



## Third Sector in Parliament

### Conference Report

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Scottish Parliament Building

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### Opening Plenary

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### **Gillian Baxendine, Head of the Scottish Parliament's Participation and Communities Team (PACT)**

Gillian welcomed delegates, introduced the staff of PACT, and ran through the order of the day. This year's conference is the second since the inaugural event last year and we worked with an external Reference Group of participants to guide us in designing and delivering this year's event.

### **Presiding Officer (PO) Alison Johnstone MSP**

In the PO's opening speech, the importance of the work of the third sector was stressed – it informs what we do in Parliament and plays an important role in democracy. The Parliament wants to connect and listen to the people of Scotland and ensure people can be actively



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involved. The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee [report](#) was referenced, alongside the Parliament’s [Gender Sensitive Audit](#) work, and the determination to drive this work forward was emphasised. This also included the UNCRC being embedded in the work that we do – particularly our participation work. It is our responsibility to create inclusive, relaxed, and comfortable experiences – we recognise it can be daunting for people, but we also see this is when we get the most out of people.

The PO shared that the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Parliament next year will be marked by taking the opportunity to celebrate what we have achieved but also to reflect what we can do better. Parliament will be aiming to facilitate thoughtful dialogue with the public, where people are supported to become confident and capable to interact with us. CPPPC’s People’s Panel recommended taking Parliament to the people – the PO committed to undertaking a programme of activities to reach every parliamentary region, evaluating what works well and what we need to do differently or more of. We need sector support and ideas on this.



Delegate Questions	Presiding Officer Answers
<p>Q1: How can the Parliament encourage and support engagement during these difficult and challenging financial times?</p>	<p>Parliament has an important role to play, that we are reaching people in as affordable a way as possible. But not all online – we need social connections. Role for MSPs to ensure we are maintaining strong links with the sector. Please know how much Parliament values your work. You help us understand how much value we are getting from services being delivered.</p>
<p>Q2: How do we get people involved who are being</p>	<p>Supporting people to understand that the Parliament is a place for them. Gender Sensitive Audit exploring why</p>



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<p>supported back into the system?</p>	<p>we don't have people from certain backgrounds in Parliament. What are the barriers and how do we overcome them?</p> <p>Through initiatives like ElectHer event – helping women feel that parliament is a place for them and celebrate individual stories. People enter Parliament from all sorts of backgrounds and experiences. Reach out to MSPs and ask for support to get involved. Parties can also do more to make things more accessible.</p> <p>Gillian Baxendine (facilitator) also mentioned Young Women Lead, a project with Young Women's Movement to engage young women in politics.</p>
<p>Q3: SP strict rules on resource for cross party groups (CPGs) – how can SP be more flexible with this?</p> <p>Follow-up comment – budget should be available to support third sector participation in Parliament, particularly for smaller groups and orgs.</p>	<p>Note that CPGs are not part of formal parliamentary work so certain conditions pertain to them. But there should be an ongoing conversation about how these are run – many have moved to an online or hybrid format. But need to be mindful of capacity with over 100 CPGs. We'll also look at how we can improve this within the budgets that we have.</p> <p><i>[For ref, see: <a href="#">Section 6: Cross-Party Groups   Scottish Parliament Website</a>]</i></p>
<p>Q4: How do we ensure the process supports us to achieve our aims – that participation leads to action?</p>	<p>Voices are making a tremendous difference – Official Report of debates and committees shows us how often participation is referred to. PO has role in supporting good scrutiny e.g., access to best research and evidence. We always need to be connected with the people of Scotland and build meaningful relationships. Collaboration is essential.</p>
<p>Q5: Professional development of SP staff to ensure diversity of voices?</p>	<p>Improvements to induction process for MSPs. Continuous PDP is key. Support and sharing experiences. Gender Sensitive Audit – to scrutinise things we need to make sure we know enough about it.</p> <p>Bringing external expertise is crucial. PACT is a new team connecting with people in communities to bring understanding around parliament.</p> <p>Gillian – challenge in making staff body as diverse as Scotland is.</p>
<p>Q6: Bringing SP to people – more committees meeting outside Holyrood? How to balance with aspiration of family friendly parliament?</p>	<p>Would like to see SP heading out more. Can be challenging - takes lots of work from engagement teams but when successful adds lots of value. Understand things being out and about that you don't when staying</p>





in SP. Very keen as part of 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to get out and about with colleagues in all SP regions.



