

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

Tuesday, 12 June

Committee Room 3

YOYP Showcase

Chair: Kezia Dugdale MSP & Axa Ali

Minutes

Attendees:

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| Kezia Dugdale MSP | Fulton MacGregor MSP | Alex Cole Hamilton MSP |
| Alison Johnston MSP | Maree Todd MSP | Antonella Valbonesi |
| Rhys McCole | Evie Henderson | Eileen Prior |
| Pauline Lynch | Finlay Slessor | Janet Cormack |
| Kieran Ashton | Alice Ferguson | Janet Morton |
| Cherie Morgan | Ellie Roy | Rhona Cunningham |
| Marguerite Hunter Blair | Nina Al – Gailani | Rowan Anderson |
| Amy Johnson | Mhairi McCann | Elaine Leith |
| Garry MacGregor | Marcus | Katy MacFarlane |
| Chris Ross | Martha Kibby | Jayne Scotland |
| Amy Woodhouse | Remy Woodhouse | May Chamberlain |
| Sarah Paterson | Jane Miller | Agnes Mullen |
| Lois Drake | Henry Millar | Zoe Thomson |
| Catherine Henderson | Flora Mitchell | Bethany Wong |
| Rae Cahill | Karina Malca Padilla | Graham Richardson |
| Chloe Riddell | Callum Holt | Joanna Shepard |
| Axa Ali (Co-chair) | Lynzy Hanvidge | Daniel Cosgrove |
| Emmie Main | Ryan McShane | Mahado Hassan Duale |
| Robert McCall | Danielle McKirdy | Ruwayda Haroub |
| Aaron Fernandez | Chloe Wyper | |
| Alyssa Faulnker | Anna Young | |
| Callum Brown | Justina Murray | |
| Louise Slorance | Lucy Gallagher | |
| Martin Canavan | Mylo Turnbull | |

1. AGM

Kezia Dugdale MSP welcomed attendees to the meeting noting her tenure as a Convenor of the Group.

Kezia Dugdale then conducted the AGM for the Group.

- Membership agreed to continue the CPG
- The membership confirmed the minutes from the April meeting of the CPG
- The Membership agreed to re-elect Kezia Dugdale MSP as Convenor
- The membership agreed to re-elect Alison Johnstone MSP, Fulton Macgregor MSP and Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP as Co-Convenor
- The membership agreed to elect Brian Whittle as Co-Convenor of the CPG.
- Membership agreed to continue with the joint secretariat provided by YouthLink Scotland and Children in Scotland

2. Welcome from chair

Kezia Dugdale MSP introduced her Co-Chair for the meeting, Axa Ali. Axa is a member of Communic18, the steering group of children and young people for the Year of Young People (YOYP).

Kezia also noted her happiness that the Cross Party Group was meeting to celebrate and showcase the work of children and young people during the Year of Young People.

Kezia finally noted the briefing provided to all delegates to ensure that everyone was able to participate in the meeting. Kezia encouraged all delegates to use their green, red or yellow cards to show their understanding and allow speakers to make adjustments.

Finally Kezia noted the busy agenda and highlighted that she and Axa would ensure the meeting ran to time.

3. Axa Ali – Why is YOYP so important?

Axa Ali noted that YOYP is one of Scotland's themed tourism years. The focus of this year is to recognise and acknowledge the achievements of children and young people.

Axa also highlighted the 6 themes for the year;

- Culture
- Education
- Enterprise and regeneration
- Equality and Discrimination
- Health and wellbeing
- Participation

Axa introduced the work of the 500 YOYP ambassadors who promote the year in their local communities and also Communic18 who have been involved in co-designing the year with adults. Their main role is to make sure adults work with children to design all work as part of the year.

Axa identified that YOYP was important as it provides a platform for children and young people to showcase their work. It also offers an opportunity to challenge the status quo.

Axa also brought in fellow Communic18 member Emmie Main.

Emmie has been working on the participation theme and trying to ensure that children and young people are heard in decision making at all levels.

Emmie also highlighted that Communic18 are keen to ensure that YOYP covers the whole of Scotland. There will be events from Dumfries to Shetland.

4. Maree Todd, Minister for Childcare and Early Years

The Minister noted that she is pleased to hear about the work being carried out across Scotland and to meet the young people who are championing the Year.

The Minister highlighted that she feels the legacy of YOYP needs to be that we build a nation that listens to children and young people.

The Cross Party Group heard about the Scottish Government's work to promote children's rights; in particular around the Child Rights Action Plan, the Rights Awareness Programme and a Child Rights Audit.

