

# Cross-Party Group on Older People, Age & Ageing

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 1pm-2.30pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Jeremy Balfour - Convenor  
Monica Lennon

Invited guests

Non-MSP Group Members

Tilly Robinson-Miles – Food Train/Eat Well Age Well  
Kate Robertson – Outside the Box  
Michelle Riddock – Simeon Care  
Diana Findley – SOPA  
Caroline Clark – SOPA  
Julia White – SOPA  
Sheena Fontana - SOPA  
Catriona Melville – Age Scotland  
Adam Stachura – Age Scotland  
Joanna McGilvery – Age Scotland  
Eileen Cawley - Scottish Pensioners Forum  
Rose Jackson – Scottish Pensioners Forum  
Kim Stringer – Vegetarians for Life  
Sarah Murray – Royal Voluntary Service  
Claire Donaghy – Independent Age  
Alan Gow – Heriot Watt University  
Martha Pollard – Edinburgh University  
Janie Corley – Edinburgh University  
Barbora Skarbela – Edinburgh University  
Alasdair Perry – Fire Scotland  
Mark McAteer – Fire Scotland  
Jo Savege – COSLA  
Andrew Senew – Home Instead Edinburgh  
Rebecca Hoffman – LGBT Health  
Elizabeth Lumsden – ROSPA  
Jennifer Forsyth – Obesity Action Scotland

Dr Anne Hendry – IFIC Scotland  
Rowan Wallace – British Geriatrics Society  
Lesley Stevenson – Shared Lives Plus  
Muriel Mowat – Befriending Networks  
Alison Clyde – Generations Working Together  
Ross Barrow – Royal Pharmaceutical Society  
Rohni Sharma-Joshi – RJS Equality Consultancy  
Sikh Sanjog

**In attendance**

Julia Shilitto – Senior Caseworker Jeremy Balfour MSP  
Jonathan Rimmer – Research & Media Assistant Katy Clark MSP  
Christine Ryder – Outside the Box (Secretariat)  
Murray Beesley – AI Media (supporting K Stringer)  
Andy Conway – AI Media (Supporting K Stringer)

## Apologies

Rhoda Grant MSP  
Richard Leonard MSP  
Pat Scrutton – Intergenerational National Network  
Arvind Salwan – Care Inspectorate  
Robert McGeachy – Camphill Scotland  
Anne Gallagher – Luminare Scotland  
Kate Samuels – Generations Working Together

## Agenda item 1

**Welcome and Apologies**

Jeremy Balfour MSP welcomed everyone to the first full meeting of the Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing.

## Agenda item 2

**Minutes of initial meeting for the new CPG on Older People, Age & Ageing 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

Jeremy explained that the meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January was an initial meeting to ensure that we had support from the required number of MSP's and to elect the office bearers in order to get the Cross Party Group established as a new CPG as it had taken longer than the allotted time to re-establish. The minutes were agreed as accurate by those who attended the initial meeting.

## Agenda item 3

### **Matters Arising**

No matters arising were raised or recorded.

## Agenda item 4

### **Presentations**

***Age Scotland's overarching priorities of the National Care Service, particularly around responsibility and accountability – Adam Stachura, Head of Policy & Communication, Age Scotland.***

Adam started by acknowledging that there is lots of tremendous of social care happening in Scotland but like everything there is always room for improvement. Adam went on to speak about the overarching themes around responsibility and accountability for social care, which is vital and a crucial lifeline for many, stating “we can all acknowledge that social care doesn’t get the prestige it deserves often playing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> fiddle to the NHS and it needs more recognition especially through the lens of covid that has been lacking”.

Adam went on to speak about the timeline which has got us to this point. Back in March 2020 when the first lockdown was announced social care services almost switch off overnight for many people, with many being left with no options and feeling very under supported which had a profound impact on people’s mental health and wellbeing. In September 2020 the First Minister announced a review of Adult Social Care in Scotland, this review was concluded in January 2021 and the idea of and National Care Service was voiced then with ideas around nationalising all care homes. In August 2021 the Scottish Government launched a consultation on the National Care Service, the responses to the consultation were published in February 2022 with the bill planned for introduction to the Scottish Parliament in the summer of 2022. Alongside this the Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People consultations is currently open until the 19<sup>th</sup> June. The National Care Service gives us a huge opportunity, with it being cited as the biggest public reform legislation since devolution.

Adam explained why getting this legislation right is so important, in 2018/19 around 1 in 20 people in Scotland received support from the social care system in Scotland and currently 75% of people who use social care are aged 65 and older. By 2045 it is projected that the number of older people aged over 65 will grow by nearly a third and by 2040 it is expected that the number of people living with dementia will rise to over 120,000. People are living longer but in poorer health meaning we need more investment in our people.

