

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People
Wednesday 22nd June 2011
13.00 – 13.30 Committee Room 3

Attendees:

Marco Biagi MSP
Kezia Dugdale MSP
Alison Johnstone MSP

Salena Begley, The Family Fund
Sara Collier, Children in Scotland
Grant Costello, MSYP
Brandi Lee Dennell, LGBT Youth Scotland
Orla Duncan, Sick Children's Hospital
John Forysth, Families need fathers
Eleanor Geddes, Barnardo's
Suzy Gilzean, Children 1st
Bronagh Goan, Tartan Silk
Amanda Godsell, Play Scotland
Juliet Harris, Together Scotland
Martin Hunt, Tartan Silk
Gareth Jenkins, Changing Faces Scotland
Mark Joseph, Common Thread
Charlene Kelly, Relationships Scotland
David Linden, Parliamentary Assistant to John Mason MSP
Cath Logan, Big Lottery Fund
Robert MacBean, National Autistic Society
Marion Macleod, Children in Scotland
Robert McGeachy, Action for Children
Melanie Main, Duke of Edinburgh
Ian Maxwell, Families need fathers
Richard Meade, Barnardo's
Susan Millar, Princes Trust
Gillian Miller, Big Lottery Fund
Andy Mount, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Muriel Mowat, SIAA
Paul Mullan, NDCS
Keith Robson, ATL Scotland
Tracy Rodger, CLIC Sargent
Kate Sanford, Quarriers
Barbara Schuler, Youthlink Scotland
Clare Simpson, Parenting across Scotland
Tania Smith, SCIS
Mhairi Snowden, Children 1st
Linda Whitmore, Enable

Apologies:

Roderick Campbell MSP
Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Joan McAlpine MSP
Fiona Mcleod MSP
Alison McInnes MSP
Anne McTaggart MSP
Ken Macintosh MSP
Murdo Fraser MSP
Drew Smith MSP
Humza Yousaf MSP
Jackie Blair, Spark of Genius
Sabrina Collins, Scottish Division of Educational Psychology
Mo Colvin, RNIB Scotland
Mig Coupe, Mindroom
Anwari Din, YCSA
Fraser Falconer, Children in Need
David Ferrier, Ypeople
Stella Gibson, Scottish Marriage Care
Alison Hardie, Young Scot
Lorraine Hershell, Partners in Advocacy
Emma Hogg, NHS Health Scotland
Fiona Jones, CI@n Childlaw
Neil Logan, Working on Wheels
Ian McLaughlan, SPPA
Ann McKenzie, One Parent Families Scotland
Felicity Mehendale, Sick Childrens Hospital
Calum Munro, Highland Children's Forum
Emma Pethybridge, Scottish Art Therapies Forum
Satwat Rehman, One Parent Families Scotland
Morag Rennie, Central Scotland Youth Project
Helen Reilly, BMA Scotland
Lesley Scott, TACT Scotland
Marsha Scott, West Lothian Council
Jonathan Sher, Children in Scotland
Maggie Simpson, Scottish Childminding Association
Joanne Smith, NSPCC Scotland
Gerry Sweeney, Ypeople
Erin Townhill, SIAA

Welcome and re-registration

Sara welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the group in session 4. There was a good turnout and a good response from MSPs – the group has listed members from all parties.

Selection of Conveners

Kezia Dugdale MSP and Marco Biagi MSP were chosen as Co-Conveners of the group and Grant Costello MSYP was selected as a Vice-Convener. Alison Johnstone MSP later confirmed she would like to also be a Vice-Convener. The group will now submit the paperwork to have the group re-constituted. Sara will be in touch over the summer recess with times and dates for future meetings and group contribution to meet catering costs.

Discussion of topics

Kezia noted that one of the topics she would be keen to look at is welfare reform and its impacts and effect in Scotland, at local level. Marco said that the Welfare Reform Bill is an example of legislation affecting children but them being considered as an afterthought.

Andy Mount talked about the negative impact of spending and funding cuts on young people. More is being demanded, on less money. The CPG needs a stronger voice to raise concerns about these issues.

Robert McBean suggested that access to child and adolescent mental health services would be good to look at, as former Minister Adam Ingram described many of them as “appallingly bad”. Provision varies widely across the country, and there was an announcement of extra funding – how is this working?

Clare Simpson agreed on the issue of mental health, also looking at parental mental health and the joining up with children and young people’s services. Perhaps also the SNP manifesto commitment to develop a National Parenting Strategy.

There may be potential to work with other CPG’s on various issues – for example the CPG mental health of which Marco is a member. He acknowledged that mental health is a problem for all age groups. Kezia will be a member of the CPG on Sexual health and CPG on drugs and alcohol.

Mhairi Snowden noted that the most successful groups and meetings were those which closely followed parliamentary business.

Early years will also be an important topics as it likely to be one of the earlier Bills the Parliament deals with.

Grant Costello told the group of the two key issues/campaigns that the Scottish Youth Parliament would be looking at are having a national work experience programme and equal marriage rights.

Martin Hunt, representing Common Thread, a private care provider, said there were issues with not all children in Scotland having access to Glow (the school online community).

Juliet Harris noted that the Scottish Government and SCCYP would be publishing reports on UNCRC in the coming months and rights focused

discussions would be beneficial. This interim reporting would make a good agenda item.

Future meetings

It was decided the group should meet at least every 2 months, starting in September. Extra meetings could be fitted in as required or requested, and joint meetings with other groups would be useful. Lunchtime on Thursday was preferred but some evenings may also be possible.

It was suggested that each meeting produce something summarising the meeting and suggesting action points or observations. There was also scope for doing more than this and making sure whatever is issued has some influence. Members with contacts in other groups/nations were encouraged to find out things are done there. Group members indicated a willingness to work on group issues outside of regular meeting times.

It was decided that the September meeting should look at the issue of welfare reform. Robert McGeachy said this would be a good time as the Bill should be at report stage in the House of Lords then. Action for Children and other organisations have raised concern over the childcare elements in the Bill, and will circulate suggested amendments nearer the time. Support from the CPG and its members would be welcomed on this. Kezia suggested a focus on devolved services.

Marion Macleod noted two further issues relevant to the welfare reform debate – child poverty and youth employability. We should look at the issues we will have to deal with in Scotland in reaction to the Bill as it goes through.

Derek Young would also welcome a timely look at youth prospects and employment. Claire Simpson agreed childcare was an issue we can do something about in Scotland.

Perhaps youth employment would be a good separate meeting topic for October?