

Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

Poverty, Intersectionality and Art – exploring issues relating to children and young people from ethnic minority populations

Tuesday 28th June 12:00 – 13:30

Minute

Chair: Kaukab Stewart MSP

Present

MSPs

Kaukab Stewart MSP

Jeremy Balfour MSP

Invited guests

Kirsty McNeill, CRER

Ally Zlatar

Non-MSP Group Members

Amy Woodhouse, Children in Scotland

Aneel Singh Bhopal, WSREC

Brian Magee, COSCA

Dave Evans, MYPAS

David Mackay, Children in Scotland

Elaine Kerridge, Children in Scotland

Elaine Walls, Skills Development Scotland

Fiona O'Sullivan, Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

Councillor Glen Reynolds, Aberdeenshire Council

Judi Martin, University of Edinburgh

Joyce Sweeney, Quarriers

Kate MacKinnon, CELCIS

Kelly Munro, Carers Trust

Leah Duncan-Karrim, Children in Scotland

Lyndsay Fraser Robertson, Children in Scotland

Marguerite Adam, Skills Development Scotland

Salena Begley, Family Fund

Sarah McClarey, Mindroom

Sarah Paterson, YouthLink Scotland

Chris Ross, Children in Scotland
Dana Vreeswijk, Children in Scotland

Welcome from chair

Kaukab Stewart MSP welcomed members of the CPG to the fourth meeting of the new parliamentary term. Kaukab told members that today's meeting would focus on the issues affecting children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The pandemic shone a light on the inequalities in our system and has had a disproportionate impact on BAME children and young people. This topic is of high importance as we continue to focus on moving into a renewal or recovery phase. Kaukab stated that this is an opportunity to focus on a new topic for the group that was highlighted as a priority in our first meeting of the term.

Kaukab introduced the speakers and said that the membership would hear from:

Kirsty McNeill from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, to give an overview on the rates of high rates of child poverty experienced by BAME children and young people and the insufficiencies of current anti-poverty policies and strategies in addressing race.

Ally Zlatar, an artist, to share her experience both as a displaced person and as someone who works to empower migrants, refugees and youth through creative arts.

Kaukab said that the meeting would also introduce the Scottish Parliament's consultation on Public Participation, which is currently open for feedback, and give members an opportunity to share their input. The Scottish Parliament are seeking to understand which groups are less likely to engage with them and how they can remedy this. The discussions during this breakout portion will be incorporated into a short submission which will be sent on behalf of the CPG.

Lastly, she said that members would also have an opportunity to ask questions to the speakers and raise further comments. Then as group, the membership we will discuss any further action we wish to take over the coming months to ensure the sector has the support that it needs.

Going forward, the CPG may consider carrying out research in this area similar to that conducted on the impact of the pandemic on the sector. The secretariat would be happy to engage with members of the group to develop this work to ensure it meaningful and representative.

Kaukab ran through a range of housekeeping measures and reminded all attendees that the chat function was available for questions and comments.

CPG Business

- a. Minutes

Kaukab said that the secretariat had shared the previous minutes with members of the group. No issues had been raised in relation to the minutes. She asked members to confirm if they were happy to take these minutes as read.

This was approved by the membership and the minutes were ratified.

b. Actions

Kaukab, handed over to Chris Ross, Children in Scotland to provide an update on the actions from our last meeting.

Actions from last meeting

- *Chris Ross, Children in Scotland will continue to follow up with the new organisations that have recently got involved in the group to explore taking out membership of the group. This will be to continue to diversify the membership.*

Poverty and race – CRER – Kirsty McNeil

Kaukab handed over to Kirsty McNeill from the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER). Kirsty gave a summary of the rates and impact of poverty on BAME children and young people.

For Information

CRER is a Scottish strategic anti-racist organisation, with a mission to protect, enhance and promote the rights of Black/minority ethnic communities across all areas of life in Scotland and to strengthen the social, economic and political capital of Black/minority ethnic communities, especially those at greatest risk of disadvantage.

CRER's work tackles structural racism in Scotland using evidence based and rights-based approaches. They work in partnership with activists, grassroots and third sector organisations, academia, Scottish Government and other public sector organisations to create change. They do so by undertaking research, policy development, lobbying, campaigning, network building and more across all areas where racial injustices persist.

