

Minutes of the Cross-Party Group for Prevention and Healing of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Date and Time - 11th May 2022 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Sue Webber MSP - Conservative
Karen Adams MSP - SNP
Liam McArthur MSP - Lib Dem

Invited guests:

Mike Foulis, former Director for Children and Families, Scottish Government
Peter McCleod, Former Chair of the Care Inspectorate
Jackie Brock, former CEO of Children in Scotland

Non MSP members:

George Hosking, WAVE Trust
Anthoulla Koutsoudi, WAVE Trust
Jay Haston, 70/30 Ambassador
Sally Amor, NHS Highland
Kim Stewart, Family Support Worker
Rachel Love, NSPCC
Anne Wilson, Children's Health Scotland
Michelle Wilson, Children's Health Scotland
Ryan McShane
Janine Rennie, Wellbeing Scotland

Agenda item 1

Apologies

Rona Mackay MSP (SNP)
Emma Harper MSP (SNP)
Brian Whittle MSP (Cons.)
Alex Cole Hamilton MSP (Lib Dem)
Rhoda Grant MSP (Lab)
Liam Kerr MSP (Cons.)
Alexander Stewart MSP (Cons.)
Maggie Chapman MSP (Green)

Claire Burns, CEO, Celcis
Professor Sir Harry Burns, Professor Of Practice & Special Adviser, Strathclyde University
Bailey-Lee Robb, Councillor at Fife Council

Agenda item 2

Minutes of last meeting - Sue proposed we accept the Minutes for December 2021. The motion was seconded and the Minutes approved and accepted.

Agenda item 3

Resignation of Co-convenor and possible Election. Rona Mackay is stepping down as Co-Convenor and Sue Webber said we are looking to replace Rona with a Vice Convenor or Co-Convenor. We asked Karen Adam if she is willing to be appointed. She will consider her commitments before agreeing. We will sort this out via email exchanges.

Agenda item 4

Commission of Inquiry into the delivery of 70/30. George gave some background on 70/30. It's an initiative that has been in existence for more than 10 years and based on his corporate turnaround expertise. He suggested that the Commission could engage with people from a different perspective - working backwards from success and seeing what they did to make it a success.

We need to ask the question - what do we need to do to achieve 70/30 in Scotland? Out of this approach, we work out a plan. The prize is massive, so we need to come up with a set of recommendations. WAVE set about this mission by, in the first instance, getting the political will for 70/30 and this now really exists. We now have the support for 70/30 from 99% of the Scottish Parliament, 80% of the UK Parliament, and a majority of the Welsh, London and Northern Ireland Assemblies. In fact, a majority of every single Party including Sinn Fein, DUP, Ulster Unionists, Welsh Nationalists, Brexit parties etc...they all support this. So the time is now right for us to put the flesh on the bones.

Something which has given urgency to this is that, within the last couple of weeks, we have received a formal response to a letter which Jay Haston, who is here with us, sent to the First Minister, inviting her backing for 70/30. The response states that the Scottish Government now supports the 70/30 objective.

WAVE has given a lot of thought on how to achieve 70/30, but we want this to be a Scottish project and we want anyone who has wisdom and ideas to become involved and contribute to this. We already have an impressive group of Members for this Commission. We have been told that the Scottish Government plans to create a strategy on ACEs and trauma by Spring of next year, so this presents a tremendous opportunity for us to feed into this, either as a CPG or as a Commission. Everyone in this meeting and everyone recommended by those here today has a chance to input into that strategy through the work of the Commission.

The Terms of Reference are still in draft, so this allows people to make suggestions or improvements. Ideas put forward included adding drug addictions (Sue Webber), intergenerational effects, poverty and structural inequalities (Sally Amor), mental health and suicide (Jay Haston), and lack of understanding in education system as to what is trauma so kids are being retraumatized. Can we include disabled community (Kim Stewart).

George will include an addendum to ask the Commission to take account of these extra items in the Terms of Reference.

Mike said we need a method of getting policies to happen. There are lots of reports on shelves, but many good policies are not being implemented, or are not yet implemented. George agreed and said that the Commission needs to develop the 'HOW'.

Karen Adams asked if psychological abuse is included too? (Answer was 'yes'). She agreed that disabled kids are more likely to be abused than able bodied kids. Is this the same for BAME and LGBT? George – LGBT have higher levels of abuse than other young people. Gender inequality - there are different patterns in how male and female children suffer.

