

# **Cross-Party Group on Life Sciences**

Tuesday 15th of June 2021 at 17:30

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Kenneth Gibson MSP; Convener

Graham Simpson MSP; Vice Convener

Fulton MacGregor MSP

Minister Ivan McKee MSP

Michael Marra MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Áine Prendergast, Ipsen

Alex Stobart, Mydex

Alison Culpan, ABPI

Alison Dun, Glasgow University

Andrew Brown, Bayer

Barbara Adams, AMK Relations

Barbara Blaney, Edinburgh University

Charlie Bryce, Napier University

Claire Headspeath, ABPI

Dave Tudor, CPI

David Bowie, ABC

David Eadie, Novo Nordisk

David Gleghorn, UCB

Dr Dionne Mackison, Scottish Government

Dr Mary Canning, Epidarex

Ellys Wakeman, Ipsen

Fiona Hamill, Janssen

Frank Gunn-Moore, SULSA

George Davidson, GSK

Heather Rankine, Exact Sciences UK

Helen Reilly, Royal Pharmaceutical Society

James Crichton, Scottish Government

Jenni Hampson, Kyowa Kirin

John Macgill, Ettrickburn

Julie Brady, Dundee University

Julie Cetingoz, Accenture

Karen Facey, Edinburgh University

Laura McIver, NHS Scotland

Lindsay McClure, NHS Scotland

Maggie Clark, Novartis

Mark Cook, Medtronic

Mike Ferguson, Dundee University

Miranda Knaggs, BioCity

Neil MacDonald, MSD

Phillip Crosson, Takeda

Philip Jones, BioAscent

Roma Macguire, Strathclyde University

Sandra Auld, Healthcare Public Affairs

Steve Brown, Roche

Steven Burke, PPD

Yasmin Fraser, Biogen

Sabine Krofczik-Wilhelm, PPD

Eleanor Charsley, ABHI

Shaun Balderson, Novartis

Sam Graham, Biogen

Conn O'Neill, Roche

Brian Bathgate, Charles River

Kate Dion, 3D Communications

Heather Ann Baxter, Eli Lilly

## Apologies

Miles Briggs MSP

Sue Webber MSP

Craig Hoy MSP

## Opening, Welcome and Introductions

Graham Simpson MSP welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the proposed Cross-Party Group (CPG) in the new session of parliament and outlined the agenda for the evening which includes the formal election of office bearers and secretariat.

## Minutes of the previous meeting (19<sup>th</sup> January 2021)

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Graham Simpson MSP, accepted by the group and seconded by George Davidson (GlaxoSmithKline).

# Prof Craig Ritchie, Scottish Brain Health and Dementia Research Strategy

- Prof Ritchie explained the origins of Brain Health Scotland and their mission to link up and improve the environment for research into Dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
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- Brain Health Scotland is a partnership between Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Government to provide expert advice about brain health research, policy, personalised prevention plans and opportunities to promote research.
- Prof Ritchie discussed the early origins and pathology of the disease, which was first diagnosed by Dr Alzheimer. Without modern technology the disease could only be investigated or diagnosed through a brain biopsy.
- Unfortunately, the broad symptoms of early disease mean Dementia is often diagnosed particularly late, where there are few options for treatment. Prof Ritchie believes that earlier diagnosis, from mid-life, can result in patients taking a preventative approach to help slow the disease from progressing.
- As a result, patients are increasingly keen to understand why they have developed the disease and what risk factors exist which make you more likely to do so.
- Prof Ritchie explained that there are around 12 risk factors which increase the likelihood of developing dementia and how brain health clinics can help assess these dangers. Sleep patterns and mood disorders are just two of the ways that we can help assess risk for dementia.
- Scotland is leading the way in collecting high quality and relevant data and Brain health Scotland want to use this information to change outcomes for people living with dementia and those at high risk of this condition and improve prevention and help research the next generation of treatments.
- Prof Ritchie explained that Brain Health Scotland have been set some ambitious targets to reduce the spread of this disease. From 2020 Brain Health Scotland aim to deliver a reduction of incidence rates of dementia year-on-year so that we all benefit from the lowest rates in the world.
- The Scottish Dementia Research Consortium works across five themes (Prevention, Diagnosis and Detection, Fundamental Sciences, Living With Dementia, Informatics) and has a diverse membership of over 600. The Group manages collaborations in research and funding.
- Dementia research is hard, and the BHS wants to put the best evidence into practice as quickly as possible. The Strategy has three key objectives which seeks to improve the pathway into research:
  - Developing enabling infrastructures for research delivery:

- Creating an environment between practice and research which facilitates rapid translation of research into practice:
- Promoting and resourcing early career researchers career development with a specific focus on helping post-doctoral researchers complete the bridge into being independent principal investigators and group leads.
- Prof Ritchie explained that the strategy will be launched on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July and encouraged those interested to have a read.

