

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

Monday 6th December

13:00 – 14:30

Agenda

Chair: Meghan Gallacher MSP

Topic: Beyond Level 0 - The ongoing impact of Covid-19 on children, young people and families

MSP Attendees

- Meghan Gallacher MSP
- Kaukab Stewart MSP
- Jeremy Balfour MSP

Attendees

- Dana Vreeswijk
- Chris Ross
- Parisa Shirazi
- Sarah Paterson
- Khaleda Noon
- Nic McGowan
- Brian Magee
- Jane Malcolm
- Felicity Vidya Mehendale
- David Ashford
- Joan Mowat
- Megan Farr
- Rebecca Marshall
- Paul Sullivan
- Representative
- Kelly Munro
- Gemma Richardson
- Parveen Ishaq
- Ghzala Khan
- Unyimeobong Matthew
- Mercy Tochukwu Christopher
- Lyndsay McDade
- Nina Collins
- Sarah Anderson
- Amy Woodhouse
- Cath Logan
- Megan Farr
- Florence Burke
- Claire Hunter
- Joyce Sweeney
- Kirsty-Louise Hunt
- Finlay Allmond

1. Welcome from Chair – Meghan Gallacher MSP

Meghan Gallacher MSP welcomed members of the CPG to the second meeting of the new parliamentary term. At today's meeting we will be looking at the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on children, young people and families and the organisations that work with them.

Meghan noted that the CPG took an extended look at the impact of COVID-19 in the last Parliament and we felt it was appropriate to revisit this topic given the ongoing impact that it is having.

Meghan told members of the group that we will be using this meeting as an evidence gathering session for a headline report that we will send to the Scottish Government in the New Year about the challenges that the sector are facing.

Meghan noted that the meeting would be taking a slightly different format with the majority of the meeting devoted to breakout space discussions that will be used to gather our evidence for the report. We will also follow this up with a short survey for members of the CPG.

Meghan informed the group that the CPG on Children and Young People have been granted permission by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. to formally re-register the group.

Membership of the group

Meghan informed members of the group of the final make up of the MSP membership of the CPG. This included:

Convenors

- Meghan Gallacher MSP
- Kaukab Stewart MSP

Members

- Michael Marra MSP
- Jeremy Balfour MSP
- Fulton MacGregor MSP
- Karen Adam MSP
- Colin Beattie MSP

2. CPG Business

a. Previous Minutes

The minutes from the October meeting of the CPG were taken as read.

b. Previous Actions

Meghan handed over to Chris Ross from Children in Scotland to provide an update on the actions from the October meeting of the group.

- The convenors and the secretariat will look closely at the of lack of access to youth spaces, an issue that particularly affects children and young people

from marginalized backgrounds. COVID-19 has exacerbated this issue and it will be a key priority of the CPG.

This topic has been brought into the thinking for this meeting and we have decided to consider it alongside the wider impact from COVID-19 beyond just access to space.

- The CPG secretariat will engage in targeted work to expand the diversity of the CPG's membership.

Children in Scotland and YouthLink Scotland have engaged with partners to try to reach a more diverse group. This has included contacting the regional Equality Councils and engaging with other members of the CPG.

3. Discussion Group 1

Meghan Gallacher MSP informed the group that we would now move to a series of discussion groups whereas a group we will identify some of the key current challenges facing children, young people and families from the Covid-19 pandemic. Our discussions will form the basis of a headline report for Scottish Government and other key partners. The discussions at this meeting may also be supplemented by a short survey of the membership of the CPG.

Meghan introduced the range of work that has already been covered on this topic across the sector. This included:

- Scottish Youth Parliament, YouthLink Scotland and Young Scot have run the Lockdown Lowdown series which has shown that the pandemic has had impact on mental health and that young people have felt excluded from decision making.
- Children's Parliament have also run a series of journal and surveys that have shown younger children missing out on chances to see friends and socialise.
- We know from organisations such as WhoCares, Staf and others that the pandemic has had a particular impact on young people with experience of care. We also know from Carers Trust how it has made life harder for young carers.
- Intercultural Youth Scotland have also highlighted the impact on young black and people of colour.
- There has also been a range of work done that has shown how young people with additional support needs have missed out on entitlements and support.
- We also know the impact on exams and assessments for young people and the stress that this has caused.

Attendees were put into 4 breakout space discussions that were facilitated by the Secretariat.

Breakout Spaces

The discussion groups focussed on the following topics:

Current challenges

What are the current challenges posed by Covid-19 and ongoing guidance/restrictions for the children, young people and families you work with?

How has this changed over the last 3-6 months?

Immediate Support

What support has been put in place from Scottish Government/the Local Authorities you work in/other funding bodies?

What other immediate support do you need?

Next Steps

What support do you feel you need in the next 3-6 months to support the children, young people and families you work with?

The notes from the 4 discussion groups can be accessed at the links below:

- Group One:
<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1xzoSsiYY2jmi1NE1EO3psEjGhrSkn1JkGZ3ylvaqXAFs/edit?usp=sharing>
- Group Two:
https://jamboard.google.com/d/1_UFBDyPz5Kofvi1FEtTF7wYQUt7W6Xz2F4E_IShcEdl/edit?usp=sharing
- Group Three:
https://jamboard.google.com/d/1B-ZMVAIE-0BJ5vu3m8YrYNO4ooMh_uX3wGbeJdUMiqw/edit?usp=sharing
- Group Four:
<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1lgzrDpb3f3JKhH0emH9Ey1CYsDFJNK01HVtIU BzSMoE/edit?usp=sharing>

The notes from these discussions have been used to inform the development of a survey that will be shared in December and January.

4. Actions Agreed

- The secretariat will prepare a survey for organisations working with children, young people and families based on the discussions during today's meeting. This will run from W/C 13th December into January.
- The CPG secretariat will continue to engage in targeted work to expand the diversity of the CPG's membership.

5. Close of meeting

Meghan Gallacher MSP thanked attendees at the CPG for coming and wished everyone a happy Christmas break.

Meghan also informed attendees that the secretariat would be in touch pre Christmas with the survey and with the draft minutes of the meeting.