It was highlighted that under Part 1 of the Children and Young People Act there is a duty on the Minister to promote children's rights and to produce reports every three years on progress in this area.

A report is due to be published in 2018 and is currently being prepared. It shows real examples of what is being achieved including tackling the Attainment Gap, Extension of Childcare Hours, Age of Criminal Responsibility and support for Equal Protection. The report will also note how the Scottish Government will take forward the UN Recommendations.

The Action Plan will look at strategic actions that will achieve major change. There is positive support within the Scottish Government for children and young people to be involved in decision making.

The Scottish Government will be consulting on the action plan and children and young people are encouraged to respond to this. The Scottish Government will also be hosting engagement events to ensure children and young people are able to participate. Members of the CPG were also encouraged to distribute the link to the consultation.

The Minister also noted various actions being taken by the Scottish Government to engage with children and young people;

- In December the Minister met with children and young people to discuss the preparation of the action plan.
- The Scottish Government held its second annual cabinet meeting with children and young people to put their views to the top of government.
- In April they met with MSYPs to discuss the concerns of their constituents.
- On Tuesday, 12 June the Scottish Government launched a new project working with Children in Scotland to engage with children and young people on their views in relation to Brexit.

The Scottish Government will also undertake an audit on how to embed the UNCRC. They are considering options, including the full incorporation of the UNCRC. The Minister will be meeting with the Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament as part of the audit.

The Minister also noted concern within the Scottish Government about the erosion of rights as part of the Brexit process.

Kezia Dugdale asked the Minister about the process of supporting John Finnie's private members bill on Equal Protection and whether the Scottish Government would bring the legislation forward. The Minister identified that this will remain a member's bill but will receive full government support.

Mhairi McCann also asked when all children will have the opportunity to learn about their rights in schools. The Minister noted there will be plans to expand this in the future. Kezia Dugdale noted that the group would follow up on this issue with a question in parliament.

5. Panel Discussion

Rhys McCole

Rhys discussed his role as a YOYP Ambassador and also highlighted his focus on improving access for disabled children and young people in to sports like boxing.

Rhys's focus in this area is based in his own experience of the struggle to take up boxing due to his own disabilities. Rhys noted he was initially told he could not box but stood his ground.

He highlighted that there was a lack of support for disability boxing and has since worked with Scottish boxing to improve the situation. Rhys has also sat on the Young Scot Sport Panel.

Rhys noted that YOYP has been an excellent platform to raise his agenda.

Aberlour Guardianship Service

3 young women who had accessed Aberlour's Guardianship Service presented to the CPG on their experiences and their work as part of YOYP.

Muhadabo noted how the guardianship service had helped her to learn English as it was not her first language. After a bad experience with an interpreter Muhadabo wanted to learn to speak for herself.

She also noted how they helped her to learn her rights as she did not know these when arrived. She also noted how they supported her through appointments and were always there for her, calling her every day to see how she was.

Muhadabo noted that all refugee and asylum seeking young people under the age of 18 have the right to access the guardianship service.

Another young participant noted how the service had been extremely supportive as she went through the asylum system. She noted that they help you learn what you need and point you in the direction to access it.

They also noted that the three women in attendance were now proving peer support to others who access the service as they want to give something back to Scotland.

They further highlighted that if she could see one change it would be improved practice within the Home Office. It was suggested that the Home Office were to slow in processing things and this affected her mental health and her studies. They need to get quicker and change their attitudes.

Rolita then spoke about the work the three women have undertaken as part of YOYP. They have been working under the Equality and Discrimination &

Culture themes and have designed an event on the Isle of Bute to celebrate different cultures.

Bute was chosen to host the event as they wanted to show that there are refugees and asylum seekers dispersed across Scotland. It was also noted here that it was important for rural areas also to learn from other cultures.

The event will take place on Saturday, 23rd June from 2pm – 5pm.

Kieran Ashton, Education Scotland Inclusion Ambassadors

Kieran Ashton introduced the Education Scotland's Inclusion Ambassadors. The group is made up of children and young people with a range of additional support needs. They work to ensure that all children and young people with additional support needs are included in Scottish education and get the support they need.

Kieran then introduced the film that the group worked on to highlight what they think needs to be done to achieve this. The film can be found [here](#).

Kieran also later highlighted that the group have worked on a resource for schools to support them in creating an inclusive environment for children and young people.

1000 Voices

Lynzy Hanvidge spoke about her experience of being part of the 1000 Voices Campaign. Lynzy noted that she is care experienced and is now employed by WhoCares Scotland.

