

# Cross-Party Group on Mental Health

14<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Beatrice Wishart MSP – Co-Convenor (Chair)  
Emma Harper MSP, Co-Convenor  
Oliver Mundell MSP, Co-Convenor  
Audrey Nicoll MSP  
Carol Mochan MSP  
Craig Hoy MSP  
Emma Roddick MSP  
Jackie Dunbar MSP  
Tess White MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Andrew Love  
Andrew Muir, Psychiatric Rights Scotland  
Barry Gale, Mental Health Rights Scotland  
Caroline Crozier  
Charlotte Mitchell  
Chris Purnell, Scottish Ambulance Service  
Cliff Watt, Bipolar Scotland  
David McLaren  
Ele Davidson, CAPS Advocacy  
Elizabeth Kirkham  
Emma Broadhurst, Beat  
Fiona Partington, The Health Agency  
George Waddell  
Greg Thomas, See Me  
Hannah Brisbane, SAMH (Secretariat)  
Harriette Campbell  
Hunter Watson  
Ian McCall, Paths for All  
Ian Skirving  
Iona Beange, University of Edinburgh, Division of Psychiatry  
James Carter  
Jane Morris, Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Jim Dorman, St Andrew's First Aid  
Kara Lindsay  
Katrina Sayer, ENABLE Scotland  
Keith Rae, Mental Health Foundation

Kristin Worsley, Breastfeeding Network  
Laura Wilson, Royal Pharmaceutical Society  
Lucy Mulvagh, ALLIANCE  
Mairi Campbell-Jack, SAMH (Secretariat)  
Martyn Pickersgill, University of Edinburgh, Usher Institute  
Nicola Reed, Cruse Scotland  
Oluwatoyin Opeloyeru  
Patricia Rodger  
Paula Fraser, VOX Scotland  
Ross Cunningham  
Ross McPhaden  
Samantha  
Shalhavit-Simcha Cohen, University of Edinburgh, School of Health in Social Science  
Steve Mulligan, BACP  
Tracey McFall, Partners in Advocacy

## Apologies

Alison Cairns, Bipolar Scotland  
COSCA  
Equality Network  
LGBT Health and Wellbeing  
NUS Scotland  
Royal College of Occupational Therapists  
SASW

## 1. Annual General Meeting

Beatrice Wishart MSP opened the meeting of the Group by thanking everyone for attending the group's first meeting since the 2021 Election.

Beatrice Wishart MSP informed Members that Emma Harper MSP and Oliver Mundell MSP were seeking re-election as Co-conveners of the Cross Party Group on Mental Health.

- Jane Morris proposed Emma Harper MSP and Patricia Rodger seconded, thus Emma was re-elected.
- Emma Harper MSP proposed Oliver Mundell MSP and Tess White MSP seconded, thus Oliver Mundell MSP was re-elected.

Oliver Mundell MSP informed Members that Beatrice Wishart MSP was seeking election as a Co-convenor and asked for a proposer and seconder. Emma Harper MSP proposed and Lucy Mulvagh seconded, thus Beatrice was elected.

Beatrice Wishart MSP informed Members that SAMH was seeking re-election as Secretariat. Patricia Rodger proposed and Emma Harper MSP seconded.

## 2. Reflection on Inquiry into the Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027

SAMH gave a presentation summarising the work of the Cross Party Group in 2020/21 explaining that this work was completed earlier this year. The CPG published four interim reports on each theme within the Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 as well as a summary report.

Over the course of the Inquiry, 24 member organisations and individuals submitted written evidence. Many Members also contributed to the reports by giving oral evidence or taking part in the discussion in meetings. This allowed the CPG to make a range of recommendations for different stakeholders including the Scottish Government and Integration Authorities.

SAMH thanked Members for their engagement with the Inquiry, particularly during a time of uncertainty.

### 3. Cross Party Group on Mental Health Work-plan 2021/22

SAMH proposed the work plan for 2021/22 focus on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health, in part due to the unprecedented effect that the lockdown and pandemic has had on everyone's mental health, but also due to the evidence received during the Review of the Mental Health Strategy last year which suggested some things had changed; some for the better and some for the worse.

SAMH proposed this Inquiry focus on three general themes:

- Social and Economic Equalities
- Children, Young People and Families
- People with pre-existing health conditions

These themes are based on emerging research from the pandemic so far, and would allow most member to be able to respond to at least one Call for Evidence on these themes. SAMH advised that the reports themselves would be more focused.

SAMH also proposed working with other Cross Party Groups where possible and suggested inviting them to respond to Calls for Evidence or endeavouring to hold joint meetings. A list of potential CPGs to collaborate with is available in the papers issued for this meeting.

SAMH suggested the following research questions, but advised that these are not set in stone:

1. How the pandemic affected the mental health of your community and what support was available? Have certain people had better or worse experiences than others?
2. What services and provisions would have been helpful but you did not know about at the time or could not access? What training or support would have made a difference?
3. What three things would you like to see change around mental health and your community to strengthen it in the future?

#### **Discussion of the proposed work plan**

Martyn Pickersgill wondered if the questions were too focused on mental health services giving the example that issues like access to green space wouldn't necessarily come up with the suggested questions. Jane Morris agreed with this point. Jane also asked whether including all Cross Party Groups had been considered as this would be particularly powerful to produce a report.

Mairi Campbell-Jack advised that the CPGs included in the list provided by SAMH only include those that have been approved so far but that there will be more added as and when they are approved by the Standards and Public Procedures Committee. Mairi advised that SAMH will keep an eye on those that are approved and write to them about our Inquiry. Emma Harper MSP advised that it is likely she will be involved with the CPG on Health Inequalities so there would be scope to link up with that group.

