

Cross-Party Group on Families Supporting Children's Learning

Tue 7 Oct 2025, 6:30pm to 8pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Oliver Mundell MSP (Co-convener) (Chair)
Fulton MacGregor MSP (Co-convener)

Invited Guests

David Yule (Children in Scotland)
Tila McDonald (Awards Scotland)
Jimmy Pickering (The Brilliant Club)

Non-MSP Group Members

Cathy Sexton (Fathers Network Scotland)
Kathryn Farrow (SPION)
Alastair Wilson (University of Strathclyde)
Beverley Ferguson (Education Scotland)
Denny Henderson (Eastwood High School)
Gavin Yates (Connect)
John Stephens (Scottish Government)
Lydia McDonald (Connect)
Magaidh Wentworth (Comunn na Gàidhlig)
Mary O'Connor (NPFS)

Apologies

Greg Dempster (AHDS)
Sara McFarlane (Connect)

Welcome and Minutes of Previous Meeting

Oliver Mundell MPS opened the meeting as chair. The minutes of the previous meeting of 18 March 2025 were approved.

Annual General Meeting

Gavin Yates took the chair for the AGM portion of the meeting. Oliver Mundell MSP and Fulton MacGregor MSP were re-appointed as co-convenors and Connect re-appointed as secretariat.

Presentation by Children in Scotland

David Yule, Children in Scotland's Policy, Projects and Participation Officer gave a presentation to the group on their [recent briefing](#) on the factors effecting attendance of pupils with additional support needs. The themes of the findings included school-related anxiety & mental health issues, support and relationships in school, part-time timetables, and out of school education provision.

Following the presentation, the group discussed working with parents and carers when assisting with support enquiries, and the differences in contact with the Enquire helpline across early years, primary and secondary school. The group also discussed appropriate use of restricted timetables and the importance of adequate resources in supporting children with additional support needs in schools. The importance of positive relationships for children and young people was also discussed, covering both school staff and parental relationships. Examples of good practice were shared.

Presentation by Awards Network

Tila McDonald presented on the role of youth awards in current education reforms, and ways families can help to unlock their child's 'amazing thing'. She gave information about the breadth of experiences youth awards can provide, and the potential for 'digital badges' as a consistent way for individuals to track their credentials.

Following the presentation, the group discussed the importance of equity of access to experiences outside of school, and ensuring access to information about youth awards for all families. It also discussed the importance of awards for engaging in community, and demonstrating skills in university or job applications.

CPG attendants were invited to sign up to the Awards Network newsletter.

Future Work and Any Other Business

Kathryn Farrow (SPION) talked about the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Placement Programme that was being undertaken in Glasgow in partnership with Education Scotland and Strathclyde University. This was as a result of a pilot programme led by Education Scotland in partnership with ITE providers and local authority Family Learning teams. An Executive Summary and Evaluation Report has subsequently been published. Oliver Mundell, MSP requested a copy of the published Report to raise this with the Education Committee.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Pilot Placement Programme

[PDF file: ITE Pilot Placement Programme - Executive Summary](#)

[PDF file: ITE Pilot Placement Programme - Evaluation Report](#)

The chair invited members to get in touch to suggest areas for the CPG to explore.

The meeting closed 8:10pm.