

**FIRST MINISTER'S NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS
CIRCLE MEETING - 30 JANUARY – EDINBURGH
SUMMARY NOTES**

COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Amina Ahmed: Scottish Government Fairer Future Codesign Panel
 - Kara Brown: International Legal Officer, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland - apologies
 - Tressa Burke: CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance
 - Catherine Calderwood: Chief Medical Officer
 - Vicky Featherstone: Artistic Director, London's Royal Court Theatre – apologies
 - Jacqui Ferguson: Non-Executive Director, Wood Group - apologies
 - Professor Anne Glover: President, Royal Society of Edinburgh - apologies
 - Dame Katherine Grainger: Chair, UK Women in Sport
 - Katie Horsburgh: Volunteer Advocate, Girlguiding Scotland
 - Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws: QC - apologies
 - Louise Macdonald OBE: Independent Chair and CEO, Young Scot - apologies
 - Satwat Rehman: CEO, One Parent Families Scotland
 - Emma Ritch: Executive Director, Engender
 - Suki Wan: Vice Chair, Scottish Youth Parliament - apologies
 - Talat Yaqoob: Director, Equate Scotland and Co-Founder, Women 5050
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- Deborah Fulercik: Scottish Government Support to NACWG

The Circle Event

Core Advisory Council members, Kara Brown and Amina Ahmed, opened proceedings and co-chaired the Circle event today, which focussed on the recently published Advisory Council's 2018 Report and Recommendations. Kara and Amina took time to set the context of the Advisory Council and progress to date, before a short film was premiered to the Circle. The film was created to celebrate the publication of the 2018 Report and Recommendations and used footage from the events that had taken place over 2018, to show the journey that the Advisory Council and Circle had been on, which culminated with the publication of the 2018 Report and Recommendations. The film was shared on social media and can be viewed here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcioR9m531A> (1 minute long).

The co-chairs then moved on to address the report recommendations, working through all 11 of them following the report structure of Leadership, Accountability and Creating Change, and in doing so discussed a range of the outputs from Circle meetings that had had led to the recommendation formation.

A performance from the incredibly talented Ellen Renton followed and Ellen recited 4 pieces of poetry. Ellen's recitals were extremely moving and you can find a transcript at Annex A.

After a short comfort break it was time for facilitated table discussions with the Circle to begin. The Circle were asked what they would pledge to do to help achieve the 2018 report recommendations. Outputs from this session will be used at an Accountability Day later in 2019, to celebrate achievements and to share good practice.

The co-chairs then brought the table discussions to a close, before introducing the key note speaker of the day, the First Minister.

First Minister's Initial Response to the 2018 Report and Recommendations

The First Minister opened with a reflection on the actual venue being used for this event, after she had observed a plaque on the wall as she came in, dedicated to the UK's first female undergraduate students in 1869 – 150 years ago – the 'Edinburgh Seven'. She reflected on their struggle to study and that it stands all these years later, in her view, as a landmark in Scotland's progress towards equal rights for women. The First Minister reflected on how far we have come since then, but also how far there is yet to go and how she pledged when becoming First Minister that she would do everything that she could to improve opportunities for women and girls.

She acknowledged and thanked the time and effort of the Advisory Council and the Circle in producing the 2018 Report and Recommendations, and reflected how when she came to the first meeting of the Advisory Council there had been a discussion about the importance of the Advisory Council not being content to tinker around the edges, but being prepared to be bold and to challenge and to really push the envelope, and how she's delighted that in this report that that's exactly what has happened.

The First Minister spent a little time portraying her initial thoughts on the recommendations, which on the whole were very positive, and emphasised that they all needed careful consideration, and a full Scottish Government response would follow later in 2019. The First Minister also pointed out that this was not just for the government to fix and that all citizens of Scotland had a part to play in progressing gender equality. You can read the First Minister's speech in full here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-advisory-council-on-women-and-girls-circle-event-first-ministers-speech/>

The First Minister took a few questions, which ranged from parliamentary quotas, to ensuring the Circle participation was as diverse as possible, before she left.

The co-chairs then brought proceedings to a close, before inviting those who could stay, to a light buffet lunch. They also reminded everyone that the next meeting was

in Dundee in March, when the Advisory Council would begin exploring their 2019 topic of Policy Coherence with the Circle.