WAVE is committed to the prevention and reduction of child sexual abuse, but this is not included in the 70/30 goal. When the goal was created in 2009, George had been treating and working successfully with paedophiles and from this he saw how sexual abuse is more complex and it will take much longer to achieve a 70% reduction in it.

WAVE is Secretariat for the CPG and agrees to also be Secretariat for the Commission.

Agenda item 5

Introduction to Commission Members

Jackie Brock – currently working with the Hunter Foundation. Previously a Senior Civil Servant working in children and families' sector with Mike Foulis. Was CEO of Children in Scotland. Interested in highlighting and illuminating the positives that we have in Scotland in policy and statutory landscape e.g. Safer Together, perinatal work. We need to synthesise and focus on how we will achieve significant change, building on success which is never fast enough. 70/30 gives people helpful focus to support the great efforts across the country. We really need to accelerate progress, and this is a great opportunity to do so.

Kathryn Lindsay - not attending

Mike Foulis – Was at Children First years ago. 2011-2015 was Director for Children and Families in the Scottish Government. Set up The Early Years Collaborative. Retired from public life in 2015. Now in the commercial world.

Peter McLeod – 35 years in child protection. Retired 3 months ago from The Care Inspectorate, and the Early Years Leadership Group. For 11 years was at Renfrewshire Council - firstly as Director of Social Work for 7 years and thereafter Director for Children's Services. Social work background. In Renfrewshire they introduced an evidence-based transformation service which they felt had a big impact. They carried out some detailed research on the profile of need in the area and used that to outline some key outcomes that they wanted to achieve and reduced the number of children going into care and the number of children on the register. This led to a change nationally and led to 'Realigning Children's Services'. The evidence base had been created to drive that change forward.

George Hosking spoke about Treasury approval of the Pioneer Communities Project (an ACE prevention project) in 2014, and the £15million funding which was allocated

to it, but withdrawn after the 2015 General Election. 15 Local Authorities were willing to put up matched funding if they were chosen as one of 4 pilot areas, but after the UK Government funding was withdrawn they were unable to fund it themselves. Their obligation to deliver statutory reactive services also constrained their ability to invest in prevention.

In Scotland, and Wales, we have governments totally committed to prevention of ACEs, but there is always this gap between what people say should happen and what actually is happening on the ground. Unless we do something about that gap we are not going to achieve 70/30. That is a particular concern of Mike's but also Claire Burns when she agreed to join the Commission. How do we use implementation science to get it into practice? We are not blind to the fact that there are a lot of challenges ahead of us, and we are thrilled that this Commission is being launched today.

Sue Webber – MSP and until the recent May Election was a City of Edinburgh Councillor, and there have been some significant challenges for Edinburgh recently. Was keen to get involved to see implementation of measures and actions to help young people.

Ryan suggested that, although he isn't at this meeting, we consider whether we invite Bailey-Lee Robb to join as a Member of the Commission. Karen suggested we invite Suzanne Zeedyk

Agenda item 6

Invitation to CPG Members to contribute.

Jay Haston - we need to lean heavily on lived experience. Not just telling stories but gather them and use them.

Sally Amor – consider language. Prevention of abuse and maltreatment how to use language to allow parents to make sense. They move into a world where they feel they are seen as a risk for their children. Make sense of their own stories. Many of us have our own lived experience and I have my own torrid stories. I reflect to my own time when I struggled as a parent. How do we create safety, trust, collaboration and choice so we give parents the space to do better, because often we lose them at the first point of engagement?

Jay – sometimes parents feel like they are being attacked when they are told they should be doing better. It's about finding a way to reach parents.

Sally – as a parent when you are told your child is out of control, you actually want to say- 'you're kidding me'. Most parents know when their kids are out of control. What the parents lack is space, capacity, time and understanding of why their child is out of control. Children do not end up out of control randomly. There are things going on in that family situation which make it difficult for everybody and that's what needs to be better understood if we want to engage parents. Linked to that is the understanding that children do as well as their parents, and services do as well as their leaders. Leaders should have different expectations in the way their staff engage with families. Shift from 'hard to reach' to 'difficult to access services'.

The other responsibility is for professionals to make a different landscape for engaging the parents.

Real and fundamental changes are needed to practices around addiction and suicide services.

Sometimes we rush to do things with families when we would be better off doing something with the workforce. Drug deaths task force - real and fundamental change is needed around cultural practices within addiction services and around suicide and mental health services.

Agenda item 7

Any other business – there was no other business.

Agenda item 8

Next meeting – September, 'The Promise'. Fiona Duncan has agreed to speak.

[Please note this meeting has now been set for 6.15pm on Tuesday 13 September.