#### *Key points from the Q and A with Prof Ritchie*

- *Conn O'Neill praised the strategy and asked whether the rest of the UK would seek to emulate it. In response, Prof Ritchie stated that Scotland's size enables it to be nimble and hopes that the lessons learned from the strategy can be rolled out across the rest of the country.*
- *Kate Dion asked about the structuring of Real-World Evidence with Prof Ritchie confirming that Brain Health services are inclusive and enable everyone to share insights and a single data system to connect all of the clinics together is part of the plan.*
- *Graham Simpson asked how many Brain Health Clinics are needed and Prof Ritchie explained the ambition to have one in every health board and a central hub to co-ordinate action.*
- *On how we can get the NHS to deliver a drug to patients, such as Aducanumab, Prof Ritchie described a paper that he co-authored on this subject which concludes that the collection of high-quality data is essential to any roll-out.*

## Ministerial Update from Ivan McKee MSP

- The Minister explained the importance of life sciences for both Scotland's economy and wider population health and his support for the re-forming of this group, which has enjoyed record attendance in the virtual world.
- As a result of COVID-19 the Minister has worked closely with a number of CPG members and praised their work in helping shape the government's pandemic response.
- Ivan also discussed his appointment as Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism and Enterprise. As part of this enlarged brief Ivan will retain responsibility for life sciences and explained his hope that the sector can continue to prosper.
- One of the elements crucial to future growth is data, and Ivan explained that the government is authoring a new strategy which will be a real focus for the new government.

- The Minister agreed with points made in the previous segment and Scotland's strengths which include being nimble and agile which can attract investment.
- This has been born out in new findings from Ernst and Young which revealed that Scotland was only second to London in attracting foreign direct investment. According to the survey:
  - FDI projects in Scotland increased by 6%, compared to a decline in the UK of 12% and a 13% decline across Europe.
  - Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen are in the UK's top 10 FDI cities outside of London, with Edinburgh overtaking Manchester into first place.
  - Scotland's investment destination attractiveness within UK rose to its highest level ever at 15%, more than double the 2019 7% figure.
- In finishing up, Minister McKee also discussed some of the events he recently attended including opening the ABPI global showcase, which put Scottish innovation in front of global pharmaceutical companies.
- Ivan also discussed the Scottish Life Science Awards and the fantastic innovation that was on show during the meeting.

#### *Key points from the Q and A with Minister Ivan McKee*

- *In response to a question from Steve Brown on the specifics of the Data Strategy, Ivan confirmed that he would task his officials to pick this up with him.*
- *Graham Simpson thanked the minister for attending the group and giving an update from government.*

## AGM

- Graham Simpson MSP summarised the work of the group in the previous session of parliament before moving to the formal AGM where he thanked the seven MSPs who have pledged to support the group in the new session of parliament.
- ABPI Scotland Director and previous group secretariat, Alison Culpan MSP, presided over the election of office bearers and discussed the importance of getting the group up and running.
- Graham Simpson MSP nominated Kenneth Gibson MSP as Convenor which was seconded by Michael Marra MSP.
- Kenneth Gibson MSP nominated Graham Simpson MSP as Vice-Convenor which was seconded by Michael Marra MSP.

- Graham Simpson resumed chairing the meeting where ABPI Scotland were returned, unanimously, as secretariat for the coming year.
- Graham discussed the 2020 workplan, which aims to cover some of the following areas: COP26 and Sustainability; Animal Health, Agritech and Aquaculture; Emerging public health threats; Data, COVID and the future; Advanced Medicinal Therapies.

Professor Debbie Tolson, Alzheimer Scotland Professor of Dementia, Director Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP), University of the West of Scotland. SDRCL Lead for Living with Dementia Research. & Susan Holland, Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse Consultant, Ayrshire and Arran NHS and ASCPP.

- Prof Tolson explained the role of the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice at UWS which sits within the Academic School of Health & Life Sciences.
- The centre is responsible for dementia education, applied research and policy influence.
- Prof Tolson described Care Empathia which has been pioneered at the UWS and seeks to bring research and learning into regular care.
- Prof Tolson explained some of the challenges and opportunities associated with dementia research which include limited funding opportunities and a culture that is not aligned to research. However, there are a number of opportunities which include looking at best practice from carers and how dementia affects employment.
- Susan Holland described the impact that lockdown has had on both dementia sufferers and their families and described the results of a comprehensive survey which was commissioned by the office of the Chief Scientist in Scotland.
- The results revealed a stark picture with lockdown contributing to the acceleration of memory loss amongst sufferers. As a result, we have seen premature institutionalisation, increased levels of stress and profoundly negative impacts for families. Susan explained that the consequences will be deep and long lasting.
- Susan described the ASCPP Carers' Academy and some of the novel solutions that have been rolled out to improve the experience of dementia sufferers, which include innovation to prevent bruising from peripheral venous cannula.

- There are a number of strategies, and Susan shared a number of developments that can help influence and improve policy.
- Action on Rights Team- training for helpline staff. The care academy works with researchers to support both learning and care.

#### *Key points for Q and A with Prof Tolson and Susan Holland*

- *Graham Simpson asked whether he could visit the centre and see first-hand some of the research taking place. He also asked about deteriorating care and what could be done to prevent this happening should there be future lockdowns.*
- *Prof Tolson confirmed that she would be delighted to host Graham at the centre once possible and confirmed that more needs to be done to improve care for dementia sufferers.*

## Closing Remarks

The Deputy Convener thanked the contributors for their presentation and reminded members to submit suggestions for upcoming meetings in 2021. He also confirmed that the date and timing of the next meeting will be sent to members in due course.