

**Cross Party Group on Children and Young People
Thursday 8th November 2012, Committee Room 2
13.00-14.30**

Minute

Attendees

Alison Johnstone MSP (Chair)
Fiona McLeod MSP
Maxine Barr, Spark of Genius
Alan Bell, Youthbank Scotland
Leah Benson, Circle
Sara Collier, Children in Scotland
Alastair Cooper, National Autistic Society
Caroline Cooper, Rathbone
Mig Coupe, Mindroom
Helen David, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Susan Dow, Youthlink Scotland
Susan Galloway, NSPCC Scotland
Darren Gate, Barnardo's
Paul Gillespie, YouthBank Scotland
Jack Green, Young Scot
Louise Hill, CELCIS
Martin Hunt, Tartan Silk
Fiona Jones, Cl@n Childlaw
Charlene Kelly, Relationships Scotland
Richard Knott, Salvation Army
Adam Lang, Youthlink Scotland
Allan Lindsay, Young Scot
Cath Logan, Big Lottery Fund
Sara Lurie, Fostering Network
Robert MacBean, National Autistic Society
Laura MacLaughlin, Barnardo's
Marion Macleod, Children in Scotland
Brian Magee, COSCA
Carrie Manning, Prince's Trust
Sharon McCluskie, Play Scotland
Robert McGeachy, NSPCC Scotland
Samantha McInnes, Young Scot
Mhairi McMillan, LGBT Youth Scotland
Andy Mount, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Paul Mullan, Quarriers
Eloise Nutbrown, Save the Children
Tracy Rodger, CLIC Sargent
Saffron Rohan, CELCIS
Ashley Ryan, Enable Scotland

Gillian Slider, YouthBank Scotland
Cara Spence, LGBT Youth Scotland
Liam Tait, YouthBank Scotland
Annie Taylor, Children 1st
Gregor Urquhart, Young Scot
John Watson, ASH Scotland
Chris Wiles, British Psychological Society Division of Clinical
Psychology in Scotland

Apologies

Kezia Dugdale MSP
Alison McInnes MSP
Anne McTaggart MSP
Kim Atkinson, Scottish Sports Association
Jeni Bainbridge, Children in Scotland
Derek Bannon, Common Thread
Salena Begley, Family Fund
May Chamberlain, Relationships Scotland
Mo Colvin, RNIB Scotland
Grant Costello MSYP, Scottish Youth Parliament
Gerry Croall
Kathleen Deacon, Scottish Marriage Care
Morag Driscoll, Scottish Child Law Centre
Jennifer Drummond, Children in Scotland
Jacqui Dunbar, Barnardo's
Nancy Fancott, CCPS
Barry Fisher, D of E
Maurice Frank, Personalised Education Now
Lynn Gilmour, Children in Scotland
Juliet Harris, Together
Kim Hartley, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy
Marion Laird, Scottish Marriage Care
Lesley Kelly, CRFR University of Edinburgh
Marion Macleod, Children in Scotland
Louise Marryat, Glasgow University
Elizabeth May, Action for Sick Children Scotland
Cathy McCulloch, Children's Parliament
Vicky McGraw, West Dunbartonshire Council
Lesley McNab, CHAS
Chris McNaught, Barnardo's
Muriel Mowat, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Agnes Mullen, Church of Scotland
Alison Newlands, Scottish Council for Independent Schools
Arianna Patterson, AFASIC Scotland
Lisa Payne, Unicef UK
Lisa Ross, Mindroom

Marsha Scott, West Lothian Council
Neil Seaton, George Heriots
Claire Simpson, Parenting across Scotland
Maggie Simpson, Scottish Childminding Association
Kim Smith, YWCA Scotland
Tania Smith, Scottish Council for Independent Schools
Andy Soar, Action Duchenne
Bob Stewart, Four Square
Megan Wilson, Sense Scotland
Linda Whitmore, Enable

13.20 - Welcome

Alison Johnstone MSP thanked attendees and began the meeting by asking Sara Collier from Children in Scotland to review the minutes of the last meeting. No objections were noted and the minutes were approved by the group.

The Chair then invited Adam Lang from YouthLink Scotland to read out a message of support to the group from the Scottish Youth Work Conference.