## Workshops

### Workshop 1 - How can the Scottish Parliament ensure that diverse voices and communities from all parts of Scotland influence our work?

**Facilitated by:** Alistair Stoddart, Senior Participation Specialist, PACT, Scottish Parliament. Ailsa Burn-Murdoch (Senior Researcher, SPICE), Alanis McQuillan (assistant Clerk for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee), Laura Black, Participation Specialist, PACT.



[>> Click Here <<](#) to view the slides from this workshop



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## Discussion points:

- How can Parliament collaborate with the Third Sector to implement the recommendations from the recent [Embedding Public Participation in the Work of the Parliament](#) report?

The workshop focused on 2 of the 7 themes from the 17 recommendations made by the Citizens Panel: Growing community engagement and Bringing the Parliament to the people. Below is a summary of the group discussions.

## Growing community engagement:

- Explore digital upskilling.
- Shape engagement around needs and wants.
- Improve engagement with LGBT+, BAME, and older groups.
- Remember the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- Remuneration isn't always financial (e.g., time) and understand issues around benefits.
- Close the feedback loop and people seeing the impact of engagement.
- Service users are in crisis and need to grow trust.
- Consider the decrease in funding across the Third Sector – resource does not match demand – payment for participation/participants as well as considering funding for the Third Sector to deliver engagement.
- Challenges with consultation fatigue.
- Increase case studies and show the difference that has been made – clear impact.
- Consider the participation cycle with transparent feedback.
- 3-year Bill processes can be challenging as well as Parliamentary timelines can be very short.

## Bringing Parliament to the people:

- Need resources to close digital divide.
- Consider language, accessibility and formats – to communicate what Parliament does.
- Challenges with people in poverty.
- Committee reports are dry, show people the impact they have had.
- More notice for Third Sector to prepare for formal evidence.
- If taking parliament out then tap into already planned activities, understand who runs policy process in the Third Sector and should be involving local government.
- Reset how Third Sector, local government, government and Parliament sit together.
- Understand how power dynamics work and more respect for the Third sector.
- Increased visibility of work will help with diversity.
- More support to prepare communities to engage.
- More informal and 1-2-1 engagement.
- More innovative use of digital engagement tools.



## Workshop 2 - Influencing Committee Work Programmes & How Committee work leads to policy change

**Facilitated by:** Kate Smith, Community Participation Specialist, PACT.

**Speakers:** Susan Brown, Clerk for the Health Social Care and Sport Committee; Miriam Dornan/Alanis McQuillan, Clerks for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.



[>> Click Here <<](#) to view the slides from this workshop

This session was an informative session providing participants with the opportunity to hear more in depth about the work of Committees and where there are opportunities to engage with their work programmes and how Committee work leads to policy change. This was from the perspective of the Health Social Care and Sport Committee and the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee but gave information relevant to all committees about the role of different teams in supporting committees and the different opportunities of where and when to engage.

### Discussion points:

- Committees and Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) - there is no interaction/cross-over with a CPG and a Committee. Although CPGs could submit a petition. There are specific rules about how SP can facilitate CPGs. The role of CPGs may be an area to explore.
- Members and the broad remit of Committees creating any challenges around getting into the detail - once Committees have decided the topic, they will look into the detail. e.g., Health, Social Care and Sport Committee – very big remit for this Committee so they will really pick where the Committee can add value with an inquiry.
- Petitions – brings something new onto the agenda. Petitioners are able to go and speak to Committee Members and hear what they have to say.





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## Workshop 3 - The Basics: Engagement focussed Parliamentary Awareness Session

**Facilitated by:** Hayley Forrester, Community Participation Manager, PACT; Rachel Hunter, Communications and Team Support, PACT.