Lucy Mulvagh suggested keeping an eye out for CPGs on Women's Health, Cancer and Palliative Care being approved. Lucy also proposed inviting evidence from communities that don't have a Cross Party Group but which have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Lucy also suggested asking people what changed during the pandemic in terms of their health and wellbeing and access to services, to allow for comparison. Lucy also noted that she appreciated the format of the previous Inquiry with the interim reports as these allowed to break issues down. Beatrice Wishart MSP agreed with the importance of being as inclusive as possible.

Keith Rae suggested having a look at how to address some of the deep-seated inequalities which the pandemic exposed and how in future we can create a more equal society where something like this wouldn't happen again. Keith asked about the purpose of the proposed inquiry and whether it will lead on to addressing inequalities.

Patricia Rodger talked about her work on digital service provision and noted that digital poverty was a huge issue as certain groups felt excluded. Patricia suggested asking people to submit what research has already been done rather than conducting a new piece of research.

Oliver Mundell MSP agreed about Patricia's point on drawing together existing research rather than doing the same thing again. Oliver also advised he is enthusiastic to reach out to other CPGs. Oliver explained that in his experience a more focused work plan is the better, rather than taking on too broad a remit. He noted Emma Harper MSP's suggestion in the Zoom chat that perhaps SAMH should explore with other CPGs whether mental health and wellbeing will be included in their work programme.

Lizzie Kirkham noted nervousness that by bringing in other CPGs might mean that mental health gets pushed to one side, there is a need for this to remain a priority. Lizzie suggested the following areas for focus: environment, equality and poverty. Lizzie concluded by highlighting that the inquiry should take account that some people have had positive experiences in the pandemic in relation to their mental health and that the questions shouldn't assume it's been all bad.

Ele Davidson agreed with Patricia Rodger's point about looking at existing research on the impact of the pandemic. Ele spoke about CAPs People's Conference in 2020 which looked at the impact, she advised that there is a report from this that can be shared with this CPG. Ele also responded to Lizzie Kirkham's point about benefits of lockdown on mental health noting that some people from CAPS have been able to attend the CPG because of virtual meetings. Ele also explained that the interim reports in the previous Inquiry were helpful for the Lothian Voices group to both submit responses and see where these have been used in the final reports.

Hunter Watson highlighted the importance of human rights in the inquiry. Hunter spoke about situations where the human rights of people with learning disabilities have been abused, particularly with the use of physical restraint, seclusion and forced treatment. Hunter noted that people with autism and learning disabilities are being detained in mental hospitals and the state hospital. Hunter also spoke about the high use of antipsychotics in care homes and the damage that these can do.

Ross McPhaden asked whether feedback was available for responses to Calls for Evidence. SAMH advised that the Calls for Evidence will be collated into interim reports which will then be shared with Members for feedback.

### **Decision on future work plan**

No alternative work plans were proposed. Beatrice Wishart MSP invited Members to vote on the proposed work plan. Lucy Mulvagh proposed and Patricia Rodger agreed, thus the proposed work plan was agreed.

## **4. Summary of Existing Research on the Impact of Covid-19**

SAMH gave a presentation on some of the existing research on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health using population wide studies. These slides have been circulated with Members and Observers.

### **Discussion**

Tracey McFall reflected that individuals don't always have just one issue, they often have a range of problems from justice to housing to mental health. Tracey suggested that the pandemic has shifted the complexity of issues that individuals need help with.

Ross McPhaden asked whether there was detail about issues that the pandemic has created or that the pandemic has brought to the fore. Tracey McFall advised that she can share more information on this with the CPG.

Ele Davidson noted that there's not a representative in the CPG from the Department for Work and Pensions which is an issue. Ele highlighted barriers to accessing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) because of the large amount of

call handlers in England who don't understand that the right to Independent Advocacy is in Scotland's Mental Health Act which causes unnecessary stress for people on distress. Mairi Campbell-Jack advised that the CPG on Housing is on the list of CPGs to engage with and encouraged Members to reflect specific issues like these that they're aware of in their submissions to the Calls for Evidence.

Hunter Watson agreed that affordable housing is important, however there are other human rights to be taken account of such as forced treatment and restraint. Hunter noted that it's expensive to detain people in mental health hospitals and that the CPG on Mental Health should be opposed to forced treatment.

Patricia Rodger let Hunter Watson know that this is something the Mental Health Law Review is looking at closely and that there is a sense that forced care and treatment shouldn't be extended beyond very specific circumstances.

Andrew Muir noted his anger at being banned by the Mental Health Law Review. Oliver Mundell MSP explained that the Law Review has been invited to attend a meeting of the CPG on Mental Health and that all Members of the CPG on Mental Health will have an opportunity to pose their questions to the appropriate person then.

Ross Cunningham pointed out the impact of limited access to outdoor spaces on both physical and mental health.

Ross McPhadden asked whether the CPG would be lobbying for funding for particular issues through its recommendations. SAMH advised that recommendations and conclusions of the Inquiry into the Impact of COVID-19 will be based on the evidence received.

Andrew Muir highlighted a Petition he's lodged with the Scottish Parliament on investigating prosecutions under the Mental Health Act which is under consideration by the Scottish Parliament's Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.

## 5. AOB

Mairi Campbell-Jack advised that SAMH will be reflecting on feedback on attendees. SAMH will also circulate the all the papers and presentations for this meeting.

Beatrice Wishart advised that SAMH will circulate the meeting papers and presentations heard at this meeting in the coming days. Members were also informed that the next meeting will be on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November and that this will be held on Zoom.