

# Minutes from Cross Party Group on Care Leavers: Initial meeting

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 1pm – 1.30pm

In attendance: Paul O’Kane MSP, Fulton MacGregor MSP, Jo Derrick (Staf CEO), Marion Willshaw (Staf) Angela Dulley, Rob Byrne

Paul O’Kane welcomed those in attendance and thanked the commitment of all involved to get to this stage.

MSPs who have expressed an interest in joining Karen Adam, Fulton MacGregor, Pamela Duncan Glancy, Miles Briggs, Collette Stevenson, Paul McLennan, Alexander Burnett with Martin Whitfield keen to attend but not as a formal member.

Jo Derrick thanked all involved and stated her belief in the importance of involving those with lived experience of the care system in the CPG to inform MSPs and other members of the challenges currently being face by care leavers but also to work with Parliament on solutions.

Jo began the process by asking for nominations for a Convenor. Fulton nominated Paul O’Kane as Convenor which was accepted.

Paul then asked for a Vice Convenor which Fulton agreed to on an interim basis on the understanding that an additional vice Convenor role would be filled at future meetings should the CPG be approved. Fulton expressed his commitment and interest in the CPG given his former life as a social worker and also expressed an interest in collaborating with the CPG on Social Work of which he is the Convenor. Paul welcomed the request and reiterated the importance of collaboration to break down barriers.

Jo confirmed the name of the group: Cross Party Group on Care Leavers

Jo stated the proposed purpose of the group: To inform MSPs of the many social, economic and financial challenges which care leavers face. To discuss how the work of the Parliament and Government can provide solutions; and to present a forum where parliamentarians can learn from the experiences of care leavers and those who support them”.

It was suggested that we add in a line about seeking to work collaboratively with other CPGs. Which Fulton agreed with.

Amended purpose: To inform MSPs of the many social, emotional wellbeing and financial challenges which care leavers face via a forum where parliamentarians can learn from the experiences of care leavers and those who support them. To work collaboratively with other relevant Cross-Party Groups and identify how the work of the Parliament and Government can provide solutions to the challenges raised by Care leavers.

Fulton commended the establishment of the group stating it was long overdue and

Paul remarked on the impact of hearing directly from those with lived experience.

The non-MSP members were confirmed by Jo Derrick – Staf who will provide Secretariat support to the CPG and also represent the voice of care leavers; Aberlour; and CELCIS with Who Cares?

Scotland, The Promise Scotland and other networks which work with care leavers to be followed up

with in due course. Jo confirmed that Staf is keen to ensure membership to the CPG brings co-representation of those with lived experience of the care system as well as those who represent them.

Paul approved members and acknowledged the importance of Promise involvement to ensure the work is scrutinised and work is moving along.

Fulton flagged that someone he knows with care experience, Ryan McShane, who is very vocal and would want to be involved but also raised the issue of how we represent the quieter voices of care leavers.

Paul acknowledged the issue and importance of getting the lesser heard voices around the table and asked Jo to share the strategic approach to ensure this was achieved.

Jo stated her contacts with STARR and Youth Justice Voices would represent secure care and care and justice experienced young people were involved. Jo mentioned National Leadership Network, which Staf are lead hosts for, as a means of reaching out to quieter voices across Scotland but also suggested Staf's connections with the workforce will allow us to reach out to those not yet involved in such groups. It was suggested Social Work Scotland could be a potential member and/or ally in the future.

Paul added that he and other MSPs should use their networks to get the broadest spectrum of voices to ensure there are meaningful discussions.

It was agreed that Paul's office would complete the necessary paperwork and Staf as secretariat would set up the first meeting once the CPG was approved.

Paul noted that CPGs are most effective when agendas are action focused, with invited speakers, including Ministers, FMQs etc.

The meeting ended with mutual thanks and appreciation of the importance of amplifying voice of care leavers. Paul reminded Staf are in Parliament exhibiting from the 15 – 17 March with evening reception on the 17<sup>th</sup> March.

#### Action points

- Paul O'Kane's office to complete CPG Registration Form to Standards Committee Staf to follow up on non-member organisations  
Once approved Staf to arrange first meeting to establish agenda of CPG going forward.