

Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time

11th June 2024 Virtual Business Meeting 6.00pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Collette Stevenson MSP

Invited guests

Tam Baillie, Chair of Child Protection Committee, Scotland

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Health & Social Care Adviser, Co Convener, Secretariat, Stuart Allardyce, Stop It Now Scotland, Secretariat, Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Whitney Barrett, Wellbeing Scotland, Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence, Eric Boslem, First Tier, Andrew Campbell, Student, Natalie Gibb, Health in Mind, Leigh McFarlane, Thirtyone:eight, Janine Rennie, Campaigner, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer & Researcher, Alison Wales, NSPCC, Carol Willson, Student

Apologies

Daniel Johnson MSP, Katy Clark MSP, Jamie Dornan MSP, Brian Whittle MSP, , Dr Sarah Nelson, Researcher, Edinburgh University, Rukhsana Saleem, Moira Anderson Foundation, Dr Jaqueline Dow, Psychotherapist

Agenda item 1

Welcome and apologies

Agenda item 2

Approval of Minutes 26th March 2024

Approved: Dr Eric Swanepoel Seconded: Anne Macdonald

Agenda item 3

Matters arising

Survivors who cannot access the Redress Scheme

In March, Fulton wrote to Angela Constance on this subject. There has been an error where Scottish Government colleagues thought this matter had been resolved. Redress currently sits with Kate Forbes MSP, Deputy First Minister. We have written to Ms Forbes today asking her to attend a meeting with representatives from the CPG in relation to the Redress Scheme. **Action Fulton**

Survivors who have compromised physical health outcomes

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport has agreed to meet with representatives of the CPG, including those with lived experience of this issue. **Action Fulton**

Sibling Sexual Abuse Motion

The Motion is now lodged for a member's debate. It will be between the summer or after the October recess. Members of the CPG are welcome to the debate and once a date is set, we will let the membership know. **Action Fulton and Anne**

Concerns about Fatal Accident Inquiries and CSA

A paper by Sarah was distributed at a previous meeting. Anne, Stuart and Alison to work on this whilst Sarah is unwell.

Mandatory Reporting

Response from Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise which suggested limited appetite from Scottish Government to explore this issue at present. Leigh noted that Thirty one: eight had written to Scottish Government on this subject and had a response stating there was insufficient evidence on this.

Tam Baillie noted that the world has moved on. Ten years ago, there was more limited evidence on mandatory reporting. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) (CSA) however provides strong evidence, and we have a better understanding of scope of the issue of CSA. The National Crime Agency (NCA) suggests 850 thousand adults present a risk of sexual harm to children. Childlight data from Edinburgh University also suggests that CSA is endemic. Probably 1 in 5 children in Scotland have experienced abuse. Andrew talked about how we reach out to adults affected so it takes shorter There is a CSA leadership group that is to be set up by the Scottish Government which should be a forum where the CPG could make representations on this issue and other related concerns... Sandra and Stuart said it was important to have survivor advisers on the CSA leadership group. Matthew McVarish from the Brave Movement is going to Columbia later in the year with United Nations (UN) in relation to international activities about tackling CSA.

Alison agreed with Tam that things have moved forward, and many third sector organisations have moved forward regarding views on mandatory reporting. Alison is happy to send out NSPCC work on this. Their view that a reporting duty is absolutely necessary, but it is not a magic wand, it requires a much wider suite of activities – service delivery, awareness raising etc. Fulton agreed that there was a much more welcoming attitude to mandatory reporting amongst social workers and frontline practitioners at present.

Fulton said that we could return to this at a future meeting. Tam noted that he would view IICSA as a United Kingdom report, not just England and Wales. Also, Child Protection Committee Scotland is establishing an influencing group and this could be looked at soon, with perhaps some collaborative work with partners such as the CPG.

It was also suggested we seek a meeting with Professor Alexis Jay, former chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, as she has met with Leigh and Thirtyone:eight on MR. **Action Anne and Leigh**

Agenda item 4

Presentation: Tam Baillie, Chair Child Protection Committee Scotland

Tam is chair of Child Protection Committee Scotland. (CPCS). The network covers all thirty-one Child Protection Committees. Most have independent chairs and twenty associate members, the Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate, police, health etc. Meetings are held every six weeks, half day meetings, with sixty or seventy attendees at each meeting. Also, a variety of groups feed into CPC Scotland (like a Police CSA group).

They also do some media work. The two main areas are reactive responses to incidents to help contextualise what has happened so there is better public understanding of child protection systems. Also, proactive responses heighten awareness and sensitivity to when children are living in traumatic circumstances as well as building confidence about adults doing something in response to concerns. Their most recent campaign was '[What if you're right](#)'

Priority of CSA for CPC Scotland. Campaign in partnership with Barnardo's, where adult survivor's contributions were essential. Key messages were you have to get across immediate and long term trauma, ask adults to be alert to changes in behavior and to be brave enough to report concerns. Used social media and boosted posts. 1.8 million reach. Voice overs were from adult survivors. More videos are likely to be developed as there is a lot of material for developing this campaign. Tam noted some concerns about whether CPC Scotland will continue to do this campaign work in the future.

Tam thanked CPG members for helping with this incredibly impactful campaign. Carol wanted to thank Tam because of his great work in this field. Sharon mentioned they had clients involved in this process and survivors felt very empowered by

involvement with the campaign. Andrew found the video was moving but noted that people will often think it is someone else who will intervene. How do we move beyond this? Tam noted that there is a mindset change needed recognizing that this is a public health crisis. Real voices and experiences can make a difference here. Tam's slides will be shared with full membership and links to YouTube videos.

Whitney discussed 'Each and Every Child' and their framing ideas might be very useful here. Alison reflected that it was great to hear that CSA is a two year priority for CPC Scotland and keeping the momentum going is important. Message about being brave enough for adults to report concerns is critically important – the weight needs to be on adult shoulders. Alison also noted the drop in identified CSA concerns in child protection statistics and was interested in Tam's thoughts on this.

Significant issue – we need to recognize our CP systems are not working well picking up on scale of issue of CSA. Andrew talked about how more centralization of data about children is important, but also adults being able to report to a helpline. Andrew emphasized the needs of neuro diverse children.

Fulton and the group thanked Tam for a brilliant conversation. Fulton asked whether there was increased reporting. Tam noted this was very difficult to measure and to attribute to a campaign. Better outcome message is hits on landing page from the campaign. Tam reinforced that it would be good if CPC Scotland has continued links with the CPG.

Agenda item 5

The Information Commission Office has agreed to meet with the CPG. The issues we wish to discuss are how difficulties with accessing records can impact on access to the Redress Scheme. **Action Anne and Stuart**

Agenda item 6

AOB

Sandra wrote to Shona Robinson re delays in funding from Scottish Government re delays in funding for survivor agencies. I was disappointed to hear that the funding period runs from September 2024 for only eighteen months. There is an ongoing issue about sustainability of service for adult survivors.

Date of next meeting

10th December 2024 6pm (Virtual)