You can find more about CRER's work on their website. <https://www.crer.org.uk/>

Kirsty shared a presentation and spoke on the high rates of child poverty among BAME communities, the insufficiencies of current strategies to tackle the problem and the potential for next steps.

[Click here to view CRER's presentation.](#)

Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children and Young People – Ally Zlatar

Kaukab handed over to Ally Zatar who shared her experience as a young person from a displaced background (Former Yugoslavia). Ally works with migrants, refugees and young people to empower them through the creative arts.

Her focus has been on helping those from marginalized communities to explore and share their lived-in experiences through creativity and using art as a catalyst for change-making.

You can find more about Ally's work on her website <https://allyz.cargo.site/>

Ally shared that her work was rooted in her experiences as a refugee and as someone who has struggled with their mental health. Through artistic expression, Ally has found a way to channel her voice; this has had a positive impact on her mental health and wellbeing.

As a refugee, she described the barriers many face to participation and accessing support. In her work as an activist, she runs a variety of creative workshops to give others a chance to explore and understand themselves, as well as to empower them to use their creative voices to combat adversaries.

Questions from membership

Kaukab thanked Kirsty and Ally for speaking and said she thought their presentations were deeply informative and impactful. Kaukab then opened the floor to questions and responses from the CPG membership.

Kaukab at this point needed to leave and handed over to Jeremy Balfour to chair for the remainder of the meeting.

- Dana asked: The stat that most stood out to me was the discrepancy between the high rate of BAME participation in post-secondary education and their lower rates of participation in the workforce. Do you have any insight into why that discrepancy exists?
- Kirsty McNeil said: This is work we are very interested in researching further as there are a number of unknowns – and we would also welcome any partners who want to support us. Even the evidence we've presented is at a UK level and further work is needed to understand what the picture looks like in Scotland. We know that there are a number of contributing factors, but work needs to be done to fully understand the causes of this gap to identify possible solutions.
- Amy Woodhouse asked: If we are on track to meeting the interim child poverty targets but BAME children and young people are being left behind this is a major concern and needs to be highlighted. We need to push for this detailed analysis of who is experiencing child poverty and develop a nuanced understanding of the child poverty so we can make sure that the strategies are targeting all communities.
- Kirsty McNeil said: We appreciate the support and are very happy to work with anyone interested in investigating this work more.

- Chris Ross said: I sit on the End Child Poverty Coalition and think we should take this data to them. Kirsty, it would be great to have you or someone else from CRER to join this conversation.
- Sarah Paterson said: When Kaukab did her introduction we said we would look over the summer – pull together a report to look at these gaps. This is work we are very interested in taking forward.
- Elaine Kerridge said: we're working with Intercultural Youth Scotland and GTCS on a project focusing on diversity in Scottish education, specifically around race, with a view to supporting greater diversity in the teaching profession which should be completed by the summer. We would be happy to share our learning from this.
- Elaine Walls said: we are very interested in supporting this work. Our organisation supports transitions, and our own research backs up many of the points you've highlighted. Regarding your work on participation rates in modern apprenticeships. We have an ethnic intersectionality and uplift support offers for employers as well– lots going on in this area. I would be interested in following up with Kirsty, we are now looking at poverty and how we can look at this area.

Jeremy said that he had launched a consultation on the [Proposed Disability Commissioner \(Scotland\) Bill](#). He encouraged members to visit the Scottish Government website to complete the consultation, which closes on 3 Aug.

Click here to access the [Proposed Disability Commissioner \(Scotland\) Bill consultation](#)

Scottish Parliament Public Participation Consultation

Jeremy handed over to Chris Ross, who introduced the Scottish Parliament Consultation on Public Engagement.

[Click here to view notes from the consultation discussion.](#)

[Click here to view our consultation response.](#)

Chris said that the CPG would like to gather the thoughts of the membership, which will be incorporated in a short submission on behalf of the CPG.

- c. What groups do you feel are currently under-represented in the work of Scottish Parliament?
- d. How can the Scottish Parliament make sure it is hearing from these groups? How would its approaches need to change?
- e. Is there anything the Scottish Parliament is doing that discourages people from these groups from engaging?

Agree actions and close

Jeremy thanked attendees for attending and explained that we will not meet over summer and will reconvene in September.

