

Cross-Party Group Annual Return

Name of Cross-Party Group

Cross-Party Group on Visual Impairment

Date Group Established (the date of establishment is the date in this parliamentary session that the Group held its initial meeting, where the office bearers were elected and not the date that the Group was accorded recognition. All Groups should hold their AGMs on, or before, the anniversary of this date.)

Wednesday 8 September 2021

Date of Most Recent Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Wednesday 5 October 2022

Date Annual Return Submitted

Wednesday 2 November 2022

Date of Preceding AGM [this date is required to aid clerks in verifying that the most recent AGM has taken place within 11 to 13 months of the previous AGM]

Wednesday 8 September 2021

Group Meetings and Activities

Please provide details of each meeting of the Group including the date of the meeting, a brief description of the main subjects discussed and the MSP and non-MSP attendance figures.

Details of any other activities, such as visits undertaken by the Group or papers/report published by the Group should also be provided.

Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Visual Impairment

#CPGVI

Purpose of the group:

The Cross-Party Group on Visual Impairment draws together the blind and partially sighted sector in Scotland to identify issues competent to the Scottish Parliament and seeks, in a reasonable fashion, to influence policy, legislation and decision makers to better reflect the needs of blind and partially sighted people.

The Cross-Party Group on Visual Impairment (CPGVI) held meetings on:

- 8 September 2021 (Re-registration and AGM);
- 8 December 2021
- 22 February 2022
- 10 May 2022
- 5 October 2022 (AGM)

Due either to Covid-19 restrictions or strike travel disruption, the meetings were held via Teams.

Wednesday 8 September 2021 (Re-registration and AGM)

MSPs present: Four

Non-MSP members present: 38

Speakers: Three

Observers: One

The meeting agreed on the re-registration of the CPGVI and re-Election of Office Bearers.

- Convener - Stuart McMillan MSP

- Vice-Convener - Neil Bibby MSP

- Secretariat & Treasurer - RNIB Scotland (Dr Catriona Burness)

This was the main business of the meeting which also reviewed some pre-election activity:

Seeking an update from the Scottish Government on the proposed low vision service.

Writing to the Scottish Government on Covid vaccine priority and the reconsideration of visiting rights for young and elderly people with visual impairments.

The meeting also discussed issues to be covered by the CPGVI in Session 6 and agreed a questionnaire would be circulated to members to prioritise issues.

Wednesday 8 December 2021

MSPs present: Three

Non-MSP members present: 49

Speakers: Three

Observers: None

Two items were on the agenda for discussion, transitions from school for disabled children and young people, and rehabilitation/habilitation.

Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP spoke on her Members Bill, the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions) (Scotland) Bill. Laura Walker, Chief Executive, Visibility, outlined the background to the Rehabilitation/Habilitation Workforce Survey Findings 2021, and Hazel McFarlane, Senior Sensory Hub Officer, Health, and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) summarised the survey findings which highlighted increased waiting lists.

The meeting also agreed that the CPGVI should circulate a request for information on the numbers of traffic lights, and of those not working, across Scotland's 32 local authorities.

Tuesday 22 February 2022

MSPs present: Two

Non-MSP members present: 45

Speakers: Three

Observers: Seven

Given the upcoming 2022 Scottish local government elections, the key topic was accessible voting.

Ken Reid gave his "Personal experiences of accessible voting", as presented to Electoral Commission in Scotland workshop for Returning Officers, January 2022. George Adam MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business provided an update on the Scottish Government's approach to accessible voting solutions. Sarah Mackie, of the Electoral Commission in Scotland gave information on the Scottish local government election preparations. This was followed by Q and A.

The Secretary reported on the results of the poll on CPGVI topics. The following topics won most votes:

- Specialist education of children with visual impairment - 10
- Employment including employability programmes and the employment gap for blind and partially sighted people - 9

- The shortage of rehabilitation officers - 6
- Accessible information - 5
- See Hear Strategy – update from Scottish Government on what has been achieved to date and what the plans are for the future - 5
- Transport - 5

Tuesday 10 May 2022

MSPs present: Three

Non-MSP members present: 38

Speakers: Three

Observers: Nine

The main agenda items were eye health and Braille Labelling on Food Products.

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Public Health, Women's Health, and Sport provided a ministerial overview and Mike Stewart of the Scottish Government gave details on three new national community-based eyecare services being developed by the Scottish Government. This was followed by Q and A.

Morven Brooks, Chief Executive, Disability Equality Scotland, gave information on the campaign to have Braille Labelling on Food Products. The aim of the campaign is to have a legal requirement to include braille labelling on food products. This could help facilitate independence for those with a visual impairment.

