

## Cross-Party Group Annual Return

**Name of Cross-Party Group**

**Cross-Party Group on Shared Parenting**

**Date Group Established** (the date of establishment is the date in this parliamentary session that the Group held its initial meeting, where the office bearers were elected and not the date that the Group was accorded recognition. All Groups should hold their AGMs on, or before, the anniversary of this date.)

**17.01.2018**

**Date of Most Recent Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

**22.02.2021**

**Date Annual Return Submitted**

**07.05.2025**

**Date of Preceding AGM** [this date is required to aid clerks in verifying that the most recent AGM has taken place within 11 to 13 months of the previous AGM]

**29.01.2020**

**Group Meetings and Activities**

Please provide details of each meeting of the Group including the date of the meeting, a brief description of the main subjects discussed and the MSP and non-MSP attendance figures.

Details of any other activities, such as visits undertaken by the Group or papers/report published by the Group should also be provided.

The Group met for its first meeting of the new Parliamentary Session on **14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

MSPs Fulton MacGregor, Bob Doris and Finlay Carson were present.

Apologies were received from Michael Marra and Jeremy Balfour. Seven members of the group were present, and two Scottish Government civil servants in attendance.

The main business was to elect office bearers and also to affirm the aims and objectives of the CPG, viz *“Where both parents are involved in their children’s upbringing, there is clear evidence of positive educational and social development. As such, shared parenting is a key mechanism for closing the attainment gap and tackling inequalities. Gender stereotyping is an issue that impacts upon many aspects of life including economic, social and family spheres. In the family arena traditional gender assumptions around child raising is one aspect of this, but an important one, as such assumptions influence early years’ perceptions, career choices and economic opportunities.*

*The CPG will identify, examine and promote policy and practice that supports both parents in sharing parenting responsibilities. It will consider how gender stereotypes can be tackled in the pursuit of a better understanding of what we need to do to ensure the best possible childhood and most promising adult life for Scotland's children. It will provide a forum for MSPs, stakeholders and other interested parties to engage directly in dialogue to inform policy developments and practice which impact on parents sharing responsibilities for the role and support networking on this topic.”*

The remaining business was discussion of a prospective work programme. A schedule has already been drawn up including presentation from a retired family court judge in Israel where issues are resolved very differently; a university researcher whose project gathered the views and experience of young people about their experience of shared parenting. It is rare in Scotland to hear the voices of young people themselves; from a US campaigner on behalf of Moms for Shared Parenting’ who sees shared parenting as a liberation from gendered custom and practice. Whatever the outcome of the UK Supreme Court on the UNCRC Incorporation Act the Scottish Parliament is committed to embedding the Convention in public practice. We will spend time on the implications of UNCRC and on the Family Law Modernisation Strategy.

A further meeting took place on **16<sup>th</sup> November 2021**.

MSPs Fulton MacGregor, Jeremy Balfour and Finlay Carson were present.

Apologies were received from Michael Marra. Nine members of the group were present. Two members of the Scottish Government civil service and an MSP staff member were in attendance. Two guests were invited to make presentations, Paul Bradshaw, Director of the Growing Up in Scotland study (GU), and Professor William Fabricius, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Arizona.

### **Agenda Item 1**

John Forsyth (Shared Parenting Scotland) reminded the group that recognising and addressing gender-based barriers to shared parenting has been within the DNA of the CPG from the outset - not only when parents separate but also within 'intact' households. He reminded the group of the Council of Europe resolution on the issue from 2015 aimed at promoting "gender equality in the workplace and in the private sphere". ( <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/22220/html>) Some of the 12 points listed in the resolution are incorporated in practice in Scotland but not all. The UNCRC Incorporation Act may highlight other areas where Scotland has ground to make up.

### **Agenda Item 2**

Equal Parenting is a child health matter Professor William Fabricius is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Arizona. He was in Scotland for a few days en route to presenting at the Nordic Conference on Shared Parenting and Gender Equality in Oslo. Professor Fabricius explained the science that led to change in the law in Arizona in 2013 presuming equal shared parenting after divorce. He took questions on the practical effect on shared parenting and conflict between parents since 2013. He explained that judges and lawyers as well as parents and their supporters had changed their practice to support equal parenting rather than make an order and stand back to see what happened.

### **Agenda Item 3**

Presentation on Growing Up in Scotland. Paul Bradshaw is Director of the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) and Project Director of the Growing Up in Scotland study (GUS). ScotCen have been delivering GUS on behalf of the Scottish Government since 2005. Paul provided an overview of the study revealing details of the data collected on children and families to date and how GUS has provided evidence for Scottish Government policy. In discussion with members Paul acknowledged that data on individual demographic groups of interest to members of the CPG - such as separated parents and fathers - has improved but remains an issue of resources.

### **MSP Members of The Group**

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group.

**Fulton MacGregor MSP (SNP)**

**Jeremy Balfour MSP (Con)**

**Michael Marra MSP (Lab)**

**Finlay Carson MSP (Con)**

**Bob Doris MSP (SNP)**

### **Non-MSP Members of The Group**

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

#### **Individuals**

#### **Organisations**

Shared Parenting Scotland, Scottish Youth Parliament, Fathers Network Scotland, Relationships Scotland, Family Mediation West, Parent Network Scotland, Men in Childcare, Midlothian SureStart, Children's Health Scotland, The Spark,, Families Outside, Circle Scotland, Parenting Across Scotland, Engender, Home Start, Grandparents Apart, Connect, CYPCS, Early Years Scotland, Dads Rock

### **Group Office Bearers**

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

<b>Convener</b>	Fulton MacGregor MSP
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<b>Deputy Convener</b>	Jeremy Balfour MSP
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<b>Secretary</b>	Shared Parenting Scotland
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<b>Treasurer</b>	-
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### **Financial Benefits or Other Benefits**

**Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.**

There were no expenses and no revenue.

### **COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 6 OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

**I, Convener of the Cross-Party Group on Shared Parenting hereby declare that, in line with the requirements of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct, this CPG has:**

5 MSP Members from 3 different political parties	X
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Held at least 2 quorate meetings in the last 12 months	X
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Held an AGM within 11-13months of the date of registration or the last AGM	X
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Submitted an annual return form within 30 calendar days of the AGM		
Provided Standards Clerks with 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings		X
Provided minutes of all meetings		X
Signed	Fulton MacGregor	
Date	07/05/2025	