

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)

28/01/2025

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]

26/09/2023* (This is not within 11-13 months; however Parliamentary Business postponed the original proposed date which led to this delay)

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 on **21st May 2024**.

MSPs Fulton MacGregor, Craig Hoy, and Bob Doris were present.

Agenda Item 1

The 50/50 Solution: Emma Johnson, author and advocate for equal shared parenting. Emma Johnson is author of “The 50/50 Solution: The Surprisingly Simple Choice that Makes Moms, Dads, and Kids Happier and Healthier After a Divorce”. She described her journey from wanting to be the parent in control after divorce to an understanding that equal shared parenting was much better for her daughter and both parents.

Agenda Item 2

The ‘Follow the Child Benefit’ barrier to Shared Parenting: John Forsyth, Shared Parenting Scotland. John Forsyth from Shared Parenting Scotland has been looking at how Child Benefit, a scheme for financial support for families with children designed for one purpose 50 years ago has become an institutional barrier built by local authorities and national agencies that works against shared parenting.

A further meeting took place on **28th January 2025**. This meeting was rescheduled from a 2024 meeting due to Parliamentary Business clashing with the proposed date.

MSPs Fulton MacGregor and Gillian MacKay were present.

Agenda Item 1

Fulton introduced CPG member, Cathy Sexton, Director of Fathers Network Scotland, who presented new findings from their 2024 Dads survey, in particular the data on mental health stresses of fathers, both in marriage/relationships and separated/divorced. The FNS Dads Survey is building an important data set over several years.

Agenda Item 2

Fulton introduced Jesper Lohse, chairman of the Danish Fathers Association and coordinating chairman of Nordic Fathers. He is member of the advisory board for Family Court Houses and the Council for Human Rights in Denmark. Jesper joined the meeting online from Denmark and explained the case to be heard shortly in the Danish Supreme Court challenging the Danish Government on the discriminations embedded in public benefits and services that work against equal shared parenting.

Agenda Item 3

Fulton introduced Mairi Welsh who graduated with a law degree in 2024 and worked as a student intern with Shared Parenting Scotland last summer. Her report, 'Just a Quick Question ...', is the result of her time meeting staff and clients which identified the pressing need for plain English communication between clients and both solicitors and the courts.

Agenda Item 4

There was discussion about the valuable insights drawn from all of the evening's presentation and the importance of wider dissemination. The Convener undertook to draft motions for the Parliament praising both as important contributions to the understanding of barriers to parenting in general and shared parenting in particular.

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)

Finlay Carson MSP (Con)

Bob Doris MSP (SNP)

Gillian MacKay MSP (Green)

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, Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland.

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.

Convener

Fulton MacGregor MSP

Deputy Convener

Jeremy Balfour MSP

Secretary

Shared Parenting Scotland

Treasurer

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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	*
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Submitted an annual return form within 30 calendar days of the AGM	
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Provided Standards Clerks with 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings	X
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Provided minutes of all meetings	X
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Signed	Fulton MacGregor MSP
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Date	07/05/2025
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*Original date of AGM in autumn 2024 was postponed.