Adam Lang noted that this particular meeting of the CPG coincided with the Scottish Youth Work Week Conference and as such some key organisations were unable to attend the CPG. As a result, delegates at the Scottish Youth Work Week Conference wished to send a message of support to the CPG and its on-going work:

"The Scottish Youth Work Week Conference would like to record its appreciation and thanks for the positive and constructive work of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Children and Young People over the 2011-16 Parliamentary sessions to date. The Conference thanks the Cross Party Group and all of its members for their on-going efforts in scrutinising and raising awareness of the many issues and policies that impact on the lives of young people in Scotland."

The Chair thanked YouthLink Scotland for relaying the message and went on to introduce the scheduled topic for the CPG meeting, Young People as Community Assets.

13.25 – Young People as Community Assets

The Chair noted that young people have, in the past, often been viewed as consumers of or a drain on community assets and

resources. However, with last year's Christie Commission report encouraging a move towards a more asset based approach in terms of community resources and planning, the time is right for this negative view of Scotland's young people to be more widely challenged. Coinciding with today's Scottish Youth Work Week Conference which will be promoting the value of engaged and participating young people, this session of the CPG will look at what can be done to encourage wider support for the view of young people as community assets.

The chair introduced representatives from four organisations that are all engaged in programmes of work seeking to promote the view of young people as community assets:

- Gregor Urquhart, Samantha McInnes and Jack Green from Young Scot's Truth About Youth project;
- Alan Bell and Liam Tait from YouthBank Scotland;
- and Ashley Ryan from Enable Scotland's 'Inspire Me' project

The Chair explained that after hearing from our panel speakers, members would be encouraged to contribute to today's discussion by sharing their views on this issue and any experience of projects or initiatives that have supported young people to become community assets as well as sharing their views on any potential obstacles/barriers that exist in relation to wider uptake of this approach.

Gregor Urquhart from Young Scot provided background to the Truth About Youth project. He advised the project was around challenging the negative perception of young people. It is currently being piloted in 7 cities across the country and is funded by the Co-operative. The project involves intergenerational working, social media and other storytelling mediums, e.g. DVDs. Of the 16,000 people involved 86% of them felt their perception of young people had changed over the 1st year.

Samantha became involved with the project over a year ago. As the result of a long term illness, Samantha had established a blog and this kick started her involvement. She has been involved in the small grants funding panel. She felt that due to social media etc communities were no longer restricted to geographical boundaries. She also stated that intergenerational work was vitally important and that young people gain confidence and skills from this.

Jack is involved through Glasgow Youth Council and is also an MSYP. Glasgow hosted a 'One Day' intergenerational event which received very positive feedback. Through his work with DRC Generations, a drugs and alcohol project/peer education network for

young people, Jack is involved with the We Step Together group which is an adult group of people with learning difficulties. Originally the members of this group had lots of fears around young people. In fact the adults would leave early to avoid having to get the same bus as the young people. A lot of these fears have now been dispelled.

Alan Bell from YouthBank Scotland provided background. There are currently 19 YouthBanks across Scotland which are all youth led from bottom to top operating a flexible model with varying funding available. They vary in how they operate but are run for young people by young people. In addition to grant giving there is also a focus to develop the young people involved generally. Accredited training is also available.

Liam Tait became involved 6 years ago through Youth Cheques local grant making. He was then given the opportunity to join the Board of YouthBank. He feels the fact that it is youth led is key to its success. He also saw involvement in YouthBank as a stepping stone for some, opening up progression routes for young people and providing accredited training in areas such as leadership and grant making. He also felt that the wider communities benefited as a result of grants awarded in these areas.

Ashley Ryan, Inspire Me Coordinator with Enable Scotland provided background on this 3 year project funded by the cooperative and delivered with sister charity Mencap. They are aiming to reach 20,000 young people with learning disabilities and improve their skills, confidence and employability. The project works closely with schools and delivers 6 workshops for 14-25 year olds around Managing Money, Readiness for Work, etc. 60 ambassadors have been involved in the delivery of these workshops at various national conferences. As part of their community impact project they sought to challenge the perceptions of young people with learning difficulties who are often seen as 'takers' not 'givers' to the community. This is done in partnership with lots of different organisations and companies. The work has also included creating sensory gardens and working alongside Countryside Rangers.

The Chair thanked the speakers and opened up to the group for wider discussion.

Group discussion

Annie Taylor from Children 1ST noted that caution should be used in relation to the term 'community assets'. It was suggested that perhaps the phrase 'Valued Contributors' would be better as

this would imply that young people contribute to their communities and that their communities contribute to them.

Fiona McLeod MSP asked all of the presenters if they could elaborate on what training they had received from their respective projects/organisations to help them in delivering on their roles.