[>> Click Here <<](#) to view the slides from this workshop

### Discussion points:

- This session provided attendees with information about the role of the Scottish Parliament and MSPs, the difference between Parliament and Government, and the various ways the sector can engage with the Parliament.
- Topics covered include devolved and reserved issues, the role of committees, submitting evidence and cross-party groups.



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- There was a good level of awareness among attendees of the role of Parliament and how to engage.
- The importance of sharing experiences and learning from one another was highlighted.
- There is a role for the Parliament to continue to build this shared learning into these events.

## Workshop 4 - The role of the Voluntary sector in the Economy



**Facilitated by:** Ewan Masson, Community Participation Specialist.

**Speakers:** Greig Liddell (SPICE researcher), Rachel Le Noan (SCVO), Mairi Spowage (Fraser of Allander Institute), Ewan Aitken (Cyrenians).

### Speakers' points:

- **Greig Liddell:** 135,000 paid staff in sector in 2021 – 5% of employed people, bigger than food & drink sector. 50k in social care. Median hourly pay above private sector but well below public sector. More people working part time than in other 2 sectors. Measures well on fair work framework in fulfilment, voice & respect; not so well on security and opportunity. Also contributes through volunteering – 25% of people in Scotland provided unpaid help in 2019.
- **Rachel Le Noan:** 46k voluntary organisations in Scotland – ¼ employ staff with average turnover of £900k; ¾ are volunteer only, average turnover under £100k. 3.5% of the sector are large charities with £1m+ turnover – receive 80% of total funding. 80% of sector





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with turnover of less than £100k receives 4.5% of funding. SCVO Tracker 2023 highlighting issues with volunteer shortage, rising costs & difficulties fundraising. Need parity of esteem with other sectors and recognition of essential contribution to a wellbeing economy.

- **Mairi Spowage (morning):** Need to define sector more clearly to be able to capture it in economic data e.g., ONS stats. Her institute has ONS funding for a research project on this, working with sector. Also highlighted parity of esteem e.g., should there be targets for timely grant payments comparable to those for paying business invoices?
- **Ewan Aitken (afternoon):** Sectors are interlinked – settled markets need settled communities. Wellbeing economy needs sector to keep people in work (supporting carers, mental health etc). Business support needs to encompass social enterprises and values-based businesses – fair work principles across all sectors.

## Discussion points:

- Sector is very significant employer in some rural areas – especially as part time employer where many people have more than one job.
- Not highlighted enough by Skills Development Scotland or schools as a career option – some good practice but not everywhere. Seen as a “privilege” to work in sector – justifies paying less.
- Increasingly taking on what statutory sector used to e.g., more complex work. Also, people who won’t engage with statutory sector. Easy solution to cut funding when local authority funding cut - doesn’t take account of immediate job losses plus loss of support which helps clients to contribute economically. Also contributing to resilience, community cohesion.
- Community wealth building is key – people need to understand the impact and opportunities of spending existing resources differently
- Level of scrutiny of grant funding is disproportionate compared to scrutiny of public sector. Procurement processes also a barrier – not starting from who can deliver what best.
- No redundancy policy in public sector – poor value for money and no parity of esteem, when some third sector staff on 3 month rolling contracts and have to fund redundancy from reserves.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> sector innovations need to be valued in same way as entrepreneurs. And demonstrate savings from its work e.g., to criminal justice system, mental health services.
- Need a new deal for the sector, moving away from low expectations of small organisations and transactional relationships with large organisations.

## Workshop 5 – Women Influencing Decision-Making

**Facilitated by:** Kerri Whiteside, Community Participation Specialist, PACT, Scottish Parliament; Tracey White (Head of Legislation and Parliamentary Business); Lucy Miller



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(Senior Policy Officer at Human Rights Consortium Scotland, and Chair of Women in Public Affairs Scotland (WiPA); Bushra Riaz (Policy Officer, Kidney Research, UK, and Executive Committee member of WiPA).



