

**Session 5 – Meeting of the
Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Disability**

**Tuesday 16th May 2017, 1-3pm, Scottish Parliament – Committee Room 3,
The Fleming Room TG.60-CR3**

Attendees:

MSPs: Jeremy Balfour MSP (Convenor), Stuart McMillan MSP (Deputy Convenor), Clare Adamson (non-member MSP)

Secretary: Layla Theiner, Disability Agenda Scotland

Treasurer: Mike Harrison, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Attendees: Steven Andrew, Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA); John Ballantine, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA); E Barr, GDA; Tressa Burke, GDA; Helena Cant, Scottish Churches Disability Group (SCDG); John Clarke, LDAS; Paul F Cockburn; Alan Dalziel, Action on Hearing Loss Scotland; Rose M Daly, GDA; Michelle Coup, MECOPP; Ashleigh Deverteuil, Leonard Cheshire Scotland; John Paul Donnelly, GDA; Mark Donnelly, GDA; Lisa Donnelly, GDA; Maggie Ellis, EKTG & PhoneAbility2; Susie Fitton, Policy Officer, Independent Living in Scotland (ILIS) / Inclusion Scotland; Julia Fitzpatrick, Managing Director, Horizon Housing Association; Stanely Flett, Aberdeen Action on Disability; Robert Geachy, Camphill Scotland; Grant Gordon, EA8; Stacey Highfield, Arthritis Care; Maureen McAllister, Arthritis Care; Louise McWhinnie; Kim Martin, GDA; Patrick Monaghan, Quarriers; Jenny Miller, PAMIS; John Miller, Action Duchenne; David Nicholson; Donna Nicholson, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland (LDAS); Noreen Paterson, GDA; Kris Procek, Falkirk Area Disability Access Panel; David Raine; Asha Singh, MECOPP; Terry Robinson, Inclusion Scotland; Iain Smith, Inclusion Scotland; Paul White, GDA

Apologies were received from: Jackie Baillie MSP; Alexander Stewart MSP; Catherine Garvie, STUC; Heather Fiskin, Independent Living in Scotland (ILIS) / Inclusion Scotland; Rachel Le Noan, Down Syndrome Scotland; Rob Murray, Changing Faces; John Sutherland; and Robin Wickes, Edinburgh Access Panel.

Minutes:

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies and the minutes from the previous meeting were noted. In order to save time for the main discussions, we did not do introductions of everyone in the room.

Action: There was a request to make the minutes shorter and to number items and pages.

It was noted it was a particularly busy day for parliamentary business including a number of questions and a debate on the 'Fairer Scotland for Disabled People' plan, which the Scottish Government published in December. The Minister for Social Security and Disabled People, Jeane Freeman, spoke at a previous meeting of the CPG on Disability about the plan. The debate was only announced last week and a few people would need to leave just before then to participate or follow the debate.

It was also noted that the topics for the meeting today were based on input and discussions at previous meetings, as would be the topics for future meeting. Members of the CPG were asked to suggest other topics though if they wished to.

Action: We had agreed to do a joint meeting with other CPGs and minister(s) on social security and/or employment, and more information on this will be circulated to the group shortly.

2. Joint statement

Action: The joint statement agreed at

We had discussed and agreed to undertake a joint statement, which would highlight key issues for disabled people in Scotland today. This would be quite topline and something which could gather cross-party support and the backing of many of the other members of the CPG. Layla drafted a statement with input from others in the Group. We have held back from progressing this further as with local and general elections, it did not seem the right time.

Proposed action: Layla to discuss the current draft with MSP members of the CPG 1:1 and see what is feasible, and circulate the draft to the wider group for comment and agreement. We will now be looking to finalise this in the early Autumn.

3. Treasurer's update

Mike Harrison gave a brief update on the finances of the CPG. He said there was one payment that was unaccounted for as the reference was just a series of numbers. The payment was made on 20th March and to let him know if anyone thought they had made the payment.

4. Accessible housing

Julia Fitzpatrick, Managing Director, Horizon Housing Association; and Susie Fitton, Policy Officer, Independent Living in Scotland (ILIS) / Inclusion Scotland outlined their views on accessible housing in Scotland including key issues and possible solutions.

Unfortunately, Helen Miller from the EHRC (Equalities and Human Rights Commission) was going to also speak about their ongoing inquiry into accessible housing. However, due to a strike by her union, she is unable to attend but has provided some information by writing which the secretary of the CPG will circulate and people can contact Helen directly if they have any questions. Grant Carson from GCIL was also unable to join due to the team at GCIL being short staffed today.

There were a number of questions and some discussion. Susie said ILIS/Inclusion Scotland would have a report on housing out this year and would appreciate the support of the CPG.

Actions: Once the report has been launched, Layla will circulate the report to the members and members can say if they do not wish to support the report. Otherwise, agreement will be taken as read. Layla, as secretary of the CPG, will also prepare a letter from the CPG to the Scottish Government, endorsing the report.

5. Louise McWhinnie – issues with the Blue Badge Scheme

Louise provided an overview of her concerns with the Blue Badge Scheme, particularly that it doesn't allow for using the car when her son is not present although it can be for journeys that support its wider needs; and issues with the application of the means test; and definition of regulations and guidance. She was keen that the benefits of the Blue Badge are shared by the family.

Action: It was agreed that the secretary of the CPG would prepare a letter with Louise that would go from the CPG raising these issues with Jeane Freeman, as Minister for Disabled People (and Social Security); Humza Yousaf, as the Minister for Transport (and Islands), and COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).

It was noted that there was an ongoing consultation on improving parking which briefly touches on the blue badge scheme.

6. Accessible toilets

Three speakers gave their perspective and work on improving the provision of accessible toilets:

- Jenny Miller, PAMIS and the 'Changing Places' campaign
- Kris Procek, parent who has been campaigning in Scotland on accessible toilets
- Maggie Ellis, European Knowledge Tree Group for Technology and Health (EKTG), EU discussions on accessible toilets

This was followed by questions and answers and discussion.

To note: Presentations or notes from the speakers on accessible housing and toilets will be circulated with the minutes where they have been shared.

7. Updates from individuals and organisations on activities and developments to the group

There did not seem to be any pressing updates and there was a brief resumption of the discussion on accessible toilets before the meeting closed.