

Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time 25th March 2025 6.00pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Collette Stevenson MSP

Invited guests

Neil Russell, Edinburgh Academy Survivors, Paul Purcell, Campaigner

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Health & Social Care Adviser, Secretariat, Stuart Allardyce, Stop It Now Scotland, Secretariat, Sandra Brown, the Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence, Andrew Campbell, Campaigner, Dr Jacqueline Dow, Psychotherapist, Ewan Law, Fife College, Fay Maxted, the Survivors Trust, Janine Rennie, Campaigner, Shaun Taylor, Eighteen and Under.

Apologies

Katy Jackson, Thirtyone:eight, Sarah Keer-Keer, Mairsinn, Laurie Matthews, Mairsinn, Giles Moffatt, Edinburgh Academy Survivors, Dr Sarah Nelson, Researcher, Edinburgh University, Ashley Scotland, Thriving Survivors, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer & Researcher, Brian Whittle, MSP, Carol Willson, Campaigner.

Agenda item 1

Election of Depute Convener

Brian Whittle MSP, currently a member of the Cross-Party Group has put his name forward to stand as Depute Convener.

Approved: Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener
Seconded: Collette Stevenson MSP

We recognised Brian's support for survivors over many years, and the group are delighted he has agreed to become our Depute Convener.

Agenda item 2

Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11th June 2024

Approved: Sandra Brown Seconded: Andrew Campbell

Agenda item 3

Matters arising

Redress Scheme

This has been a long-standing issue and made more complicated by different Ministers having responsibility for the Scheme, therefore letters were passed around and perhaps got 'lumped together' resulting in some confusion.

We discussed if we should go ahead and seek a meeting or further action? Should we keep on hold till the new Parliament and look afresh? We agreed we should go ahead and write to Katy Forbes and request a meeting for our views to be heard and decide on ways forward following this. Janine, Andrew, Stuart and Anne can draw up a brief agenda for any prospective meeting **Action Fulton, Anne and Stuart**

Health Inequalities for Survivors

Health Inequalities for survivors. Fulton, Andrew, Anne and Stuart met with Neil Gray, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and Maree Todd, Minister for Health, Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport on 11th September 2024. Letter from Mr Gray on 17th October 2024 (attached).

It was a useful meeting, however, in Mr Gray's response male survivors are not mentioned, even though this was highlighted as one of the serious health inequalities and discrimination against men, and men are being left behind. Political phrasing has changed over the years and there has been unintended consequences where boys and adult male survivors are left out of the larger abuse discussions.

It is also felt they continue to conflate and confuse physical health and psychological health. We agreed to continue to keep avenues open for discussion. The suggestion of a Reference Group to be convened was suggested, we can follow this up in our response. (Attached a note from Andrew to Mr Gray).

Fulton suggested as we have an open door with the Cabinet Secretary, we should write back outlining our concerns and approach the Health & Sport Committee's Convener to raise these concerns. **Action Fulton**

Sibling Sexual Abuse

Sibling Sexual Abuse. Fulton and Anne provided an update on the Debate held in the Scottish Parliament on 6th November 2024 attended in person by SSA survivors and Anne. It was acknowledged how difficult this area of child sexual abuse is,

however, no matter how difficult, there were thoughtful contributions made by many MSPs and Natalie Don-Innes, the Minister for Children and Young People of Scotland. He has had very positive feedback, including the First Minister.

We discussed next steps to ensure it is kept on the agenda and the actions we raised in our information paper were upheld. Stuart felt that SG would be picked up by the new Scottish Government Sexual Abuse Leadership Group who were due to have their third meeting next week. SSA has not yet been discussed on this group, but there is an opportunity for it to be put on the agenda. Stuart feels the whole process is moving very slowly. They have not resolved how survivors should be represented on the group; we should ask them to meet with the CPG and update us on their progress. We should also ask Ashley for an update from Thriving Survivors' perspective. **Action Fulton and Stuart.**

Mandatory Reporting

Following on from the successful discussion held on 5th November 2024. We have kept a watching brief on how the new Labour government will take Professor Jay's recommendations forward following the abandonment by the previous government.

A Motion was raised in the Chamber by Fulton on MR and whilst there is a groundswell for MR in Scotland, there is also some resistance and pushback from the civil service and professional bodies with a responsibility for children. Anxiety and concerns that they will be flooded are largely unfounded from research and analysis by Professor Jay and Tam Baillie. The "What if you're right" campaign needs to be publicised further.

Mandate Now and some survivors from private schools in Scotland have met with Jess Phillips, MP Deputy Prime Minister

Neil noted that there was a significant need for education of professionals and public in relation to identification of child sexual abuse and how to report concerns, including anonymous reporting. Consideration for the CPG is whether to set up a sub-group to look at education of professionals drawing on survivor experience about identification of suspected CSA.

