

# Cross-Party Group on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Date and Time 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 6.00pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Convener, Daniel Johnson MSP, Depute Convener, Brian Whittle MSP

Invited guests

George Scott, Campaigner: Abuse in Private Schools in Scotland

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Macdonald, Co Convener, Stuart Allardyce, Stop It Now! Scotland, Whitney Barrett, Wellbeing Scotland, Sharon Belshaw, Break the Silence, Emma Bryson, Speak Out Survivors, Andrew Campbell, Student, Ellie Forgan, KASP, Sheila Gaul, Retired Social Worker, Ewan Law, Fife College, Leigh McFarlane, Thirtyone:eight, Dr Sarah Nelson, Edinburgh University, Janine Rennie, Campaigner, Dr Eric Swanepoel, Writer & Researcher

Whitney Barrett was welcomed as the new Chief Executive of Wellbeing Scotland, we look forward to her contributions to the group in the future.

Apologies

Collette Stevenson MSP, Sue Webber MSP, Sandra Brown, Moira Anderson Foundation, Treasurer, Dr Javita Narang, International Consultant, Trauma Care, Carol Willson, Student, David Whelan FBGA

Agenda item 1

**Approval of Minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

Leigh McFarlane and Dr Eric Swanepoel

## Agenda item 2

### **Matters Arising**

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Cross Party Group's recognition was withdrawn on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022. **No further action**

## Agenda item 3

### **Vacancy for Co Convener/Secretariat**

We urgently need to appoint someone (preferably from an agency) to assist Anne and the group on arranging meetings, taking minutes and liaising with MSPs and the group membership. Can we open this up to the full membership for a response prior to our AGM which will be held in June. **Action Fulton and Anne**

## Agenda item 4

### **Update on Sibling Sexual Abuse Presentation: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

The event was incredibly moving and well received by those attending. They have since sent on further expressions of thanks and a wish to be kept informed of our progress and any events in the future.

Once again, our CPG has pioneered a difficult and challenging subject to the parliament to highlight an area of CSA that does not have the recognition, understanding and support in place for the survivor and their family. Thanks once again to Ellie and the speakers.

There is a minimum data set gathered by child protection committees in relation to children who are placed on the child protection This includes information on whether children have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. It might be helpful if the data set could also collect data on whether a child has experienced sibling sexual abuse. This would mean that we had some data about how often such cases are referred to statutory authorities.

Fulton is hosting an event in the parliament on 15<sup>th</sup> March on CSA Prevention, where this can be raised.

It was agreed that a sub group should be convened to enable deeper examination into how we can raise awareness and take this forward. **Action: Stuart, Ellie, Andrew, Sharon, Sheila, Leigh and Anne will take this forward and report back to the group at our next meeting**

## Agenda item 5

### **Applications for membership**

George Scott, Campaigner on Abuse in Private Schools in Scotland.  
Philip Walker, National Manager, Survivors Trust, an umbrella organisation for the rape and sexual abuse sector in the UK and Ireland. The group approved both memberships and welcomed George to the meeting. Anne will inform Philip of our acceptance. **Action Anne**

## Agenda item 6

### **Abuse in Private Schools in Scotland**

Fulton welcomed George to the meeting and asked if he would like to say a few words. George is happy to become a member and contribute in any way he can from his abuse experiences in private schools. The physical and psychological of his abuse has taken its toll, and he is part of an informal group of survivors from private schools, seeking justice, we acknowledged his courage in coming forward and welcomed him to the group.

We have been approached by some other survivors of childhood physical and sexual abuse whilst at Fettes College and Edinburgh Academy in the 70s who have written to the MSPs about their experiences of abuse in childhood as well as the many failures of police and the legal and justice authorities over the years, culminating by giving evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

They are aware that CPGs cannot take up individual cases; however it is essential we recognise the number of survivors abused coming forward and give recognition to their experiences and help in any way we can.

There were deep concerns on a ban by SCAI on the naming of an alleged abuser in the press. "Edgar" was named in the Westminster Parliament by Ian Blackford MP, who used his Parliamentary Privilege to name him. This has helped survivors as they were once again being silenced. This restriction has since been lifted and Iain Wares can be legally named in public.

Another issue of real concern is the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021. As we know it established the scheme for making "redress payments" to survivors of historical child abuse in care in Scotland and that those who experienced abuse before 1964 remain affected by the law on prescription.

However, while there is no cut-off date, the Redress Scotland scheme applies only to children who suffered abuse whilst in the care of the state. If you attended a private school, you are unfortunately not eligible under the scheme. It is made worse by the SG establishing Redress arrangements before the Inquiry revealed the severity of abuse in private schools and deciding not to amend relevant Prescription Legislation.

We had a detailed discussion and that gender and class make no difference and child abuse happens everywhere, abuse is abuse, when there is opportunity, such as institutions and schools where vulnerable children are placed, there is risk.

It was agreed we discuss further and offer our support in any way we can by highlighting the abuse suffered by children in private schools.

## Agenda item 6

### **AOCB**

Brian Whittle MSP provided an update on cases coming across his desk on historic child abuse and that these are difficult to read due to the terrible abuse experiences these survivors have endured. We discussed the scope of the Redress Scheme and how to include private boarding schools and other settings where people were “in loco parentis”.

Sarah raised the issue on women’s prison’s where a high proportion are survivors of CSA, rape and sexual assault. That their trauma is long lasting and that this is recognised in all conversations and discussions in the future. Fulton suggested we send round the link from the Justice Committee Session. **Action Fulton and Anne**

### **Date of next business meeting**

To be confirmed but before summer recess to enable us to hold our AGM as well as business meeting