

Cross-Party Group on Shared Parenting

14 September 2021

Minute

Present

MSPs

Fulton MacGregor MSP
Finlay Carson MSP
Bob Doris MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Ian Maxwell, Shared Parenting Scotland
Chris Metzitis, Fathers network Scotland
Ruth Campbell, Family Journeys
Cheryl-lee Brown, Midlothian Sure Start
Kenny Spence, Men in Childcare
Adam Wilson, Families Outside
John Forsyth, Shared Parenting Scotland

In attendance

Simon Stockwell, Scottish Government
Wendy Georgeson, Scottish Government

Apologies

Jeremy Balfour MSP
Michael Marra MSP

Thomas Lynch, Dads Rock
Eileen Brownlie, Relationships Scotland
Pauline Linn, Family Mediation West
June Loudon, Grandparents Apart UK

Agenda item 1

Election of office bearers.

Fulton MacGregor was elected Convener. Jeremy Balfour was elected vice convener.

Agenda item 2

Confirmation of name.

The name Cross Party Group on Shared Parenting was confirmed.

Agenda item 3

Purpose and Objectives.

The following text was agreed:

Where both parents are involved in their children's upbringing, there is clear evidence of positive educational and social development. As such, shared parenting is a key mechanism for closing the attainment gap and tackling inequalities. Gender stereotyping is an issue that impacts upon many aspects of life including economic, social and family spheres. In the family arena traditional gender assumptions around child raising is one aspect of this, but an important one, as such assumptions influence early years' perceptions, career choices and economic opportunities.

The CPG will identify, examine and promote policy and practice that supports both parents in sharing parenting responsibilities. It will consider how gender stereotypes can be tackled in the pursuit of a better understanding of what we need to do to ensure the best possible childhood and most promising adult life for Scotland's children. It will provide a forum for MSPs, stakeholders and other interested parties to engage directly in dialogue to inform policy developments and practice which impact on parents sharing responsibilities for the role and support networking on this topic.

Agenda item 4

Appointment of Secretariat.

Shared Parenting Scotland was elected.

Agenda item

Discussion of work programme.

We have prospective contributions already drawn up from a retired family court judge in Israel where issues are resolved very differently; a university researcher whose project gathered the views and experience of young people about their experience of shared parenting. It is rare in Scotland to hear the voices of young people themselves; from a US campaigner on behalf of 'Moms for Shared Parenting' who sees shared parenting as a liberation from gendered custom and practice. Whatever the outcome of the UK Supreme Court on the UNCRC Incorporation Act the Scottish Parliament is committed to embedding the Convention in public practice. We will spend time on the implications of UNCRC and on the Family Law Modernisation Strategy.