

Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time 26th January 2022 6.00 pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Collette Stevenson MSP

Invited guests

None

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Co Convener, Janine Rennie, Wellbeing Scotland, Co Convener, Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Harry Aitken, FBGA, Emma Bryson, Speak Out Survivors, Lynn Burns, Break the Silence, Andrew Campbell, Student, Ellie Forgan, KASP, Alexa Green, Student, Pam Hunter, SAY Women, Ewan Law, Fife College, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer and Researcher, Carol Willson, Student

Apologies

Katy Clark MSP, Lorna Ann Deans, Sarah Nelson, Writer & Researcher, Malcolm Roger, QHSE Advisor and Survivor, David Whelan FBGA

Agenda item 1

Approval of Minutes of 17th November 2021

Proposed: Janine Rennie Seconded: Dr Eric Swanepoel

Agenda item 2

Matters Arising

Letter to Mr Swinney on COVID issues for survivors was responded to on 1st December 2021 and sent to the membership for comment. We agreed that Mr Swinney's response was detailed and acknowledged the concerns we raised. We will continue to engage with him as and when and comment further when an Inquiry into the Pandemic is set up.

Invitation to SG Redress Policy Team to attend a future meeting. There has been no approach as yet. We will action this at a later date when the Redress Scheme is further in its deliberations.

Georgiana Bugeag, United Nations of Scotland, who recently applied for membership of the group unfortunately, cannot continue for now due to work commitments.

Agenda item 3

Updates on Covid and its effects for survivors and agencies

See under Matters Arising: letter to Mr Swinney and his response.

Janine spoke about the continuing increase of referrals and the need for more secure funding to enable agencies to manage to see survivors. Sandra echoed

this and expressed they cannot keep up with their waiting list, Pam and Lynn reiterated their experiences from their respective agencies. Apart from short term financial help; this needs to be part of any Covid Inquiry.

Agenda item 4

Update on Redress Scheme

Harry provided an update as follows:

1. RS was launched 9 December 2021.
2. Phone calls received to date to the Scottish Government line, about 1700.
3. Applications to date by claimants submitted to the Redress Scheme, about 150.
4. A Scottish Government estimate of total 8000 applications expected, to the Redress Scheme, by victim/survivors and Next of Kin.
5. Publicity of the awareness Redress Scheme not apparent in England.
6. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request from England for the publicity costs spent in England of the Redress Scheme. This FOI request was rejected by the Scottish Government, under the rule of exception. This question would be raised at the InterAction Review Group on Thursday 27 January 2022.
7. There is no evidence of progress yet, of the Survivor

Redress Forum (which is established in the Bill).

N.B. Most of these numbers, stated here, expected to have increased by 28 January 2022.

The group are still concerned about the Waiver and survivors being traumatised going through the process, there is a lack of trauma awareness and the safety of survivors. We had a detailed discussion on survivor's safety and a personal testimony from a survivor of in care felt the process could potentially lead to traumatisation. Issues such as having to prove abuse took place, lack of records were obstructive and humiliating for survivors.

Fulton will write to the Cabinet Secretary on Redress

Agenda Item 5

Justice Issues for survivors

Fulton, Anne and Janine had a virtual meeting on the 20th December. Following discussion on the issues raised by the group Fulton proposed we look at a CPG Inquiry into Justice. We could over three sessions invite the Police, Lord Advocate and Cabinet Secretary for Justice to raise our issues and the experiences that survivors have within the justice system. We can then produce a report and look towards a parliamentary debate. Again, this issue is one of deep concern and a long and wide ranging discussion took place. Everyone in the group, survivors and allies have all experienced horrific experiences at every stage from reporting to police and the journey to court, if it gets that far. Lynn brought up the Scottish Victims Taskforce and how we

need to engage with them. It was agreed that we need to ensure that we have a trauma informed approach with officials who do not have experience of hearing the deeply disturbing experiences survivors have endured. It was agreed that we do need to contact Keith Brown MSP Justice Secretary to link our concerns and feed into the strategy for justice reform to ensure we do not duplicate its work. **Action Fulton, Janine and Anne**

Agenda Item 6

Issues for discussion by the group:

Website

Finalise and get Fulton to approve and send to Standards for final approval.

Action Anne, Alexa, Emma and Fulton

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Andrew has not had sufficient time to do a paper on this due to University commitments; however he has asked the following questions:

Evidence shows that the Scottish Government does not have an age datum for when a child becomes an adult in line with CRC. Can the CPG ask for clarification on this matter as with no age?

The second question is around the economic pressure that has not been experienced in thirty years. What would occur if an organisation financially failed? Is there

any policy in place to inhibit this? How would clients' access support on the collapse of an organisation?

Not Proven Verdict

Paper sent out to group from Emma.

Trauma Informed Curriculums

Ewan covered this at last meeting. He is undertaking some research on this topic which he will present to the group once finalised.

Sexualisation of Children

Anne discussed with Carol regarding approaching the large Children's charities and Stop It Now.

Agenda Item 7

AOCB

Sarah has suggested writing a blog when issues arise that are relevant for the website. They have to be research based and not her opinions, perhaps a small group to discuss?

Continuing our close scrutiny of and objections to the current redress scheme. About campaigning for trauma informed training and curricula which is not just informed re general trauma, but the *specific* needs of CSA and CSE survivors, about continuing to press SG re needs of survivors during and (hopefully) after Covid.

Sarah would also like to offer a presentation sometime on the use of character witnesses in trials on historic CSA, rape and sexual assault. She cites the example of Lady Lavinia Nourse, when character witnesses were called and testified she loved cats, was an expert organiser of social events and had a great sense of humour. Perhaps this can be something we can cover in our criminal justice discussions.

Date of next meeting

TBC