

Cross Party Group: Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

Note of meeting held on 12th January 2012

Attendees

Johann Lamont MSP Convenor
Annabelle Ewing MSP Vice-Convenor

Margaret Burgess MSP
Margaret McDougall MSP
John Mason MSP
Dennis Robertson MSP
Drew Smith MSP

Debbie Adams	Children First
Linda Boyes	ACOSVO
Alan Brown	The Stroke Association
Vicki Ferguson	Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens
Margaret Gibb	CSV
Daniel Gray	SSA
Lynne Kalman	The Stroke Association
Jan Killeen	Alzheimer Scotland
John Lee (Joint Secretariat)	Volunteer Development Scotland
Phil McAndrew	Voluntary Health Scotland
Ian McCall	Paths For All
David McColgan (Joint Secretariat)	SCVO
Elizabeth McGinn	Red Cross
Louise McGinty	Quarriers
Fiona Nicolson	Quarriers
Paul Okroj	CHSS
Robert Pickles	Planning Aid for Scotland
Des Ryan	Edinburgh Cyrenians
Gurjit Singh	Red Cross
Moira Tasker	CAE
Jess Wade	RNIB
Liz Watson	Befriending Networks
Annette Wilson	Waverley Care

There were no apologies received.

The Convenor welcomed both her fellow MSPs and colleagues from the voluntary sector to the meeting and noted the continuing high levels of interest in the Cross Party Group.

The Convenor advised the meeting that, due to her recent election as Leader of the Labour Party in Scotland, she would, unfortunately, have to step down from her role with the CPG. She indicated that her colleague Margaret McDougall MSP would be willing to assume the role.

It was agreed that immediately after the CPG meeting, Margaret McDougall MSP would meet with the joint secretariat to discuss the procedure and timescales required for an election process to be put in place.

Volunteering, The Voluntary Sector and Preventative Spending

In recognition of the significant policy shift towards preventative measures, 2 guest speakers had been invited to make presentations highlighting the vital contribution of volunteers and the voluntary sector to the preventative agenda. The guest presenters were:

Des Ryan, CEO of Edinburgh Cyrenians.
Jan Killeen, Head of Policy and Research, Alzheimer Scotland.

Edinburgh Cyrenians Homelessness Prevention Project

This extremely effective homelessness prevention scheme meant that 99% of the people worked with were still in their homes 12 months later. It demonstrates that prevention can save local authorities money and bring other improvements in people's lives in particular in their financial, employment and health circumstances. A copy of the executive summary of the report is attached with this minute.

Des emphasized the benefit of cross party support for homelessness and the importance of the Scottish Parliament's early enactment of legislation to address the issue.

Alzheimer Scotland

84,000 people live with dementia in Scotland today – numbers are likely to double over the next 20 years.

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's only voluntary organisation dedicated to supporting people with dementia and their families. It provides over 60 community based services across Scotland and has a network of nearly 30 locally based Dementia Advisers who provide direct support to individuals and develop community support networks.

Early intervention is the key to preventing untimely admissions to long-term care.

Jan welcomed the commitment to reform set out in the National Dementia Strategy and the RCOP programme for change. A summary of this presentation is attached with this minute.

The Convenor thanked the guests for their excellent presentations and invited a discussion by the Group on the issues raised.

Discussion

It was noted that the Cyrenians had achieved a significant success rate and that in overall terms evaluation and the ability to demonstrate outcomes were extremely important to the voluntary sector.

Volunteers in the Cyrenians project operate alongside (and add value to) key paid staff, and are fully trained and regularly supported, crucially the project also encourages clients to become involved in volunteering.

Alzheimer Scotland has over 600 volunteers – 60 resourcing the 24hr Freephone Dementia Helpline which celebrated its 21st birthday last year – the Helpline receives nearly 6000 calls a year.

It was noted that in reality 'preventative' measures had to deal with multiple, complex and inter-related issues in key areas of social policy such as early years/the family, education, housing and health. This makes the success of the preventative agenda particularly challenging.

Two key issues emerged from the discussion. First, the ongoing issue of 'respect' between the public sector and the voluntary sector. Second, is the national compact between the Scottish Government and

the voluntary sector still in place: and how were local compacts progressing?

The Convenor had to leave the meeting to attend to business in the Chamber and her colleague Margaret McDougall MSP took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Next Meeting

The Convenor-designate and the Joint Secretariat will discuss the procedure for an election of a new Convenor with the Standards Committee and then inform the Cross Party Group of the procedure and timescales. The date for the next meeting will be agreed once the election process is completed.

John Lee
Volunteer Development Scotland
Joint Secretariat.