

**AGM & Cross-Party Group**  
**Children and Families Affected by Imprisonment**  
**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017**  
**1pm-2:30pm**

**Attendees:** Mary Fee MSP, Nancy Loucks, Tim Parkinson, Gael Cochrane, Sheila Gordon, Graeme McKerracher, Stephanie Jenkins, Angela Phillips, Rebecca Joyce, Karen Armstrong, Barbara Donegan, Laura Van Der Hoeven, Richard Lyle MSP

**Apologies:** May Chamberlain, Pete White, Valerie MacNiven, Georgina Lyttle, Heather Noller

<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	<b>Action</b>
Mary Fee MSP welcomed those in attendance.	
<b>AGM: Election of office bearers</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Fee MSP was re-elected as Convener (Proposed by Nancy Loucks and seconded by Tim Parkinson)</li> <li>• Richard Lyle MSP was re-elected as Vice-Convener (Proposed by Mary Fee MSP and seconded by Gael Cochrane)</li> <li>• Nancy Loucks was re-elected as Secretary (Proposed by Mary Fee and seconded by Laura Van Der Hoeven)</li> </ul>	
<b>Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as accurate.</p> <p>Laura van der Hoeven gave an update regarding changes to applications for APVU (travel costs for prison visits). The new system has caused considerable problems for families but after several months is gradually getting sorted. Training from the APVU team has been provided for prison Visitor Centre coordinators and key SPS staff, organised by the National Prison Visitor Centre Coordinator. Laura will keep the Group posted of any further developments.</p> <p>The new system has led to considerable delays in processing payments. The APVU have extended the period of time during which a claim must be made while this backlog is cleared so that instead of the usual 28 day cut off, people can make a claim for their travel to any prison visit during the last 99 days.</p>	

Update on Parliamentary Business	Action
<p>Mary Fee raised a PQ regarding SPS compliance with Rule 7 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules) 2015 regarding data collection of children and families of prisoners.</p> <p>The Information Sharing (Scotland) Bill currently going through the Education Committee may have implications for implementation of the requirement to collect and share information about children of prisoners under the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.</p>	
Presentation and discussion: Principles and Purposes of Sentencing: Scottish Sentencing Council Consultation	Action
<p>John Scott QC gave a presentation on the Consultation from the Scottish Sentencing Council on the principles and purposes of sentencing. Details of his presentation, which was based on the consultation, are available here:  <a href="https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/consultations/principles-and-purposes-of-sentencing/">https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/consultations/principles-and-purposes-of-sentencing/</a></p> <p>In discussion, the Group noted that the principles and purposes in the consultation were very broad and arguably unrefutable (e.g. that sentencing should be fair and proportionate). Nancy asked how responses from group members to the consultation might have the most impact, in view of the group's desire to ensure that the impact of sentencing on children and families was taken into account. John suggested that responses could focus on relative priorities within the purposes and principles to get this view across.</p>	
AOCB	Action
<p>Lord Farmer's Review of the importance of maintaining prisoners' family ties was published in August. Although focused on England and Wales, the review provides comprehensive evidence and recommendations valuable for use in Scotland. Copies of the press release on the launch of the review were available at the meeting.</p> <p>Other current Consultations relevant to the work of the group include the creation of smoke-free prisons (which includes a question specifically about engagement with families on this); parole reform; and the Community Justice Scotland Strategic Plan.</p>	

<p>The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland has been published, with a number of items relevant to the group such as increased use of electronic tagging and extension of the presumption against short sentences.</p>	
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<p>The 'Digital Prison? Positive Futures' conference takes place in Edinburgh on 14 November and will include a discussion of the use of IT in promoting family contact.</p>	
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<p>Finally, Families Outside is considering a 'Send Your MSP to Prison' event to coincide with the Scottish Government's Year of the Young Person in 2018. Details of this will be circulated in due course.</p>	
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**Date of next meeting:** TBC, though agreed that lunchtime meetings are preferable