

WASPI Scotland CPG

Minutes of meeting no 1

26 October 2021.

Attendees,

MSP's/Government officials.

Katy Clark (Chair), Siobhan Brown, Beatrice Wishart, Calum Fisher

WASPI/ CPG Members,

Linda Carmichael, Rosie Dickson, Liz Daly, Carla O'Hara, M Eley, L McColl, Catriona Melville, Wendy Millar, Ann Jackson, Olive Sharp, Liz McQuarrie, Frances Brown, Christine McMillan, Catriona Melville, (Age Scotland), Zara Pennington Smith,(WPIYPO), Anne Campbell, Lynn Paterson, Susan McKellar (SWC) Christine Houston, Anne Potter,-(Secretariat).

Apologies

MSP's,- Jamie Greene, P Harvie, S Gullane, P Mc Neill, C Haughey, J Hepburn, T Arthur, G Adam, G McKay, M Matheson

WASPI – M Grierson, H Smith (Age Scotland)

- 1- Welcome Intro & Apologies.- Katy introduced herself as the new chair of the group & asked for all attendees to introduce themselves with a little bit of background as to their involvement with WASPI/Women born in 50's.
- 2- PHSO Stage 1 report feedback. Anne P explained that the APPG in Westminster had asked for feedback on the July 21 Stage 1 report by PHSO which confirmed there was indeed Maladministration carried out by DWP. They were keen to find out where there may be flaws in the report & to flag them up so they can investigate further. They also asked for ideas of how MP'S & APPG could assist going forward. This has been submitted by WASPI Scotland along with many other campaign groups & we await their decisions on what happens next. Unfortunately there is no indication of timescales from PHSO regarding stage 2. There were various comments regarding the lengthy process encountered over the years. Anne C said she was annoyed that her Complaints process had been affected by the Back 2 60 Court case DWP closed many cases without action. Rosie D asked how CPG can influence Westminster to act upon the PHSO findings & all agreed this was important.
(AP1/1) A question was raised about the figure of almost 10,000 complaints recorded but this information does not appear to be accurate.
- 3- WASPI Campaign Update.

Anne Potter advised the campaign had been severely hampered by COVID with many women fearful of attending gatherings & events. Ultimately the campaign is hopeful of PHSO Stage 2 finding fault with communication of National Insurance changes over many years & complaint handling by DWP & ICE.

Katy C confirmed there has been a letter sent to Therese Coffey's office regarding the need to take action on PHSO stage 1 report plus highlighting the serious issues in State Pension receipts being unnecessarily delayed. Katy suggested it might be worthwhile preparing a letter for sign off by all MSP's to show support & understanding of the campaign & the need to reach a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible. **(AP2/1)** The planned exhibition in Holyrood is postponed until Spring 2022 but it was felt we should perhaps hold a small committee room event in the meantime. Siobhan Brown agreed that there should be something to focus on highlighting the campaign to all MSP's. Beatrice Wishart suggested we should share our concerns & discussions with MSP's & an event might suit the requirements. Katy has proposed a written briefing on the SP delays & may organise a motion. **(AP3/1)** Linda C commented that the CPG over the years has suffered from lack of MSP continuity & obtaining true cross party involvement whilst realising MSP's are extremely busy. Siobhan echoed the need to obtain more support from MSP's at CPG's however most MSP's find they are over committed to various forums. Beatrice was still keen to look at an event in a committee room as a good opportunity to have MSP's drop in & hear about the campaign. **(AP4/1)**

4 - Regional Update. Frances B stated Ayrshire having some meetings with safety measures in place. Rosie D updated on Glasgow events at Mary Barbour statue & Govanhill carnival. She mentioned the Renfrewshire ladies had a successful gathering at the Johnstone bandstand with councillors attending & local press. Zara suggested more close working with MP's. Carla reported on a successful event in Livingstone in September generating interest from locals & press. Still surprised at the numbers of women unaware of state pension age delays. Liz McQuarrie was pleased with the Light Up purple events that took place September 6 across the UK. Support was given by many councils & various landmarks lit up specially for WASPI. Liz also thought the WASPI pledge which we carried out a few years ago might be worth doing again inviting MP's & MSP's to show support by signing the pledge. Liz Daly also felt the purple light up was worthwhile with Dunbartonshire council focussing on Dumbarton HQ. Anne C has been speaking to her 2 local MPs in the hope they join forces to target the 10k women affected. Linda C has concentrated on raising awareness in Aberdeen streets pre Covid & continues to keep members informed on Facebook. Aberdeen council provided the purple light up on a distinguished building which was appreciated.

5 - Ayrshire Research. Frances B presented the Ayrshire findings on the impact of delayed SP on individuals & local economy. She explained how the group gathered the information & developed the feedback. This proved to be worthwhile & Frances suggested it would be a good exercise to carry out across Scotland by MSP's. **(AP5/1)** Olive S commented that in Banff & Buchan they

carried out a paper sift of local papers from 1994 to check for State Pension articles but had little success. They did however find one item of interest by Neil Drysdale in the Press & Journal money page which they felt might not have attracted the attention of many 50's born women.

Liz McQ highlighted the inaccurate info which was still on DWP website in 2016 showing SP at age 60 for women. Lynn P added their group is working with an economist in an attempt to develop the Ayrshire research. Rosie D stated there had always been an emphasis on the Socio economic effects along with women being forced into working age benefits.

AOB

No AOB.

Date of next meeting to follow.