Cross-Party Group on Families Supporting Children's Learning

Tue 18 March 2025

Minute (draft)

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP (Co-convener) (Chair)
Oliver Mundell MSP (Co-convener)

Non-MSP Group Members

Amy Woodhouse (Parenting Across Scotland)
Cathy Sexton (Fathers Network Scotland)
Magaidh Wentworth (Comunn na Gàidhlig)
Alastair Wilson (University of Strathclyde)
Greg Dempster (Association of Heads & Deputes Scotland)
Sara McFarlane (Connect)
Gavin Yates (Connect)
Lydia McDonald (Connect)
Beverley Ferguson (Education Scotland)
Sarah Walker (NASUWT)
Annie Watson (Enquire)
John Forsyth (Shared Parenting Scotland)
Vanessa Morris (Dumfries & Galloway Council/SPION)

Apologies

Pam Duncan Glancy MSP
Denny Henderson (Connect)
Chris Small (CCPS)
Kathryn Farrow (SPION)

Welcome and Minutes of Previous Meeting

Fulton opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The minutes of the previous meeting of 1 October 2024 were approved, proposed by Gavin Yates and seconded by Sarah Walker.

Presentation by **Parenting across Scotland**

Amy Woodhouse provided a brief overview of Parenting across Scotland and key findings from the 2024 Parenting Evidence Review, particularly those relating to education. She also introduced PAS' campaign to increase children and young people's access to hobbies and asked how we can support more children across Scotland to experience the multiple benefits that hobbies provide.

Following the presentation, the group discussed funding for youth work, and issues around providing activities to more rural communities. It also discussed current provision of clubs and societies for children and young people, the logistics of providing hobbies to children around the school day, the impact of the schemes discussed on teachers and volunteers, the impact on shared parenting situations, potential financial costs to individuals, and community-based activities in lower income areas.

CPG attendants were invited to sign up to the Parenting across Scotland newsletter or email Amy directly at amy.woodhouse@parentingacrossscotland.org if they'd like to get involved in the campaign to support hobbies.

Presentation by **Connect**

Gavin Yates presented on Connect's recently published Relationships, Rights and Communication survey report. For most respondents, home-school partnerships are a positive experience. However, some families feel abandoned, especially if they are struggling to access the support their child needs. Connect has identified some key areas where consistency, new ideas and some additional focus would really help all parents and carers and schools to feel confident in their home-school partnerships.

Following the presentation, the group discussed survey methodology, parental rights in education, examples of best practice in schools, issues around a 'main parent' being appointed at schools and the impact of this on shared parenting, and the roll out of the Parents Portal.

The report can be found here

Future work and any other business

The next meeting will discuss current work around relationships, behaviour and consequences. Connect has offered to organise speakers on this.

The meeting closed 7.25pm.