

Cross-Party Group on Palliative Care
Hybrid Meeting

Approved minute Wednesday 11 June 2025, 6.00-7.30pm, Scottish Parliament Meeting Room TG.20/21 and on MS Teams

Attendance

In person:

Bob Doris MSP, XPG Convenor
Marie McNair MSP, XPG Deputy Convenor
Rhoda Grant MSP
David Cameron, Office of Bob Doris MSP
Mark Hazelwood, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care
Sandra Lucas, University of the West of Scotland
Rebecca Patterson, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

Remote:

Melissa Byrne, Cruse Scotland
Clare Carolan, NHS Western Isles
Dawn Crosby, Pancreatic Cancer
Amy Dalrymple, Marie Curie
Pauline Ellison, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care
Katie Endacott, Action Duchenne
Keri Fickling, Scottish Ambulance Service
Tracy Flynn, Ayrshire Hospice
Donna Hastings, St Columba's
Annabel Howell, CHAS
Sadia Hussain, Action Duchenne
Till Kroeber, Strathcarron Hospice
Scott Mackinnon, Scottish Ambulance Service
Helen Malo, Hospice UK
Sandra McConnell, NHS Lanarkshire
Gordon McLean, Macmillan
Sarah Mills, University of St Andrews
Kathleen Morison, Soul Midwives, Scotland
Maureen O'Neill
Lorna Porteous, NHS Lothian
Heather Tonner, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Eloise Richmond, Scottish Parliament (Communications and Engagement Officer)
Jackie Stone, St Columba's Hospice Care
Rhona Winnington, University of West of Scotland

Apologies:

Miles Briggs MSP
Elaine Stevens, IANPC
Jude Meryl, Soul Midwives Scotland

Agenda item 1: Welcome, introduction and apologies

Bob Doris welcomed attendees to the meeting and invited those in the room to introduce themselves, and those attending virtually to introduce themselves in the chat.

Agenda item 2: Approval of the minute of the previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minute of the last meeting was approved. Proposed – Marie McNair MSP; Seconded: Sandra Lucas.

Agenda item 3: Annual General Meeting 2025

3.1 AGM 2024 – Minute

Marie McNair MSP proposed the minute as a correct record of the 2024 AGM. There was no seconder present who had been at the previous meeting, so the minute will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

3.2 Annual Return (Paper 1) & Accounts 2024-2025: (Paper 2)

The Annual Return & Accounts 2024-2025 were both approved for submission to the Standards Committee.

3.3 Annual Subscription 2024-2025

It was agreed that the annual subscription should continue to be £0 for members.

Action

- SPPC continues to provide the secretariat for this group – due to financial pressures SPPC would be happy to receive donations towards costs of supporting the group.

3.4 Election of Office Bearers

Convenor - Bob Doris MSP

Nominated by Rhoda Grant, seconded by Marie McNair

Deputy Convenor – Miles Briggs MSP

Nominated by Bob Doris, seconded by Rhoda Grant

Deputy Convenor – Marie McNair MSP

Nominated by Bob Doris, seconded by Rhoda Grant

Secretary / Treasurer – Mark Hazelwood

Nominated by Bob Doris, seconded by Rhoda Grant

The group also noted:

- thanks to Bob Doris for his ongoing commitment as Convenor of the Cross Party Group.
- thanks to Marie McNair for her practical support as Vice Convenor of the group
- thanks to Miles Briggs, particularly for his work on the Right to Palliative Care Bill.

- thanks to SPCC for their ongoing work providing the secretariat to the group

Agenda item 4: Presentation

Presentation: *Impacting outcomes and experiences at the heart of the system – the Scottish Ambulance Service Macmillan Palliative and End of Life Care Project*

Scott Mackinnon, Palliative and End of Life Care Programme Lead, Scottish Ambulance Service

Keri Fickling, Practice Education Lead (North), Scottish Ambulance Service

Presentation slides are available here: Scottish Ambulance Service Macmillan Palliative and End of Life Care Project

Group discussion followed, including mention of the following issues:

- It is good to see such positive and impactful work taking place – the kind of practical improvements this group has been talking about for years.
- There is a recognition of the importance of doing more to communicate to families that, if they call an ambulance and don't wish to go to hospital there are likely to be other options available.
- The collaboration that has taken place as part of this project has been hugely helpful and there is an appetite for this to continue and increase going forwards.
- The education and skills staff are getting as part of this project are also having a positive impact on non palliative patients.
- There is regional data available, for example on response times.
- More support for future care planning may help to alleviate or avoid some of the crises for which ambulances are being called.
- Different areas of Scotland had different resources and services available – SAS worked differently in each area to make the most of what was available in each place.
- Remote and rural areas bring specific challenges, with longer distances meaning each ambulance is likely to be out for longer. Things like a 24/7 palliative care helpline and just in case medication can help, and SAS continues to explore what more it can offer in terms of support, linking up with other services in remote and rural areas.
- Though 24/7 palliative care helplines can help avoid crisis call outs, not everyone who could benefit from accessing them is identified as needing them. Sarah Mills at St Andrew's University is involved in work to see how to improve identification.
- Amy Dalrymple highlighted that Marie Curie is conducting a short survey study investigating how care home staff access controlled drugs (CDs) such as morphine and midazolam, for palliative and end-of-life care: <https://bit.ly/cinch25>
- Given the impact that this project is having, it is hoped that funding will be found to enable it to continue.

Action:

- Any support group members can offer in terms of advocating for the worth of this project and its continued funding is welcomed.

- Scott Mackinnon and Keri Fickling will send Bob Doris and Rhoda Grant a summary of key points from their presentation so that they can submit a parliamentary motion highlighting the impact of the project.

Agenda item 5: Update on the Assted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Bob Doris contacted the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to ask them for their predicted timetable for Stage 2 amendments on the Bill, and will share this when he receives it. From experience, it is expected that Stage 2 won't happen until after the summer, potentially into the Autumn. At this stage MSPs can approach the Scottish Parliament policy team with a policy intent, and the policy team will draft an amendment to the Bill to reflect that policy intent. It is also possible for MSPs to approach the policy team with pre-drafted amendments, and for interested individuals and organisations to approach MSPs to work with them on potential amendments.

Action – Bob Doris will share any further information he receives relating to the Bill process and schedule.

Agenda item 6: Any other business

The Scottish Parliament will go into dissolution next year before the election, so it is likely that there will be only two or three meetings before then. Suggestions for agenda items at future meetings were made:

- Hospice UK's new report on improving palliative care in remote, rural and island communities.
- For the final meeting before the parliament's dissolution the group could discuss what palliative care related issues need action from the next parliament.

Agenda item 7: Date of the next Cross Party Group meeting

The date of the next meeting will be arranged and circulated in due course.