

Minutes of the initial meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia held via Zoom on Thursday 28th September 2021

1. Present:

Oliver Mundell MSP

Stuart McMillan MSP

Pam Gosal MSP

Rachael Hamilton MSP

Apologies:

Paul O’Kane MSP

In attendance: David Jones, Cathy Magee

2. Registration Process

Oliver Mundell convened the meeting to approve the submission to re-establish the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia.

He invited David Jones, Secretary of the previous CPG to take the members through the registration process.

This included:

- Agreeing the purpose of the Group: The previously adopted purpose was confirmed.
- The election of office bearers:
Convener – Oliver Mundell MSP
Vice Convener – Stuart McMillan
Secretary/ Treasurer – David Jones
- Agreeing the submission to the Scottish Parliament

David gave a brief presentation on the legacy issues from the previous CPG to provide a background context and information for the new MSP members.

3. Briefing on the National Context

The Convener invited Cathy Mcgee, Chief Executive of Dyslexia Scotland to provide a national perspective on the key issues relating to dyslexia.

The key issues identified were discussed as a potential focus for future CPG meetings. These included:

- The impact of Covid 19 and recovery plans
- The implementation of the Morgan Review of Additional Support for Learning and the implications for dyslexia
- The current Educational Reform process particularly the future roles for the replacement for the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Education Scotland
- The impact of dyslexia on members of the black and minority ethnic communities
- Neurodiversity/ Neurodivergence including the current work being undertaken by the Scottish government
- Adult assessment and affordability

4. The Implementation of the Morgan Review of Additional Support for Learning

David Jones highlighted two key areas which had been identified in the Morgan Review which were of particular interest relating to dyslexia.

Recommendation 5: Teacher training

Recommendation 9: Quality assurance

Prior to the end of the previous Parliament, Oliver Mundell had raised issues with the then Cabinet Secretary for Education regarding significant inconsistency issues across Scottish local authorities in terms of teacher training and in collecting data relating to the identification of dyslexia at primary and secondary schools.

The Cabinet Secretary had accepted that these were legitimate concerns and made a commitment to take the matter up with Education Scotland.

5. The National Consultation on Education Reform

The members noted the importance of encouraging those with an interest in dyslexia to respond to the consultation.

The closing date of 26th November 2021 was noted

6. Open Discussion

A number of questions were raised by members and David Jones and Cathy Mcgee offered to meet with individual members if that would be helpful.

The timing of future meetings was discussed as previous meetings had lasted 90 minutes rather than the proposed 60 minutes. This will be important when meetings restart within the Parliament as many non MSP members travel significant distances to attend short meetings.

A number of non MSP members from the previous CPG had indicated that they wished to continue. Subject to the approval of the Parliament, David Jones will confirm the list of non MSP members.

7. Date of first formal meeting of the Cross Party Group was set for Thursday 18th November 2021 at 1pm via Microsoft Teams.