

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Shared Parenting

**Minutes of Tuesday 15th January 2019 meeting
18:00 to 20:00 Room Q1.03, Scottish Parliament**

- 1.1. Gillian Martin MSP in the chair, demitting to Fulton MacGregor MSP as new Convenor.
2. **Present.**

Gillian Martin MSP, Fulton MacGregor MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP, Brock Lueck (One Parent Families Scotland), Eoin Keane, Eileen Brownlie (Relationships Scotland), Sam Pringle (Fathers Network Scotland), John Forsyth (FNF Scotland), Frances Byatt-Smith (Edinburgh Parent Centre), June Loudon (Grandparents Apart), Rob Pryce (The Spark), Peter Cloke (Circle), Alastair Williamson (FNF Scotland), Miranda Gray, Ian Maxwell (FNF Scotland), Simon Stockwell (Scottish Government), Wendy Georgeson (Scottish Government).
Miranda Gray was introduced as a new member of the group.
Guest: Felicity Shedden, Family Law In Partnership
In attendance: Allan Stubbs
3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Finlay Carson MSP, Andy Wightman MSP, Thomas Lynch (Dads Rock), Graeme Robertson (Circle), Cheryl Brown (Midlothian Sure Start).
4. **Minutes of 2nd October 2018 meeting and matters arising**

The Minutes were amended to show Rona Mackay MSP, Rosanne Cubitt and Eoin Keane as present at the October 2nd 2018 meeting and apologies had been received from Eileen Brownlie.
5. **AGM**

Fulton MacGregor MSP was elected unopposed as Convenor. Gillian Martin MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP were elected unopposed as co-vice Convenors.
FNF Scotland agreed to continue as secretariat.

A Financial Report was tabled by Ian Maxwell showing voluntary donations in the year totalling £155 from Dads Rock, Frances Byatt-Smith, Fathers Network Scotland, FNF Scotland, Midlothian Sure Start and Relationships Scotland leaving a balance of £58.37. £96.63 had been spent on speaker costs and printing.
6. **Review of our first year**

A copy of the group's registration form with the Scottish Parliament was circulated as a reminder of its stated purpose. There was agreement round the table that the coming year which would see the Scottish Government's bill on modernisation of Scottish family law gives impetus to the issues we want to address – identifying institutional and cultural obstacles to shared parenting. A number of suggestions were tabled for forthcoming sessions.

7. **Presentation on 'Parenting Coordinators'**
Felicity Shedden from Family Law In Partnership described 'Parenting Coordination' which is an innovative child-centred intervention to support and guide parents in implementing their parenting agreements or court orders in medium and high-conflict cases. The work involves skills from family law, mediation, mental health, parenting education, social work and child protection fields. At the moment a court order is made the parents involved are likely still to be in the 'adversarial mode' engendered by the court process but are left just to get on with it. Parent Coordinators in other jurisdictions, including some court jurisdictions in England, help defuse the day to day small issues that arise and avoid returning to court with what are in the bigger picture minor issues.

8. **Dates of next meetings.**
From the chair Fulton proposed a move from a Tuesday evening schedule to Wednesday. This was agreed.
Dates were set for April 24th, September 4th and November 6th

9. **Any Other Business**
There was no further business.