Cross-Party Group on Unpaid Carers

Thursday 1st October 2026 at 1pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Carol Mochan MSP (Scottish Labour)
Cara McKee MSP (Scottish Green)
Helen McDade MSP (Reform UK)

Non-MSP Group Members

Fiona Pirrie, East Ayrshire Carers centre
Julie Carter, Firsthand Lothian
Lesley Jeffrey, Dumfries & Galloway
Christine Farquhar, Carer
Neil Campbell, Dundee Carers Centre
Laura McKenzie, Falkirk & Clackmannanshire
Margaret Murphy, EYC
Cath Purdie, PASDA
Salena Begley, Family Fund
Karen Maloney, Carers Trust Scotland
Paul Traynor, Carers Trust Scotland
Susan Smyth, Lanarkshire Carers Centre
Diane Sharp, Dochas Carers Centre
Diarmuid McDonnell, Carers Trust Scotland Advisory Board
James Calder, MECOPP
Mark Bevan. Leuchie House
Ian Sloan, Action for Children North Lanarkshire Young Carers
Jennifer White, Carers East Lothian
Harvey Carruthers, Fife Young Carers
Louise Harker, Unpaid Carer
Joan Best, Crossroads (North Argyll) Care Attendant Scheme
Janice Dunn, Carer
Jenni McNab, Shared Care Scotland
Janine Mccullough, Education Scotland
Marie McWaters, Carer
Laura Mahon, SFAD
Becky Duff, Carers Trust
Judith Hawcroft, North Argyll Carers Centre
Mo Colvin, Young Carers

John Gannon, Pasda
Moira McWhinnie, Carer

Apologies

Miles Briggs MSP (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party)
Sanne Dijkstra-Downie MSP (Scottish Liberal Democrats)
Joe Long MSP (Scottish Labour)
Iris Duane MSP (Scottish Labour)
David Smith (Reform UK)
Raymond Jamieson, PKAVS
Kate Hogarth, Shared Care Scotland
Sharlene Ramage, Falkirk & Clackmannanshire

Agenda item 1

Welcome and Introductions
Carol Mochan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies Do not use images, logos or tables.

Agenda item 3

Election of office-bearers
Agenda item 3 was considered ahead of Agenda item 2, due to time constraints and members needing to leave for other commitments.
Convenor
Paul introduced the election of office-bearers. Carol confirmed that she was willing to take on the role of Convenor.

- Proposed by: Cara McKee
- Seconded by: Helen McDade

Co-Convenor / Deputy Convenor
The Co-Convenor vacancy will be circulated to other MSP members. Helen has agreed to temporarily fill the role until there is a permanent replacement

- Proposed by: Carol Mochan
- Seconded by: Cara McKee

Secretariat of the group
The role of Secretariat was put forward and Carers Trust Scotland said they would be willing to take on the role.
Proposed by: Diarmuid McDonnell
Seconded by: Susan Smith

Agenda item 2

Future focus of the group focus
Carol Mochan MSP opened the discussion on the group's future priorities. Participants reflected on work undertaken during the previous few months. One of the key themes

to emerge was the importance of embedding cross-party group business within the wider work of the parliament.

In the past, the group's programme had been organised around key dates for carers and their associated themes. It was suggested that future meetings should follow a consistent theme, to allow continuity and a strategic focus on the group's work.
Potential areas of focus included:

- the right to a break for carers;
- the implementation of Carers Act legislation as it approaches its tenth anniversary;
- what is working well in practice; and
- where further action or improvement may be needed.

Carol Mochan MSP urged the need for delivery, and asked attendees to consider what must be done to ensure the government deliver on legislation. It was also suggested that the group consider policy commitments made in the Programme for Government.

The need to engage with carers over the support they require and the funding challenges in Health and Social Care Partnerships was discussed. Further discussions centred around challenges in carers' digital inclusion, along with improving the quality of data collection.

It was noted that carers centres have a good understanding of carers populations, but also funding pressures and increasing demand for these centres is a growing problem. Paul Traynor noted upcoming research on projections of carer numbers in Scotland.

The funding of IJBs and the importance of enabling flexible employment for carers was also discussed, as well as the work of other cross-party groups across the UK. The group agreed that it was important to have good connections with these groups, and other third sector stakeholders.

Carol Mochan MSP closed the meeting.

ACTIONS
Circulate the Co-Convenor vacancy to MSP members.
Confirm the date, year and venue of the next meeting.
Agree the frequency of future meetings. Three meetings a year
Select a consistent theme for the group's forthcoming programme
The group would look to write to other CPGs in Scottish Parliament and other institutions in the UK to engage with their work.

Agenda item 4

AOB
No other business was noted.

Agenda item 5

Date of next meeting

Carol Mochan MSP recommended that the next meeting of take place on 17th March at lunchtime.