

Cross-Party Group on Shared Parenting

Tuesday 28th January, 2025. 1800 – 2000 (online)

Draft Minutes

Present

Fulton MacGregor MSP
Gillan Mackay MSP

Invited guests

Cathy Sexton, Fathers Network Scotland
Jesper Lohse, Danish Fathers Association
Mairi Welsh, Intern, Shared Parenting Scotland

Non-MSP Group Members

June Loudon (Grandparents Apart), Richard Sinclair, Russell Galloway, Lorraine Galloway, Scott McElvanney (Researcher, Emma Harper MSP) Claire Ross, Sara McFarlane (Connect), Sarah Foley (Edinburgh University), Simon Stockwell, Adam Briggs, Wendy Georgson (Scottish Government), Kevin Kane (Shared Parenting Scotland), Ian Maxwell, Eoin Keane, Ryan Warren (Dads Rock), Kenny Spence (Men in Childcare), Megan Farr (CCYP), Amy Woodhouse (Parenting Across Scotland), Cheryl Brown (Midlothian Sure Start),

Apologies

Anne Gibson (Relationships Scotland)

Annual General Meeting

Fulton MacGregor apologised for the late postponement of the meeting and AGM originally scheduled for 26th November 2024, due to emergency business in the Chamber.

Fulton MacGregor MSP was reappointed as Convener. Proposed by Kenny Spence, seconded by Cheryl Brown

Jeremy Balfour was reappointed as Deputy Convener. Proposed by Fulton MacGregor, seconded by Cheryl Brown

Shared Parenting Scotland was reappointed as Secretary. Proposed by Kenny Spence, seconded by Cathy Sexton.

Minutes of May 21st 2024, and Matters Arising

The Minutes were amended to show Bob Doris MSP in attendance. There were no matters arising. Proposal to accept amended minutes, Cheryl Brown, seconded Fulton MacGregor.

Presentation: Fathers Network Scotland 2024 Dads Survey. Cathy Sexton

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.

Danish Supreme Court Review of Unequal Parenting Practice. Jesper Lohse

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.

“Just a Quick Question ...”. Mairi Welsh

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.

AOB

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.

The Convener and Secretariat would find a date for the next meeting before the summer recess.

The meeting closed at 20.00.