SPPAC/S7/26/8/1

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
Thursday 12 November 2026
8th Meeting 2026, (Session 6)

Cross-Party Group Application

Introduction

1. Cross-Party Groups provide an opportunity for MSPs to engage with external stakeholders on a particular subject. CPGs are not formal parliamentary business and should not be confused with the Parliament's committee system. They are formed and led by MSPs although it is expected that groups will also have non-MSP members.

2. In accordance with section 6 of the Code of Conduct for MSPs, proposals for the establishment of CPGs in the Scottish Parliament must be submitted to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee for approval.

3. At its meeting on 12 November, the Committee will consider one proposed CPG:

- Unpaid Carers – proposed convener Carol Mochan MSP will attend.

Consideration by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

4. All CPGs must comply with Section 6 of the Code of Conduct. These are the provisions the Committee considers when deciding whether to accord recognition:

5. Paragraph 20 states "…one of the proposed Group's MSP office bearers (usually the Convener) will be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to explain the justification for the proposed Group." The conveners have been invited to this meeting to discuss registration of their proposed Groups respectively.

6. Paragraph 21 states "the Committee will pay particular attention to a proposed Group's purpose. If the Committee considers that a proposed Group is not in the public interest but is intended, for example, to further particular commercial interests, the proposed Group will not be accorded recognition. The Committee will also consider whether the purpose of a proposed Group overlaps the remit of an existing Group. If there is any overlap proposed Groups are asked to provide justification as to why their aims could not effectively be achieved within an existing Group".

7. Paragraph 9 requires group membership to include at least five MSPs, with at least one MSP from each of the parties or groups represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. The Committee has agreed a general waiver of this Rule for this Session: Groups are required to have five MSPs from at least five of the parties on the Bureau.

8. Paragraph 10 entitles groups to contain members from outwith the Parliament.

9. Paragraph 11 requires one MSP to be Convener of the Group and there to be at least one other MSP office bearer.

Proposed CPG on Unpaid Carers

10. The proposed CPG's registration form is at **Annexe A.** Its stated purpose is:

- … to provide a dedicated, politically neutral forum for Members of the Scottish Parliament, unpaid carers, young carers, organisations and other interested individuals to consider the needs, rights and contributions of unpaid carers across Scotland.
- The Group brings together parliamentary, lived experience, policy, research and practice perspectives. It aims to support informed discussion, strengthen understanding and encourage constructive action on issues affecting unpaid carers and the services and organisations that support them

11. The MSP membership of the proposed Group is—

Carol Mochan MSP, Scottish Labour (proposed Convener)
Helen McDade MSP, Reform UK (proposed Deputy Convener)
David Smith MSP, Reform UK
Cara McKee MSP, Scottish Greens
Alan Brown MSP, Scottish National Party
Sanne Dijkstra-Downie MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrats
Miles Briggs MSP, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

12. The proposed Group has listed 12 non-MSP individual members and over 25 organisation members on the form.

13. The registration form indicates that the Group anticipates secretariat support from Carers Trust Scotland. The total value of financial benefits is estimated to be £2180 which includes hospitality provisions and will be paid by Carers Trust Scotland. It also indicates that members of the proposed Group will not be charged a subscription.

Next Steps

14.The Committee will discuss with Carol Mochan the application for recognition of the proposed Cross-Party Group. It will then consider at the next agenda item whether to accord recognition to the proposed Group.

Clerks to the Committee
November 2026

Annexe A

Please read Section 6 of the Code of Conduct before completing this form.

Name of Cross-Party Group
Cross-Party Group on Unpaid Carers

Purpose of The Group and Proposed Discussion Topics

1. Please state the purpose of the Group.

The purpose is to provide a dedicated, politically neutral forum for Members of the Scottish Parliament, unpaid carers, young carers, organisations and other interested individuals to consider the needs, rights and contributions of unpaid carers across Scotland.

The Group brings together parliamentary, lived experience, policy, research and practice perspectives. It aims to support informed discussion, strengthen understanding and encourage constructive action on issues affecting unpaid carers and the services and organisations that support them**.**

2. Please also provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the Group and why the purpose is in the public interest.

The purpose of the Group is to:

- Keep the experiences, rights and priorities of unpaid carers and young carers visible within the Scottish Parliament.
- Provide a forum for unpaid carers, young carers, organisations, practitioners, researchers and policymakers to share evidence, experience and learning.
- Consider what is working well in practice and where further action or improvement may be needed.
- Examine the implementation and impact of legislation, policy and public service reform on unpaid carers.
- Support cross party understanding and constructive discussion of practical solutions.
- Promote accountability for national commitments affecting unpaid carers, while maintaining the Group's political neutrality.
- Contributes to better informed decision making and improved outcomes for unpaid carers, young carers and families across Scotland.

3. Please also provide details of any overlaps with the purpose of existing Cross-Party Groups and an explanation of why, regardless of any such overlap, the Group should be established.