There is lots to be learned from the independent review, it was a comprehensive well received review which really picked up people’s experience and the excellent practice and what works well currently which needs to be built upon. It was an

important piece of work and mentioned lots of what we were asking for around, choice, equity of access, investment, human rights, people at its heart, changes to charging rates, improved conditions staff and more accountability & responsibilities for government. Big gaps were also highlighted between what should happen and what actually happens in reality. There were over 50 recommendations in the independent review including:

- Tackle racial inequalities
- Adopting a human rights approach
- Free at the point of access
- Support for unpaid carers
- Reform the commissioning process
- Shift away from competitive market model
- Recruitment and staff retention support
- Prioritising investment in social care

The Age Scotland priorities for the National care service are:

- Resourcing of this is vital, it needs investment. It doesn't have enough of the right people to deliver the right care.
- The Older People's Health & Social Care strategy and the Carers strategy need to be embedded within this new legislation.
- A system that puts people at the heart and in control of their own lives.
- More of the same won't do so we need politicians to grab this opportunity for reform, be bold and design something that delivers for now and in the future.

Adam finished with his talk with his hopes and fears. His hope is that we have a bigger and more resilient service for the future with more support and better recognition for the sector and unpaid carers. The fear is that it becomes a bureaucratic monster that is harder to deliver with lots of people talking rather than delivering but we have the opportunity to make sure that doesn't happen - hopes outweigh our fears.

***What's missing in National Care Service discussions- particularly recognising the preventative importance of food for health and wellbeing & how the National Care Service links to other Scottish Government policies and commitments – Tilly Robinson-Miles, Impact and Policy Officer, Eat Well Age Well – Food Train.***

Tilly started by pointing out that although she is talking about what is missing currently that does not mean to say that they won't be addressed at a later stage of the process.

A key challenge is malnutrition in older adults we know that 1 in 10 older adults in Scotland are at risk or have malnutrition although this figure could be higher. Malnutrition is also preventable the National Care Service could give us a real opportunity to take a preventative approach to health and social care and have a real emphasis on prevention then we know that this will help people stay healthier for

longer. This also links into one of the key pillars of the Christie commission which was around prevention.

Food is a preventative tool; we all need food to thrive and survive. Currently in Scotland there is very little recognition of food in our existing legislation particularly in social care support, the National Care service really gives us an opportunity to address this. Research from the university of Glasgow has shown that food is not only good for your physical wellbeing but has a positive impact on your mental wellbeing, feeling of belonging, social isolation and loneliness. A quote from the research “The physical need for food must be paired in the need for meaningful social interaction in order to reduce the risk of isolation and loneliness which creates a vicious cycle of under eating and low mood.”

Social care is not just about individual personal support it is a multi-scale approach with lots of different levels of support that may need to be accessed at different times, lots of that support has slowly disappeared such as meals on wheels and other community based supports

How can we ensure that food is part of the National Care Service? We believe that prioritising capacity building in the workforce we have seen how vital the staff in social care and unpaid carers have been in the last to years so we need to ensure people a have opportunities to follow career progression, time to do training in preventative measures which will lead to a proactive service rather than reactive.

Rhoda Grant MSP is putting forward a private members bill about a Right to Food, currently the human right to food is not enshrined in Scots law and Food Train along with other organisations believe that it should be and that a human rights approach should be at the hear of the National Care Service. Fairer Scotland for Older People which was published a few years ago committed to working with Health and Social Care partnerships to identify, address and manage malnutrition quickly and effectively. The Good Food Nation bill calls for social care to be more explicitly recognised. Currently different public bodies need to produce a food plan but that doesn't include the Integrated Joint Board's or the Community Health Boards, we have called for that to be recognised and we need a cross cutting approach. Finally, the Scottish Government's strategy for Adults Health and Social Care was released for consultation last week and we would encourage everyone to get involved.

Tilly concluded by saying that we have seen the amazing work of social care over the last 2 years but future shocks are likely, so we need to prepare and we need a National Care Service that is resourced and has the legislation to support it.

Jeremy thanked both Adam & Tilly for their presentations and confirmed that the Good Food Bill would have its second reading on Tuesday in the Parliament.

