

**Cross Party Group on Children and Young People
Minutes for Wednesday 1 May
13:00 – 14:30
Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament
Legacy of Year of Young People**

Chair: Alison Johnstone MSP and Fulton MacGregor MSP

Alison Johnstone MSP	Fulton MacGregor MSP	Kezia Dugdale MSP
Chris Ross	Lauren Asher	Janet Morton
Pete Gilpin	Rebecca McQuaker	Lorna Gibson
Mandy Morrison	Damola Samuels	Louise Slorance
Kirsten Shield	Kaytlyn Lessels	Megan Burt
Lucinda Rivers	Antonella Valbonesi	Georgia Greaves
Daniel Cosgrove	Elizabeth McBride	Katie Greeves
Carlene McAvoy	Kirsty Morrison	Vivien Jayne
Susan Hunter	Kieran O'Neill MSYP	Sara MacFarlane
May Chamberlain	Joel Meekison	Kevin Kane
Aaron Fernandez	Wiktorina Orlicka	Alice Maillinson
Rhys McCole	Rhia Gerrard	Tim Frew
Barry Fisher		

1. Welcome from Chair

The meeting was opened with a welcome from Chair, Alison Johnstone MSP. Alison relayed apologies from Fulton MacGregor MSP, who had been delayed. Alison agreed to chair the first half hour of the meeting.

Alison reflected on the importance of Year of Young People and welcomed the YOYP ambassadors who made the year such a success and members of Communic18. 500 Ambassadors worked across the year in every local authority in Scotland to lead on a range of projects and pieces of work.

Alison highlighted the importance of securing a positive and meaningful legacy from YOYP that builds on all the good work, time and energy that was put into the year. She stated that the point of the meeting was to identify where the CPG can contribute to that.

Alison gave a list of the themes of YOYP:

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

She then gave the objectives for the year:

- Provide a platform for young people to have their views heard and acted upon

- Showcase the amazing talents of young people through events and media
- Develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations
- Recognise the impact of teachers, youth workers and other supporting adults on young people's lives
- Provide opportunities for young people to express themselves through culture, sport and other activities

Alison described the format of the meeting, which would be different to usual. Rather than hearing 4 presentations with a short period for contributions from the floor, the meeting would consist of two short presentations before breaking into small groups to identify key ways that the CPG and Scottish Government can ensure a meaningful legacy from the Year of Young People.

2. Previous minutes and actions

Chris Ross from Children in Scotland updated CPG members on progress on previous action, which was for the CPG to write to the Maree Todd MSP with a summary of the discussion from the meeting on Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill and to ask her to articulate a timescale where the age of 14 or 16 could be considered.

The letter has been drafted and will be sent to convenors to approve.

He asked for any comments. There were none.

3. Panel Discussion

a. Rebecca McQuaker, youth worker seconded to work on YOYP, Kaytlyn Lessels, Lauren Asher and Dami Samuels, YOYP champions and volunteers from Dumfries and Galloway Council

The group spoke about how they are working on delivery in the present tense, because this is work that is still happening. It was emphasised that the year itself may have ended but it was not over for Dumfries and Galloway, where a legacy plan has been developed moving forward from YOYP.

Lauren spoke about the new opportunities and experiences that they had in 2018. The programme of events had included 9 signature events and other grassroots programmes.

Kaytlyn outlined the plans for continuation in Dumfries and Galloway. There are 4 main strands:

1. The showcase of the talents and achievements of young people.
2. Youth beats, a music festival which gives young people the opportunity to gain hands on experience and educated them about different issues.
3. 10,000 voices consultation. The results of which have been used to inform a 5-year plan.
4. Development of a youth council, which gives young people a voice in decision making.

Dami gave details on the regional youth awards, which is becoming an annual event. There are 9 different categories and she herself won the Unsung Hero award for her volunteering. This event aims to showcase the talent and achievements of young people. They want to see this continue as it is an event specifically dedicated to young people.

