

# **MINUTES OF MEETING CROSS PARTY GROUP ON ADULT LEARNING**

Tuesday 12 May 2015

Committee Room One, The Scottish Parliament

---

**MSPs in attendance:** Jean Urquhart MSP and Margaret McCulloch

## **Agenda items**

### **1. Welcome**

Jean Urquhart, MSP welcomed attendees to the sixth Cross Party Group meeting.

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

### **3. Approve Forward plan and Calendar of Events**

Jean talked through the draft paper, which was agreed and is as follows:

#### **Session 1**

##### **Adult Learning and Democracy**

Civic education used to be at the heart of adult learning, but, at the very moment when education for democracy is most needed, we have allowed our focus to be narrowed to workforce development. This session argues that adult education needs to push out its shrinking borders, join in the civil society debate, and reclaim civic education as our focus of attraction.

#### **Session 2**

##### **Adult Learning and Crime**

Crime and punishment cost us all a huge amount, economically, socially and personally. Prison populations have soared, taking us down a road from which it is difficult to retreat. Prisons are full of offenders with very low educational levels. Investing in better education and training opportunities gives hope, and makes good economic as well as social sense. This session will focus on the impact of adult learning on changing behaviours.

#### **Session 3**

##### **Adult Learning and Health**

Health and social services recently restructured in light of Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, the Summer session will look at the role of adult learning in health and the impact adult learning has on saving money for health services.

### **4. "Has Adult Learning had its Day" Presentations**

The Cross Party Group received presentations from:

**Ian Leith, Scotland's Learning Partnership**

Ian presented to the group that adult learning was in poor health due to budget constraints, reductions, loss of staff therefore loss of capacity to deliver and uncertainty as to where adult learning sits with the loss of creative thinking. He then explained why adult learning was important: Helps people get and retain employment; Helps people develop social awareness and be better citizens; Helps people play an active role within families and communities; Enables people to participate with confidence. Ian then talked about the needs and lack of opportunity for engagement and then finally how there is the vast need for adult learning but that we need to rethink how to best to meet those needs.

### **Elizabeth Kwaw, Ecorys UK Ltd**

Elizabeth introduced the recently launched EPALe, which is a multilingual open membership community for anyone with a professional role in adult learning across Europe. It shares content related to adult learning, including news, blog posts, resources, events and courses. Members can engage with adult learning colleagues across Europe. <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/> (IF REF 4)

## **5. Impact Awards**

The Impact Awards are new for this year-designed to promote adult learning projects in Europe and to show what we can contribute to the European Agenda for Adult Learning. The panel was looking for groups whose learning experiences would inspire other organisations to develop projects similar and to explore the range of possibilities for developing European Projects.

Awards were presented by Jean and Margaret and given to:

- Crisis Home Performance Project.
- The Feel Fantastic Fridays Parent Carer Group and Emma Deans
- Rosie's Retro
- The Cambuslang and Rutherglen Rock and Pop Chorus
- Edinburgh Adult Education Group
- Fullarton Futures Group
- Nifty Fifties Wise Owl Project
- Working 4 U, West Dunbartonshire Council

## **6. Any other Business**

Jean told the meeting that over the course of the CPG in adult learning the issues of difficulty in funding has arisen. What are the statistics and what do we do to empower existing and new learners? It's evident that funds are getting squeezed and something needs to be done.

Some other questions raised were:

"There is a need for universal credit to be digitally available. Why is that pottery for beginners is ILA funded and ICT not?"

Arrangements are for vocational funding is eligible. SDS can answer this more directly. A community responsibility to find this out as funding is so important and will be more important.

“How much is spent on Adult Learning?” “How much does it receive?” We are currently waiting on a breakdown as £1.3 is given to national adult education organisations. We don’t know what local authorities get. Many different agencies deliver adult learning.

John Park commented “£1.3 million is not much considering the education bill is £7 billion. What are we spending it on?”

Jean thanked the delegates for their points raised and also thanked the presenters and the award finalists.

## 7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 23 September time to be confirmed.

There was no other business.

## Those indicating attendance at the CPG:

Adams, Vicky	Farrell, Charlie	McAuley, Mairi
Ahmed, Gina	Fitzpatrick, Donna	McCallion, Christopher
Allan, Margaret	Forrester, Andy	McGarry, Oonagh
Anderson, Laura	Frame, Grace	McHarg, Jim
Anne McGhee, Julie	Frew, Katie	McKenna, Gerry
Anwar, Mohammed	Gallagher, Sheila	McLaren, Claire
Armstrong, Linda	Garman, Nicola	Nelson, Jean
Ashpool, Simon	Gemmell, Alastair	Parkhill, John
Bamford, Caroline	Gordon, Tracy	Paton, May
Banks, Jacqueline	Gray, Archie	Petrie, Vicky
Bell, David	Green, Craig	Phee, Gail
Boucher, Fiona	Heggie, Kirsty	Quinn, Anne Marie
Brechin, Pat	Holland, Lee	Reid, Gail
Bridges, Ken	Hughes, Mary	Slade, Bonnie
Brodie, Chic	Hughes, Neil	Smith, Moira
Buchan, Joanne	Hunt, Barbara	Smith, Moira
Cairns, Peter	Hunter, Justine	Starratt, Bob
Callaghan, Lee	Hyslop, Caroline	Stevenson, Robert
Cawley, Martin	Irving, Elizabeth	Sturgeon, Bobby
Chang-Leng, Stephen	Judge, Linda	Sutton, Pauline
Christie, Blair	Jung, Peter	Taylor, Lawrie
Clark, Mark Anthony	Kelly, Kevin	Urquhart, Neil
Cousins, Vanessa	Kwaw, Elizabeth	Usher, Sarah
Craig, Gail	Laird, Matt	Venters, Graham
Currie, John	Law, Alexander	Waddell, Tracy
Davidson, Kirsty	Leith, Ian	Walker, Gary
Day, Kirsty	Leith, Rhonda	Waylen, Sam
Deans, Emma	Logue, Jane	Whitelock, Emma
Douglas, Gail	MacLellan, Graham	Whyte, Clark
Dunbar, Lesley	Makeham, Eric	Whyte, Lesley
Easton, Susan	Manson, Fiona	Wild, Mark
Fairgrieve, Chris	Mcallister, John	