
Martin Henry, Stop it Now! Scotland (MH)  
Sarah Nelson, University of Edinburgh (SN)  
Anne Macdonald (AMac)  
Alison C. Tait, Break the Silence (AT)  
Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence (SB)  
Lorraine Sorley, Health in Mind (LS)  
Andrew Campbell (AC)  
Sandie Barton, Rape Crisis Scotland (SBar)  
Marnie Collins, KASP (MC)  
Ann Donnan, Safe Space (AD)  
Traci Kirkland, Open Secret (TK)  
Janine Rennie, Open Secret (JR)  
Carol Willson (CW)  
Sandra Brown MAF (SBro)  
Kath Muirhead (KM)  
Ilene Eassen Open Secret (IE)  
Valerie Barr, Centrestage Communities (VB)  
Sharon Guest Barnardo's Scotland (SG)  
Felicity Hollands, Scottish Parliament (FH)  
Marianne Paton, Scottish Parliament (MP)

## **Apologies**

Johann Lamont MSP (JL)  
May Chamberlain, Relationships Scotland (MCh)  
Sue Hampson, Safe to Say (SH)  
Eric Swanepoel (ES)  
Dr Sandra Ferguson, NHS Education for Scotland (SF)  
Javita Narang Univ. of Edinburgh (JN)  
Muriel Mowat (MMow)

## **Introductions and welcome**

Margaret Mitchell (MM) welcomed everyone to this inaugural meeting of the group. The re-registration of the CPG, election of office bearers and introduction of new MSPs was formalised.

## **Election of office bearers**

Margaret Mitchell MSP (MM) was elected Convenor  
Nominated by Janine Rennie (JR)  
Seconded by Martin Henry (MH)

Johann Lamont MSP was elected (in absentia) as Deputy Convenor  
Nominated by Margaret Mitchell MSP  
Seconded by Anne Macdonald (AMacD)

MM intimated that Marnie Collins (MC) was standing down as Treasurer and Javita Narang (JN) standing down as Secretary. MM also felt that having three Vice Convenors was not working so well and suggested that two vice-convenors with clarified functions might work better.

Sarah Nelson (SN) stood down as Vice Convenor and was thanked for all her support. SN will remain as a valued member of the group.

MM proposed Martin Henry (MH) as Vice Convenor, seconded by Andrew Campbell (AC). MH duly elected Vice-convenor.

MM proposed Anne Macdonald (AMac) as Vice Convenor seconded by Sarah Nelson. AMac duly elected Vice-Convenor.

It was then agreed that the two Vice-Convenors (MH and AMac) would act also as secretariat for the CPG in the coming year. Thanks were recorded to JN for all her hard work and support. Javita will continue as a valued member of the group.

AC proposed JR as Treasurer Seconded by Alison Tait (AT)

It was agreed that MH would act as second signatory for the CPG accounts cheque book.

Thanks are recorded to MC for her hard work and support over the years as Treasurer. Those in attendance congratulated Marnie on her news that she is due a baby in February and presented her with a bouquet of flowers. KASP will send another representative during the period of MC's leave.

## **CPG Remit and work**

- The remit of the group was discussed. The past year has been difficult due to the National Inquiry into Historical In-care Abuse in care which has dominated the policy agenda and focus of government attention and resources.
- The debate in Parliament and the meeting with the Minister, Jamie Hepburn MSP provided no further progress or clarification in relation to the numbers of survivors who experienced abuse at home or in the community but whose needs have not been the focus of policy initiatives or resource allocation. Whilst the CPG fully supports initiatives to help and assist people who are "in-care abuse" survivors concerns remain as to the shortfall in explicit

recognition of abuse as an issue which disproportionately arises within families and in communities.

- Since the SurvivorScotland Strategy is no longer the flagship which articulated policy and direction of travel the CPG felt the need to focus on how it should go forward and what areas required specific focus within the coming year as part of its own action/work plan. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference of the CPG should be revised and presented to the membership for further consultation and refinement. It was agreed that MH and AMac would do so and circulate a revised version to the CPG for further discussion. **(Action: MH and AMac)**
- Concerns were raised by several members that the CPG should continue to challenge aspects of government policy and implementation to ensure that the interests of all survivors are a priority. Communication is a key issue and how best to maintain good communication between the CPG, Ministers and external parties and organisations affecting issues of interest to survivors. Similarly have a critical overview of how the needs of survivors are met through government funding and the ways in which resource need is met are also issues which the CPG should have a strong interest in. The fragility of the third sector agencies – who are major service providers to survivors – in terms of secure funding and future provision is also a concern and the general funding landscape raises concerns about how the needs of survivors might be met in the longer term or outcomes adequately measured.
- The CPG's role should be constructive. It is well placed to flag the issues which concern survivors and their advocates and how the Government (and Parliament) might address these. Indeed there is also a view that the policy and provision for survivors might better be addressed within an 'equalities' framework rather than mainly through health and mental health. Prevention of sexual abuse also needs to be to the forefront of activity and interest so that in the longer term children and young people can be protected from abuse happening in the first place.
- The CPG recognises that it should not be engaged in partisan politics and needs to adhere to terms of reference which make this clear and which also sets out a positive role for the CPG.
- It is important that we focus on the future and that we recognise that the 'survivor's agenda' need to not be entirely focussed on past events. Bringing about positive conditions for survivors to build their futures and live healthy and stable lives is also an important aspect of progress. We recognise that the new justice agenda has sexual offences as part of its remit so it is right that the CPG highlights the needs and perspectives of survivors in this agenda.
- It was suggested we need to link with other relevant CPGs in Parliament although we recognise that attempts to create positive links before have not been taken up.

- The 2016/17 work programme for the CPG will be discussed and agreed at the next meeting. Member were asked to consider what items they would want to see included in the work plan for the CPG and to email these to Annie and Martin prior to the next meeting so these can be included for discussion under that item on the agenda. (**Action: All Members**)

## **AOCB**

- Details of the screening of Hidden in Silence were provided.
- Sarah Nelson's new book Tackling Child Sexual Abuse was recommended and Sarah would be grateful for any feedback.
- MM thanked everyone for their contributions.

The date of the next meeting was set for **Wednesday 9th November at 1.00 pm.**

## **NOTE**

**Attendance at meeting should be confirmed by email with the Secretariat by the end of the week preceding the planned meeting. This is to ensure proper administration of security at Parliament. Those who do not confirm will not be on the list for attendance and therefore will not be issued a pass for admission.**