[>> Click Here <<](#) to view the slides from this workshop

- **Tracey White - Scottish Parliament's Gender Sensitive Audit**
  - Audit announced in February 2022.
  - Goal is for gender equality to be prioritised and mainstreamed across the work of the Parliament.
  - Women differentiated by intersecting identities.
  - Not until 2021 that any women of colour were elected and that we had our first permanent wheelchair user.
  - 34 recs in Audit report - key one is the creation of an Advisory Body to ensure recs have meaning.
- **Lucy Miller - Women's Participation in Politics and Public Affairs: A Force for Change**
  - Women missing from leadership roles in parliament - third sector lacking also.
  - Currently white non-disabled men make the majority of decisions in Scotland.
  - This conversation vital at this exact period of time – societal culture and who we elect is critical - silencing women is very dangerous (Russel brand example).
  - Key issues facing women include gender-based violence, reproductive rights, childcare.
  - What can we do? Highlight the need for intersectional representation, address structural barriers, stress the importance of feminist leadership.
  - Diverse groups make better decisions - different perspectives lead to comprehensive solutions.
- **Bushra Riaz - Why the lack of representation in politics from Minority Ethnic South Asian and Black women?**



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- Culture: it's not seen as a “career” within the SA communities prior to the now elected as First Minister and Anas Sarwar as Scottish Labour leader.
- Ethics/religion: many are strong faith-based individuals, and they see politics of hypocrisy, lies, against religious beliefs.
- Stigma: it's a “white mans” position, let alone a woman or an Asian woman with a head scarf.
- Oppression: seen as “angry woman of colour speaking”.
- Racial, sexism, Islamophobia: many women experience difficulties and even abuse at different levels.
- How to overcome? Education and awareness amongst Black and Ethnic Minority communities.
- Schools’ programs/university freshers' events etc.
- Promoting apprenticeships within politics, holding open days.
- Hold focus group talks with third sector organisations (like WiPA).

## Discussion points:

**Q1: What are some of the barriers you have faced in the third sector when trying to represent the intersectional problems women face? This could include women of colour, from the LGBTI community, or disabled women.**

- Societal/cultural barriers: de-prioritisation, language, lack of confidence, representation
- Systemic/structural barriers: ‘check-box’ data, structures aren’t in favour of intersectionality, lack of funding, low status of third sector, big charities hoover up funding, lack of data, outreach.
- Lack of intersectionality: disability, accessibility, token spokesperson, stigma, classism, LGBTI+ representation, trauma.

**Q2: What could the sector be doing better to have women’s voices heard and what could Parliament be doing better to listen? What does your organisation already do as an example of best practice to ensure women’s interests are reflected?**

- Encourage societal/cultural reform: active encouragement, instil confidence, diverse representation across media, create space for marginalised women, education.
- Improve systems across the third sector and Parliament: easy routes to engage, practical delivery, apprenticeships, create spaces, proactive representation on boards, training, and education, learn from living experience to find other/better ways to engage, ask what people need.
- Better adopt trauma-informed/skilled approach: need trauma-informed, self-management, people could share their experiences in the right format,





empowerment, leadership roles need to be representative to discuss trauma, terminology.

- Partnership-working: opportunity can be fun, organisations working together to platform women, learn from good practice, connect with all people at different points, Young Women Lead, collaborate with women-dominated spaces.

For full notes of the Workshop 5 discussions, see Appendix 3 below.

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## Closing Plenary Panel

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**Facilitated by:** Gillian Baxendine

**Speakers:** Anna Fowlie, Chief Executive, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO); Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC); Matt Baker, Orchestrator, The Stove Network.



The full closing plenary panel is available to listen to as a [podcast](#).

QUESTION	ANSWERS
No feeling of urgency with policy problems – what would you recommend to make better connections between communities and policy officers?	Make it meaningful to people, everyone's contributions should be valued. In the public sector it's not valued. Top down and hierarchical. Biggest responsibility in power is for people to give away power, love SP but worry it is taking too much power - we need to get it back out there, building new democratic structures. Improve local democracy. We could be growing that democracy ourselves. Advocate for those voices getting louder and louder.