The issue of cataract waiting times was raised under Any Other Business and the CPGVI agreed to write to Minister Maree Todd about these concerns.

Wednesday 5 October 2022 (AGM)

MSPs present: Two

Non-MSP members present: 37

Speakers: Four

Observers: Eight

The AGM agreed on the re-Election of Office Bearers.

- Convener - Stuart McMillan MSP

- Vice-Convener - Neil Bibby MSP

- Secretariat & Treasurer - RNIB Scotland (Dr Catriona Burness)

The Secretary noted that the FOI report, “Traffic lights across Scotland (Spring 2022)” was attached with the meeting papers. It features responses from 29 Scottish Local Authorities.

Two topics were on the agenda, employment challenges faced by people with visual impairment and the Cost-of-Living crisis.

Lesley Clarke and Matthew Innes, Advocacy Managers for Disability Services, of the Department of Work & Pensions, outlined how the Access to Work programme provides support to help blind and partially sighted people take up and retain work. Mel Hanvey from North Ayrshire shares her personal experience of working with sight loss.

James Adams, Director, RNIB Scotland, led a short discussion about the impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on blind and partially sighted people and the CPGVI agreed to write to the Scottish Government to state support for mitigations that could be taken by the government as well as expressing support for uprating benefits in line with inflation.

MSP Members of The Group

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group.

1. Jeremy Balfour MSP (Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party)
2. Neil Bibby MSP (Scottish Labour)
3. Miles Briggs MSP (Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party)
4. Rhoda Grant MSP (Scottish Labour)
5. Stuart McMillan MSP (Scottish National Party)
6. Paul O’Kane MSP (Scottish Labour)
7. Colin Smyth MSP (Scottish Labour)

Non-MSP Members of The Group

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

Individuals

1. Matthew Clark
2. Amanda Foster
3. Tom Heald

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Thelma Ingram 5. Joan Kerr 6. Anne MacLean 7. Maureen McAllister 8. David McKerral 9. Moira McMurchie 10. Terry Moody 11. Councillor Robert Mooney 12. Rod Murchison 13. Hussein Patwa 14. Mary Rasmussen 15. Ken Reid 16. Terry Robinson 17. Kirin Saeed 18. Alan Stewart 19. Steven Sutherland 20. Colette Walker 21. Sandra Wilson
<p>Organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RNIB Scotland – Secretary and treasurer 2. Allergan 3. Angus Council 4. Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ASDO) 5. Associated Optical 6. Blind Veterans UK 7. Dundee Blind & Partially Sighted Society 8. Eyecare Scotland 9. Family Fund 10. Glaucoma UK 11. Guide Dogs Scotland 12. Haggeye 13. Linking Education and Disability (LEAD) Scotland 14. Macular Society 15. Microphthalmia, Anophthalmia & Coloboma Support (MACS) 16. Newsdirect 17. NHS Education for Scotland 18. NHS Forth Valley 19. NHS Lothian Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. NHS Tayside Disability Equality Network 21. North East Sensory Services (NESS) 22. North Ayrshire Council 23. Optelec UK 24. Optometry Scotland 25. Police Scotland 26. RNIB Connect Radio 27. Scottish Association for Visual Impairment Education (SAVIE) 28. Scottish Government 29. Scottish Sensory Hub (ALLIANCE) 30. seescape 31. Sight Action 32. Sight Scotland 33. Sight Scotland Veterans 34. The Royal Blind School Sight Scotland 35. University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education and Sport 36. University of Edinburgh, Scottish Sensory Centre 37. VI Charity Sector Partnership Mental Health Committee 38. Visibility 39. Visionary 40. Vision PK 41. Vision Support Service Aberdeen City Council
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Group Office Bearers

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

Convener	Stuart McMillan MSP
Deputy Convener	Neil Bibby MSP

Secretary	RNIB Scotland - Dr Catriona Burness
Treasurer	RNIB Scotland - Dr Catriona Burness
<p>Financial Benefits or Other Benefits</p> <p>Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.</p>	
<p>The CPG has received the support outlined below from RNIB Scotland, September 2021 - October 2022:</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>C Burness (12 days) & M Jackson & K Henderson (3 days) Total: £2255</p> <p>Catering costs for CPG</p> <p>N/A - as meetings from September 2021 - October 2022 were held by Teams and no catering was provided.</p> <p>OVERALL TOTAL: £2255 The CPGVI does not have a member subscription charge.</p>	
<p>Convener Contact Details</p>	
Name	Stuart McMillan MSP
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Telephone number	01475 720930