Annex A

Of One's Fathers

Andy Murray is Judy Murray's
son uncanny the clench
they have in common
the oblong that their mouths make
out of pain or panic
the unsanded edge of their guttural
groan Judy played too
but wasn't good enough
to be remembered she would not
have sworn in a tennis skirt no room
for that she is hard
to recognise
parts of her don't look like a mother
that family does not
hug enough to be normal
her cheeks are angles that should have
softened by now no one says
like mother like son but
their faces are too close together
according to the viewers at home
who have never seen the back
of a woman's throat a female body
locked with passion
limbs straight as a flag

Chuckling It Down

Cobbles are slick with it

And it moulds the Mound as Everest

Unequal in its height, but now twice as treacherous

My coat wasn't made for this

There's a man who is held together by his tie

When the sky splits, he adds an inch to his stride
Without looking his fingers find a button
And his umbrella breathes out
Until its diaphragm is as wide
As the disbelief of an open mouth.
It's all black but for the discreet crest of a brand
And as the water lands
He is lidded distant from its urgent sound

Two steps behind, I playfight with mine
It's all line and Velcro and edge
Sharp bits and pattern mess
I'm pitching a tent halfway through the night
While Edinburgh pours itself down my neck

It takes strength to grip a handle already too wet
Or to walk when the wind makes me a kite
We're almost the same, this man and I
He has gained muscle from holding things still
When I have built it through struggle
Because it's always a wrestle when the clouds spill

But the main difference between us lies
When I arrive at the top of the hill
I'll hurt where I shouldn't and shoogle myself dry

I'll be grateful for the ground changing
And he, with he black umbrella,
Will not notice that it's still raining.

When I Grow Up

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Asked eyes smiling in supermarket aisles

As I hid in my mum's coat

Asked men taking notes and women wielding files

Royal Mile performers

Rosettes seeking votes

Meanwhile

From the depths of mum's woollen folds

A voice crept out tight

From a closing throat

Well, I suppose I like to write

Aw isn't that nice, it's good to have goals

And with lips stitched in a knowing smile

They re-joined their concrete club

But no one asked me

Who do you want to be when you grow up?

Someone whose tongue is not riddled with apology

But pink with prose who knows

When to interject and when it's best to let things go
Who hasn't let laughter
Lodge a dam in the duct where her tears should flow
She doesn't care who sees
When I grow up I want to be
The friend that people clamber to keep
Who sees good in every sordid street she passes through
But I don't know if I can
Because who was never factored into my plan
And no one asked me
Where do you want to be when you grow up?
In a world that doesn't judge
Where my walk isn't met with bulging stares
Because the colour of my hair makes no difference
A world freed of its flares and dissonance
Where innocence isn't ruined as soon as we're out the womb
When I grow up I want to be
In a place where a job title doesn't give us the right to entitlement
where respect isn't a result of luck
With no muddied puddles where morals get stuck
But how long do I wait?
Because back then, no one asked me
When do you want to grow up?
When tomorrow taps me on the shoulder and tells me
You've had enough

Calls me over with warmth in her voice and fingers
I have no choice in growing older
But when I grow up
I'll do it when I'm ready
Not when some quiz in a magazine tells me
Like I might as well be
A glossy lie
I'm just not sure I'll get to whe
See I have never asked them
Why should I want to grow up?
I'll slip time off my wrist and call its bluff
I will fight the ensuing flood
Because
I suppose I like to write
And for me that will always be enough.

*Coulter's Candy
ally bally, ally bally bee
sittin on yer mammy's knee*

mum

Home is the sky unsnecked
and spitting teeth

behind a bolted front door

so I can keep my fingers dry
as they race the day's
drooling down the glass.

It's not the same sofa
that held our shared weight
but sometimes, the bounce

she drilled into sleepy knees
sneaks into my step,
I've heard the song play out from other mouths

and wanted it back,
like the child who first heard it
and hadn't learned to share yet

*greetin for a wee bawbee
tae buy some Coulters candy*

ruby

on the news they say
we don't watch the news –
too lockscreen stuck to
look up

I look up
numbers to spine our debates
while she makes tomorrow's
scrubs creaseless and packs a lunch
that won't be eaten

next week
will be our seventh time voting both 21
unsure if our crossed boxes
will bring better both
hopeful, though

her thoughts
are wasps between work and proxy-or-postal
and mine are coloured as red as her
namesake with stories from the ward

not enough
beds and not enough blood and not
enough

*poor wee Jeanie's getting awfy thin
a rickle a' banes covered oer wi skin*

han lou

Her eyebrows meet in the middle above the wok

she misses

the smells that lived

in her clothes back home

this country is crisp linen at its

best and this kitchen is its worst

spiceless

she rolls her eyes over my porridge

finds nothing she knows in its taupish heap

is that savoury or sweet?

I can't make my words tell her

that it's neither and both

it's good for you
it'll keep you warm

she'll try it another day

she says, holding a laugh

at my priorities in her throat

*noo she's gettin a wee double chin
wi sookin Coulters candy*

granny

I don't remember the occasion – or even if there was one – but I know that in making room for the fajita treat my stomach fought the cotton of my t-shirt. We had parked the car halfway so we could walk the rest and let our food go down, Granny planned these things. I thought the world rolled around in her handbag. I was sure I'd seen it leant against the packet of Murray Mints from which I was doled what I was due. Her plan hit stage two when dusk slapped the Firth of Forth as if she had asked it to.