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<p>Funding constraints and building democracy – how much does party politics get in the way of progress?</p>	<p>Need a few politicians less constrained by the rules. Less of problem in Scotland, social contract that we can work together on the big issues. Not take that for granted. Would like targets from public bodies of where they spent their money. Have you spent it in a postcode in your community? Expertise, resources. Hold people accountable for putting money into their communities. If tough, look at reasons why? Wales example – resources and agency Party-politics gets in the way, broad consensus about long term but point scoring over short term – need for MSP cross party consensus is anyone asking what is this doing to help children etc? Is anyone in SP looking at this? If that is what voters are interested in, we need to change the nature of debate.</p>
<p>In terms SP founding principles of power sharing - what would you like to see parliament do?</p>	<p>Rather than party politics – binary issue of nationalism versus unionism got to try and tackle that. It has often worked best when people were collaborating. Leadership and wider population. I would love to see power sharing. SP feels inclusive, increasing power into the centre, contrary to other policies. Easy place for public to access. People are welcoming etc. What is underneath that and how do we change what comes out the sausage machine Explore pre distribution model - opposite of the trickle-down approach. Get organised – start-ups blood sweat and tears. Create a context organised at a local level. Keep going and be very connected.</p>
<p>Where do you see the role of youth work in the role of youth work in community empowerment and local doc?</p>	<p>Central to, surge of participation at the last vote. Promised after that there would be a more participative approach in Scotland. Young people are not so engaged in party politics. More engaged in issue-based action. Youth work is the place where it happens, it should be fundamental in our communities. Every head teacher should be able to ask, “where do my young people go?” Headteacher taking different approaches and using local resources. Every high school should be able to answer the question. Place based approach. Local approach. Young people are a superpower in my experience, creating a magic around them, create conditions for young people to be involved. Make the offer right for young people. Challenge making the offer right for young people. Challenge the young people to invent some better systems – like boards, how did</p>



	<p>we end up with this system of boards? Can we get a better way? Pupil Equity Fund – schools. Using the resources locally, what can our young people get to locally? Where do young people go after school if they are hungry?</p>
<p>What are you feeling hopeful about?</p>	<p>People. Angie Gilmore 'LIFT Lochside' – hope for me is her. Young People and their passion, we need to stop letting them down.</p>



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## Conclusions and Next Steps

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- Establishing a Third Sector Reference Group, to support PACT in designing the conference, helped create a diverse agenda which covered a cross-section of relevant issues. The group was made up of representatives from the following organisations:
  - North Lanarkshire TSI
  - Voluntary Health Scotland
  - Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
  - The Scottish Assembly
  - Shetland TSI
  - Moray TSI
  - Christians Against Poverty
  - Alliance Scotland
  - Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise
  - Inclusion Scotland
  - Barnardo's Scotland
  - Scottish Community Alliance
  - Human Rights Consortium Scotland





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- Kidney Research, UK
- A strong desire from the Advisory Group was to secure more attendance from MSPs in this year's conference. At last year's conference we had three MSPs attend, and we saw an increase this year to seven. This demonstrates positive progress, however in any future conferences, we will aim to secure further involvement from Members. MSPs in attendance at this year's conference were:
  - Jeremy Balfour, Scottish Conservatives
  - Maggie Chapman, Scottish Greens
  - Foyso Choudhury, Scottish Labour
  - Sharon Dowey, Scottish Conservatives
  - Alison Johnstone MSP, Presiding Officer
  - Paul McLennan, SNP
  - Ben McPherson, SNP
- The Reference Group was also keen for the conference to provide the opportunity to network with other Parliamentary staff, outwith PACT, and we were grateful to our colleagues across Clerking teams, Events & Exhibitions, the Parliament Communications Office, SPICe (the Scottish Parliament Information Centre), and the Lobbying Registrar Team for their participation in the lunchtime Networking Space.
- As well as being circulated to all delegates, this report (and the podcast) will be made widely available to all Members and Parliamentary staff – please do also share the report across your own networks.
- The importance of these kind of events, which bring staff from the sector together to network with each other and connect with Parliament, was clearly articulated throughout the day.
- The need to develop mechanisms which extend these kind of networking opportunities to communities and participants more widely was also clear.
- The Presiding Officer's announcement around the Parliament's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme will provide an opportunity to experiment and learn how best to 'bring Parliament to the people' – this may create an opportunity to think creatively about next year's conference.
- PACT will continue to work closely with our third sector partners to provide clear structures which enable participation within Parliamentary work.



