



OFFICIAL REPORT  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 17 March 2022

Session 6



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot) or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

---

**Thursday 17 March 2022**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CROSS-PARTY GROUP.....</b>	<b>2</b>

---

**STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2022, Session 6**

**CONVENER**

\*Martin Whitfield (South Scotland) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

\*Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP)

\*Tess White (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Paul O’Kane (West Scotland) (Lab)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Katy Orr

**LOCATION**

The Sir James Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)



## Scottish Parliament

### Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 17 March 2022

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:00]

#### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Martin Whitfield):** Good morning. I welcome everyone to the eighth meeting of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee in 2022. I remind members who are joining us virtually to place an R in the chat function of BlueJeans if they would like to come in on any issues.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on whether the committee will take agenda item 4 in private. Item 4 is the consideration of some correspondence. Do members agree to take item 4 in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Cross-Party Group

**The Convener:** Our second agenda item is the committee's consideration of an application for recognition from a proposed cross-party group on care leavers. I welcome Paul O'Kane MSP to the meeting. He is the proposed convener of the group and joins us remotely.

Good morning, Paul. Would you like to set out the purposes and intentions of the CPG?

**Paul O'Kane (West Scotland) (Lab):** Thank you, convener, and good morning to colleagues on the committee. I am very pleased to be here this morning to share with you the intentions of the cross-party group on care leavers.

The establishment of the group arose from a sense that there was no dedicated focus for care leavers in the Parliament. We have a number of cross-party groups that cater for children who are currently looked after, and other cross-party groups cross-cut around social work and other issues. However, there was a sense that young people who are leaving the care system and young people who have lived experience of being in the care system do not have a voice in the cross-party group system.

As is summarised in the papers that the committee has received, the purpose of the group is

"to inform MSPs of the many social, emotional wellbeing and financial challenges which care leavers face"

via the forum of the CPG, which will seek to share information and knowledge about the experiences of care leavers and those who support them. We will work in collaboration across the other cross-party groups that I have mentioned, and I think that we will have a particularly strong relationship with the cross-party group on social work.

We intend to have a wide membership, which will be drawn from young people with lived experience and adults who have gone through the care system. We will seek to express their views, opinions and ideas to the Government and Parliament and to share their vision for what Scotland can be.

A core part of what the group will do could arise from the work that we are all committed to on the Promise. There is a sense that the cross-party group would want to contribute to the progress of the Promise and the scrutiny of the Promise, ensuring that we, as decision makers, as well as wider civic society in Scotland, keep the promise that we made to care-experienced young people and those leaving care across Scotland.

A number of other related issues will be discussed in the group, but, in summary, it will be

about putting care leaver issues on the map and ensuring that a group that is often underrepresented is represented in our Parliament.

**The Convener:** Thank you, Paul. I note that one of the organisations that signed up to the CPG is STAF—the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum. It was lovely to see its display in the Parliament’s garden lobby and to see its members meeting MSPs to discuss it.

Do committee members have any specific questions on the proposed group?

Did it surprise you, Paul, that this was the first time that a care leavers group was being proposed?

**Paul O’Kane:** It did, convener. Given the remarks that I just made about the importance to us all of the Promise, and given the degree to which the profile of people who have care experience—and, indeed, the care system itself—have been at the forefront in the past few years, I was quite surprised. The group is definitely of its time. It will provide a strong forum in which we, as decision makers, can continue to scrutinise that journey through hearing the voices of care-experienced young people.

I would also like to thank you, convener, for reminding colleagues that STAF is in the Parliament this week. Our stall continues today, and we have an event this evening. I will abuse my position slightly to plug that event, in case colleagues are around at 5.30 this evening.

**The Convener:** That was not in any way set up—much. [*Laughter.*]

Thank you for attending, Paul. The committee will consider whether to approve the application for recognition under agenda item 3, and the clerks will inform you in due course of the committee’s decision.

**Paul O’Kane:** Thanks, convener.

**The Convener:** Agenda item 3 is, indeed, a decision on whether we wish to afford recognition to the proposed cross-party group on care leavers. Do committee member have any comments, questions or views on that?

**Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP):** I have a brief comment to make. I nearly asked Mr O’Kane about this, but I did not think that it would be required. However, I would like to put on record the fact that I think that the cross-party group could be of good service to the committees of the Parliament as well. I sit on the Education, Children and Young People Committee, and we will clearly have a scrutiny role in relation to the delivery of the Promise, but we will not always be able to give that as much time

as we would like to. I think that the work of the cross-party group could certainly complement the work of the main committees of the Parliament in relation to their responsibility for ensuring that we deliver on the Promise. In that context, it is very welcome that this cross-party group is, hopefully, going to be established.

**The Convener:** You make an interesting comment, Bob, because this committee has heard, in relation to a number of different matters, about the challenge of committees being able to hear evidence, particularly from witnesses with lived experience. Whether or not this proposed CPG goes forward, maybe there will be an opportunity to look at the resource that exists in some of our CPGs when we are looking to take evidence across committees.

**Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP):** I put on record that I will be a member of the proposed CPG, if it is accepted.

In relation to my background, I also put on record that, prior to being elected, I worked for a care charity with three care homes in Scotland, so the subject is really close to my heart. It is so welcome to see the CPG being established and to be able to be a voice for those young people. I have seen at first hand the challenges that they face.

One thing that stood out for me, which I would like to see addressed going forward, is that in a care home setting, although the local authority is the corporate parent, there is potentially no will to have any of the care staff make sure that the young people are going to school and getting a proper education. It is not incumbent on them. The other thing that stood out for me is the fact that the young people were very reluctant to register to vote, which I found quite concerning. They felt that big brother was watching them and that the police would be on to them for various different things if they registered.

It is an area that I am really passionate about, and I am keen to take it forward in order to bust any myths associated with care experience.

**The Convener:** I like your comment on busting myths. The record notes your potential interest in the CPG.

Are members agreed to accord recognition to the proposed cross-party group on care leavers?

**Members indicated agreement.**

09:08

*Meeting continued in private until 09:54.*

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

---

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

---

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers  
is available here:

[www.parliament.scot/documents](http://www.parliament.scot/documents)

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: [sp.info@parliament.scot](mailto:sp.info@parliament.scot)

---



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba