



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Thursday 18 February 2021

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Thursday 18 February 2021

CONTENTS

	Col.
SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION	1
Civil Partnership Between Persons of Different Sexes (Prescribed Bodies) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/24)	1

EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

5th Meeting 2021, Session 5

CONVENER

*Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

*Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee City West) (SNP)

*Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con)

*Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)

*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Claire Menzies

LOCATION

Virtual Meeting

Scottish Parliament

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Thursday 18 February 2021

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Subordinate Legislation

Civil Partnership Between Persons of Different Sexes (Prescribed Bodies) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 (SSI 2021/24)

The Convener (Ruth Maguire): Good morning, and welcome to the fifth meeting in 2021 of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

Before we deal with agenda item 1, I want to address the conduct of the committee's deputy convener, Alex Cole-Hamilton, during last week's proceedings on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill at stage 2. Committee members might have seen that the member raised a point of order in the chamber on Tuesday. However, as the Presiding Officer pointed out, the incident happened during a public meeting of this committee, so it is a matter for me, as convener, to address.

The member's unparliamentary conduct was brought to my attention following the meeting. I assure colleagues that, if I had observed it at the time, I would have dealt with it immediately. The aggression and bad language displayed were entirely improper, fell far short of what is acceptable and clearly demonstrated disrespect to the chair and the committee and, in particular, to the Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd. I have written to the minister to offer my sincere apologies for not spotting the unacceptable behaviour and dealing with it at the time. I now place my apologies on the record.

That the member's conduct might have been observed by children and young people who helped to shape the legislation that we were considering saddens me. It is incumbent on all of us, as elected representatives, to set the best example to the people whom we represent, including our children and young people, and to show them that disagreement and difference of belief are normal and healthy and can be handled through respectful dialogue.

I have written to Mr Cole-Hamilton to seek his assurance that he will conduct himself in a courteous and respectful manner in future. I confirm that I have now received from him a letter

in which he apologises unreservedly and gives such an assurance.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the apology that I gave in the chamber on Tuesday. I know that I should have come to the committee first, but I really wanted to place my apology on the record as soon as parliamentary time would allow.

My conduct fell below parliamentary standards. I am very sorry to you, convener, to the minister and to anyone who was watching, including the committee's members. I was a youth worker for 19 years, so I know how important it is for adults to carry themselves appropriately and for them to set an example. On Thursday last week, I failed to do so. My conduct has caused a great deal of distress, for which I am very sorry. There really is no excuse for it.

I also apologise to my mum, who brought me up to have better manners than that. I am sorry.

The Convener: Thank you. Your comments are noted.

Agenda item 1 is consideration of subordinate legislation. The Civil Partnership Between Persons of Different Sexes (Prescribed Bodies) (Scotland) Regulations 2021 are subject to the negative procedure. Any member who wishes to comment should indicate that in the chat box now.

No member has indicated that they wish to comment on the regulations.

That concludes the public part of our meeting and we will shortly move into private session. The committee's next meeting will be on 25 February, when we will take evidence from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

09:34

Meeting continued in private until 09:50.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba