

# Cross-Party Group on Women's Health

12.30pm Wednesday 23rd March 2022 via MS  
Teams

## Minute of Meeting

### Present

#### MSPs

Monica Lennon MSP  
Beatrice Wishart MSP  
Sue Webber MSP  
Emma Roddick MSP

#### Invited guests

Leah Hazard  
Louise Caldwell

#### Non-MSP Group Members Present

Jonathan Sher – QNIS  
Julie Morrison - Baby Loss Retreat  
Catherine Hughes  
Eilidh Dickson – Engender  
Susan Mckellar - Scottish Women's Convention  
Fiona Shannon - Feel Free Support Team  
Gillian McElroy – Alliance  
Hazel Gardiner – NASUWT  
Heather Denham – Baby Loss Retreat  
Jen Stewart – Alliance  
Sinead Cook - NHS Grampian  
Victoria Goldie – MISS  
Dorothy-Grace Elder  
Rebecca

#### Others present

Coreen Fulton (Monica Lennon MSP Staff)  
Amanda Govan (Monica Lennon MSP Staff)  
Louisa McCearney (Monica Lennon MSP Staff)

#### Apologies

Kenny Gibson MSP

Tess White MSP  
Rachel Clarke BPAS

## 1. Welcome, introduction, and apologies from Monica Lennon MSP.

Monica thanks everyone for continuing to log in remotely for meetings and thanks to MSP colleagues who have joined today

## 2. Matters arising.

Notes of the meeting held on [insert date] distributed to Members for approval.

## 3. Invited Guest Speakers: Louise Caldwell – Campaigner for separate miscarriage facilities; Leah Hazard - Midwife and Author.

ML welcomed two guest speakers who will be sharing their insights and experience with CPG members.

i) Louise Caldwell speaks about her campaign and what support she would like – especially from MSPs – to work towards dedicated maternity units for women experiencing pregnancy complications leading to baby loss.

- Louise details her own personal experience and the trauma which she endured as a result of having her miscarriage in the labour ward of her local hospital.
- She expressed how she felt “paraded and degraded” following her experience which she says was inhumane and barbaric.
- Louise talks about her campaign to get a separate location/area so women don’t have to go into the maternity ward. A non-clinical room or comfort suite (not a fire escape entrance, whereby women still go through the maternity corridors and past maternity wards) with staff there to support the women; where the women can be together if need comfort and understanding from each other.

ii) Leah Hazard - NHS Scotland midwife, author of memoir *Hard Pushed: A Midwife’s Story*, and maternity activist:

- Leah thanks the CPG for having her and expresses upmost sympathy with Louise and the many women and parents across Scotland who have similar concerns about how this is handled, commends Louise for talking about this.

- Leah confirms her opinions are hers alone and not her employer (NHS Scotland), but does reflect many midwives views.
- As a midwife Leah has been involved many times in baby loss, and agrees a separate unit would be best, however has major concerns about resources and staffing due to the deep crisis in NHS.
- Leah speaks about Scottish maternity services being stretched through workload and staffing services.
- Leah notes that NHS Scotland are losing both experienced and newly qualified staff due to the pressured, broken system and real-term pay cuts. An urgent review of staffing and pay is needed for the best care for fundamental and crucial, real, lasting, meaningful change.

### iii) Discussion and Q&A

Various questions raised and comments from MSPs and members.

- Inquiry regarding perinatal mental health in Scotland currently been undertaken by Scottish Parliament Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.
- Concerns regarding lack of depth in women's health plan specifically in relation to maternity services.
- Question regarding the place of abortion care in Louise's campaign.
- What sort of questions should MSP's be asking about the women's health plan
  - o Questions around work place planning tools/in-depth review required.
- Comment regarding work on prevention of miscarriage – notes QNIS initiative "Healthier Pregnancies, Better Lives"
- Impact of Covid pandemic exacerbated pressures.
- Calls for MSPs to be persistent in taking this forward.
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### 4. Any other business.

N/A

### 5. Date of Next Meeting.

Pre-recess.