

**Session 5 – Meeting of the
Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Disability**

**Tuesday 19th September, 1-2.30pm, Scottish Parliament – CR 4 – The Clerk
Maxwell Room – T1.60, SP**

Attendees:

MSPs: Jeremy Balfour MSP (Convenor), Stuart McMillan MSP (Deputy Convenor),
John Mason MSP

Secretary: Layla Theiner, Disability Agenda Scotland

Treasurer: Mike Harrison, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Other attendees: Julia Shillitto, office of Jeremy Balfour MSP; Caron Jenkins, Arthritis Care Scotland; John Miller, Action Duchenne; Rebecca Scarlett, LEAD Scotland; John Ballantine, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA); Carolyn Lochhead, SAMH; Carolynne Hunter, parent/carer; Ashleigh de Verteuil, Leonard Cheshire; Asha Singh, independent; Morgan Jones, MECOPP: Supporting BME Carers; Robin Wickes, Edinburgh Access Panel; John Sutherland, consultant; Colette Walker, East Renfrewshire Disability Action (ERDA); Cate Vallis, RNIB Scotland; Maureen McAllister, Arthritis Care; Stan Flett, Aberdeen Action on Disability; Tony Sneddon, Vice Chair of the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee / CWU; Robert McGeachy, Camphill Scotland; Paul F Cockburn; Aurora Constantin, researcher into autism, University of Edinburgh; Susie Fitton, ILIS/Inclusion Scotland; Tracey Francis, Contact, Craigmillar Enterprise and Arts Centre (SPACE); Helena Cant, Scottish Churches Disability Group (SCDG); Maggie Ellis, EKTG/PhoneAbility; Seonaid Cooke, TalkTime Edinburgh; Frank Morgan, DGVoice; Jenny Miller, PAMIS

Apologies were received from: ASH Scotland; Jackie Baillie MSP; Catriona Burness, RNIB Scotland; Stephanie Fraser, Bobath Scotland Cerebral Palsy Therapy Centre; Rachel Le Noan, Down Syndrome Scotland; Terry Robinson, RNIB Scotland / Inclusion Scotland; Colin Millar, SPAEN; Bill Scott, Inclusion Scotland; David Nicholson, Scottish Churches Disability Group (SCDG); Avril Hepner, BDA; Heather Fiskin, ILIS/Inclusion Scotland; Grant Carson, Capability Scotland/GCIL (Glasgow Centre for Independent Living)

Minutes:

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies, review of minutes from the last meeting

Jeremy Balfour MSP chaired the meeting. He provided an update on the confirmation of the joint CPG meeting of the Cross Party Groups on Disability, Visual Impairment, Carers and Learning Disability. This meeting will take place on Thursday 16th November (1-2.30pm, in Committee Room 4) and will focus on a discussion about social security in Scotland, the Minister for Social Security, Jeane Freeman. Spaces will be limited due to the size of the room and interest in the meeting. He asked people to let Layla Theiner (Layla@disabilityagenda.scot) know if they would like to attend this meeting.

Action: Following discussion on issues with Blue Badges, he said the secretary had drafted letter, reflecting input from across the CPG, and this had been sent from his office, and will be circulated for information. It was noted that we have asked for a representative of the Scottish Government to attend a future meeting of the CPG to give an update and feedback on issues raised.

Jeremy Balfour MSP asked if there were any objections to the CPG endorsing the ILIS/Inclusion Scotland report on accessible housing, following the discussion at the last meeting. Susie Fitton from ILIS will be at the meeting if there are any queries.

Action: There were not any objections, and if none were received by email, the secretary would draft a short letter from Jeremy to ILIS/Inclusion Scotland to confirm endorsement.

2. AGM business

The office bearers were reconfirmed:

- Jeremy Balfour as Convenor
- Stuart Mcmillan as Deputy Convenor
- Disability Agenda Scotland (DAS) as Secretary
- Mike Harrison as Treasurer

The other MSP members were also reconfirmed:

- George Adam MSP
- Jackie Baillie MSP
- Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP
- John Mason MSP
- Pauline McNeill MSP
- Anas Sarwar MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP
- Alexander Stewart MSP
- Adam Tomkins MSP

The following non-MSP individual and organisation members were reconfirmed or added to the list:

Non MSP Individuals

- Janice Connelly
- Carolynne Hunter
- John Sutherland MBE

Organisations

- DAS (Disability Agenda Scotland) - secretary
- Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) - treasurer
- Action on Hearing Loss Scotland
- Action Duchenne
- Arthritis Care Scotland
- Autism Rights

- Capability Scotland
- Carers Trust Scotland
- Changing Faces
- Contact a Family Scotland
- Down's Syndrome Scotland
- Drake Music Scotland
- EKTG
- ENABLE Scotland
- Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL)
- Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA)
- Inclusion Scotland
- Lead Scotland
- PAMIS
- PhoneAbility
- Quarriers
- RCSLT (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists)
- RNIB Scotland
- Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)
- Scottish Churches Disability Group (SCDG)
- Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF)
- Sense Scotland
- Scottish Personal Assistant Employers Network (SPAEN)
- Talk Time Edinburgh

Action: The secretary and Jeremy Balfour's office would complete and submit the necessary paperwork to the Scottish Parliament.

3. Updates and any other business

Due to time constraints, the Convenor took updates and any other business first.

Aurora Constantin from the University of Edinburgh would like to give a short overview of some research she is undertaking into autism. She shared copies of a flyer and this will be circulated with the minutes.

Seonaid Cooke from Talk Time Edinburgh, who have just joined the CPG, gave an overview of the work of the organisation.

Several people including Jenny Miller from PAMIS and Carolynne Hunter said it would be useful to discuss at a future meeting issues around children's services, including care packages and transitioning from to adult services. **Action:** It was agreed that this would be a topic for either the next meeting or the one after.

Jeremy gave an update on a meeting he had attended with disabled parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth including Australia, Canada, a number of African countries, Malaysia, Jersey and Wales. Jeremy will be participating in some work around this and may update again in the future.

4. Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation, with Lord Bracadale

Lord Bracadale talked about the remit of the review and the process he is following. The review includes hate crime across a range of protected characteristics including race, religion, disability and transgender. Part of what they are looking at is what makes a crime a hate crime, existing legislation and how it relates to culture change. Some issues will be outside the scope of the inquiry. Statistics from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal (COPFS) suggest that there is underreporting of hate crime by disabled people.

He outlined the key points in the recently launched consultation and explained how input will help to shape the proposals on changes to the law. There were a number of comments and questions including on the importance of inclusion; education and culture change; and how legislation relates to the Equality Act. There was also a discussion about the engagement and promotion the inquiry team is undertaking to encourage responses to the consultation.

There was a comment about the slide used as a backdrop as it was not helpful for those with a visual impairment. The URL and email address was read out, and the inquiry team noted this issue for future engagement.

The consultation is open and closes on 31st November 2017. More information on the review is available online here: <http://www.gov.scot/about/review/hate-crime-legislation>; and <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/hate-crime/independent-review-of-hate-crime-legislation/>

Towards the end of the meeting, Jeremy Balfour MSP (Convenor) and Stuart McMillan MSP (Deputy Convenor) had to leave the meeting to go to the Chamber. Layla Theiner (DAS) chaired the final 10mins of the meeting.

5. Future meetings

Action: Layla mentioned the joint meeting in November and that dates would be circulated soon for meetings in early December and February and, based on input from the members, these were likely to be focused on children's services, employment and follow up to the discussion about Blue Badges.