It was agreed we need to keep momentum in Scotland as we see how it develops in the UK parliament. To this end we agreed to form a sub-group to discuss how we best take this forward and keep on the agenda with update from Giles and Neil on the UK government's actions.

We will then request a meeting with Natalie Don-Innes, Minister for Children and Young People of Scotland. **Action Anne and Stuart.**

Fatal Accident Inquiries

Fatal Accident Inquiries and follow up from Sarah's paper. As Alison from NSPCC was not in attendance, it was agreed that Stuart and she update the CPG in writing before our next meeting. **Action Stuart and Alison.**

Information Commissioner for Scotland Update

The issue of the difficulty in accessing records for the Redress Scheme was brought to our attention by a survivor from Wellbeing Scotland. We approached the ICFS's office, and they have been very helpful. They offered to meet with the CPG at any time. We agreed the statement and actions were sufficient for now and we can keep in touch for any future meetings.

"Today we have published the [action we have taken to improve access to personal information from local authorities across Scotland](#). We actively monitored records access compliance and engaged with all 32 local authorities in Scotland and, whilst most were able to improve their compliance, where we saw no improvement, we have issued reprimands. We focused on accessing records because we had heard directly from those with care experience, and those who were seeking their care records to support their application for redress for abuse suffered in care, about the harms they experienced after long delays."

GROOMED Play written and performed by Patrick Sandford

Fulton remarked on how powerful Patrick's performance and play based on his real-life experiences was and how much impact it had to him and those who attended. He thanked Patrick on behalf of the CPG. Anne and Sandra had been in touch with him, and he wanted to pass on his thanks for Fulton sponsoring the event and Anne and Sandra for getting the event staged. Fulton thanked Anne and Sandra for the immense amount of work on getting the play and the organising of the event.

Agenda item 4

Applications for membership

Sarah Keer-Keer, from Mairsinn, formerly Ritual Abuse Network, Giles Moffatt, Edinburgh Academy Survivors, Neil Russell, Edinburgh Academy Survivors, Paul Purcell, Campaigner, Ashley Scotland, CEO Thriving Survivors.

Anne read through their applications and Neil and Paul spoke about their backgrounds and experiences of abuse and how they would like to contribute to the work of the CPG on behalf of all survivors. Neil introduced Giles who is unable to make the meeting and Paul, who had been involved with the CPG in the past was welcomed back.

Fulton informed the meeting that Ellie Forgan and Malcolm Rodger were standing down from the group. He thanked Ellie for all her valuable contributions over the past few years and her work on sibling sexual abuse leading to an important event and recent debate in the parliament. Ellie has kindly agreed to participate in anything we arrange on this issue in the future. Fulton thanked Malcolm for his valuable contributions to the CPG and insight into sexual abuse in football and sports. We wish them all the best for the future.

Anne informed the meeting that Leigh McFarlane from Thirtyone:eight has left her post and Katy Jackson will attend in future. We thanked Leigh for her important contributions, especially on mandatory reporting.

Agenda item 5

Royal College of Psychiatry: Position Statement on Psychiatry

The CPG was contacted by a survivor, who has drawn to our attention that there had been a Consultation by the Royal College of Psychiatry on the impact of non-recent child sexual abuse on the mental health of adults, February 2024 Position Statement.

Geraldine came across this by accident and contacted them to enquire why this Consultation was not put out to survivors in Scotland and contacted the RCP Scottish branch. It appears there was an error on their part to not include all the four nations.

Following a meeting with Geraldine, Katy Clark MSP, representatives from the Scottish and English RCPs, there will be an acknowledgement and apology for omitting to include the views of survivors out with England in the final published document. Katy Clark MSP, who is her constituency MSP and a member of the GPG has agreed to host an event to launch the Position Statement in the parliament over the summer. There is an opportunity for survivors to attend and give their thoughts on this important document that will have an impact on the lives of survivors who come into the contact of psychiatric services. **Action Fulton and Anne**

Agenda item 6

AOCB

Sandra informed the group that she will stand down in her role as Treasurer. Therefore, we need to have an agency from the membership to agree to hold the chequebook for the account. Stuart has agreed to be the second signatory from Stop It Now Scotland. Sandra also mentioned the membership fee of £15, organisations, and £5 individuals. The fee is to enable us to have catering and some small outlays for events such as GROOMED and the round table meeting on Mandatory Reporting. There is no requirement to pay the fee.

Anne pointed out that we need to set a date for our AGM before summer recess. She will liaise with Rob and let membership know once a date is set