

Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities

Thursday 31 January 2019, The Scottish Parliament

Draft Minutes of the Tenth Meeting (Parliamentary session 2016-2021)

MSPs present: Christina McKelvie MSP, Donald Cameron MSP (Chairing), Elaine Smith MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP and Brian Whittle MSP

MSP Apologies: Anas Sarwar MSP, Emma Harper MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP

Other CPG members present:

Jillian	Adie	Salvesen Mindroom
Maria	Arnold	Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC)
Salena	Begley MBE	Family Fund
Lauren	Blair	Voluntary Health Scotland
Sandra	Brown	Eden Project Communities
Hilda	Campbell	Cope Scotland
Christine	Carlin	Salvesen Mindroom
Alison	Crofts	Voluntary Health Scotland
Kirsty	Cumming	Community Leisure UK
Jessica	Davidson	Royal College of Nursing
John	Fellows	Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Jennifer	Fingland	Cycling Scotland
Izzy	Gaughan	Shelter Scotland
Mairi	Gordon	Samaritans
Scott	Granger	Individual Member
Ian	McCall	Paths for All
Alan	McGinley	Scotland Versus Arthritis
Gillian	McNicoll	Rowan Alba
Penny	Morriss	Living Streets Scotland
Muriel	Mowat	Befriending Networks
Paul	Okroj	Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland
Lindsay	Paterson	Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh
Jonathan	Sher	Queen's Nursing Institute for Scotland
Mary	Sinclair	Senscot
Claire	Stevens	Voluntary Health Scotland
Rosie	Tyler-Greig	LGBT Health and Wellbeing
Sarah	Van Putten	Befriending Networks
Marie-Amelie	Viatte	Inspiring Scotland
David	Webster	Royal College of GPs
Pete	White	Positive Prison Positive Futures
Tom	Wightman	Pasda

Kiren	Zubairi	Voluntary Health Scotland
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Non-members present:

Lynne	Anderson	The Health and Social Care ALLIANCE
Georgia	Artus	LifeCare Edinburgh
Linda	Bamford	Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
Claire	Bennett	Music in Hospitals & Care
Chloe	Burton	Carr Gomm
Andrena	Coburn	Life Changes Trust
Sarah	Curtis	University of Edinburgh
Anna	Gryka-MacPhail	Obesity Action Scotland
Nicola	Hanssen	Roar: Connections for Life
Bronach	Hughes	Scottish Government
Jolanta	Lisicka	Scottish Government
John	MacDonald	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
Maureen	MacMillan	Sight Action
Chris	McLean	Scottish Government
Louise	McLean	Scottish Government
Cath	Morison	NHS Lothian
Maureen	O'Neill	Faith in older people
Rupert	Pigot	Diabetes Scotland
Fiona	Pirrie	East Ayrshire Carers Centre
Keith	Robson	MS Society
Patricia	Rodger	Advocard
Christina	Sabbagh	Obesity Action Scotland
Fiona	Smith	NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Elaine	Stalker	Families Outside
Lesley	Stevenson	Shared Lives Plus
Robert	Thomson	Care and Repair Scotland
Nicola	Tomkinson	NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Kirstin	Worsley	The Breastfeeding Network

1. Welcome and minutes of last meeting

Donald Cameron MSP (chairing) welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that the draft minutes for the last meeting held on 30 October 2018 had been circulated to all members prior to this meeting. The minutes were duly approved.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Proposed new members

The Cross Party Group (CPG) received applications from three organisations wishing to join the CPG:

- Scottish Rural Health Partnership
- Breast Cancer Now
- Scottish Obesity Alliance

These were approved bringing membership up to 63 external organisations.

4. A Connected Scotland

Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Older People and Equalities

The Minister thanked the CPG for the invitation to address the meeting and was delighted to do so.

She advised that the Connected Scotland Strategy launched in December 2018 to tackle social isolation and loneliness was informed by the hundreds of responses from individuals and organisations who responded to the consultation together with written summaries from engagement events held throughout the country. All parts of Government now need to work together to realise the ambitions of the strategy, however Government can't deliver the Strategy on its own. There is a need to build and maintain effective cross-cutting collaborative approaches: therefore a [National Implementation Group](#) has been announced and wider stakeholder groups will be formed in due course.

Scottish Government's vision is a Scotland where individuals and communities are more connected, and where everyone has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships regardless of age, status, circumstances or identity.

She said that all generations need to work together across the four key strands/priorities of the Strategy:

- Empower communities and build shared ownership
- Promote positive attitudes and tackle stigma
- Create opportunities for people to connect
- Support an infrastructure that fosters connections

She acknowledged that there was much work to be done however new partnerships with local government and stakeholders and a £1 million funding commitment over the next 2 years will help build capacity and pilot innovative approaches to tackling social isolation and loneliness.

