

**Approved Minutes of  
Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on  
Shared Parenting**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018  
From 18:00 to 20:00  
Room Q1.03, Scottish Parliament**

**1 Gillian Martin MSP in the chair.**

Gillian welcomed members attending for the first time and suggested it would be useful to go round the table for brief introductions.

**2 Present.**

Gillian Martin MSP, Bob Doris MSP, Finlay Carson MSP, Joan McAlpine MSP, Rona Mackay MSP, Kenny Spence (Men in Childcare), Peter Cloke (Circle), Ian Maxwell (FNF Scotland), Sam Pringle (Fathers Network Scotland),

John Forsyth (FNF Scotland), Peter Morris (Men and Boys Initiative), Mark Malcolm, Lorraine Beveridge (both Issy Shillinglaw Grandparents Rights), Cheryl Brown (Midlothian Sure Start), Frances Byatt-Smith (Edinburgh Parent Centre), Rosanne Cubitt (Relationships Scotland). Eoin Keane.

Guests: Craig Flunkert, David Leitch (both Scottish Government), Alison Cameron, Gitit Kadar-Satat, Jane Denholm (Office of Ivan McKee MSP)

**3 Apologies** had been received Andy Weightman MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP, Brock Lueck (OPFS), Fiona Robertson (North Lanarkshire), Elaine Stalker (Families Outside), James Jopling (Samaritans), Graeme Richards (Circle), Line Knudsen (GUS), Pauline Linn and Brian McGlynn (FM West), Eileen Brownlie (Relationships Scotland), June Loudon (Grandparents Apart).

**4 Minutes of 12 June meeting and matters arising**

The minutes were approved as drafted.

Matters arising:

Membership. Since the last meeting Francesca de Munnich had been accepted as a corresponding member on behalf of Save the Children.

Subscription. The June meeting had approved a request for a voluntary subscription of £25 from members to cover miscellaneous expenses such as speaker costs. 5 member organisations have made the £25 contribution.

**5 Presentations and discussion.**

Gillian introduced the evening's presentations. First, Craig Flunkert and David Leitch from the Scottish Government learning Directorate talked the group through 'Learning Together' the recently published National Action Plan on Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement Family Learning and Learning at Home.

Alison Pringle, Head teacher at Elphinstone primary School, East Lothian, Sam Pringle from Fathers Network Scotland, and Gitit Kadar-Satat from Edinburgh University on 'How Involving dads as well as mums can work and the results it can achieve'.

The presentations were warmly received and the examples drawn from the sustained effort Prestonpans Infant School were described as genuinely uplifting and inspiring.

Issues that were raised round the table included:

How to overcome resistance from mothers if the inclusion of fathers is seen as intrusion on their territory;

How to overcome the basic systemic obstacle that Pupil Enrolment Forms and annual data updates are given to only one parent where the parents no longer live together. How do schools even know who the separated fathers are?

How can the Prestonpans/East Lothian effort be replicated more widely across Scotland?

## **6. Forward planning of Agenda**

Issues discussed included:

a proposal that would illustrate obstacles to shared parenting for fathers in receipt of social security benefits (Action - Peter Cloake)

James Jopling could be asked for information on incidence of family breakup among those who contact Samaritans (Action – Secretariat)

The importance of effort and public campaign to make men in childcare more 'male friendly' in the same way as so much effort is put into making STEM 'female friendly'

Information and explanation about Contact Centres.

## **7. Any other business**

Convenor. Gillian explained to the meeting her wish to stand down as convenor though would continue to support the group. Efforts will be made to identify a successor ahead of the agm set for January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Date of next meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019