

Scottish Parliament

Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Chronic Pain

Held on 31st October 2012 at 1pm in Committee Room 4

Welcome – Ministerial Visit

The Chair, John Wilson MSP, welcomed the group members and the Minister for Public Health- Michael Matheson, MSP.

(Previous minutes of the September meeting were agreed as an accurate record.)

Action :- Minutes to be sent for upload to CPG Parliament page. **Jacquie Forde**

Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson- Discussion

The Minister was happy to be able to attend a group meeting- however meeting started later than expected due to a Parliament committee being late in leaving the allocated room, so time with the Minister was rushed and he volunteered to cut his opening remarks and go straight to questions.

Members of the CPG, through the secretariat, had been asked by the Minister's office to send questions to him prior to the meeting. Many questions were sent and a sample seven selected. The minister promised to try to answer all later. Unfortunately, MSPs present did not get their own questions raised and co convener Jackie Baillie afterwards submitted 19 Parliamentary questions, the replies are being circulated bit by bit by the secretariat as they appear. Mr. Matheson was thanked for his attendance on a busy day and many would like him to visit again for a fuller conversation.

Questions taken by the Public Health Minister are included in the minutes.

Summary of Meeting

The feedback shows that everyone regretted that the meeting on October 31 was so brief. The minister's office asked for feedback on the feelings of the meeting and the secretariat sent this request to all present. The response was considerable and the secretariat sent everyone's response to the Minister's office. The overall feeling of respondents was that there were not many clear answers to questions. Response also criticised the Update Report on Chronic Pain Services, saying it missed facts on staffing, waiting lists, etc. The Report was published a few days before the meeting. However, Dr Steve Gilbert told the meeting that such facts would be put on a website later.

Numerous members queried why the meeting was at 1 pm, as our meetings are always at 6 pm - this was a request from the minister's office because it was the only time he had available.

Some also asked why some of the MSPs also left before 2 pm - but that was when Parliament debates began again and they had to go. Lunch times at Holyrood are a problem, including the risk that there's a delay in a Parliamentary committee leaving a room - which we also endured.

Because it was lunch time, a big attendance and some had travelled many miles, a snack lunch was supplied, rather than our usual £60 for tea and biscuits.

Medtronic agreed to sponsor the snack lunch. But they have informed the secretariat that due to their internal processes that our application had arrived too late for their system and are unable to settle the catering bill.

Our voluntary secretary has had to pay the £248.88 bill personally from her not for profit organisation , The Wellbeing Alliance to avoid problems for the cross party group.

Thank you.

We'd like to thank everyone who attended this meeting for their dedication. Members took the trouble to travel from, for instance, Aberdeen, Norfolk, Kelty, East Lothian, Lanarkshire, Glasgow, not forgetting that even members in or near Edinburgh broke into a busy day.

New Supporters:

We'd like to welcome warmly more new supporters, including strong crusaders for patients.

Ian Semmons is chair of Action on Pain, which he, as a pain sufferer, founded in 1998. Action on Pain covers the UK and the charity had become concerned about Scottish services because they get many calls from Scotland asking for help. That is why he made the long and awkward journey from Norfolk to be with us and pledges his continued support and attendance as often as possible.

www.action-on-pain.co.uk

Another respected crusader is Mairi O'Keefe, chief executive of Leuchie House, East Lothian, respite centre for people with chronic disabilities. Mairi refused to accept closure when the Multiple Sclerosis Society aimed to shut Leuchie, their only respite centre in Scotland.

Mairi, Leuchie staff, guests, some MSPs and the Scottish community saved Leuchie House by starting their own organisation. Leuchie welcomed 476 guests in their first independent year and have also relaunched a day respite service.

For those interested, Leuchie House still helps MS sufferers but has widened scope to other chronic conditions. www.leuchiehouse.org.uk

Date of next meeting

29th January 2013 at 5.45 pm

AOB

NO AOB noted

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Questions Asked by the CPG to the Public Health Minister

1. Dorothy-Grace Elder, founder of the Parliament's chronic pain campaign and cross party group:
Can we now have an explanation over why funding to help pain sufferers was deemed "inappropriate" by the previous health secretary, in contrast with other issues - e.g. obesity, smoking, drugs - which receive tens of millions in direct funding on top of NHS board investment?
And what's the deadline for the GRIPS report and the Scottish Service Model for chronic pain being fully implemented - and how can this happen without funding from the Government or Boards?