WhoCares work to ensure that children and young people are involved in their care journey. This is done through many routes including care councils, who come up with ways to challenge decision makers and improve the lives of care experienced young people.

Lynzy noted that care experienced young people need to be listened to, loved and shown how to be loved.

The 1000 Voices Campaign challenges the First Minister to speak and listen to 1000 Care Experienced young people. The campaign was invited to the SNP Conference, where the independent care review was announced. Lynzy identified that the review meant that care experienced young people were now being listened to.

The 1000 Voices team are involved in making sure that care experienced young people are actively included throughout the process. Lynzy also noted that she was happy that the Chair of the Care Review is care experienced.

She also noted how supportive the First Minister has been. She cares, is interested and shows confidence in them.

Lynzy also noted the expansion of Care Day in 2018. The day celebrates care experienced young people. All attendees are able to bring along someone who helped them through their care journey. Lynzy took her advocate as she had been very important in her journey. She highlighted that her advocate always believed in her, on good and bad days and helped her talk about big and small issues.

Lynzy's aim for YOYP is that everyone has someone to trust and rely on and that children and young people will always be listened to. She also wants care experienced young people to not feel judged and always feel loved.

Edinburgh Science Festival's Youth Consultation Group

Two members of Edinburgh Science Youth Consultation Group presented their role in co-designing the science festival.

Bethany highlighted that YOYP was a change to shine a spotlight on their work. She noted that science is important in understanding how the world works and children and young people have a key role as they will make the advancements in the future.

The group was set up to make the festival more appealing to young people.

The group decided to create an event aimed at increasing interest among young people. They developed a murder mystery style game where participants used different aspects of science to identify the murderer.

They also developed a game where humans competed against robots. Bethany noted that the humans won, just.

Bethany noted that being involved in the group had been hugely positive experience because their input had been seriously valued by staff. She noted that the legacy of YOYP needs to be that children and young people are seriously listened to.

Anna then followed up by saying that YOYP should mean that children and young people are given more opportunities to be involved in events like the CPG.

Anna felt that young people need to get to experience new environments because this supports their learning and development.

Anna also quoted Benjamin Franklin and highlighted that children and young people learn by active involvement. She felt the science festival encapsulates this. It goes beyond the curriculum and allows children and young people to expand their learning.

By being involved children and young people develop their curiosity and this supports learning.

Anna closed by noting that that older people need to commit to involving children and young people because, with support, they can contribute to change on big issues.

6. Floor Debate

Sciennes Primary School

Pupils from Sciennes Primary School discussed their work to promote children's health. The group discussed three main issues that their classes had been working on;

- Improving access to sport because it can have a positive impact on both physical and mental health.
- Improving access to support for children and young people with additional support needs and their parents - particularly in relation to get w/ extra-curricular activities.
- Parenting support to improve healthy eating. This included reducing the price of healthy good and putting warning signs on unhealthy products.

Axa Ali asked whether their school is listening. The pupils felt that where it was an issue that the school could act on, they generally did.

Ellie Roy, Children in Scotland's Advisory Group

Ellie asked Kieran Ashton about whether systems to support pupils with ASN, such as a room where pupils can sit to relax or calm down, could be abused.

Kieran said he did not think so because schools usually keep a record. Pauline Lynch from Education Scotland also noted that there is usually an agreement between pupils and teachers about use of such spaces.

Elaine Leith, Circle Services

Elaine highlighted that after having listened to all the children and young people in attendance, she has already thought of new ways to design the services that Circle deliver.

Ryan McShane, WhoCares Scotland

Ryan noted that he has asked pupil support why his school is not a Rights Respecting School at present. He asked Kezia Dugdale whether the Scottish Government could over rule schools and ensure all become rights respecting.

Kezia Dugdale noted that it would not be wise to overrule because it is important that schools want to undergo the process. She suggested, in her experience, it is not that teachers do not want to follow the process but that they do not have time. She then identified that in her view, full incorporation of the UNCRC is the best to ensure that all schools become rights respecting.

Alice Ferguson, Children in Scotland Advisory Group

Alice noted that in her role as an MSYP, she has been elected the convenor of the Health and Wellbeing Committee. Alice asked the pupils from Sciennes about the food options within their school.

The children and young people noted that they have various options and the portions are a good size.

7. Close of Meeting

Kezia Dugdale closed the meeting and thanked attendees.

Actions

The Secretariat will work with the Convenor to lodge a question in parliament asking what the Scottish Government plans to do to ensure all children and young people learn about their rights in school.