

# Cross-Party Group on Medicinal Cannabis

## Date and Time

5 February 2025, 6pm

## Minute

Future directions of the Cross Party Group

## Present

Monique Equi  
Linda Hendry  
David Johnstone  
Marc Manders  
Jim Mills (secretary)  
Lynne O'Connor  
Kate Spence  
Alison Strath  
Lisa Quarrell  
Steph Sherer, Americans for Safe Access, Executive Director and Board President  
Monica Lennon  
Ben McPherson  
Collette Stevenson

## MSPs

Monica Lennon  
Pauline McNeill  
Ben McPherson  
Collette Stevenson

## Invited guests

Lisa Quarrell  
Steph Sherer (Americans for Safe Access, Executive Director and Board President)

## Non-MSP Group Members

Monique Equi  
Linda Hendry  
David Johnstone  
Marc Landers  
Jim Mills (Secretary)  
Lynne O'Connor  
Kate Spence

Alison Strath  
Lisa Quarrell.

## Apologies

None

## Agenda item 1

Minutes, news and future directions.

Minutes were approved. After discussion it was agreed that in 2025 the CPG should focus on the issue of greater access to legal cannabis medicines and parliamentary action by the end of 2025. Monica advised the CPG to focus on work with partners to pressure the Scottish Parliament into action. Ben suggested actions such as writing to relevant Cabinet Ministers, inviting them to the CPG, and providing written questions to MSPs to influence the parliamentary agenda. Pauline had been successful in securing a question in the Public Health and Women's Health Portfolio Question Time on 19/2/25 (see attached).

## Agenda item 2

Focus on Patients and Policy.

Lisa Quarrell reported on lack of progress with securing Bedrolite through the NHS for her son Cole. In seven years, it has proven to be the only product that has an impact upon the frequency and severity of his symptoms. Without it this increase. With it he is able to attend school and enjoy taekwondo lessons. The local NHS Board has not supported the case for funding Bedrolite on a named-patient basis despite relevant medical specialists in Scotland offering to provide a prescription. Instead, invasive and expensive surgery has been offered by the NHS Board, which Lisa has assessed as too much of a risk to Cole's future health and development. This appears to be a clear question of social justice for the family, as those who can afford to secure private prescriptions for Bedrolite continue to do so. Lisa faces the monthly task of meeting the cost of the product by raising funds through charity, while also working to support her family. The cost of Bedrolite for Cole is in excess of £100000 in the last seven years. Steph Sherer provided insights from the US on campaigns to secure greater access to legal cannabis medicines there. The picture in the US is complex as regulations vary from state to state. It has been very important to keep separate the issues of medical and recreational markets. Access to legal cannabis medicines remains a social justice issue in the US and much of the market is unregulated. Pharmacies do not carry cannabis though they want to and this is our next step. In the discussion that followed it was confirmed that Bedrolite is available for named patients in England and recently in Northern Ireland so Scotland now appears to be the exception within the UK (Jim Mills). Monica Lennon suggested that the CPG make it clear what the ask is of Scottish Government. Lisa

Quarrell confirmed that she had spoken to Humza Yousaf when he was Health Minister who had shown a willingness to help, but this was later backtracked upon. She added that in Northern Ireland all the consultant neurologists sign a prescription which gives a confidence to prescribe that we don't have here in Scotland Alison Strath stated that the pharmaceutical company which produces Bedrolite is unlikely to offer the product to Cole on a compassionate basis as they usually do this only when they can foresee future sales. She stated that she would try to make the case to them.