

Cross Party Group on Men's Violence against Women and Children

8th November 2023, 12.30-14.00 via Zoom

Minute

1 Present

MSPs

Rona Mackay (RMa) (Convener)
Beatrice Wishart (BW) (Deputy Convener)

Invited guests

There were no invited guests on this occasion.

Non-MSP Group Members

Hannah Brisbane (HB), Engender
Natalia Equihua (NE), Women's Support Project
Nicola Gilbert (NG), Scottish Women's Aid
Alice Jackson (AJ)
Suzanne Law (SL), Central Advocacy Partners
Laura Martins (LM), Close the Gap
Carlene McAvoy (CMcA)
Melanie McCarry (MMcC)
Gill McKinna (GMcK), Caledonian System, Scotland
Anne Robertson Brown (ARB)
Catriona Scott (CS), RASAC Perth & Kinross
Marsha Scott (MS), Scottish Women's Aid
Daisy Slate (DS), NUS Scotland
Dianne Thom (DT), Caledonian System, Scotland
Claire Thomson (CT), Rape Crisis Scotland
Lisa-Kristin Weylandt (LKW), Includem
Richard Whitecross (RW)

Apologies

Chris Ringland, Evangelical Alliance
Amber Cully, GEMAP
Zoe Taylor, SAY
Pam Hunter, SAY
Laurie Duffy, Young Women Scotland

2 Cross Party Group Business

A AGM

- a. AGM 2022 - Minute approval
 - The minutes of the AGM of the Cross Party Group on Men's Violence against Women and Children, held on 26th October 2022 were approved as an accurate record – proposed by MS and approved by HB.
- b. Selection of office-bearers (Rona Mackay, Beatrice Wishart)
 - Convener
 - Rona Mackay, MSP was re-elected as Convener of the Group – nominated by BW and seconded by MS.
 - Deputy Convener
 - Beatrice Wishart, MSP was re-elected as Deputy Convener of the Group – nominated by RMa and seconded by MS.
 - Secretariat
 - Scottish Women's Aid was re-elected by acclamation as Secretariat for the Group.
 - MS encouraged members to considerate standing for the secretariat, if they would like to.

B Approval of previous meeting minutes

- a. 13th September 2023
 - The minutes of the CPGMVAWC meeting, held on 13th September 2023 were approved as an accurate record – proposed by HB and approved by MS.

C New Member Applications

- a. SafeLives
 - SafeLives (Jessica Denniff, Head of SafeLives) were welcomed as new members of the CPGMVAWC.

D Thematic Session

- a. An Update on the Istanbul Shadow Report
 - MS updated the Group that SWA were compiling a consolidated report, along with Rape Crisis Scotland.
 - A number of workshops had taken place.
 - If any member organisation had not received an invitation to contribute, but would like to, they should email NG, who

- would forward the request to the member of staff compiling submissions.
- b. Fund to Leave
- MS spoke to the pilot of the Fund to Leave, which had been announced by Scottish Government.
 - Funding of £500-£1,000 would be available to women to assist them in paying for the essentials that women and children need, including rent and clothing, when leaving an abusive relationship.
 - Funds would be available across five Local Authority areas, where the homelessness statistics were highest, and would be delivered by Fife Women's Aid and nine Scottish Women's Aid-affiliated groups.
 - Data would be collected as to what the funds were used for.
 - RMa congratulated all who had made this development possible.
- c. Follow up on Bail and Release from Custody Act
- MS reported that information was being collected and consideration given to how to approach elements that had not been included in the Bill.
 - RMa confirmed that she and BW could feedback concerns to the Justice Secretary.
 - The option to draft a letter from the Cross Party Group was suggested, but group agreed to wait until MSPs had had some discussions with officials.
 - CT confirmed she would seek feedback from Rape Crisis Scotland.
 - While it is important to reduce the level of prison population, it was stressed that maintaining the safeguarding measures regarding domestic abuse and sexual assault was vital.
 - SWA's Survivors' Reference Group had met with the Committee prior to vote on current version of the Bill and wrote to them to say how disappointed they are with the finalised Bill.
- d. 16 Days
- RMa confirmed that there was, as yet, no motion, for a Members' Debate and no Government debate had been scheduled.
 - MS agreed that a form of words could be drafted to put forward as a motion.

- Attending members shared some of their planned events for 16 Days.
- NG confirmed she would compile a document with any links forwarded to her regarding members' events, and would circulate the document to members of the Cross Party Group.
- Activities discussed at the meeting included:
 - Scottish Women's Aid
 - The theme would be the Cost of Living Crisis and the cost of leaving.
 - Rape Crisis Scotland
 - The theme would be the Survivors can't wait Campaign.
 - CT confirmed that Rape Crisis Scotland was finalising a formal response to the Funding Review, to be sent to the Minister and to COSLA. CT would be happy to share the response with Group members.
 - RASAC P&K
 - Activities would include a Reclaim the Night march, a consent event, poetry readings and a comedy night.
 - Close the Gap
 - Activities would include an online event to celebrate employers, who have achieved Equally Safe at Work accreditation.
 - Engender
 - HB confirmed Engender would be supporting sector activities and carrying out Equally Safe engagement activities with policy makers and civil servants. There would be drop-in sessions.
 - NUS Scotland
 - DS reported that NUS Scotland would be supporting and highlighting their student association activities, collating a calendar of events and activities.
 - Women's Support Project
 - NE shared links with information about their activities:
 - A webinar 'Exiting and women who sell or exchange sex in Scotland'.

- An in-person Seminar ‘Women Protection is the best Form of Child Protection’.
- A webinar ‘OnlyFans – Culture, Content, Consumers’.
- Alice Jackson
 - AJ highlighted two reports that could be relevant to 16 Days
 - One from OXFAM – Radical Pathways Beyond GDP.
 - Another from Action Aid ‘Another World is Possible’.

E Member Updates

- On this occasion, Member Updates all revolved around 16 Days, as detailed in the previous agenda item.
- Marsha invited members to think about taking up the offer of the member spotlight slot at the next meeting.

F AOCB

- Edinburgh Women’s Aid Legal Services Project
 - MS announced that the Edinburgh Women’s Aid legal services project was re-starting, with three years’ funding.
 - Further funding had been applied for, to extend the project to Highland and Islands, using an appropriate model.
 - There was optimism that the intention was to scale up the project.
- Gaza
 - RMa voiced concern about effects of the current situation on women and children. It was suggested that:
 - The Group write swiftly to:
 - The UK Government
 - The BMA, or other relevant bodies

3 Date and Time of next Meeting

- a. The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.