2. Professor Martijn Steultjens, Professor of Musculoskeletal Health, Caledonian University:
Has the Government identified any areas of care that could be disinvested in, to free up funds for improvements to chronic disease care? And, in the Minister's view, is the NHS in its current guise well equipped to deal with patients with often multiple chronic disorders - it looks like it won't be able to stand up to what's coming in the next few decades. The suggestion that a lot of chronic pain care should be provided through self management and voluntary sector involvement I read as a notice of future failure. I would much prefer it if this message was just given straight, without the politics. Isn't a wake up call needed?

3. John Thomson pain sufferer and founder member of the cross party group 12 years ago:
Why has the Scottish Government or their officials not obtained estimated costs for improving pain services throughout Scotland - regardless of whether Government or health boards pay, we need to know this - and will they now obtain these facts from Boards?

4. Linda Mawson, pain sufferer: Will the Minister promise an inpatient service here, to avoid pain patients being sent to Bath and, if Scotland gains independence, would the NHS Trust Hospital in Bath feel inclined to offer their inpatient facility to chronic pain sufferers from Scotland - and why should they?
And is there a deadline for the completion of the "review", started in August, of the previous refusal to have an inpatient service in Scotland?

5. Professor Steultjens: The Health Improvement Scotland report on chronic pain paints a far rosier picture than would be justified based on the information elsewhere in the report. On Page 13, Conclusions, it referred to "significant pain in around 14% and severe pain in 6% of the general population. But only about 0.3% of the chronic pain population were referred to secondary care pain management clinics" and the Report states: "This suggests that the majority of people living with chronic pain will be cared for in the community and primary care"
Isn't that a dangerous and unfounded conclusion to draw from these percentages as it essentially says there is no problem with under provision of care?

6. Children's Chronic Pain Services - we now know the figures for shortages. These include: No doctor funded in Aberdeen, 0.2 of a doctor's time in Glasgow, 0.1 in Edinburgh, no pain nurse in Glasgow, no physiotherapist in Aberdeen or Lothian, no psychologists funded in Aberdeen or Edinburgh and no occupational therapists in any of the three children's hospitals. Why does this report state nevertheless "There are multidisciplinary children's pain management services in the children's hospitals in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen?" This was a pre submitted question and, at the meeting, Dr Mary Rose, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, raised children's pain

services in abbreviated form.

7. Bill Paton, ABPI:

Cheap medication for pain patients: There is currently a significant focus on the primary care prescribing budget, which receives more scrutiny than any other health intervention. Could a more pragmatic approach which was outcome driven for patients be adopted which encouraged effective outcome based measures for patients with chronic pain, rather than cycling through the cheapest products?

Attendees

MSP's

Jackie Baillie MSP
John Wilson MSP
Jackson Carlaw MSP

Secretariat

Jacqueline Forde

Attendees

Ian Semmonds
Colin Rae
Bill Paton
Dorothy Grace Elder
John Thomson
Ann Cassells
Christine Martin
Linda Mawson
Frank Mawson
Prof Martijn Steultjens
Jean Rafferty
Susan Archibald
Thom Kay
Helen Cadden
Diane Thomson
Ian Little
Sara Watkin
Simon Packer
Lucy Watson
Sarah Stevenson
Fiona McPherson
Phil Atkinson
Peter McCarron

Malcolm Clubb
Mr Meek
Jacquie Kelly
Mary Rose
Sarah Stevenson
Lucy Watson
Simon Packer
Irene Logan

**Apologies Chronic Pain
CPG**

Paulo Quadros
Heather Cameron
Steve Gilbert
Iain Brotchie
Judy Brannigan
Janette Barrie
Martin Charles
Ann Ruglys
Ross McDonald
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Martin Johnson
Peggy Deane
Sabu James
Janet McFarlane
Anne Simpson
Martin Dunbar
Martin Johnson
Rachel Atherton
Gabrielle Stewart
Prof Jim Mcewen