

The Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on  
Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 6.00 pm

Scottish Parliament Committee Room 5

**In attendance**

Johann Lamont, MSP Convener, Fulton MacGregor MSP Depute Convener, Anne Macdonald, Co-Convener, Janine Rennie, Wellbeing Scotland, Co Convener

Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Emma Bryson, Alex Griffiths on behalf of Margaret Mitchell MSP, Rona Mackay MSP, Co Convener CPG Violence Against Women and Children, Traci Kirkland, Wellbeing Scotland, Ewan Law, Rowan Alba, Dr Javita Narang, Social Destination, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer, Alison Wales, NSPCC

**Apologies**

Sandie Barton, Rape Crisis, Dr Sandra Ferguson, NES NHS, Margaret Mitchell MSP, Joy Patrick, KASP

**Welcome, apologies and introductions**

Johann welcomed everyone to the meeting

**Approval of Minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

The Minutes of our meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were approved

Nominated: Fulton MacGregor MSP

Seconded: Ewan Law

**Matters arising**

Invitation to Cabinet Secretary for Justice : The Cabinet Secretary will be attending on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019. This will be an opportunity for us to highlight the work we do on behalf of survivors and to discuss the justice issues they face.

Video Conferencing:

Update from request by Brian Whittle MSP on behalf of Alison Tait from Break the Silence. As the update on VC are in the Minutes sent out a few weeks prior to Alison's query, Alison would not have been aware of the feedback from IT that they cannot provide this facility at our meetings as they are not classed as parliamentary business.

Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill Stage I Link to Stage 2: Link sent to members

Chequebook has been passed from Wellbeing Scotland to Sandra Brown, Treasurer, at the Moira Anderson Foundation

### **Application for membership**

Sheila Gaul a Children and Families Social worker is very interested in joining the group to share her experiences and views. Sheila has experience of working with children and young people who have experienced physical and sexual abuse. She has also been trained in investigative interviewing and has on many occasions interviewed children and young people formally as part of ongoing police investigations. She also has significant experience with the children's hearing process.

The Group were unanimous on Sheila joining the CPG. **Action: Anne and Janine to contact Sheila and provide our Procedures and Terms of Reference**

### **Events update:**

- Dame Denise Coia will attend an Event to discuss her work as Chair of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Task Force on 27<sup>th</sup> February
- Humsa Yousaf MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice will attend our meeting on 15th May to discuss justice issues that survivors encounter
- Event with Mathew McVarish on mental health **Action Anne and Sandra**
- Nadine Milne , Policy Team, Scottish Government **Action Anne and Janine**

### **AOCB**

DS Catriona Henderson from Police Scotland has got back to us with the final version of their survivor leaflet. This was sent out to members with the minutes. Although there are still some misgivings on the leaflet, several of our suggested changes have been incorporated.

Sandra and other members raised concerns on the recent case of Christopher Daniel. Sheriff Sinclair gave him an absolute discharge even when he had been found guilty and convicted of the sexual abuse of the child.

Janine discussed her debate on Scotland Tonight and raised concerns that it was stated that the child had no impact on them from the abuse by the sheriff where in reality a child will dissociate and freeze.

A full discussion continued on the messages this gives to perpetrators and to child victims and their families who will understandably feel abandoned by the legal system. We agreed that whilst we are shocked at this outcome we cannot pursue it but will raise it with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on this and the wider issues of sentencing and training on childhood trauma for the Judiciary.

## **Date of next meetings and events**

**Event:** Dame Denise Coia, Chair of Children & Young People's Mental Health Task Force, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 1.00 pm CR4  
(*This is not a CPG Business Meeting*) Members have been asked to circulate details of this event as widely as possible. We would also like to have as many MSPs as possible.

**CPG Meeting:** With attendance by Humza Yousaf MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 1.00pm CR3. Members should consider any justice issues they would like to raise and let Anne and Janine know prior to the meeting.

## **Presentation by Edinburgh Rape Crisis**

Johann, Fulton and the group welcomed survivors, staff and volunteers from Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre who gave a presentation on their poetry and writings, resulting in the publication of an anthology of 'Rising Free', a deeply moving anthology of creative writing by survivors who have used the services of Rape Crisis Centre Edinburgh.

This anthology is about survival, healing, finding voice and calling for change and a powerful commentary on the changes needed to improve justice for survivors of sexual violence and the impact of Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre's services.

Johann, Fulton and Rona formally thanked the survivors and Rape Crisis Centre Edinburgh as did the Cross Party membership. It was agreed that whilst we cannot raise individual's personal experiences, we will bring the issues to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice when we meet and for us as a group to continue discussions with RCCE.