Currently, the CPG does not overlap with any established Cross-Party Group

4. Please also provide an indication of the topics which the Group anticipates discussing in the forthcoming 12 months.

- The Group's work programme will be shaped collectively by members. Key priorities include:
- The implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, including identification, Adult Carer Support Plans, Young Carer Statements, information and advice, and access to support.
- The development and implementation of the right to breaks, including access to meaningful short breaks and the impact on health and wellbeing.
- Poverty and financial security, including social security, the additional costs of caring, access to financial advice and barriers to education and employment
- Health and social care reform, including community based care, hospital discharge and the involvement of unpaid carers in decisions affecting the person they support.
- The role, sustainability and funding of local carer organisations as essential partners in prevention and community support.
- Recognition, identification and support for young carers and young adult carers in schools, further and higher education, transitions and employment.
- The influence of unpaid carers in local and national decision making, including the use of lived experience and evidence to assess delivery and outcomes.

MSP Members of the Group

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group. In doing so please note:

- Section 6 of the Code of Conduct requires there be 5 members from the parties represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. The SPPA Committee agreed a waiver for this session that requires 5 MSP members from 5 parties represented on the Bureau;
- MSPs can be on no more than 10 CPGs of which fulfil no more than 3 office-

bearer positions; • If the group fails to comply with MSP membership requirements, the Convener must ensure this is resolved within 90 days.	
MSP Carol Mochan MSP Helen McDade MSP David Smith MSP Cara McKee MSP Alan Brown MSP Sanne Dijkstra-Downie MSP Miles Briggs MSP	**Party** Scottish Labour Reform UK Reform UK Scottish Greens Scottish National Party Scottish Liberal Democrats Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
Non-MSP Members of the Group For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.	
Individuals	Clare Steel, George Fairfull-Smith, Christine F Farquhar, Louise Harker, Cllr Nairn Angus-McDonald, Marie McWaters, Janice Dunn, Moria Mark, Gabrielle, Tom Wightman, Lindsey Currie, Diarmuid McDonnell
Organisations	Firsthand Lothian, East Ayrshire Carers Centre, Carers Trust Scotland, Carers Scotland, Coalition of Carers in Scotland , Carers Trust, Fife Young Carers, Unity Enterprise, Dundee Carers Centre, MECOPP, Shared Care Scotland, Lanarkshire Carers, Crossroads North Argyll, Carers centre managers network for Scotland, Central Carers Association (Falkirk and Clackmannan), Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre, Edinburgh Young Carers, Family Fund, North Argyll Carers Centre, Education

	Scotland, Pasda, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs, Dochas Carers Centre, Leuchie, Young Scot, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre, Forces Children Scotland, Carers of East Lothian

Group Office Bearers

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

Please note:

- No more than 3 named contacts per CPG - the Convener, the Secretary and one other individual who can provide information to the Standards Clerks about the activities of the Group. The Convener of a Group must confirm the name of this individual.

Convener	Carol Mochan MSP
Deputy Convener	Helen McDade MSP
Secretary	Karen Maloney, Carers Trust Scotland
Named Contact	Evie Milligan

Financial Benefits or Other Benefits

Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.

Carers Trust Scotland – staff time approx. £2000 per year (attendance at 3 meetings a year and 3-day administration for each meeting)

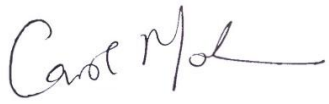
Carers Trust Scotland Hospitality costs on average £60 per meeting

Total value of financial benefits approx. £2180 per year

Subscription Charged by the Group Please provide details of the amount to be charged and the purpose for which the subscription is intended to be used.
No subscription is charged.
Statement on Compliance with the Code of Conduct. Must be read and signed by the Convener.

Please read the following:
• The Convener of a Group is primarily responsible for ensuring that the Group complies with the Code of Conduct;
• The Convener is solely responsible for providing Standards Clerks with:
  ○ The names of new MSP members of the CPG and changes to office-bearers;
  ○ Named contact details;
  ○ The registration form;
  ○ All minutes of meetings within 30 days of the meeting being held; **(Substantially verbatim minutes will not be accepted and will be returned)**
  ○ The AGM return (to be submitted within 30 days of the AGM to be held within 11 – 13 months of the initial meeting).
• Groups are required to have five MSPs from five of the parties represented on the Parliamentary Bureau;
• CPGs must hold at least two formal meetings per year (not on the same day), where two MSPs members of the Group are present;
• CPGs must provide Standards Clerks with 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings;
• If a CPG meeting is cancelled or rearranged, notification must be provided to the Standards clerks by no later than the day after the meeting was originally scheduled to take place;
• If a Group fails to comply fully with the Code for more than one year in a row, the Committee will withdraw recognition from that Group.

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I declare that I have read the above and that the Cross-Party Group on Unpaid Carers is constituted and will comply with the terms of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament.	
Signed (Convener)	
Date	12/10/2026