

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

NOTES

Wednesday 31 May 2017 13.00-14.30

Committee Room 2 The Scottish Parliament

Chair: Johann Lamont MSP

Outdoor Learning

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MSPs Present: Alison Johnston MSP, Brian Whittle MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP

Members Present:

Sue Palmer	Laura Curtis Moss	Rob Bushby
Maggie Simpson	Susan McNeish	Laura Dover
Louise McIntyre	Dinah Aitken	Maureen Driscoll
Ffoyna Taylor	Jen Drummond	Linda Bellingham
Karen Robertson	Karen Dobbins	Arvind Salwan
Graham Mounsey	Dougie Shannon	Liz Millership
Jenny McAllister	Paul Mullen	Mark Anderson
Simon Beames	Pamela Freed	Kim Hartley Kean
Lois Drake	Robert McGeachy	Ann Clarke
Dugald MacGilp	John Beattie	Karen Chambers
David Ashford	Alison Motion	Dave Pyper
Patricia Hutcheson	Sharon Cunningham	Hannah Winn
Clarissa Cheong	Cherie Morgan	Ashley Oakley
Gwen Amant	Laura Wilson	Amy Woodhouse
Chris Ross	Sarah Paterson	

Cross Party Group re-registration:

- Membership agreed to continue the CPG
- Membership agreed to re-elect Kezia Dugdale MSP as convener
- Membership agreed to re-elect Alison Johnstone MSP, Fulton Macgregor MSP and Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP as co convener
- Membership agreed to continue with the joint secretariat provided by YouthLink Scotland and Children in Scotland
- New Members ratified: Grounds for Learning, Skills Development Scotland, Real World Learning Scotland, Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, Rising Stars, Snowsport Scotland, Susan McNeish, Scottish Natural Heritage

Panel discussion:

Natalie White – Curriculum Outdoors Attainment Challenge (COACH), Learning Outdoors Support Team (LOST), East Ayrshire.

- Environmental issues: Engage & Protect environment.
- Cost less than paying for facilities.
- Curriculum outcome & experiences from real world context, private project CPD, learning in playground & community space.
- Good resources example (cheap magnifying glass), parents week end event, bring learning alive (time table while walking to school with trees), breach barriers of learning not just at school but outside all the time.
- P1, P4, P7 multisensory approached (60-degree angle with a stick rather than a drawing a book, more tactile and they'll remember better.
- Need to take the teachers out of the classroom.

Alex Cumming, Deputy Director, Duke of Edinburgh Award in Scotland

- Framework for education 40% suffer mental health problems (stats by Who Cares Scotland)
- Change attitude to learning, classroom not the best environment all the time.
- It can improve young peoples attitude & attributes for work.
- Attainment; need vision for outdoor learning, council don't see what it can provide.
- Politicians need to give freedom to teachers, leadership team.
- For the last few years' real push to re-engage parents with school, engaging parents is key.
- Giving young people the creativity chance.

Chris Miles – MBE, trainer and former nursery school head teacher and pre-school education coordinator

- Norway kinder garden (children abseiling, kayaking, catching fish and cooking) gain confidence & self-reliance, no worries of being sued.
- Generation who was let loose, freedom. They are trying to make it happen in Fife (children took leadership role, helping young people with additional needs.)
- Lots of boxes ticked for curriculum, but need to realise it's for kids themselves, not a paper exercises filling. Need to trust kids & give them permission to do own enquiry.
- Patchy network: need to join up, not just for one year, it should happen in every class & progressing not start and stop. People come & go (it might be a gain or loss). It should be embedded in children as they will become parents in the future.

Dave Spence, CEO Scottish Outdoor Education Centres

- Need to inject sense of urgency & stop just talking about it.
- Need children to embrace change

- Outdoor: change of perception, change of own beliefs
- Need to identify multiple benefits not just being active

Pete Rawcliffe – Scottish Natural Heritage, People and Places Unit Manager

- Enjoyment of being in contact with nature, outdoor not just environmental issue but education too.
- Trying to make it more joined up, add value, no more competition, need new attitude for teachers.
- Need to promote outdoor learning better: developing policy across the board, need to develop a pathway for everyday to have a continuous approach instead of a tick box exercise.

Brian Whittle MSP

- Long term health became too prescriptive.
- Falling & hurting themselves is also part of learning. Need to change this in parent's head.
- Big cities: no outing as no funds for buses, but they could use attainment fund for activities.
- Need to align ourselves to approach the government collectively.

Floor discussion:

Robert McGeachy: What would be the one policy ask of panel members?

Karen Chambers, Scottish Wildlife Trust: We need to be aware of stereotype with city school as much of a problem as rural school. Outdoor stimulates speech & language skills, under develop language in ruff area. Does it have to be green as urban area also outside?

Natalie White: Outdoor learning can be anything that happens outside the building, it can be as diverse as you want.

For policy ask: need a strategic direction & overview, Education Scotland has no outdoor learning officer so it reflect on messages sent down the line as not really important.

Alex Cumming: need to think of youth work as well, personal skills. There needs to be a way that outdoor learning can be aligned to Youth Work outcomes. It needs to be more constructive at national level & everyone engaged in same places, same language even if people leave their post there can be continuity.

Chris Miles: Formal education need to support more but fear is holding people back (how do I fit this in with everything else?), need a requirement but not too frightening regarding data monitoring & outcomes.

Not about one trip/ year but every week near the school, getting rid of formality so young people gained experiences and talk to their parents, when we were kids we didn't know we were learning all the time. Adult need to be careful & see when they need to give input.

A cross sector approach is required & taking example of good practice (Finland league table is going up)

Sarah Paterson: The focus is on formal education, informal education can't be left apart, need to bring them together & put more focus on informal education.

Johann Lamont MSP: wouldn't really put sports as outdoor activities as it's structured and regimented.

Brian Whittle MSP: extra curriculum on learning, outdoor learning same framework & constricted.

David Ashford: Need to connect all young people with nature. The UNCRC has no article making it a right for children to have access to nature frequently.

Donald McGilp: need more young people to take part in decision, need young people in CPG

Simon Beames, Edinburgh Uni: Scotland really good at outdoor provision, but very inconsistent across regions. Need more support for school & non-school so we can walk the talk.

Action:

- Contacting Government minister (sending them a report)
- Maybe organising another a high profile event
- Look at forming a subgroup of membership & bring motion to parliament
- Speaking to young people (Scottish Youth Parliament)
- End of June conveners meeting