

Scottish Parliament

Cross Party Group on Women's Justice

Inaugural Meeting Wednesday 16th May 2018, 1pm-2pm

Attendees

Name	Designation
Rona McKay	MSP
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Mary Fee	MSP
Daniel Johnson	MSP
Richard Lyle	MSP
Liam McArthur	MSP
Maddie Ford	Scottish Parliament
Kim McGuigan	Community Justice Scotland
James Blair	Community Justice Scotland
Lorraine Gillies	Scottish Community Safety Network
Nancy Loucks	Families Outside/ Prison Reform Trust
Amy Callaghan	Scottish Parliament
Tracey Robertson	Early Years Scotland
Kate Fry	Parliamentary Researcher for Rhoda Grant MSP
Mags Higgins	Women for Justice, Scotland
Karyn Mabon	Women for Justice, Scotland
Paula Mitchell	Women for Justice Scotland
Emma Trottier	Engender

Apologies: Anne Pinkman - Prison Reform Trust

Welcome	Outcomes/Actions
<p>RM MSP welcomed those in attendance and due to shortage of time moved that the initial business of the group be actioned first to allow RG MSP to attend another meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RM MSP was elected as chair • MF MSP as Vice chair • PM as Secretary • Action Amend minutes by adding the proposer and seconder to all elected posts.
<p>Main body of the discussion</p> <p>RM suggested that there should be a constructive outcome for the group such as a report.</p> <p>MF raised several topics, i.e. alternatives to custody, suggesting that we needed more settings such as 218. Mary noted that there was not enough help for women in the Justice system for women with mental health challenges. Mary was concerned about the loss of family contact for women and especially loss of contact with their children.</p> <p>RM mentioned that only 75% of women on remand were charged. Within third sector services that provide wider support to the Community Justice system that there appeared to be a difficulty in sustainable funding with some funding cycles being one to three years only.</p> <p>MF suggested that the way men and women are processed within the Justice system is different with women being held on remand for several reasons.</p> <p>LM agreed with Mary McFee’s point on mental health and asked that we avoid doubling up with this item and feeding it into the Justice Committee.</p> <p>MF noted the patchy (postcode based) nature of support that is available for women in the Community Justice System.</p> <p>LG introduced the idea of a community safety perspective. How do we create safe communities? What would prevention look like? What do communities perceive around women’s justice?</p> <p>JB noted that the Justice system needs to be more responsive and compassionate/reactive to need.</p>	

	Outcomes/Actions
<p>JB noted the disintegration of family life and wondered where the support for families was within the Community Justice system. He wondered if Social Work partner with The Scottish Prison Service to offer support to families.</p> <p>KMc offered to be a speaker at the group. She has lived experience of the Justice system. She noted that there need to be more prevention services aimed at those with a high number of ACES (adverse childhood experiences). A peer mentoring system was highly useful. KMc broached the subject of life long convictions and that some of them need to be reassessed.</p> <p>RL agreed with KMc and noted that some of these convictions need to be quashed.</p> <p>JB noted the difficulty in obtaining legal aid to strike a spent conviction from your record. The entire process costs a lot of money and is often then prohibitive.</p> <p>ET mentioned the new opportunities in the Social Security framework at this time and how the Justice system might work in closer partnership with the new system and other agencies.</p> <p>NL raised the issue of prevention and family support services, specifically the Abelour Family Support Service in Glasgow which lost it's funding. It housed families so that parents and children could be helped and that parents did not need to decide between rehabilitation/support or staying with their family.</p> <p>TR noted the work done with dads in relation to parenting skills whilst in prison. She mentioned that it was less likely for mums to receive visits from their children whilst they were in prison. There seemed to be multiple reasons for this.</p> <p>MH noted that the new CCU (Community Custodial Unit) planned for Maryhill in Glasgow fell short of the recommendations of The Commission on Women Offenders report, 2012. The new hub was to be a therapeutic place for low level, non- risk women and not a high security hub. She noted her involvement with Justice Watch in 2016-2017, a mass observation of the treatment of Women in Scottish Sheriff courts.</p> <p>NL noted that Scotland did not have as many options for community custodial services as other places in the world. There are other schemes that allow for an option of house arrest or to be able to take the children to and from school or out for special occasion such as birthdays. Other option include overnight stays and private family visits.</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>RM To look at the proposed outcomes of the CCU's in light of the 2012 report. (Angiolini Report)</p>

	Outcomes/Actions
<p>RM noted the need for a shift in cultural perception from punitive justice to rehabilitative Justice.</p> <p>JB noted in a visit to Finland that they support the individual more. He noted that our society is not supportive enough or compassionate to the individual's circumstances.</p> <p>PM agreed with JB and noted that the issue is to do with Public Health and is not a Criminal Justice Issue.</p> <p>JB noted that Scotland is risk adverse.</p> <p>RM noted that our system is not radical enough.</p> <p>RM noted that now was the time to break the mould.</p> <p>KMc noted that women need a care package and to be helped in order to rehabilitate.</p> <p>LG spoke about the Christie Commission and how our public services work together at a strategic level and how we may want to consider this in relation to woman in the Justice system.</p> <p>PM spoke of a possible public media campaign.</p> <p>KM spoke of the deadly Valium addiction on the streets of Glasgow at present and said it was of high proportion.</p> <p>KMc agreed it was a Public Health issue, not a Justice issue.</p> <p>KM agreed that it was a Public Health and Social Justice issue.</p> <p>JB and ET agreed that a more robust assessment was needed in the Management of Offenders Bill regarding gender impact.</p> <p>RM drew the meeting to a close.</p> <p>The next date for meeting has been changed from September 12th to September 19th, 2018 at 6pm.</p> <p>6-7pm To decide on one topic to take forward. 7-8pm To decide on strategy.</p>	