

Final Minute of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Men's Violence Against Women and Children

Tuesday 6th December 12.30 pm Queensberry House, Room Q1.07

Present

- Christina McKelvie MSP (Chair)
- Claire Baker MSP (joined the meeting at 1.15pm)
- Rhoda Grant MSP
- Stephen Madill- CEC, Safer Families
- Catriona Kirkpatrick- Engender
- Dawn Fife- SAY Women
- Marsha Scott- Scottish Women's Aid
- Louise Johnson- Scottish Women's Aid (Minutes)
- Melanie McCarry- University of Strathclyde
- Davy Thomson- White Ribbon Scotland
- Rachel Adamson - Zero Tolerance
- Rebecca Malcolm- Intern at Christina McKelvie's office

2)Apologies

- Mhairi McGowan for ASSIST
- Anne Hayne for NHS Lanarkshire - EVA Services
- Lily Greenan
- George Eckton
- Chris Gray- Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Perth & Kinross

3) Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the inaugural CPG meeting of 28th September 2016 were agreed by the meeting- proposed by Christina McKelvie and seconded by Marsha Scott

4) Agreement of Members

- SAY Women, represented by Dawn Fife
- White Ribbon Scotland, represented by Davy Thomson
- Dr Melanie McCarry of the University of Strathclyde

All had indicated that they wished to rejoin the CPG, having been members of the CPGMVAWC previously, and this was unanimously agreed by the members present.

5) Priorities for work of the CPG

Sexual Violence, the proposed new criminal offence of domestic abuse, implementation of "Equally Safe" and judicial training had all been previously proposed. A discussion followed around topics for future meetings:-

Proposed new criminal offence of domestic abuse- the CPG could feed in ideas to the Bill Team and the Minister. Ongoing conversations underway as to whether the proposed law will be fit for purpose and what it should contain. The SGov is committed to ensuring children's safety and that they are well- treated but the issue is how this can be translated into the Bill. This work is a high priority for SWA, along with support mechanisms for rolling out the offence and training. Opportunity for Scotland to devise the best legislation and it is important that the SGov hear from the VAW sector

Access to Justice- Justice Committee's review of COPFS practice and procedure -Christina McKelvie mentioned that issues had been raised on the

treatment of victims at Hamilton Sheriff Court and that the response could have been better. Not clear if the CPG members still have the opportunity to feed into the Inquiry

FGM, forced marriage and Commercial Sexual Exploitation -SWA asked that the CPG's work should include a closer look at what's happening in relation to FGM, forced marriage and Commercial Sexual Exploitation in addition to domestic abuse and sexual offending. SWA now operated the Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline so there is a need to have a conversation about this issue.

Intersections between economic discrimination, VAW and the impact on women and children.

Issues for children- Representation for children in court. Marsha Scott inquired whether there was a connection between work of the CPGMVAWC and the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry into the sexual abuse of children in care in Scotland. Does the CPG have a role in feeding into the process as this may be an opportunity to raise the agenda on VAW and protecting children?

Immigration, asylum and the “no recourse to public funds” issue- This is a cross-sector matter. Particular impact on 16-17 year olds as NRTPF is making engagement difficult and increasing number of children coming from Syria. SWA is working with the Scottish Refugee Council (“SRC”) around this matter and the abuse of women and Christina McKelvie advised that the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee is looking at working with the SRC. Marsha Scott raised the issue that dispersal of refugees and asylum seekers around Scotland is an issue since this is being done with no support to local authorities around this work and the legalities involved, no engagement with VAW organisations and no support to the women. The CPG could invite Nina Murray, Women's Worker at the SRC, to the CPG to discuss these issues. **ACTION- invite SRC to future meeting of CPG**

Christina McKelvie advised of an issue raised with her office in relation to researchers seeking access to women and how appropriate this was. A university from England and the Local Government Association from England and Wales approached Saheliya with a request for their support in accessing women in relation to research on FGM. Their approach has caused concern since they are offering women money to engage, but no support. Christina's officials will discuss with Saheliya.

Primary Prevention in Scotland- What does this look like and does it encompass VAW in the context of women's inequality and what does this mean in terms of policy, etc. and what we do or want to do differently? Zero Tolerance noted that Christina McKelvie's role in the Scottish Government's Equalities and Human Rights Committee provides links between equality and VAW. The “join-up” is missing in the “Equally Safe” Delivery Plan.

Brexit- Implications of “hard Brexit”/repeal of the Human Rights Act and international instruments and obligations. There is a perception that Brexit may mean “no more human rights” for the UK but there is an opportunity to address this. The Scottish Parliament' SPICE is looking at all the human rights obligations of the Scottish Parliament and the Concluding Observations on the UNCRC as a “route map” across all protected characteristics and VAW. This will be considering budgeting and discriminatory practices within schools- the EIS has a tool kit. Discriminatory practices will be looked at and their impact across all protected groups

Stephen Madill advised that this has impacted on participation with the CEC groups for Polish men; workers and men not keen to engage due to a fear of being abused because of their nationality.

