

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POLITICAL LITERACY
Minutes For Second Meeting held on 13.05.21

Attended on the 13.05.2021 (Parliamentarians):

Simon Fell MP (Co-Chair) and Lord Iain McNicol (Co-Chair)

Apologies from those who could not attend on the 13.05.2021 (Parliamentarians):

Tracey Crouch (MP), Lord John Taylor, Layla Moran (MP), Tim Loughton (MP), Lord Chris Rennard, Philip Dunne (MP), Kate Green (MP), Cat Smith (Vice-Chair), Ben Bradley (MP), Caroline Lucas (MP), Owen Thompson (MP), Yasmin Qureshi (MP), Helen Hayes (MP), Flick Drummond (MP), Lord Simon Woolley, Helen Hayes (MP), Afzal Khan (MP), Nickie Aiken (Vice-Chair), Christian Wakeford (MP) and Lord Andrew Lansley

Attended on the 13.05.2021 (Secretariat):

Matteo Bergamini, CEO (Shout Out UK), Olive Baring, Project and Communications Coordinator (Shout Out UK), Maddy Page, Communications Officer (Shout Out UK), Spencer Caminsky, Communications Officer (Shout Out UK)

Summary of the activity of the APPG since the inaugural meeting

Lord Iain McNicol (Co-Chair)

Lord McNicol began with a quick overview of the activities of the APPG since the inaugural meeting, highlighting the series of conversations which have occurred inside and outside of parliament. He also noted the APPG had been featured on BBC news. He emphasised that this APPG is unique because it is non-partisan and has garnered support from parliamentarians from across the political spectrum.

Simon Fell (Co-Chair)

Simon Fell spoke about the need for more political literacy education. He noted that there is a specific energy surrounding this APPG. In particular, he spoke of the number of organisations, parliamentarians, teachers and individuals reaching out to get involved.

He also reflected on the current climate in regard to Covid-19 and how this has affected teaching. He believes that as a result of the pandemic, young people are more connected to digital technology than they have been previously. He stressed the importance of equipping young people with the tools and skills to tackle issues such as misinformation online, especially as we move into the digital age. He also noted that through his community work he has seen just how political young people are becoming and again highlighted the importance of providing the building blocks for young people to meaningfully engage in politics and navigate online spaces. He closed by saying how excited he was by the current work by the APPG.

Matteo Bergamini, CEO (Shout Out UK)

Matteo Bergamini gave an update on the work Shout Out UK has been doing since the inaugural meeting. He noted that he has been in conversation with stakeholders discussing the main barriers around increasing the provision of political education in schools. He highlighted that there are ongoing conversations about what mediums would be most effective in delivering political literacy education.

These conversations have stressed the need for teaching political literacy and that it is a non-partisan issue. Political literacy education is about ensuring young people's understanding of the fundamentals of the British political system in order to foster meaningful engagement with politics. He pointed out that those working in the sector have highlighted a feeling of reservation from both schools and parents around this concern of partisanship and how it would affect political literacy education. He briefly spoke about how Shout Out UK is beginning to try and tackle this question through campaigns like Political Literacy Day and encouraging people to get involved. He closed by saying that he believes this APPG will play a key role in highlighting that political literacy is a non-partisan issue.

Dr. James Weingberg (Academic Advisory Group)

James Weingberg spoke briefly about how the Academic Advisory Group has expanded to twenty academics. The Academic Advisory Group is focusing on three core activities: setting terms of

reference; synthesizing existing research; and further existing research. He mentioned that a research grant has been secured through the Speaking Citizens Project with University of Sheffield.

Young people's and teachers' statements

The following young people and teachers gave statements about their experiences receiving and teaching political literacy:

Gabriel Daudy, 17, school student

Gabriel highlighted that without political literacy training young people struggle to think independently and often follow the opinions put forward by parents or teachers. He believes that political literacy is essential to foster independent political thought.

Eve Ronson, 21, university student

Eve Ronson highlighted our reliance on higher education to make up for the lack of political literacy training in secondary school. She commented on some of the socio-economic conditions that would prevent young people accessing higher education thus a curriculum that teaches political literacy.

Sarah Boyle, Teacher at Falinge Park High School, Rochdale

Sarah Boyle spoke about some of the challenges as a teacher surrounding how to engage young people in politics.

Amy Cushing, Teacher at Brinsworth Academy, Rotherham

Amy Cushin discussed how her school has embedded political literacy into some mainstream lessons and the challenges that have come with that approach.

Discussion: The Skills Agenda and Cross-Curricular Approach to Political Literacy

The following organisations discussed their approach to teaching political literacy in schools:

- Elena Wilson, *The Edge Foundation*
- Catherine van Saarloos, *Maths in Education and Industry*
- Anna Cooban & Bethany Skinner, *Citizen Project*

This was followed by an open Q&A session.

Co-chairs' closing remarks

Lord Ian McNicol (Co-Chair)

Ian McNicol thanked everyone for coming and informed attendees about Shout Out UK's Political Literacy Day, which will be on the 4th of November. He mentioned that the House of Lords have a 'Student Engagement Programme' and urged teachers to reach out for more information once restrictions ease. He closed by saying if anyone wants to run any events for their networks around political literacy, especially in the run up to Political Literacy Day, members of the APPG would love to participate so please do let us know via Shout Out UK.