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In addition to the closing plenary [podcast](#), you can also [view photographs](#) taken during the Conference, and watch short videos from some of the Conference [delegates](#), [Gillian Baxendine](#) (Head of PACT), and [Lucy Miller](#) from WiPA Scotland.

- You can find more info on PACT, and contact details to keep in touch, at [www.parliament.scot/get-involved/participation-and-communities-team](http://www.parliament.scot/get-involved/participation-and-communities-team).
- **Thank-you all very much** for your time in attending the conference, and for the work that you deliver with PACT and the Scottish Parliament more widely.
- Please take the opportunity to complete the conference [evaluation survey](#), which will remain open until **October 27<sup>th</sup>**.



## Appendix 1: Workshop Agenda

**09.00 – Registration opens**

**09.30 – Tea/Coffee available in Holyrood room**

**10.00 – Opening Plenary**

**Speakers:** **Gillian Baxendine** – Head of Participation and Communities Team; **Alison Johnstone MSP** – Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament

**10.45 – Workshop sessions AM**

- **Workshop 1** - How can the Scottish Parliament ensure that diverse voices and communities from all parts of Scotland influence our work?
- **Workshop 2** - Influencing Committee Work Programmes & How Committee work leads to policy change
- **Workshop 3** - The Basics – Engagement focussed Parliamentary Awareness Session
- **Workshop 4** - The role of the Voluntary sector in the Economy
- **Workshop 5** – Women Influencing Decision Making

**12.00 – Lunchtime Networking**

Networking with Parliament staff including Committee Clerks, SPICe researchers, Parliament Communications Office, Events and Exhibitions Team, etc, to find out about their work and how you can engage with them.

**13.15 – Workshop sessions PM**

- A repeat of the morning breakout sessions

**14.30 – Closing Plenary**

Gillian Baxendine (Head of the Participation and Communities Team) will facilitate a Panel session on the sustainability of the voluntary sector and how current challenges may impact on the ability of organisations to engage with institutions like the Scottish Parliament.

**Panellists:** **Anna Fowlie** – Chief Executive, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations

**Bridie Ashrowan** – Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council

**Matt Baker** – Orchestrator, The Stove Network

**15.30 - Close**





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## Appendix 2: Delegate List

Ewan	Aitken	Cyrenians
Eveline	Armour	TPAS Scotland
Bridie	Ashrowan	EVOG
Matt	Baker	Stove Network
Philippa	Balshaw	Girlguiding Scotland
Corey	Beaton	Safe Harbour
Lauren	Blair	Voluntary Health Scotland
Sandra	Boyle	Safe Harbour
William	Campbell	Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations Ltd.
Joyce	Cattanach	Headway East Lothian
Stephen	Caulfiend	National Autistic Society
Charlie	Clark	Capital City Partnership
Anthea	Coulter	Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface
Jamie	Dunlop	Scottish Youth Parliament
Aiseosa	Erhahon	Capital City Partnership
Allan	Faulds	Alliance Scotland
Caroline	Ferguson	Rural and Urban Training Scheme
Jennifer	Forsyth	Obesity Action Scotland
Anna	Fowley	SCVO
Victoria	Fox	Cyrenians
Tristan	Green	The Ripple
Angus	Hardie	Scottish Community Alliance
Maggie	Hepburn	Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations
Ayesha	Huda	Voluntary Action Shetland
Anna	Innes	East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action
Theresa	Irving	Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay
Rachel	Le Noan	SCVO
Donald	MacDonald	Uist Council of Voluntary Organisations
Lewis	MacLeod	Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland
Eoin	MacNeil	Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay
Megan	McClellan	Who Cares? Scotland
Fiona	McDonald	Sight Scotland
Matt	McDonald	Scottish Youth Parliament
Sara	McFarlane	Connect
Yvonne	McGill	Voluntary Action South Ayrshire