Lauren spoke about the second strand which was to secure a future for the youth beats music festival. Last year they had some big headliners, so it attracted a large group of young people. Its key aim was to provide free youth information in a way they hadn't seen before. Each year will have a different theme and the young people in attendance will be able to gain support on different issues that affect them.

Lauren then preceded to outline the third strand – the 10,000 voices consultation. She was pleased to announce that they have been granted £160,00 each year for the next three years, as this project has helped hundreds of young people.

Throughout the project they engaged with 10,642 young people, which is 46.9% of young people who live in Dumfries and Galloway – this is the largest ever collation of youth voices in Dumfries and Galloway. This report has been used to inform a 5-year strategic plan working on youth services and the hope is that organisations will use this report to further consult with young people.

Dami described the newly appointed youth council. The council will be made up of 35 young people, including 2 representatives from each area, 7 nominated representatives (young parents, young people with additional support needs and disabilities, ethnic minority community, LGBT community, gypsy/traveller community, young carers and care experienced young people) and 4 elected members of the SYP.

The elections took place in April 2019 and the partners are excited to work with the young people involved.

Lauren posed the question as to how this can all continue. She stated that this was not a year, but instead the start of a journey to provide opportunities and have voices heard – a catalyst for change.

One way in which they are continuing is through funding - £86,000 has been allocated to the region wide soft skills programme. This programme was developed by a skilled project team, and it aims to bridge the gap in youth work, helping those who want to work but need the skills and knowledge to do so.

Lauren believes that one of the main highlights of last year was the Dumfries and Galloway LGBT gathering.

She finished by thanking the room.

Alison Johnstone MSP

Alison said it was clear to see their determination, which is something that will make a transformative difference.

b. Joel Meekison – YOYP Ambassador

Joel began by congratulating Dami on her award.

He described his evaluation meeting with Maree Todd at the end of the year. YOYP is looking forward to a point of some uncertainty and change. He believes that young people and adults need to work together with equal footing. CYP need the power to say yes and no to adults.

He believes that the legacy of YOYP are children and young people working together with adults.

Last year was a success, we flew children around the world and put on music festivals, but we shouldn't let this excitement blind us. Not every child had the opportunity to be on stage. We need to break out with the children given that opportunity. We need to show CYP that if you stand up and say something then you can make a change.

The legacy is to let children do it, by making concrete changes on a national scale.

He stated that the year has done normalisation very well, especially with the publication of an action plan on CYP rights by the Scottish Government, but now we need to look at other opportunities. For example, co-designing materials and spreading them wider than youth services and charities who already work with young people.

The First Minister has pledged to bring the UNCRC into Scots law before 2021, but we need concrete changes to incorporate this into Scots law and introduce a precedent into CYP lives. There is still work to be done on UNCRC incorporation.

Joel outlined how we should go forward:

- Concrete policy changes
- Budgetary support (funding)
- Application of learning to make real terms impact
- Minimum age of criminal age of responsibility
- Allowing CYP voices to be heard and influence the Climate Change Bill

Joel finished by thanking the room.

Alison Johnstone MSP

Alison welcomed this announcement and stated that the CPGs made a difference to this. The climate emergency wouldn't have come about without young people.

4. Group Discussion

- a. How could the Scottish Government secure a meaningful legacy from the Year of Young People?
- b. What are the barriers to a meaningful legacy from Year of Young People?

- c. How could the CPG help take forward to legacy of the Year of Young People?
- d. What specific policies would take forward the legacy of the Year of Young People?

5. Feedback from groups

Fulton took over from Alison as chair. He introduced himself and thanked Alison for chairing the first part of the meeting. He noted that it seemed as though the group discussions had gone well. He asked the note takers from each group to summarise the points taken.

Chris Ross, Children in Scotland

Chris' group suggested that the CPG could introduce new timings for meetings so that CYP could attend and also find a new location so that children outside the central belt could attend. They noted that all SP documents need an accessible version and that we need to move on from tokenism, as problems with accessibility shouldn't have to always be brought up.

