

# Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

## 5th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Thursday 28 October 2021

### Re-registration of Cross-Party Groups

#### Introduction

1. Under the terms of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct (the Code), Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) that were registered in the previous Session of the Parliament can seek to re-register in this Session. Standards clerks, in consultation with the Convener, undertake a sifting exercise and highlight applications to be referred to the Committee for further scrutiny (either through a paper to the Committee or an evidence session with the Convener of the proposed group). Proposed Groups that do not require further scrutiny because they meet all of the requirements will be re-registered and can begin operating without having to seek fresh recognition from the Committee.

2. Section 6, paragraph 24 of the Code lays out the criteria to be applied for re-registrations—

- *Name and purpose of Cross-Party Group:* These must be the same as were registered in the previous Session.
- *MSP membership:* There must be at least 5 MSP members and at least one MSP from each of the parties or groups represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. The Committee has agreed a waiver of this rule in Session 6 of the Parliament and Groups are required to have 5 MSPs from the majority of parties or groups represented on the Parliamentary Bureau.
- *Non-MSP membership:* There are two categories of membership, individual and organisational. For organisational members, it is the organisation that is the member and not the individuals that attend from that organisation. An individual or organisation is not a member of a Group until Standards Clerks have been informed.
- *Office Bearers:* There must be at least 2 MSP office bearers and one of these must be the Convener of the Group.
- *Financial Benefits:* Value and source of any financial benefit must be given. In the first instance, the Group will be contacted and asked to provide more information.
- *Contact:* Must be the Convener of the Group.

## **Cross-Party Groups that have been re-registered**

3. For the Committee's information the following proposed CPGs met the criteria for re-registration, complied with the Code regarding meetings, complied with the Code in Session 5 and have consequently been re-registered.

- Autism
- Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Conditions
- Cancer
- China
- Chronic Pain
- Construction
- Crofting
- Dyslexia
- Epilepsy
- Food
- Funerals and Bereavement
- Health Inequalities
- Housing
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Japan
- LGBTI+
- Mental Health
- Music
- Palestine
- Poland
- Prevention and Healing of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Science and Technology
- Scotch Whisky
- Shared Parenting
- St Andrew's Day
- Taiwan
- Towns and Town Centres
- Visual Impairment

## **Cross-Party Groups that require further scrutiny**

### **Change of name / purpose**

4. Section 6 paragraph 40 of the Code states that "Any proposal to change the name or purpose of the Group must be drawn to the attention of the Committee. The Committee will consider the proposed change and decide if recognition should still be accorded to the Group." As the decision to accord recognition is solely for the Committee, any change to a previously registered name or purpose requires the approval of the Committee.

5. The following proposed Groups complied with the Code regarding initial meetings and complied with the Code in Session 5 but did not meet all of the

requirements for re-registration. Two Groups wish to change their purpose and one Group wishes to change its name and purpose.

6. The proposed CPG on Colleges and Universities has amended its purpose from last session. In Session 5 the purpose of the Group was-

- To consider and discuss the future of further and higher education in Scotland.

7. The proposed Group's new purpose is—

- The Cross Party Group on Colleges and Universities is a forum for debate and sharing of information on a wide range of issues affecting the higher and further education sectors in Scotland.

8. Liz Smith MSP is the Convener of the proposed Group and her office have provided the following explanation for the change—

“The reason for the change is that we felt that the previous purpose was rather vague. Also, “the future of the further and higher education sectors” was a bit misleading as meetings typically focus on current challenges faced by universities and colleges.”

9. The proposed CPG on Nuclear Disarmament has amended its purpose from last session. In session 5 the purpose of the Group was—

- To act as a policy forum for discussion and updating on how policy impacts on nuclear issues for Scotland.

10. The proposed Group's new purpose it—

- To provide a platform for MSPs to engage with a range of organisations seeking to address nuclear issues in Scotland and to act as a forum for the challenges and opportunities in Scotland arising from the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

11. Bill Kidd MSP, the Convener of the proposed Group, provided the following explanation for the change—

“During the last Parliamentary term the Historic Treaty On the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the United Nations, with support from a majority of member states. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to ICAN for its contribution, signing its significance and the importance of the part they played in ensuring that the voices of those affected by nuclear weapons policy were heard as well as the voices of governments that deploy them in their security policies. In 2021, the Treaty entered into force for the states that signed it and divestment from nuclear weapons has been accelerating as the global perception of their legitimacy shifts. While the UK's security and defence policies lie beyond the remit of the Scottish Parliament, the majority of Scottish Parliamentarians who have pledged to work for global nuclear disarmament through the TPNW's universalisation increased at the last election and the Scottish Government has the devolved competence to

support the TPNW in several ways. Responsibility for civil society's basic safety includes risk assessment of the nuclear warhead carriers on Scottish roads, and radiation leaks in the Gare Loch, and the Government can ensure that Scotland educates citizens about the UN processes and health workers about radiation effects. The distinct Scottish legal system and police force can consider Scotland's responsibilities, and address the changing norm in international humanitarian law. reconsider the purpose of the group in the light of the UN TPNW and the Scottish Parliament's needs at this time, while recognising the areas of its devolved competence."

12. The proposed CPG on Improving Scotland's Health wishes to change its name and purpose. In session 5 the Group was called the *CPG on Improving Scotland's Health: 2021 and beyond* and the Group's purpose was—

- To take a solutions-oriented focus on how to improve the health of the people of Scotland by reducing the health harms caused by alcohol, tobacco, poor diet and obesity and
- To join up knowledge and learning, and to identify positive ways forward, with a range of stakeholders committed to improving public health and to preventing and reducing non-communicable diseases for the next generation.

13. The Group wishes to change its name and purpose for this session, the new Group will be called the CPG on Improving Scotland's Health and its new purpose will be—

- To take a solutions-oriented focus on how to improve the health of the people of Scotland primarily by reducing the health harms caused by alcohol, tobacco, poor diet and obesity and
- To join up knowledge and learning, and to identify positive ways forward, with a range of stakeholders committed to improving public health and to preventing and reducing non-communicable diseases for the next generation.

14. The Group has provided the following explanation for the change of name—

"The CPG was newly established in the last Parliament. '2021 and beyond' was intended to reflect the longer view required on Non-Communicable Disease prevention, beyond that parliamentary term. With the strong desire from members to continue the group and support from MSPs, the proposal is to remove the reference to the end of the Parliamentary term and to establish this as an ongoing CPG."

15. It has also provided the following information on the change of purpose—

"The word 'primarily' has been added to the stated purpose of the Group, to allow for other relevant issues to be brought into discussions, while keeping the focus on the three key areas of alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy food."

16. Members are invited to consider—

- whether they wish to seek further clarifications, in writing, on any specific questions they might have in relation to the change of purpose for any of these groups; or
- if they agree to the re-registration of the CPG on Colleges and Universities, the CPG on Nuclear Disarmament and the CPG on Improving Scotland's Health.

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Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee  
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