

**Clarkston**  
Preschool  
Playgroup

Williamwood Church  
Seres Road  
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Glasgow  
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18.8.2004

Ms Myra Watson  
Charity Bill Consultation  
Voluntary Issues Unit  
Scottish Executive Development Department  
2-G, Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ

Dear Ms Watson,

## **Draft Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Bill**

### **Response from Clarkston Preschool Playgroup**

This letter is sent as response to the above consultation document from the Parents Committee of Clarkston Preschool Playgroup (Registered Charity No. SC010635).

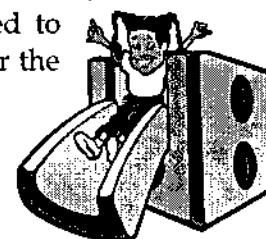
Clarkston Preschool Playgroup has provided ante-preschool play and learning for children between the ages of 2½ and 4 in the Clarkston area for over 30 years. The playgroup, like most others, is run by a voluntary committee of parents whose children are attending playgroup that year. As children normally only attend the playgroup for a period of one year, the Parents Committee changes each year. The playgroup employs several playleaders to work with the children and ensure the education provided to them meets the requirements of East Renfrewshire Council and the Scottish Executive.

We agree with the thrust of the document. It is important that the public have confidence that money donated is being spent wisely and to the benefit of those the charity is supposed to be helping.

We agree that a single framework for charity regulation would be beneficial. We are relieved that different sizes of charity will be expected to provide different levels of proof of compliance. As a small organisation with a turnover of less than £20,000 per annum this is appreciated. The Playgroup cannot run without a Parents Committee, and few parents have any experience of being involved in the running of a charity. Therefore, the simpler the requirements, the easier to both comply and recruit volunteers willing to be part of the committee.

All charities are to be required to provide contact details and other, unspecified, information. Given that our committee changes each year, we would be interested to know whether full details of the committee will be required, or whether the contact details of the Committee Chair would suffice.

We currently produce a set of annual accounts for the Inland Revenue. Will this suffice in future, or will we be expected to produce an Annual Report?



We agree with the proposed categories of people disqualified from being charity stewards as long as there are no sanctions against charities inadvertently appointing such a person. With the limited pool of candidates for the Parents Committee, we will obviously take such precautions as we can, but proper vetting of applications will not be possible.

We would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the more detailed proposals when they are published. In the meantime, we will try to answer some of the questions raised in the document.

***We would welcome your views on whether we should leave the interpretation of 'public benefit' to the regulator, or provide broad criteria in our Bill – and, of course, on the criteria we set out above.***

We would be happy to leave the interpretation to the regulator. The guidance should be published and made widely available to ensure transparency in charity status applications. The 13 'charitable purposes' detailed in the consultation document appear to be reasonable and we consider that we meet three of the criteria, namely

- the advancement of education
- the advancement of health (through education about healthy eating)
- the advancement of civic responsibility or community development

We would, though, be interested in how it is suggested that we can demonstrate that we are complying with the above. Meeting the requirements of East Renfrewshire Council to remain in partnership with them might be one such demonstration.

We agree that keeping the definition of charity as similar as possible on both sides of the border would be advantageous, although, as a local organisation, we are not affected by the decision

***We would welcome your views on the appropriateness of OSCR's form, appointments and functions as set out here and in the draft Bill.***

We consider the suggestions to be appropriate.

***We welcome your views on the suggested term 'charity steward'.***

Being such a small organisation, with such a narrow focus, the formal organisation is kept to a minimum. Thus we have no Charity Trustees or Board. Our equivalent is the Parents Committee. If, for the period of office, all or selected members of the Committee were referred to as charity stewards, this would be acceptable. If another tier of organisation was required, we would have some difficulties in achieving this.

***We welcome your views on the duties of 'charity stewards' described.***

We agree that the duties are appropriate.

Our response may be made freely available.

Yours sincerely

Colin Rodden

Colin Rodden

Treasurer

Clarkston Preschool Playgroup