Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia held in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 1st May 2019.

1. **Present**:
   Margaret Mitchell MSP, Oliver Mundell MSP, Maurice Corry MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP, Tom Mason MSP, Elaine Smith MSP

   Martin Davies, Stuart Lucas, Liz Rodger, Owen Ferry, Michael Sinclair, Joe Moran, Liz Tangney, Margaret Crombie, Jennie Guise, Emma Malins, Julie Ross, Helen Fleming, Susie Agnew, Cathy Mcgee, David Jones

2. **Apologies**: Lynn Dobbie, Hamish Hunter, Monica Gribbens, Julia Trotter

3. **Minutes of last meeting**:

Corrections to the minute were:

Paragraph 6 - Professional Recognition- Actions from the Making Sense Review of Dyslexia.

The minute to read:

'Both teachers described their involvement in the GTCS/ Open University Professional Recognition Pilot Project developed in response to the Review. This pilot programme was run by Dyslexia Scotland, in partnership with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.'

Paragraph 7 - Open discussion

The minute to read:

This involved completion of three modules:

- Introduction to Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice;
- Supporting Dyslexia, Inclusive Practice and Literacy; and
- Dyslexia: Identification and support

The teachers also undertook a piece of Personal Inquiry/ Research as part of the pilot and had submitted their papers for GTCS professional recognition.

The minutes were then approved by Cathy Magee, Seconded by Margaret Crombie.

4. Business arising from last meeting
There was no business arising.

5. Presentation: Charles Martin, Partnership Manager of Justice Programmes with the Wise Group

Charles Martin, currently on secondment to the Justice Department of the Scottish Government provided a personal testimony of his early life as a child and young person with dyslexia and the impact on his early years, leading him into behaviours which resulted experiencing the criminal justice system from the inside. His experiences were humbling and inspirational and he highlighted the importance of peer support which had led him into his professional career in helping people who fall foul of the law and end up in prison.

Charles answered a range of questions around both his own experiences and the work that he is undertaking for the Scottish Government.

6. Open Discussion

A full discussion took place including current work supporting those within the prison system with dyslexia, and the work Dyslexia Scotland has developed with the Scottish Prison Service. Members appreciated the honesty, humility and humour with which Charlie had made his presentation.

Liz Rodgers, Chair of the Dyslexia Scotland Adult Network, provided feedback from a recent survey of adult network members, particularly in relation to employment issues and concerns.

The survey had indicated that key areas of support related to:

- The emotional impact of dyslexia;
- Supporting dyslexics at work
- Living with or being a partner of someone with dyslexia

- More IT and app support

Concerns were raised about the continuing use of online application forms for first stage recruitment processes and the disadvantage this has for those with dyslexia.

Members also commented on the costs of getting an adult assessment and understanding the vocabulary used in assessment reports. The view was also expressed that despite Access to Work recommendations regarding support with job applications, this was not consistently being applied.

Any other business

(i) A further discussion took place regarding recent enquiries relating to support for examinations. It was noted that it had been a number of years since this issue had been considered by the Cross Party Group and it was agreed that an invitation be extended to the Scottish Qualifications Authority to provide an update on current procedures and levels of uptake of support through, for example, the use of technology.

(ii) Margaret Mitchell MSP agreed to explore the possibility of hosting a Parliamentary Reception during Dyslexia Awareness Week in November 2019.

7. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 10th September (to be confirmed)