## **Discussion**

The presentations were followed by a discussion on the following areas:

Digital accessibility, the National Care Service consultation received 1300 responses, this is not enough especially after a pandemic. Although the consultation was carried out during the pandemic, they did not arrange enough face to face opportunities and the sessions held online were not without their difficulties with the chat function disabled. More people who require the use of care services need more accessible opportunities to feed in. Similarly, the Adults Health and Social Care strategy requires you to be able to access email to request a paper copy of the strategy and it has no phone number. This is very concerning and excluding many people from getting their views heard.

Fears around 4 care homes in Edinburgh where they have decided to put on hold any decision until they find out who will be running the National Care Service, this is very concerning for families and those who live in the care homes as the future is very uncertain at the moment with a real fear that the council will close them if it takes too long to make a decision.

How the Food Train knows the older people in the local communities who need the help to get food and stop them falling through the gap. Working collaboratively with many different contact points including GP's and other organisations including Independent Age where they trialled with people who were referred to their helpline were also asked 4 questions from a patient association nutrition checklist which allowed people to be referred on at an early stage as this is crucial. Currently they are at the early stages of piloting a strategic approach with Scottish Borders Council & partners to embed the Patient Association Nutrition Checklist across the authority including housing, GPs, social care etc meaning everyone is looking out for signs of malnutrition. If this proves to be a good model it could be rolled out across Scotland.

How food feeds into wellbeing and how it is also plays a crucial part in who we are, which means that it should be culturally appropriate especially in a care setting and people should have choice and opportunities as at different points in our lives our relationship with food changes. Food is also about your identity, whether, vegan vegetarian, Kosher etc. It is fundamental to people's sense of self and overall wellbeing.

Job satisfaction for those who work in social care, delivering care in slots of 30 minutes gives people no job satisfaction. Some providers increased their pay rates by 50% well above COSLA's recommended pay rate and it made no difference, they still struggled to recruit, that is not going to change unless we give people time to care.

Prevention and the role that the Fire & Rescue service could also play as they have a home fire safety policy where they visit peoples at home. Currently they are developing a safe & well visit around aspects of wellbeing in the home where people are referred on to the appropriate agencies, perhaps malnutrition issues could be

added to this as they have a significant reach in the community. Fire and Rescue are keen to work in partnership with other organisations to reach more people.

Resourcing of National Care Service and it being free at the point of access which was recommended in the report. Taking aside residential care, many other services should be free of charge including day care and dementia care as it is a medical condition rather than a social care issue. People shouldn't be in the position where they can't receive the care, they require due to its cost. Alzheimer Scotland is currently campaigning on this.

As part of the UN Decade of Action on Healthy Aging they have launched the Global Framework for Long Term Care, we are silent about that in Scotland. The UN framework is very clear that it is not a service it is a framework with a range of integrated services across all sectors. It has many transferrable ideas that could work in the National Care Service as around 85% of those who receive social care also receive care from health services as well as housing etc. We need to ensure a more integrated approach rather than lots of different services. We need to look beyond Scotland and what the rest of the world is doing as however a service is designed people always fall out of the bounds.

Jeremy explained that the next steps for the National Care Service will be that once the Bill has been launched it will go to a committee who will take evidence from all stakeholders, and I would encourage as many groups and individuals to respond as possible.

It doesn't matter what you call it we need to ensure that we do something for those who face barriers in accessing care, we need to do more than talk. We need to move forward rather than keep on having the same discussions and conversations over and over again. What can we do as a collective to ensure that the right voices are being heard at the next stage?

The Health, Social Care & Sport committee have also put out an enquiry which closes at the end of March around health inequalities which may be of interest.

Self Directed Support, it is a good piece of legislation, but it is not being executed or spoken about so rather than adding new legislation lets get what we have working. SDS would solve a lot of problems for a lot of people if it was working properly.

## **Actions**

Send the minutes to the Minister and to the committees so they can hear what we are saying at this point.

As a CPG we give evidence to the committee – delegated to Christine (co-ordination) Tilly, Anne & Rohini to work together on collating our evidence.

A joint meeting between CPG on Older People, Age & Ageing & the CPG on Social Work to discuss Self Directed Support.

## Agenda item 5

### **Future Meeting topics**

Anne Hendry suggested – In partnership with SOPA they have been leading a wellbeing in later life 6- month programme which will be finishing at the end of April, they could present some of the recommendations from the work.

### **Action**

Email either Jeremy or Christine with any ideas.

## Agenda item 6

### **AOCB**

Bank account – we have discovered that we do have a bank account with a small sum of money in the account. We need to appoint a treasurer to take on the role Rose Jackson volunteered to take on the role.

Age Scotland have released report into the surge in energy prices

DWP are carrying out a consultation on their legislation, they are looking for people to respond, if you see it please respond.

Next meeting will be on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This meeting will be virtual.