The Minister urged people to take the time to read the strategy, and hoped that it would inspire everyone to play their part in helping tackle social isolation and loneliness and to build a kinder society, reminding people that people can feel lonely even in a busy place.

Read [A Connected Scotland Strategy](#)

5. Loneliness and Social Isolation discussion, short inputs from

Kiren Zubairi, Policy Engagement Officer, Voluntary Health Scotland

Last year Kiren conducted social research with a group of 57 people through 5 focus groups and 6 interviews and learned about – what loneliness and social isolation is, how it affects people, what causes it and what can be done at an individual, societal and governmental

level to tackle it. The focus of the research was to hear from under-represented demographics namely BME women, people living in socio-economically deprived areas, people living and working in rural areas and paid and unpaid carers of people receiving palliative care. All of whom have been less visible and less heard in the debate on loneliness and social isolation thus far

Loneliness and social isolation is often triggered, exacerbated and maintained by the social and economic circumstances in which people live including the level of resources such as financial power, knowledge and social capacity that are available to them. Those who are already at risk of being marginalised have a greater likelihood of experiencing chronic loneliness and social isolation and the associated mental and physical health outcomes.

Read more: The [Zubairi Report](#)

Sandra Brown, Scotland and North England Manager, Eden Project Communities

Eden Project Communities look at building social capital on a massive scale so that people connect within communities. The Big Lunch is an initiative encouraging neighbours to sit down together, with the establishment of a National Day being the goal. Relationships are the bedrock of a connected Scotland: positive relationships are the opposite of loneliness. Need to explore what needs to be done to improve relationships – this is key.

Sandra, welcomed the recognition of third sector experience – need a culture change so that everyone responsible for those living around them and making social isolation and loneliness a thing of the past. Need leaders and language to encourage kind behaviour.

Find out about [The Big Lunch](#)

Nicola Hanssen, General Manager, ROAR: Connections for Life

Need to nurture a whole society approach – there would be an enormous difference if we addressed the growing numbers of older people who are experiencing loss, after death, purpose in life etc. The medical model is over dominant at local and national level and ties people into being less socially mobile. Need to support older people at home and in their communities: people need to be able to get out and be mobile. Risk aversion leads to disempowerment. Need to look at what is causing social isolation and loneliness and falls – they are preventable and not a medical issue. Stop frailty and stop people being reduced to life sitting in a chair.

Read more about [Stay Mobile Stay Connected](#)

Nicola Tomkinson, Senior Health Improvement Programme Officer, NHS Ayrshire and Arran

Working to encourage a collaborative approach across planning partnerships to provide a public health response to social isolation and loneliness. Need to raise awareness to reduce stigma and encourage conversation about loneliness: who is at risk and the triggers and transitions across the life course, the impact on health and wellbeing and tackling loneliness is everyone's business. Promoting a preventative approach that aims to address the drivers of loneliness and barriers to connection, create the conditions that support connection and identify people, get them involved and re-connected, whilst promoting kindness and awareness. Raising awareness and encouraging caring conversations within the acute sector, housing sector and education.

Further discussion:

National framework on Volunteering due out in March: will need a big recruitment drive to feed the many organisations which rely on volunteers. Need to address gaps in quality and what the barriers to volunteering are.

Important to collaborate across and between organisations and faith organisations should not be ignored.

The issue of the impact of social isolation and loneliness upon parent carers and also siblings of disabled children, young people and adults (including, but not limited to individuals with Autism) was raised. The Minister stated that consideration was being given to the particular needs of siblings improving social connectedness and tackling issues of social isolation and loneliness.

Third sector need greater financial support: third sector providing services that local authorities used to provide but without sufficient funding this is not sustainable.

Raise the role of protected groups: in rural areas organisations receive calls from people just to chat. Older LGBT people face stigma and there is a need for good physical spaces where they can be themselves. In addition are 75% single which can result in additional issues.

In addition to social prescribing, people are also accessing their own support and helping themselves through volunteering, music and sport.

Donald Cameron MSP invited Claire Stevens to conclude the meeting. Claire thanked everyone for attending and encouraged people to get involved in the VHS conversation around culture, health and well-being.

Donald Cameron MSP thanked everyone for attending and for the important cross portfolio work happening across health, housing and transport – have to integrate across portfolios to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

6. Any other business

Pete White of Positive Prison? Positive Futures tabled a motion asking the CPG to recognise:

The need for increased awareness of the ongoing and increasing health inequalities of people within and affected by the Scottish justice system, in all its forms, requires urgent, ongoing and active collaboration involving the Justice and Health Departments of Scottish Government. This should include increasing awareness of the challenges experienced by the people in prison living with hepatitis C.

The CPG agreed with the motion.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the CPG is scheduled for 30 April 2019 from 5.40 pm onwards in Committee Room 4 and co-Convenor Richard Lyle MSP will Chair.