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Helen	McHugh	Safe Harbour
Catriona	Melville	Age Scotland
Lucy	Miller	Human Rights Consortium Scotland
John	Munro	CVO East Ayrshire
Kelly	Munro	Carers
Sarah	Murray	Royal Voluntary Service
Tracey	Nicholson	Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise
Nicoletta	Primo	Sight Scotland
Bushra	Riaz	Kidney Research UK
Joanna	Rodgers	Young Women's Movement
Mehar	Shagufta	Playlist for Life
Duncan	Shaw	Safe Harbour
Ian	Sloan	Diabetes in Fife
Chris	Small	Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland
Kimberley	Somerside	Voluntary Health Scotland
Mairi	Spowage	Fraser of Allander Institute
David	Stewart	FEDCAP Employment
Nadia	Stuart	Scottish Refugee Council
Fiona	Sword	YMCA Kirkcaldy
Duncan	Thorp	Social Enterprise Scotland
Jenny	Trott	CVS Inverclyde
Louise	Wakeling	Barnardo's
Julia	White	Voiceability
Lynn	Williams	Third Sector Scotland Network
Mhairi	Wylie	Highland TSI
Tristan	Green	The Ripple Project
Iain	MacIntyre	CVS Falkirk & District
Shelly-Ann	Brown	EVOG



## Appendix 3: Workshop 5 – Women Influencing Decision-Making - Full Group Discussion Notes

**Q1: What are some of the barriers you have faced in the third sector when trying to represent the intersectional problems women face? This could include women of colour, from the LGBTI community, or disabled women.**

*Nb: these pointers have been grouped and themed by the facilitator subsequent to the discussion.*

### Societal/cultural barriers:

- Women's issues not taken seriously – shut down when you speak up, de-prioritisation.
- Language – how can we structure our language to be inclusive and welcoming and how we better manage our work for the large part of society with no English as first language?
- Menopause cafes etc not being taken seriously.
- There is too much pressure on individual activists.
- Lack of confidence and women underestimating themselves when it comes to certain positions. Scottish Youth Parliament MSYPs over half of women MSYPs said they'd put themselves forward for leadership if they had more confidence.
- Representation - unless women from all backgrounds are in leadership positions, they're going to funnel themselves to fit the dominant presentation.
- Workspaces facilitating spaces to hear problems but not actively listening.
- Problems with transactional society post-covid - same can be seen in public sector and third sector.

### Systemic/structural barriers:

- Underpinning structural issues – structures and systems imposed upon us and might not meet everyone's needs, prevailing perception that institutions just meeting KPIs, we need to challenge 'check-box' data.
- We need to better understand how different cultures relate to the structures and systems imposed.
- Representation isn't there yet in the Parliament = structures aren't in favour of intersectionality = strategic decisions are made by those who are not fully representative = not speaking to the entirety of Scotland.
- Systemic lack of funding for third sector work, competitive environment – “low status” of third sector compared to business, when authorities look at where they're putting funding they won't look at marginalised groups as it might require more funding.
- The proportion of funds going to women and girls is [1.8%], a lot of funding goes to orgs that don't specialise in young women and girls.
- Big charities Hoover up [79%] of funding – making it much more difficult for smaller charities.
- Lack of resources = lack of data = orgs don't have that lived experience, and risk tokenism.



- Funding also impacts outreach – we need the resources to reach marginalised people, this can take a lot of time, women in more vulnerable positions are often left out, this has compounding impacts.
- Parliament should be aiming to be completely sexist free – tough discussions needed to enable this.
- Systems need to change in order to attract women into leadership roles.