Liam noted the leadership training he had received and that there were always 'older' people on hand to assist.

Cara Spence, LGBT Youth Scotland asked how representative the different organisations were in terms of representing young people from all types of backgrounds or was this another barrier?

Jack replied that SYP is probably overrepresented in terms of equality – eg a quarter are LGBT. This is also something that Glasgow Youth Council has always been aware of.

Alan said Youthbank had embedded this from the start and is most evident at local level.

Louise Hill, CELCIS echoed Sam's point about a community not just being a geographic area. **Sam** said she started a website on long term conditions which now has readership all over the world and is part of a big online community.

Eileen Prior, Scottish Parent Teacher Council, asked how these projects link with education and schools, what the barriers were to enable this to happen and what might be done to overcome them?

Liam said all YouthBanks work differently but some linked in with schools eg the coordinator is a teacher and meetings are held in schools.

Ashley said workshops take place in schools and colleges and help young people think about life after school or college.

Alison noted that the media were often key to how young people were portrayed and perceived.

Andy Mount, West Lothian Youth Action Project agreed the media were important and that negative stories tended to receive more coverage than positive items, although this was not always the case.

Sharon McCluskie, Play Scotland asked if the communities these projects were operating in were more accessible and accepting of

young people 'out playing' or should there still be a call for designated places for young people to hang out.

Gregor said that as part of their intergenerational work they had looked to find out why young people hung out in certain places – eg outside Tesco – often because it was well lit and felt safe. Older people who had probably engaged in similar behaviour themselves didn't view it in the same way.

Jack said Glasgow Youth Council had good links with STV and the Evening Times and felt they were making progress with positive stories. **Gregor** agreed positive relationships had been established with media and that the rise of social media was useful in telling stories.

Chris Wiles, British Psychological Society Division of Clinical Psychology in Scotland noted that the feeling of exclusion for young people was particularly important and was a common thread in finding their identity and their place within the community. It impacts on emotional confidence and emotional health improvements. Crossgenerational connections are also important for the community. It was very encouraging to hear the young people speak here today.

Eloise Nutbrown, Save the Children said there was often formal exclusion of young people in decision making at local level – how can they be helped to influence eg at a local level.

Alan said having the right supports in place was helpful at local level and used the example of young people having the right support in place to successfully challenge the opening of a bookmakers near a youth centre.

Ashley said that in partnership with SYP they provided citizenship workshops. Local issues which have been raised are things like drops in the pavement for wheelchair access and the issue of disabled young people having to book transport 24 hours in advance, removing any spontaneity.

Robert McGeachy, NSPCC Scotland said that, as a result of amendments lodged on behalf of YouthLink Scotland, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a statutory duty on community planning partners to consult and co-operate with young people about the design and delivery of services, and that there is also a statutory duty to consult young people about the local antisocial behaviour strategies designed to tackle antisocial behaviour. He said that, despite young people's right to be

consulted in these key areas, the practice of involving young people in local decision making was very mixed across Scotland. He also referred to the UK Government's Localism legislation in England and Wales, which excluded young people from participating in the local referenda introduced by the legislation to inform local decision making. He said that these examples raised serious questions about the extent to which key agencies see engagement with young people as a priority. He said that it was important that young people's existing rights to be consulted in these, and other, areas should not be lost as the Scottish Government progresses its proposed community engagement legislation.

Martin Hunt, Tartan Silk, agreed social media was really important in how young people are perceived, and if you put the right positive story to the media they will publish it. Scotland's communities need to be engaging young people in the build up to the Commonwealth Games – they can be wonderful ambassadors and games makers.

Gregor said they had over 120 youth legacy ambassadors promoting the games and legacy. **Alison** has also been raising this important issue at the Health and Sport Committee.

AOB

John Watson, ASH Scotland, brought to the group's attention the Scottish Government's publication of a draft Tobacco Control Strategy for limited consultation. He raised concerns over the potential impact of this strategy and the relatively short amount of time that organisations have been given to respond to it (by end of November). John encouraged all members of the group to respond to the strategy consultation and asked for a copy of the strategy to be circulated to members of the group for their information and consideration.

Action points – it was suggested that the CPG could write to the Government on the short and limited consultation on the strategy and to possibly suggest a child rights impact assessment be carried out on the strategy.

Young people as statutory consultees was also raised as an issue which could warrant further investigation.

Next meeting – TBC in 2013.