

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Thursday 9 September 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.

- Accident Prevention and Safety Awareness
- Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Animal Welfare
- Armed Forces and Veterans Community
- Carers
- Disability
- Fair Trade
- Germany
- Industrial Communities
- Learning Disability
- Life Sciences
- Lung Health
- Palliative Care
- Rare, Genetic And Undiagnosed Conditions
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
- Scottish Horseracing and Bloodstock Industries
- Scottish Showmen's Guild
- USA
- WASPI

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 proposed CPG on Independent Convenience Stores complied with the Code regarding the initial meeting and in Session 5 but wishes to make a change to its purpose for Session 6.

6. In Session 5 the purpose of the Group was-

- To inform MSPs of the issues and challenges facing independent convenience stores and to highlight the contribution local neighbourhood shops make to

Scotland's communities – particularly helping to sustain rural and marginalised urban communities - and to Scotland's economy (there are more convenience stores per head of population than in the rest of the UK). The group will bring together the key stakeholders in the independent convenience store sector: retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers and trade associations. It will connect with wider stakeholders in the voluntary and charity sectors and invite guest speakers to participate.

7. The proposed Group's new purpose is—

- Inform MSPs of the issues and challenges facing independent convenience stores and to highlight the contribution local neighbourhood shops make to Scotland's communities – particularly helping to sustain rural and marginalised urban communities - and to Scotland's economy (the sector employs 47,000 people directly; the value of sales is £4bn annually and the sector contributes £530 million in GVA to Scotland's economy per annum). The group will bring together the key stakeholders in the independent convenience store sector: retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, and trade associations, invite guest speakers to participate, including Scottish government Ministers and officials.

8. Gordon MacDonald MSP is the Convener of the proposed Group and his explanation for the change is—

“The reason for this change is because Scotland had the largest number of stores when the CPG was first established. In 2021, Wales now has the largest number of stores per head of population. However, the significance of the CPG is still very much evident as the latest data ... clearly indicates. We have detailed this to ensure the scale and importance of the convenience sector is illustrated to members and other key stakeholders.”

9. The Committee is invited to consider whether it agrees to the re-registration of the CPG on Independent Convenience Stores.

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Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
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