

## Senedd Cross Party Group on Human Rights

### AGM and Meeting

11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – online via zoom

### MINUTES

**In attendance** (nb the meeting was held virtually and some attendees dropped in and out, it was difficult to record everyone in attendance, or their affiliation).

Sioned Williams MS – Chair Simon Hoffman – Secretary Cefin Campbell MS Andrew Jenkins - Office of Sioned Williams MS Charles Whitmore Adele Rose-Morgan Rhian Davies DW Anwen Jones - Citizens Advice Bethan Davies Cath Davies Guide Dogs Wales David Rowlands Tai Pawb Hayley Richards WCIA Jackie Jones Ioan Bellin - Office of Rhys ab Owen MS Jennifer Downie NYAS Jessica Lainman WEN Wales Kathy Riddick Melissa Wood Barnardos Cymru Nicole Evans OPCW Patience Bentu FGC	Rhian Croke Robert Moore Ross Thomas Tai Pawb Sam Williams LDW  Tanya Harrington Will Davies
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### AGENDA and MINUTES

#### 1 – Welcome.

#### 2 - Agree notes of last meeting

Agreed without amendment.

#### 3. AGM Formal Business

Cyfin Campbell MS proposed Sioned Williams MS as chair. There were no other nominees. The CPG agreed Sioned Williams MS as chair until the next AGM.

Sioned proposed Simon Hoffman (representing Swansea University) as CPG secretariat for the next 12 months. The CPG agreed.

It was noted and agreed that the CPG has not incurred any expenditures since the last AGM.

#### 4. Update on the work of the Legislative Options Working Group

The CPG received an update on the work of LOWG from its chair, Charles Whitmore. Key points were:

Charles gave the background to the LOWG and outlined its terms of reference. In short, the group will bring forward proposals for the Welsh government to consider relating to incorporation of international human rights into divorce law. Charles informed the CPG that LOWG had undertaken a good deal of desk based analysis and had undertaken engagement with stakeholders from Scotland's First Ministers Advisory Group on human rights. He indicated that LOWG had recently completed its initial report. Unfortunately Charles was unable to go into detail as the report is yet to be considered by the Welsh Government Human Rights Advisory Group. However he was able to inform the CPG that the LOWG was looking at full incorporation of human rights where possible within devolved competence, with due regard a backstop if full incorporation is not possible. Charles also informed the CPG that the LOWG was examining incorporation of all the UN core treaties as well as the UN principles on older persons, and a bespoke right to a healthy environment. In response to a question Charles also confirmed that LOWG would not limit itself to UN conventions but would also take into account other conventions, including CoE treaties. Charles informed the group that the LOWG is currently focused on developing a methodology for assessing whether or not particular treaties are capable of incorporation within devolved competence. He also updated the group on the timeline for the work of the LOWG - and indicated that it appeared unlikely that the work would be completed in time for legislation to be brought forward during the current Senedd term. The CPG expressed its disappointment at this delay, but also recognised that it was important for the work to be carried out properly, in particular to ensure that the risk of challenge from the UK government is minimised.

#### **5. To note the UK government's position reform of the HRA 1998**

The CPG noted that the UK government has confirmed that it will not proceed with its proposals to reform the Human Rights Act 1998. While the CPG welcomed with relief this change of position, it also noted that some within the Conservative Party seem to be proposing that the UK should withdraw from the Council of Europe and the European Convention on human rights, and that this should be a manifesto proposal for the next election.

With the above in mind the CPG requested that the chair right with urgency to Welsh ministers urging them to push forward with enhancement of human rights protections in Wales including through a Human Rights (Wales) Bill.

The chair agreed.

#### **6. Discussion on Welsh government consultations**

The CPG noted that the Welsh government is currently consulting on a draft child poverty strategy, on the right to adequate housing, and on a new tribunal system for Wales. Sioned suggested, and the CPG agreed, that it would be appropriate for the CPG to contribute to consultations where human rights are relevant. However, it was noted that in relation to the child poverty strategy and adequate housing, the deadlines for these consultations (September) make it unlikely that it will be possible to draw together a CPG response. Sioned therefore suggested that the next CPG might focus on a submission relating to the new tribunal system for Wales.

#### **7. Any other business**

None.

#### **8. Date of next meeting**

To be notified.

Minutes prepared by Simon Hoffman

Any corrections should be notified to: [s.hoffman@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:s.hoffman@swansea.ac.uk)