

Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time 8th October 2025 6.00pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Brian Whittle MSP, Depute Convener

Invited guests

Leigh McFarlane, Kaizen Safeguarding

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Health & Social Care Adviser, Secretariat, Stuart Allardyce, Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Secretariat, Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence, Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Dr Geraldine Dow, Psychotherapist, Katy Jackson, Thirtyone:eight, Sarah Keer-Keer, Mairsinn, Giles Moffat, Edinburgh Academy Survivors, Ashley Scotland, Thriving Survivors, Treasurer, Shaun Taylor, 18& Under, Alison Wales, NSPCC, Carol Willson, Campaigner

Apologies

Andrew Campbell, Campaigner, Fay Maxted, The Survivors Trust, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer & Researcher

Agenda item 1

Approval of Minutes 25th March 2025

Approved: Sandra Brown Seconded: Sharon Belshaw

Agenda item 2

Matters arising

Before we opened the meeting, we acknowledged the reasons why so many meetings have been either cancelled or rescheduled at short notice due to parliamentary business running over and late sittings in the Chamber. It is unfortunate but out with our control, your patience is much appreciated.

We also stressed that there is still CPG work happening in between business meetings, for example our meeting with the Deputy First Minister regarding our concerns on several aspects of the Redress Scheme, and the discussion on Mandatory Reporting with the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group.

Redress Scheme

Fulton, Andrew, Janine, Anne and Stuart had a meeting with Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes and representatives from her office. The meeting was productive, and she answered where she could our concerns, with the understanding that she will not be standing at the future election, so this is an area we will have to revisit once this has been settled. It was agreed that meanwhile we maintain connections between the CPG and Ms Forbes, hopefully with another meeting. Fulton also suggested a possible debate before final recess. **Action Fulton**

Health Inequalities

Following on from our meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health, we have received a reply from Mr Gray's office, dated 11th June 2025. We acknowledged that there has been some progress, however there are still so many examples coming to our attention of survivors not receiving trauma informed practices we will continue to bring these to the attention of the Cabinet Secretary. Anne will send the letter out to the full membership for comment before our next meeting. **Action Anne**

Sibling Sexual Abuse

Stuart and Ashley provided an update on our SSA paper which was sent out in advance of the meeting. There were only a few minor amendments and additions, particularly on language and research. We discussed intrafamilial harm by other family members, such as cousins, also female abusers. It was agreed that there was some research on this, but it hasn't been opened up for discussion more widely. Ashley gave some updates on forthcoming conferences and will send us details and links to join. What has been achieved in such a short space of time is quite amazing and we look forward to providing further updates at our next meeting. **Action Ashley**

Mandatory Reporting

See update on Agenda Item 5

Fatal Accident Inquiries

Stuart and Alison's paper was sent out in advance of the meeting. Stuart provided some context on how this issue arose through Sarah's concerns and her original paper. It was agreed that this is a complicated issue and wider than the scope of the CPG. We could try and find a way of bringing the relevant people round the table to explore through an open discussion. It was proposed that we host a meeting to explore further. **Action Stuart and Alison**

Royal College of Psychiatry Position Statement

We have no update since our last meeting. Anne will keep the CPG updated on any progress and next steps.

Agenda item 3

Dr Sarah Nelson OBE: An appreciation

Anne opened this part of our meeting and said a few words on her working relationship with Sarah and their friendship which spanned over twenty-five years. How much Sarah has contributed to the survivor movement through her research, her many written resources for survivors, her support to survivor agencies, and to the Cross Party Group, of which she was a member for so many years. Sarah was a one off and irreplaceable, it is still difficult to imagine that she is no longer with us.

Fulton spoke to the Motion laid down in parliament on Sarah's life and contribution to survivors which was sent round the full membership and more importantly to Sarah's daughter and family.

Shaun spoke of his work with Sarah over the years and the Lottery Heritage Project with Sarah and Laurie that will chart the survivor movement that Sarah was so pivotal in. Sarah was still working on behalf of survivors up until the last two weeks before she passed.

We all agreed that the loss of Sarah, when still in her prime is a blow to us who worked with her over the years, but also for survivors, who will miss her incredible support to them over her lifetime. Most importantly, we offer our condolences to Sarah's family, who have suffered the loss of a mother, grandmother and sister.

Agenda item 4

Application for membership

Leigh McFarlane, Kaizen Safeguarding. Leigh was previously a member of the CPG when at Thirtyone: eight. It was unanimously agreed that the CPG welcome Leigh back as a member.

Agenda item 5

Update from the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group

Stuart has prepared a note of the discussion meeting with the Group. This has been sent to the full membership. NCSAE would appreciate a follow up meeting with us to discuss whether survivors and allies think there is an argument for further review in Scotland. It was agreed we should meet with them. Fulton thinks we should arrange another more formal discussion group meeting and perhaps a Members Debate in the parliament. **Action Fulton**

Agenda item 6

Continuity of the Cross-Party Group beyond the 2026 Election

We need to look at how we best carry out attracting MSPs to join the group, as last time it proved quite difficult. Now that many long-standing MSPs are not up for re-election, we need to publicise the group and the importance of our work as much as we can. Anne, Stuart and Alison have met and propose they put together a two-page paper to send out to MSPs when elected.

Action Anne, Stuart and Alison

Agenda item 7

AOCB

Members have suggested we meet in person at alternative meetings as whilst Virtual meetings can be helpful, the feelings of isolation are markedly strong at times. We will look at this in the new year session.

The letter from Carers and Users of Psychology Services (CUSP) to the Cabinet Secretary for Health on Urgent Call to Introduce a Legislative Framework for Restrictive Interventions in Scotland's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Care was sent out to the CPG membership

Sandra wished to record her, and all at the Moira Anderson Foundation's thanks for Fulton highlighting the new Police Scotland investigation into the disappearance of Moira Anderson in the Chamber of the parliament. Fulton acknowledged how growing up in Coatbridge area affected him on Moira's disappearance.