

# Cross-Party Group on Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland

## Agenda

Wednesday 5th December 2018

Committee Room 4

1pm – 2pm

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks:** The Convener Mary Fee MSP welcomed the Group and thanked everyone for attending the second meeting of the Cross Party Group for Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland.

### Attending:

MSPs	Name
	Mary Fee MSP
	Christina Mckelvie MSP
	Jackson Carlaw MSP
	<b>Total: 3</b>

Members	Name	Organisation
	Susan Townsley	
	Yvonne Townsley	
	Michelle Foy	
	Nathan Wilson	Scottish Parliament
	Padmini Mishra	Scottish Government
	Pauline Stratford	Skills Development Scotland
	Dominique Barr	MECOPP
	Lucy Arnot	MECOPP
	Marguerite Adam	Skills Development Scotland
	Hilary Third	Scottish Government
	Laura Bernstein	South Lanarkshire Council
	Callum Ogden	MECOPP
	<b>Total: 12</b>	

2. **Previous Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and approved by the members.

3. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
4. **Ministerial Working Group Update:** Christina McKelvie MSP provided an update on behalf of the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. She thanked Mary Fee MSP for setting up the Cross Party Group on Gypsy/Travellers and welcomed attending these meetings in the spirit of continued partnership working. She noted the need for strong leadership in this area and how there had historically been much talk and not enough action. The group has met three times and is looking at Accommodation, Education, Poverty and Health. An update on the focuses within these areas was given, as well as the announcement of an additional £775,00 in funding, including £275,000 funding for STEP to support and share best practice in delivering education for children and young people in the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Christina McKelvie MSP also noted that the new MECOPP Women's Voices Project would be an important part in upcoming work with women in the Gypsy/Traveller community. Community members were encouraged to take part in opportunities to have their voices heard, including consultations on Hate Crime legislation review and other similar opportunities. Reference was made to an NHS Board in Scotland which released a communication to staff which was immediately met with complaints and was ultimately retracted – apologies were issued by the NHS Board involved in this, which demonstrated that increasingly discrimination and intolerance against the Gypsy/Traveller community is being challenged. Christina McKelvie MSP ended her remarks by stating that she would like to speak to the Cross Party Group again in 2019 to speak about implementation of the Ministerial Working Group's work.

## 5. Round Table Discussion

**Health:** There was discussion around GP practices and access to records. CHI numbers were discussed as well as the benefits they would bring to GPs being able to access records as necessary. GP registration being refused was also discussed – members were encouraged to report any incidents in which a GP refuses to register a patient on the basis of them being from the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Vaccinations were raised in the context of educational participation – where individuals are choosing to not engage with formal education they are sometimes missing out on opportunities to receive vaccinations. Literature or information handouts were discussed as an opportunity to increase uptake in this area.

**Women's Voices Project:** Dominique Barr provided an overview of this new project and what it hopes to achieve in the short and longer term. The project will formally launch in January and will be accessible to women from the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland, although the initial focus of monthly events will be in Edinburgh and Lothians, Perth and Kinross, and Argyll and Bute. The aim of the project is however to be as inclusive as possible and welcomes involvement from women throughout Scotland. The project aims to work with women in civil and civic areas, supporting women to pursue their interests, hobbies, and to become more involved in local and national decision making processes on a political level.

**Site Standards:** Susan Townsley, Michelle Foy and Yvonne Townsley shared their experience of the Minimum Site Standards implementation. Susan Townsley advised that from her perspective the situation has not changed for the sites and the minimum standards are too low. In particular it was noted how the sites are not designed to be accessible for wheelchairs, prosthetic legs, or other kinds of mobility adaptation. There was a general discussion on Chalet standards on some sites and how these are in need of repair and maintenance with major issues such as lack of insulation, mold and dampness.

The question of how the site standards were assessed was raised, as well as the lack of opportunities for residents of the sites themselves to share their views. The group would like to see an opportunity for residents to be consulted as standard in ongoing assessment, and for assessments to be conducted by an impartial assessor other than the site owners and operators.

Christina McKelvie MSP shared that she considers this to be a Human Rights issue and if stronger enforcement is needed, for example penalties for non-compliant Local Authorities, then this is something the Ministerial Working Group will look at.

**Education:** There was discussion around perceived discrimination in school catchment areas where it is felt that the Gypsy/Traveller community is being excluded from newly built schools in their immediate vicinity, particularly at the Double Dykes site in Perth

**6. AOCB:** None

**7. Date of Next Meeting:** It was decided by the Cross Party Group that meetings should be held every two months.