

## **Cross Party Group on Shared Parenting Minutes of meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Present:**

#### **MSPs**

Gillian Martin MSP (Chair), Finlay Carson MSP

#### **Organisations**

Brock Lueck (One Parent Families Scotland), Ian Maxwell (FNF Scotland), Kenny Spence (Men in Childcare), Pauline Linn (Family Mediation West), Eileen Brownlie (Relationships Scotland), Sam Pringle (Fathers Network Scotland), Lindsay Jessiman (Families Outside), Peter Cloke (Circle), John Forsyth (FNF Scotland), Graeme Richards (Circle), Emma Trottier (Engender),

#### **Individuals**

#### **Guests**

Line Knudsen (ScotCen Social Research), Rebecca Goldman (Fatherhood Institute)

#### **In attendance**

Jane Denholm (Office of Ivan McKee)

#### **Apologies:**

Ivan McKee MSP, Adam Tomkins MSP, Andy Wightman MSP, Kate Forbes MSP, Stella Gibson (Spark), Graeme Richards (Circle Scotland), Fiona Robertson, Amanda Ward Jackie Tolland (Parent Network Scotland), Barry Wright (Dads Rock), Thomas Lynch (Dads Rock), Shelagh Young (Home Start) (As the Parliament was sitting late during the meeting a number of MSPs were unable to attend)

#### **Minutes of Meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January**

The minutes were approved.

#### **Subscription**

At the initial meeting members agreed there was no need to have a subscription. However, members also agreed "to invite speakers from Scotland, the UK and other countries". Some speakers would need to claim for reasonable travel and/or accommodation expenses. The Secretariat host organisation, FNF Scotland had agreed to act as treasurer to administer and account for any funds collected.

The Group suggested that a grant might be available from somewhere to cover costs. The Secretariat **agreed** to investigate this.

#### **Membership**

Following suggestions made at the previous meeting a number of organisations had been invited to join the group. Engender and Home Start Scotland have accepted.

Requests to join the group had been received from the following groups or individuals: Peter Morris (Men and Boys Initiative), June Loudon (Grandparents Apart UK), Frances Byatt-Smith (individual), Eoin Keane (individual), Mark Malcolm (Issy Shillinglaw Grandparents Rights).

All the requests were **accepted**.

Following discussion it was proposed from the chair that future applications from individuals or groups who accept the overall 'purpose and objectives' of the group should be considered by the conveners and secretariat. **Agreed.**

### **Presentation by Rebecca Goldman**

Rebecca Goldman, research associate with the Fatherhood Institute, gave a power point presentation (attached) on her research into parenting patterns where parents are separated. She identified that the general 'non-resident parent' term is an obstacle to conveying the reality of post-separation parenting into the public discourse. It 'lumps together' parents who rarely or never see their children as well as those who have a daily relationship with them. The consequence is serious gaps in the data on which family policy is currently developed.

### **Shared Parenting levels in Scotland**

Ian Maxwell presented a complementary paper (attached) on the data and data gaps in Scotland.

### **Future work programmes**

John Forsyth presented a paper (attached) with a time line of forthcoming legislation, consultations and developments in the family courts that will have consequences (some unintended) for sharing parenting in Scotland.

**Decided.** The consultation on the Scottish Government review of family law should be underway by the next group meeting. Civil servants conducting the review should be invited to present at the June meeting.

**Decided.** "Shared parenting as a feminist issue" would be an interesting theme and Françoise Hetto-Gaasch had been invited to contribute to the June meeting, possibly by video link. Mme Hetto Gaasch convened the Council of Europe committee that devised Resolution 2079, on gender barriers to shared parenting. To date she had not responded.

### **AOCB**

The Fatherhood Institute, Fathers Network Scotland and FNF Scotland had proposed publishing a press release on the issues raised by Rebecca Goldman's presentation to the group. A policy should be agreed on publicising the work of the group.

**Decided.** Media should not be invited to group meetings. Press releases may be released after the meeting having been signed off by the 3 co-convenors.

### **Next Meeting**

12 June;  
Room Q1.03 Scottish Parliament

John Forsyth

11.05.2018