

Cross-Party Group on Long Covid

Tuesday 1st October 18:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Jackie Baillie MSP
Sandesh Gulhane MSP
Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

Invited guests

Dr Amy Small
Jane Ormerod
Jackie Baillie
Helen Goss
Dorothy grace elder
Nick Sculthorpe
Rob Simpson
Jason Grieve
Tracy iPhone
Freja Ljungberg
Leanne Quinn
Hetty C
Stuart McIver
Allana Hoggard

Non-MSP Group Members

Long Covid Scotland

Apologies

Sally Witcher
Beatrice Wishart MSP
Richard Leonard MSP

Agenda item 1

Trying to access health services has been very difficult for most people with Long Covid. There is a sense that GPs do not know how to refer people with Long Covid for care, highlighting a lack of clinical pathways. 49% of people surveyed who are living with Long Covid have disengaged from healthcare as a result of this.

The point was raised that it isn't just patients disengaging from the health service, it's health services disengaging from them. Cass Macdonald says "you can't disengage from services that don't exist."

The CPG raises the questions – of reports that have been done by Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and The Alliance on Long Covid, what will the follow up be? What will happen as a consequence of these reports?

Jackie Baillie MSP added that there is a lack of consistency in services across Scotland and this is a very real issue. Provision of services is a postcode lottery that depends on where you live. Health Boards have been unable to provide the services they want to due to a lack of funding, yet the Scottish Government has failed to announce any new money for Long Covid despite the Barnett Consequentials received from UK Government Long Covid spend.

Agenda item 2

Helen Goss, Long Covid Kids Scotland points out that reports on Long Covid do not include children and there is only one service for children in Scotland which is in Grampian.

Current Long Covid provision appears to be very much rehab based. Patients need medical treatment, not rehabilitation.

Jackie Baillie MSP suggests the CPG asks Andrew Gwynne MP to attend a future meeting given his role in the UK Government and interests in Long Covid.

One big problem is that we do not have a one for Scotland approach. There is a lack of joined up thinking and data sharing.

Agenda item 3

The point is raised that many people have chronic long term health problems due to Long Covid, however LC is not recognised under the equality act.

The economic impact of people being out of work due to Long Covid is massive, but we cannot focus solely on this argument as it suggests that people with Long Covid are only important if they are contributing to the economy.

There is also the issue of children who become inactive in school and the community due to Long Covid. More must be done to address this serious issue.

How do we get to a preventative model of tackling Long Covid?

Agenda item 4

Action is required from the Scottish Government on Long Covid urgently.

We don't just need more money, we need action to address the issues Long Covid sufferers face daily.

There is a total lack of public health messaging and this must be addressed.

Members of the CPG encouraged to ask their Green MSPs to attend the CPG.

The group decides to ask Neil Gray MSP to meet with the CPG in his role as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

The meeting ended at 19:00.