

Draft minute of the meeting of the
Cross Party Group on Men's Violence Against Women and Children
30th November 2020, 17.00 – 18.30, via Zoom

1. Present/Apologies

Present

CPG Members

- Claudia Beamish MSP (CB) – Chair
- Rona Mackay MSP (RMK) – Co-convenor
- James Dornan MSP (JD)
- Ashley Scotland, Thriving Survivors (AS)
- Brenna Jessie – Rape Crisis Scotland (BJ)
- Kallia Manoussaki, Individual (KM)
- Katy Proctor, Individual (KP)
- Kelly Johnson, Individual (KJ)
- Kelsey Smith, Close the Gap (KS)
- Lily Greenan – Individual (LG)
- Linda Rodgers – Edinburgh WA (LR)
- Marsha Scott – SWA (MS)
- Mhairi McGowan, Individual (MM)
- Nancy Lombard – Individual (NL)
- Nicola Gilbert – SWA (NG)
- Nikki Dillon – Individual (ND)
- Richard Whitecross – Individual (RW)
- Sarah McMillan – Scottish Association of Social Workers (SM)
- Sarah Weldon – Forensic Mental Health and Learning Disability Service of Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS – (SW)
- Vikki Kerr, City of Edinburgh Council Community Justice, Safer Families (VK)

Apologies

- John Finnie MSP (JF)
- Johann Lamont MSP (JL)
- David Ferguson – Barnardo's Scotland
- Emma Ritch – Engender (ER)
- George Ekton – Individual
- Kirsty Pate, City of Edinburgh Council Community Justice, Domestic Abuse Services
- Linda Thompson, Women's Support Project
- Melanie McCarry – Individual (MM)
- Nicoletta Primo, Girl Guiding Scotland
- Rachel Adamson – Zero Tolerance
- Stephen Madill, Individual (SM)

2. Thematic session: Impact of COVID on victims/survivors of VAWG and the services that support them

- A. Domestic abuse – Dr. Marsha Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Women’s Aid
- B. Rape and sexual assault – Brenna Jessie, Press and Campaigns Officer, Rape Crisis Scotland
- C. Discussion and decision of CPG actions - Invite Lord Advocate and Cabinet Secretary to next meeting? Chair of Justice Committee?

It was confirmed that presentations could be made available after the meeting.

The presentations were followed by consideration of issues they raised, including:

- How to most effectively address institutional racism and support an intersectional approach in service provision.
- Actions MSPs could take to help highlight issues such as the effect of backlogs in the court system in respect of cases of domestic abuse.

Action: CB committed to write to the minister after this meeting.

Action: There was a suggestion that someone from the Court Service and the Lord Advocate could be invited to attend the next meeting.

- RW highlighted the upcoming consultation on Child Welfare reporters, as well as the need to ensure the speed and quality of criminal, civil and family court statistics, so they can be used effectively.

Action: RW agreed to outline some points to be added to the letter suggested by CB.

- NL confirmed that the research she and KP are carrying out, about women’s experiences of the CJS, would begin in January.

Action: Could any points (as practitioners) regarding this research be forwarded to NL and KP.

- AS confirmed Thriving Survivors were due to begin work on a consultation that will launch in May, to gain an understanding of survivors’ views on Restorative Justice, which might contribute to the research carried out by NL and KP.
- MS said that, while SWA are not in support of restorative justice, the organisation could circulate Thriving Survivors’ consultation.

Action: Thriving Survivors to forward the consultation to NG at SWA for circulation if wished.

- BJ said that RCS could also look at the consultation and set up conversations around it.

3. Cross- Party Group business

A. AGM

- a. Approval of previous minutes: Draft minutes of the AGM on 18th September 2019 were approved as an accurate record (proposed by MS, seconded by RMK).
- b. Selection of Office-bearers: MS thanked CB MSP and RMK MSP for agreeing to continue as Co-Conveners of the CPGMVAWC. CB agreed to enquire of JF if he would be happy to serve as Deputy Convener until the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021.

B. Approval of previous Meeting Minutes:

Draft minutes of the last meeting, held on 26th February 2020 were approved as an accurate record (proposed by MS and seconded by BJ).

C. February Meeting: Plan themes for 2021

It was agreed that the themes for 2021 would be considered at the next meeting in February.

Among potential topics could be a strategy for engagement with Scottish Government, involving cross-party collaboration and highlighting engagement with the new intake of MSPs.

JD suggested arranging meetings with MSPs on specific subject matter, to maximise the benefit of the engagement.

D. Members' Updates:

- Rape Crisis Scotland: BJ confirmed a programme around the campaign to end the Not Proven verdict. Also, a podcast being produced with Professor Vanessa Monroe. The continued success of the Survivors reference group was highlighted, over 40 of whom had had engagement with the system.
- Edinburgh Women's Aid: LR recorded thanks to the Scottish Government for the extension of grants for a year and the funding so crucial at this time. LR also reported that a partnership with Edinburgh University Social Work had been successful in securing funding for a PhD regarding the outcomes of MARAC. A multi-agency approach in response was seen as crucial in lockdown and the impact on women of the court delays was stressed, in terms of its impact on both the women concerned and staff caseloads.
- Scottish Women's Aid: MS updated attendees about the activities associated with 16 Days of Action, including the launch of the Research Integrity Framework (a piece of work involving all the Federations and group of academics, among them John Devaney and Emma Wilkinson). A new Children and Young People's webchat service was to be launched on 1st December 2020. In addition, the Helpline were launching a new video, partnering with survivors, about

what it feels like to live with domestic abuse. Work was also being carried out on a Report of Funding. MS confirmed that DA protection Orders legislation would apply in Scotland for the first time.

- University of Stirling: LG announced that Stirling University had been carrying out work about the impact of Covid on women across 12 countries, since early summer, partnering with Scottish Women's Aid and WAVE. The final report was currently being produced.
- Thriving Survivors: AS provided an update about end-to-end service, based on Hermann's Model, which was to launch in March 2021.
- City of Edinburgh Council Community Justice, Safer Families: VK provided a National Caledonian update and reported on continued work with perpetrators, though it is not currently possible to run groups. The One-to-One programme has been accredited and funding had been achieved to help address the issue of intersectionality.
- Forensic Mental Health and Learning Disability Service of Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS: SW gave an update about the STAR Service in Glasgow and said that they had been able to see service-users face-to-face since July, working with the Caledonian Project. Research was being carried out to evaluate the service and findings would be shared, as the hope is to establish similar services in other locations.

E. AOCB:

- a. There was no AOCB on this occasion.
- b. RMK thanked everyone for attending.

4. Date and time of the next meetings

February – exact date to be confirmed.