

## **Approved Minutes, CPG on Chronic Pain meeting May 20, 2015.**

Attendance: 3 MSPs: Public Health Minister Maureen Watt, John Finnie, MSP, Bill Kidd, MSP. Non MSPs 38 (List at end)

The meeting was chaired by co convener John Finnie, MSP who welcomed all.

### **Public Health Minister visit**

The Public Health Minister, Maureen Watt, who replaced Michael Matheson after he was promoted to the cabinet in November, had offered to meet the CPG, 6 pm – 6.30pm. Much of the meeting involved statements during and after Ms Watt's appearance. She said her Government continued to stress the importance of chronic pain issues. Members asked numerous questions and challenged on the future of the Centre for Integrative Care, which specialises in chronic conditions, including chronic pain. (Formerly known as Glasgow Homeopathic Hospital) Ms Watt said the Government had no intention to close the hospital.

Members challenged, saying closure or further rundown could evolve "naturally" as the hospital was now down to only four boards out of 14 sending patients regularly, with Highland, Lothian and, currently, Lanarkshire withdrawing. Members requested Government intervention, especially over Board decisions being made against patients' wishes.

Ms Watt said such matters were up to Boards and she couldn't intervene, with which many members disagreed. But she was due to visit the CIC hospital soon. Ms Watt said the Scottish Government was considering a new wing being built at the CIC to take the permanent home of the first Scottish Residential Service in about two years time. The new Service was entirely separate and in temporary accommodation presently. If a new wing was created, she said, both the CIC and the Residential Service would benefit. Most members agreed but said there was no confirmation at present, no building had started, and the danger was that the hospital could suffer further withdrawals in the two years. CIC patient Catherine Hughes is taking a petition to Parliament soon on the CIC rundown. She pointed out that Lanarkshire Health Board, by barring patients from CIC services, would force hundreds more patients onto their mainstream clinics, despite being already short staffed (see " **Lanarkshire Lignocaine patients**" heading below)

### **Equal Rights for patients**

Paulo Quadros asked if the Minister would agree that all chronic pain patients should have equal rights to access NHS chronic pain management treatments recommended by SIGN guidelines if their doctors referred them? Ms Watt agreed and Paulo then mentioned that SIGN guidelines had approved some alternative treatments but patients found these hard to access and many GPs were unaware of acceptance by SIGN. Ms Watt said that SIGN recommended acupuncture for short-term relief of back pain but disagreed with Paulo's assertion that massage was also an official recommendation.

**Waiting Lists for mainstream NHS Pain clinics.** Elizabeth Porterfield of Clinical Priorities said Ms Watt is responding to a CPG request for waiting list figures at all Scottish chronic pain clinics; these should be published in November.

**Benefits cuts & chronic pain patients:** Claire Schiavone, a young chronic pain patient, highlighted the plight of chronic pain patients in Benefits assessments by the Westminster controlled DWP. She said many felt they were being singled out for loss of benefits, which had even lost some their homes and that assessors showed little or no knowledge of chronic pain.

**Sub Groups** The meeting approved a proposed Benefits sub committee being worked on in relation to chronic pain sufferers and a separate sub on CAM and the CIC hospital, if enough people volunteered and showed this viable.

**Lanarkshire Lignocaine patients: update.**

Thanks from patients was expressed to the CPG for taking up their cases after four Lanarkshire patients told the CPG that staff shortage at Lanarkshire clinics meant they were many weeks over time on their Lignocaine infusions, which had “changed our lives”. They returned quickly to unbearable pain levels if infusions were delayed. Thanks also went to Liz Porterfield of Clinical Priorities who contacted Lanarkshire HB and pursued.

The patients reported that infusion regularity had subsequently improved, with nurses used more. But the meeting agreed that Lanarkshire shortages must be watched. The patients stressed that the Lanarkshire pain clinicians had always been “superb” but were clearly short of staff. One patient reported it would be January before she could see her consultant.

It is not known if improvements affect only the four patients who reached the CPG to complain. But Lanarkshire's promised review of conventional pain services, started around Dec/Jan, and promised for May, is still not ready, according to the Lignocaine patients.

Minutes of meeting on February 24 2015 approved unanimously.

AGM: Co conveners re-elected unanimously: Bill Kidd, SNP, Neil Findlay, Lab, John Finnie Independent & Green Group. Hon Secretary Dorothy-Grace Elder re-elected unanimously.

**ATTENDANCE:**

41 (including 3 MSPs)

Dr David Weeks, Irene Logan, Hazel Young, Kathleen Powderly, Kevin McGhee, Diane Goodwin, Prof Tim Eden, Dr Jackie Mardon, Susan Archibald, Dorothy-Grace Elder, John Thomson, Lloyd Mawson, Christine Martin, Dr Helen Jackson, Gabrielle Stewart, Mairi O'Keefe, Claire Schiavone, Paulo Quadros, Liz Porterfield, Dr Pat Roche, Catherine Hughes, Anne Hughes, Anne Simpson, Jean Erskine, Geraldine McGuigan, Chris Mercer Janice Connelly, Ian Brogan, Patricia Donnachie, Phil Atkinson, Tasneem Nadeem, Muhammad Nadeem, Javed Akhtar, Elaine Hamilton, Lara Grant, Maureen McAllister, Fiona Robinson, Louise Clark.

APOLOGIES:

Dr Colin Rae, Margaret Coats, Linda Tierney, Linda Mawson, Lord Foulkes,  
Margaret Wyllie, Frank Mawson, Mariette Lobo, Prof Steultjens.