

Cross-Party Group on WASPI

Date and Time 22 JAN 2025 6PM Via Zoom

Minute

Present

MSPs

Katy Clark
Jackie Baillie
Maggie Chapman
Clare Haughey
Meghan Gallagher
Tess White

Invited guests

Angela Madden
Iain Fraser
Esther O' Hara
S McKellar
M Dawson

Non-MSP Group Members

Anne Potter
Heather Wallace
Frances Brown
Rosie Dickson
L Carmichael
M T Hanson
Joyce Rennie
Ann Jackson
Hilda
M Eley
L Paterson
R Meiklejohn
S Arnott
T Connolly
W Millar
K Birney
O Sharp

C McMillan
C Jardine
J Farmer
S Cowan

Apologies

R L Baillie
E Daly
C Scott

Agenda item 1

This meeting concentrated primarily on the UK Gov statement Dec 17 2024. Pensions Minister Liz Kendall delivered the shock news that the compensation for maladministration as recommended by PHSO would not be paid. The CPG had asked for statements of support from all parties since pledges of support by MSPs & MPs had previously been given. All party support has since been provided & attached for the record. Comments from MSPs include Jackie Baillie reaffirming her support for WASPI & genuinely disappointed. Clearly using financial constraints is wrong. The CPG will write to the Gov. & happy with Holyrood debate outcome. Maggie Chapman added Patrick Harvie sending best wishes & confirmed Scottish Greens support for fair & fast compensation. She added it is an issue of injustice, is scandalous & misogynistic affecting women & their families. This is a betrayal of trust with too many affected. An in depth discussion followed. MSP Clare Haughey urged the campaign to continue fighting this decision & expressed her anger at the UK Gov decision. Angela Madden stated she was shocked by Labour decision & as a consequence had resigned from her long held Labour membership. She was flummoxed at the timing, the day before Xmas recess. WASPI Ltd have contacted their legal team though legal action is not ideal. DWP have issued a response which is not entirely supportive of the Gov action. Donations may be required if legal route adopted. Lawyers are looking at the content of the Gov statement, particularly 90% of women knew SP age changing which, WASPI dispute. PHSO would not have progressed the complaints if that was correct. The other main issue is about women of 50's not reading letters. Stats are clearly not accurate. It was pleasing to see 72 MPs attend the WM Hall debate on Jan 15 & there was a good response for the DWP select committee on Jan 22nd & hopeful Liz Kendall will be approached to clarify her statement. Stephen Flynn has secured a 10 minute rule bill slot on Jan 28 & its keeping the campaign in the forefront of Gov business. Ms Madden will keep us updated. Katy C thanked her for her attendance. Esther O'Hara of Unite assured campaign of their support Tess White said she felt the WM Hall debate was powerful & confirmed her belief that the Gov had broken their promise. She also confirmed her party supported the motion & suggested those who haven't seen it to take time to do so. Ms White said that the labour MSPs should go back to Keir Starmer to advise him of the extreme disappointment. Ms White confirmed she has a background in HR & is happy to work as a CPG member in moving the campaign forward. R Dickson commented she is fed up being used as

a political football. We all paid our NI. The idea of Means testing any compensation would exclude many from qualifying. & added it's an absolute insult to 50's born women, & their families. Triple lock is not a solution & the WFA is also an issue affecting the same age group. Lynn Paterson wanted to reiterate any compensation would go right into the local economy & reminded Tess W her party could have dealt with the issue prior to election. Mary Dawson reaffirmed Unison support & thanked Angela M for attendance at October Retired members conference. Mary stated she was absolutely astounded at the Labour decision & disputed the 90% figure of women being aware of changes to SP age. Iain Fraser of Age Scotland confirmed he has a great deal of knowledge on the WASPI campaign having worked in PHSO & with Ronnie Cowan MP. He contributed information relevant to the recent Holyrood debates - namely Close the Gap briefing. Susan McKellar of Scottish Women's Convention is keen to hold round table events on the WASPI topic though recognised its Westminster we need to take corrective action. Olive Sharp of Banff & Buchan mentioned SNP had secured a 10 minute Rule bill on Tuesday January 28 & encouraged all to share the information. M T Hansen asked How can PHSO be ignored? & why mention Black Hole as a reason not to settle compensation.? Heather Wallace said the WM Hall debate was fantastic & thanked all who attended. She also suggested Wales & NI could or should organise debate to prove the devolved nations are in agreement..

Agenda item 2

It was suggested our next meeting should be arranged to accommodate Rebecca Long Baillie availability, preferably February or early March. Katy thanked all for attending & for their contributions.

Agenda item 3

Scottish Party statements of support for WASPI compensation have been circulated & are available from Secretariat at waspiglas73@gmail.com.