

## **All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

Chair: Craig Whittaker MP

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

Interview Room 1, Portcullis House

**Present:** Craig Whittaker MP, The Earl of Listowel, Ann Coffey MP, Steve McCabe MP, Chloe Cockett (The Who Cares? Trust), Natasha Finlayson (The Who Cares? Trust)

**Apologies:** Alex Cunningham MP

#### **1) Election of Officers**

- i) Craig Whittaker MP was re-elected as Chair of the group (nominated Ann Coffey MP, seconded by Steve McCabe MP)
- ii) The Earl of Listowel was re-elected as Vice Chair (nominated Craig Whittaker MP, seconded Ann Coffey).
- iii) Bill Esterson was elected as Vice Chair (nominated Craig Whittaker MP, seconded Ann Coffey).
- iv) Jessica Lee MP was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer of the group. (nominated Craig Whittaker MP, seconded Steve McCabe MP)
- v) All the officers were elected unanimously.
- vi) There are five new members of the group: Sarah Champion MP, Bill Esterson MP, Steve McCabe MP, Alex Cunningham MP, Emma Lewell-Buck MP.
  - i) All other members of the group were left un-amended.
- vii) It was agreed that there should be a presumption to notify the group if members wish to withdraw their membership and as such it was decided that all other members were happy to continue their membership.
- viii) The entry in the All-Party Groups register will be amended to reflect the above changes.

Action: CC to amend the register and CW to sign before the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014 deadline.

#### **2) Future work programme**

- a) Dates of future meetings:
  - i) The dates for the next year were agreed and are as follows:

Wednesday 5th February  
Wednesday 2nd April  
Wednesday 11th June (young people's led session)  
Wednesday 22nd October  
Wednesday 10th December

b) Themes of future meetings

- i) The themes of the future meetings were discussed and it was agreed that there would be a meeting led by the young people and one meeting on the Entitlements Inquiry, one year on. It was also agreed that the young people should vote on the remaining three topics.
- ii) NF highlighted that the topic of IROs would possibly include a research launch with NCB.
- iii) The Earl of Listowel suggested including personal advisors to 25 within the topic of healthy relationships. It was also suggested that the topic should be changed from healthy relationships to positive relationships.
- iv) The Earl of Listowel suggested dedicating a whole meeting to personal advisors.
- v) The Earl of Listowel suggested exploring return to home and highlighted recent NSPCC research and the concerns about children and young people bouncing between home and care. He suggested an additional meeting on the topic.
- vi) Steve McCabe MP suggested replacing the topic of money management with return home at the vote bearing in mind item 2c on the agenda. This was agreed.

c) Possible joint meeting with the APPG for Financial Education

- i) CC gave an overview of the suggestion.
- ii) Craig Whittaker MP said that the workshops from the Entitlements Inquiry had gone very well, and suggested doing something in the same format.
- iii) The issue of funding was raised and NF suggested getting a bank to sponsor the event.
- iv) It was agreed that CC would go back to talk to pfeg who hold the secretariat for the APPG for Financial Education and continue discussions.

Action: CC to speak to pfeg and begin discussions.

d) Entitlements Inquiry

- i) Craig Whittaker MP invited the Earl of Listowel to give an overview of the launch of the Entitlements Inquiry. The Earl of Listowel also said that he had met with Isabelle Trowler, the new Chief Social Worker for Children and Families and she had said that she was concerned about social workers not spending enough time with children and young people. Lord Nash and the Minister were both at the meeting.
- ii) NF said that there had been more than 200 attendees at the launch.
- iii) The Earl of Listowel asked Steve McCabe MP for feedback as he had attended as a panel member.
- iv) Steve McCabe MP said that it's very difficult with that kind of event balancing panel members speaking and young people having enough time to speak. He felt it was disrupted by the vote and said that it can sometimes feel like the panel is talking at the young people. However, he said that the range of issues and number of young people raising issues wasn't bad.
- v) Follow up actions were discussed. It was agreed to write to the Minister and to hold a follow up meeting in December 2014.

Action: CC to draft a letter to the Minister, thanking him for attending and requesting a meeting.

### **3) Meeting young people's needs**

- a) Ensuring the room is adequate
  - i) Craig Whittaker MP said that the two most recent APPG meetings had been bumped from their booked room.
  - ii) Both the secretariat and Craig Whittaker's staff have done all they can to ensure that the biggest rooms are used and young people are not turned away. (CC said that no young people have been turned away from the door of the meeting, although they may have to wait outside for a short amount of time).
  - iii) Ann Coffey MP said that the best days to hold APPGs are on days when standing committees do not sit. She also suggested rooms in the House of Lords: 4G, The Cholmondeley Room or committee room G.
  - iv) The Earl of Listowel said that he would ask his secretary to check the capacity of rooms in the House of Lords. He also suggested the conference centre, although this would incur a cost to the group.

Action: The Earl of Listowel to ask his secretary to find out about room capacity and to liaise with CC.

#### **4) Funding**

- i) Craig Whittaker MP went through the balance sheet and asked where funding comes from.
- ii) NF said that in the past, funding has come from donations from officers and others. Previous receptions have been funded by a sponsor.
- iii) Craig Whittaker MP said that he would be happy to approach banks for sponsorship for the pfeg event.
- iv) Steve McCabe suggested asking someone who is high profile with a background in care to support the group financially.
- v) The Earl of Listowel said that he would think of people to approach.

Action: CC to draw up a list of potential donors for Craig Whittaker MP to approach.

#### **5) AOB**

- i) Ann Coffey MP said that she had been asked by Tony Lloyd to chair an enquiry following on from Rochdale. She would like to hear from young people as to whether they felt that there had been a sense of change for young people having their needs met and what are the barriers in the system for young people, particularly those who enter care late. Steve McCabe MP asked if the University of Bedfordshire were doing something similar. Craig Whittaker MP asked if the enquiry was about the system or the young people who had been abused. Ann Coffey MP said that people don't know how to talk to young people at risk and wants to see if there had been change in this area. The Earl of Listowel said that the APPG for children was holding an enquiry into young people and the police and suggested it may be interesting to attend.
- ii) The Earl of Listowel asked whether there should be a call for feedback. Young people feel like they don't know enough about the progress made. NF said that there was the newsletter that gave updates. The Who Cares? Trust would ensure that it contains as much information as possible.
- iii) The Earl of Listowel asked about whether the idea of interns could be reinstated. Interns had in the past spent time shadowing the chair and the Earl for a short amount of time during the week. NF said that it was a lot of work for the chair, and hadn't been done since before the previous chair, but it would be something that the secretariat would be happy to look into, if the officers wished.
- iv) Ann Coffey left the meeting.

- v) NF raised the issue of correspondence that had taken place on separate occasions between herself, Craig Whittaker MP and the Earl of Listowel and the barrister Ivor Frank regarding the young people who attend having an expert to turn to. The issue had also been raised by Kevin Woods at the DfE. NF suggested having Ivor, Kevin or Roger Morgan attend in an advisory capacity rather than a panel member and it was agreed to action this for future meetings. Craig Whittaker MP said that he would speak to Ivor.

The meeting was closed.