

# Cross-Party Group on Disability

Wednesday 1 February – via Zoom

Minute

## Present

MSPs

Jeremy Balfour  
Alexander Stewart MSP

## Non-MSP Group Members

Alison Skillin  
Andrew Ewen  
Calum Byers  
Cath Purves  
Claire D'All  
Clare Sweeney  
Daniela Rondina  
David Martin Nicholson  
Denis Shovlin  
Helen Forrest  
John Grafton  
John Wallace  
Laura Wilson  
Linda Bamford

Lyn Pornaro  
Lynne Glen  
Maddy Kirkman  
Marg McNeil  
Margaret Ellis  
Maureen Morrison  
Neil Patterson  
Nicole Kane  
Patricia Ferguson  
Paul Fisher Cockburn  
Sue Bowen  
Susan Chambers  
Lauren Bennie

## Apologies

Jackie Baillie MSP  
Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP  
Emma Roddick MSP  
Salena Begley  
George Allan  
Robin Wickes  
Terry Robinson

Catriona Burness  
Ally Irvine  
Donna Tomlin  
Maureen McAllister  
TalkTime Scotland  
Camphill Scotland

## Non-Member Attendees

Ross Barrow – Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Aman Doll – Royal Pharmaceutical Society

## Agenda Item 1 - Approval of new members and minutes

Margaret Ellis approved the December minutes and Lyn Pornaro seconded. Susan Chambers raised the issue of her point from the December meeting surrounding autistic adults being held in high secure units without criminal records. Jeremy Balfour apologised and agreed to follow up with a letter to the minister surrounding this.

**Action** – Secretariat to follow up with Kevin Stewart MSP surrounding autistic adults being held in high secure units without criminal records and the plans for their immediate release.

## Agenda Item 2 - Presentation by Aman Doll – Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Aman Doll from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) updated members on the work she and her colleagues have been undertaking to improve inclusion and diversity within the pharmacy profession. The RPS is a membership body for pharmacists across the UK and it lobbies on behalf of members around issues such as medicine safety.

She explained that via survey the RPS realised that disability and lack of accessibility is one of the largest barriers to the profession. Attitudes towards disabled people and long-term conditions were seen as barriers as well as flexible working and representation amongst senior pharmacists.

Aman continued, saying that disability is massively under-reported and it is difficult to quantify how many disabled people there are within the profession and to establish a culture where disability can be discussed openly.

The RPS launched a dedicated 3 month disability awareness campaign to highlight barriers and to commit to celebrating and raising awareness of visible and hidden disabilities. At the moment, accessibility is heavily focussed on the customer/patient rather than the employee within the pharmacy.

Aman concluded saying that the RPS wants to give a voice to people with under-represented conditions and to include as many people as possible.

Jeremy Balfour thanks Aman for her presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Neil Patterson stated that he has come across the same issue within the music industry.

Margaret Ellis said that it's important to consider the legislative framework around employment discrimination and that the Equality Act 2010 exists to provide support to those with protected characteristics.

Calum Byers urged the RPS to utilise the Access Panel Network across Scotland, a network of disabled volunteers who can provide accessibility advice and support.

Linda Bamford thanked Aman for her presentation and for the RPS's undertaking a culture shift. Linda asked whether the RPS could link in with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) who are front runners in this area and Aman agreed to follow up with this. Linda added that she is hearing more and more about employers picking up some of the stress of employees.

Pat Ferguson said that increased and flexible working hours within pharmacies could massively improve the working conditions for disabled people with the knock on effect of making the pharmacy open longer for the community.

Lyn Pornaro commended the work that the RPS is doing and added that it would be useful for Aman to update the CPG at a later date on the campaign legacy. Lyn asked that in future could the presentations be mindful of the inclusive communication principles and the language we use. For example, it should be disabled people not people with disabilities.

There were no further questions or comments, so Jeremy Balfour thanked Aman and Ross for their presentation.

## Agenda Item 3 – Presentation by Alison Skillin

Alison Skillin provided the CPG with a short presentation of her work with the Assistance Dog Council (ADC).

Alison updated the CPG on what it is like to use an assistance dog as well as some of the barriers that blind and partially sighted people face when using an assistance dog.

Alison discussed the impact of these barriers and how they can affect a sense of inclusion in society. Alison stated that one important issue is that there is no standardised signage letting people know that assistance dogs are welcome.

Jeremy Balfour thanked Alison for her presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Linda Bamford asked whether Alison has heard about any issues following the UK departure from the European Union and whether assistance dog users have found any difficulties travelling to the EU. Alison said that she has heard that most people face issues when returning to the UK from the EU because UK businesses often have incorrect policies and procedures in place.

Neil Paterson thanked Alison for her presentation but disagreed and stated he has heard of people leaving the UK to the EU of having issues taking their assistance dogs because there is confusion around whether or not the dog is a pet and whether it should be placed in the cargo hold of a ship. Alison agreed that there is so much conflicting information but it's disabled people who are the victims.

Margaret Ellis urged the group to engage with Westminster about assistance dog awareness.

There were no further questions and Jeremy Balfour agreed to contact the minister regarding assistance dog signage.

**Action** – Secretariat to follow up with the Scottish Government around assistance dog signage and whether anything can be done in Scotland to help support the Equality Act 2010.

## Agenda Item 4 – Any Other Business

- Lyn Pornaro shared more information around the braille labelling campaign that Disability Equality Scotland, Oban Access Panel, and Sight Scotland is running and asked members to sign the petition which closes today. There are currently 1200 signatures.
- Maggie Ellis raised the topic of CPG funds and meeting format. Jeremy Balfour confirmed that this was being looked into and that the secretariat would follow up with a member survey on the issue of meeting style and membership fee.
- Denis Shovlin raised the issue of accessible parking and that something needs to be done about it in Falkirk and that blue badge parking needs to be addressed especially with Horizon Parking.
- Linda Bamford added that the pavement parking ban which comes into effect soon could make things more difficult for people in accessing parking.

## Meeting Close

There were no other matters arising so Jeremy Balfour thanked those in attendance and asked that members contact the secretariat for suggestions for the agenda. The meeting was closed.

## Action Points

**Action Point 1** – Secretariat to write to Kevin Stewart MSP around the issue of autistic adults being held in high secure units

**Action Point 2** – Secretariat to write to the Scottish Government around assistance dog signage

**Action Point 3** – Secretariat to follow up with a member survey surrounding the style of how CPG meetings are held and whether members should contribute towards refreshments.