Funding from Europe has filtered through local authorities and the SGov. ZT has asked the SGov to identify the number of organisations potentially impacted by the loss or restriction of European funding. Will this impact on the third sector VAW organisations and access to DAPHNE funding? What is the SGov's stance and are they being proactive in terms of their presence at Strasbourg, Brussels and the UN- could they be doing more? Christina McKelvie advised that the Equalities and Human Rights Committee will be considering this and information will be on their webpage. She will be continuing her representation of Scotland on the Council of Europe and will be joining the Current Affairs Committee.

Agreed topics for further discussion as future Agenda items

- **Equally Safe** – as a permanent agenda item, with update from SGov
- **Brexit**
- **Access to Justice**
- **DA offence**
- **Austerity & economics linked to VAW**
- **Benefits system**
- **NRTPF, etc**
- **Primary Prevention**

Scheduling of meetings & invitations

Noted that there had been difficulties in securing MPS representation due to long-standing commitments already in place. Possibly rotate around Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to secure best MSP representation, other Parliamentary business permitting. The meeting discussed Invitations to present to the meeting and it was agreed that we would ask the Cab Secretary for Justice and his officials and the DA Bill Team in January/February and also Trevor Owen from SGov Equalities Unit to give an update on "Equally Safe" to the CPG, as a standing item

ACTION

**Contact the Cab Sec's office to invite him to the next CPG meeting- Jan/Feb?
Invite DA Bill Team (Jan/Feb) and Trevor Owen to deliver "Equally Safe" update**

Members' Updates- to be on the agenda as a standing item

Melanie McCarry- informed the meeting on the Scottish Government research project Strathclyde University, linking with Glasgow University, will be undertaking covering sexual violence on university campuses and the implementation of "Equally Safe" to produce a toolkit on pathways for higher education establishments. This will be capturing information on rape and sexual assault but not FGM, CSE or forced marriage and the researchers will be capturing the dataset from staff and, working with the Strathclyde Students' Association, students across the campus. They are also looking for grant funding to extend the research element to the University of the West of Scotland, in order to access varied campuses and identify differences. The project plans to carry out campus-based surveys and develop a new MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on VAW.

Stephen Madill- Rory Macrae from the CEC "Working with Men" project has been seconded to the SGov to work on the re-accreditation of the Caledonian System, involving the rewriting of all the manuals as a precursor to the further roll-out of the System. Funding for their RESPECT Polish Project is also needed since this ends in

SAY Women- developing a seminar with Quarriers and looking at a series for people with autism; more young women being referred to the SAY Women service who are identifying as autistic. If women are undiagnosed, this will impact on agency responses and how they present. SAY Women are considering how to progress this and making further links into mental health services/policy. Links into benefit system and work capability assessments. Male applicants are being scored with a “higher need” and obtaining benefits while women presenting with the same issues are being denied any award and having to appeal, because of the male gendered approach.

Engender- developing roadmap- “15 year plan” as to what the SGov can do to achieve women’s equality and their response to VAW is part of that.

Zero Tolerance- aware of the lack of a gendered analysis in Early Years provision and trying to have conversations with the Ministers and the profession but finding this difficult. This is a huge issue that has been massively underplayed and not recognised in terms of the impact on children and their understanding is entrenched from a very early stage. Could this be incorporated into SVQ training or curriculum? However, the problem with this is that the approach tends to be watered down to a basic approach around “gender”.

Work with employers- PACT- if an employee discloses DA, employer can support the employee and effect primary prevention. However, the take-up is low. Clear that the “burden” of “education” is being seen as the responsibility of “Early Years”, as opposed to adults and there is no tie-in with the workforce and workforce policies in terms of primary prevention. Given this, how can we push primary prevention at adults to overcome the usual response of aiming this “just for children”? Need to keep the dialogue open and ongoing. (Stephen Madill added for information that in relation to employers’ DA workplace policies, the CEC has a policy that it will support the victim of DA, etc., but also the perpetrator who wants support.)

The media also have a responsibility to stop “normalising” VAW. ZT will be refreshing their “Handle with Care Guidelines for Journalists” and advised that the “Write to End Violence against Women” Annual Award event was later that evening.

SWA

Homelessness and DA community research project- the community research team in Fife is working on a Housing Improvement Plan with Fife Council to support women who have experienced homelessness though DA. The Building Equality Project is looking at the intersection of women’s economic dependence and DA, helping women to access paid work that lifts women and children out of poverty and with Engender, SWA is looking at a Round Table for the “gender road map”, where equality issues for women could be evidenced- health, media, child care, benefits.

SWA’s joint work with the Children and Young People’s Commissioner in Scotland, “Power Up, Power Down project”, was designed for children with lived experience of domestic abuse to contribute their views on court ordered contact processes and decisions, the outcome of which will be launched publicly. Also the .Children’s Participation Project, looking at how children would like to participate in “Equally Safe”

Date of next meeting

End of January 2017