### Lack of intersectionality:

- Disability – lack of knowledge about communication preferences/difficulties, accessibility to communication aids, no reasonable adjustments for the neurodiverse, disabled women might lack time to be able to participate in the mainstream ways offered.
- Risk having token spokesperson.
- There is a stigma when talking about intersectionality, misogyny, and classism – this is both a third sector and Parliament issue - classism is very prominent, e.g., voices are shut down if you don't speak in a certain manner.
- There is a feeling that when having to explain intersectionality out-with 'women's sector' spaces, it's often met with blank faces - this has downstream impacts of funding.
- Lack of LGBTI+ representation in academic campuses.
- Women's time and capacity to engage is variable – and women from some backgrounds may face this challenge to a greater extent.
- Those who work with trauma are working now in an environment where there is a [70%] rise of sexual violence during covid.
- There can be a lack of aspiration where home life is difficult. A lot of impact in being able to come into a small group and be confident.

**Q2: What could the sector be doing better to have women's voices heard and what could Parliament be doing better to listen? What does your organisation already do as an example of best practice to ensure women's interests are reflected?**

### Encourage societal/cultural reform:

- Young women and girls need active encouragement.
- Instil confidence in women – what can we do to get women to speak up?
- Women lifting women up, e.g., namechecking in work environments.
- Increase and improve diversity in representation of roles across media - share examples of inequality and discrimination, take practical action.
- STV [Expert Voices](#) referenced as a good initiative in increasing representation.
- Communities working together. Creating space for marginalised women to have their voices heard – there is power in collectiveness.
- Keep talking and pushing.
- Breaking through barriers e.g., with education.
- Important for men to be aware, to be allies, and to take an intersectional focus too.





### Improve systems across the third sector and Parliament:

- Parliament could create more easy routes to engage – routes that are not extractive, e.g., women should be paid or benefitted for their participation – the [Status of Young Women Report](#) was referenced.
- Engage directly with women's sector to learn about best practice and not tokenistic engagement.
- Turn ideas into practical delivery – how easy is it to bring people together to talk about their experiences, maybe not in a Cross-Party Group but create easy ways for women to come into Parliament to find a pathway to where they want to be, e.g., apprenticeships - could we do this in Parliament?
- Improve maternity leave and hybrid working options across all sectors. Parliament creche service is offered once you have your child – not just members but also visitors and staff.
- Build a work culture of being assertive in meetings prior to contributing - usually women give disclaimers before they speak like 'can I just say', 'sorry', 'can I just check'.
- Create spaces to bring women on board – comfortable and safe spaces.
- Proactive representation on boards etc – not just about churn. Break down the perception that board roles are for men – this includes elected roles.
- Training and education for staff on myriad of women's issues.
- Ensure all parts of community are truly represented then more women will be better able to relate to them and feel encouraged to share similar issues.
- Learn from lived and living experience including other cultures – find other/better ways to engage rather than reverting to typical meeting formats.
- Ask what people need – provide tools and information to enable people to help themselves.

### Better adopt trauma-informed/skilled approach:

- Need trauma-informed, self-management – giving people the tools to feel empowered.
- There are remarkable young women who could share their experiences in the right format – need to bring women at the coalface in, e.g., [Safe Harbour Inverclyde](#), bring these women through to Parliament – this has a big impact on politicians too.
- Women who've gone through trauma or abuse need active empowerment.
- Leadership roles need to be representative of everyone – if an organisation is just white women and they want to discuss trauma, need to be aware there will be barriers for participants who want to have someone who looks, talks and is like them.
- Be sensitive around terminology.

### Partnership working:

- Try to create environments where opportunity can be fun, show younger people what the future can look like in a positive light.
- Bring organisations together and partner to identify the different strengths.
- Third sector and Parliament could platform women more and seek to actively build and resource this kind of work.



# Third Sector in Parliament Conference 2023



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

- Learn from good practice – meeting young people where they're at – engage with young women and girls at every stage of their journey.
- Also need to connect with all people at different points of their feminist journey.
- Scottish Youth Parliament has produced a report with 26 recommendations and is having conversations like this workshop is having.
- Share initiatives like [Young Women Lead](#) – do a road show, lived experiences. Young Women's Lead cited as playing significant role in one participant getting a job in policy – important role in creating visibility – without funding and support it's very difficult to run.
- Work better with Local Councils - Holly Bruce Glasgow Councillor cited as leading valuable work for women and girls.
- Collaborate with women-dominated spaces, such as unpaid care, this helps acknowledge the full reality.