The group wanted to know the timetable on UNCRC corporation into Scots law and noted that it should not be rewritten but instead the whole document should be included.

In terms of barriers, they noted cultural barriers as taking precedence. It is important that we work with underrepresented groups, for example, those under the age of 8 and young carers. More bottom up change is needed; therefore, we must listen on an individual basis not just nationally to CYP.

The group felt that the CYP should be more accessible in terms of place and time, therefore including a wider range of people. The idea of a CYP Co-Convenor came up, as it was in place previously, so would this be a chance to explore this again? CYP should be given more awareness of their rights. One way of achieving this could be through training for MSPs to engage with CYP.

The group would like to see local authorities continue funding YOYP like Dumfries and Galloway, whilst also making engagement with CYP wider than the third sector. They also suggested continuing the ambassador programme.

Kevin Kane, YouthLink Scotland

Kevin outlined the group's interest in planet concerns. They believe the Scottish Government should engage beyond recent announcements, as if not, this would mean no future for CYP.

The group had agreed that the inclusion of support for the youth work sector should continue and that this practice should be utilised by the government and going forward through local and national government initiatives.

Kevin outlined the barriers faced as apathy, funding (local and national), rurality leading to difficulty of travel, and a period of consistent engagement.

He then gave ideas for the CPG to take forward, including guides for good practice, making sure youth voices are heard in the chamber, along with recommendations from the CPG. We should utilise the CPG contacts to reach beyond Scotland.

In order to take forward the legacy of YOYP, the group agreed that the inclusion of CYP was the most important. They believe members of the youth parliament should be represented in meetings, to protect and champion the sector. Sport, drama, and alternatives to education would help to bring forward the legacy. Broad policy areas need to be changed in order to influence the wider Scottish Government agenda. The CPG is integral to taking that further.

Joel Meekison, YOYP Ambassador

Joel Focusing events on specific aims – acknowledging didn't look at themes equally. Where does all this learning feed into? Document? Evaluation? Made public? We need to look at the real terms impact, which is longer than a year. Gap in social services representation. Importance of giving examples of what CYP can do. Branch out to different ways of participation.

The main barrier that the group identified was funding. Pop-up funding was used for events throughout last year, but will it persist? Joel asked if the feedback would be going into anything? They need more funding and a longer structure of funding.

The group ascertained that the events were a lot of the time attended by the usual suspects. These are CYP who had already engaged previously, so now we need to break out. The question is, how do we engage with others? Joel reiterated that we need to focus on the young people who aren't getting involved.

Fulton gave thanks to all three groups and there was a round of applause.

6. Agree Actions and Close – 14:20 – 14:30

Fulton felt there were some good points raised, especially in terms of the timings and locations of CPGs and the Scottish Government on tour. He stressed the importance and need to make sure the group is accessible. The middle of the day is not always suitable for MSPs either. He stated that evening sessions were better for MSPs. He also said that the idea of taking the meetings out of the government building was an idea across lots of CPGs. He expressed his approval of this idea, as it means MSPs must block time off and can't get dragged into other things. He suggested a trial.

Fulton went on to say that the same young people in his constituency come to him with different issues, but we need those who aren't active to get involved. One way that he is working on this is through dedicated CYP surgeries. 4 high schools in his constituency will have specific surgeries over the next three months. He stressed that the whole political engagement process needs more work. Scotland has a good engagement in general, but it needs more representation from a broader range of young people.

Agreed actions:

1. Send a letter to the Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd MSP.
2. Secretariat to bring proposal for changes to time and location of CPG.
3. Secretariat to bring back a paper on how we can bring in Children and Young People as Co-convenors.
4. Secretariat to explore safeguarding training for all MSPs.

Chris Ross noted that the times and location of CPGs would be easier to amend after the next AGM.

Agreed time and date of next meeting: 12th June 2019, 13:00-14:30