

# Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Chronic Pain.

## MINUTES

Meeting & AGM October 31, 2018: chaired by Miles Briggs MSP

The chair welcomed all, including Ian Semmons, patient founder of Action on Pain, who travelled from Norfolk.

AGM: MSP co conveners Elaine Smith, Rona Mackay, Miles Briggs, and Anas Sarwar were re-elected unanimously, as was voluntary secretary Dorothy-Grace Elder.

Minutes of previous AGM of October 4, 2017, approved, also minutes of meeting on June 20, 2018.

### **Agenda discussions:**

**Almost four out of five chronic pain patients contact unscheduled care & emergency services.** ISD new figures prove the strain on return patients, the NHS, emergency services and out of hours GPs over the suffering of long-term pain patients.

ISD discovered that 36,877 out of 47,933 chronic pain patients needed to contact 'at least one' unscheduled care service – ambulance, GP out of hours, emergency departments, NHS 24, emergency admissions. That's in a three-year period (April 2015 to March 2018) ISD wrote: "That means nearly four out of five accessed at least one of the unscheduled care services".

To the CPG this was another indication of long delays, especially in return appointments, which had previously been kept under wraps.

**Scottish Mesh Survivors:** Women campaigners were applauded for their campaign resulting in the new health secretary, Jeane Freeman MSP, intervening against mesh. But Ms Freeman pointed out that regulating mesh products was not devolved. She has written to the London regulator, MHRA, expressing her "dismay and concern" over reports that they approved mesh devices on "the flimsiest evidence" The campaign continues over women who state their lives were ruined.

**Respite help for chronic pain: who cares?** CPG member Mairi O’Keefe, CEO of Leuchie House, spoke on her retirement this week after 15 years of remarkable work. Leuchie House faced closure by the MS Society but Mairi, then manager, refused. The meeting applauded her work in rallying all Scotland, including the Parliament, in a huge campaign which turned Leuchie into a model respite centre for many painful conditions. Her plea was for “more Leuchies” in Scotland beyond East Lothian.

**Fibromyalgia:** more help needed. Fibro patients reported waiting times delays regularly. So devastating is this all over pain condition from day to day that six fibromyalgia Patients had to cancel on the night. MSPs to lodge Parliamentary questions on waits.

**Other CPG work :** all year, group members research and gather facts and tackle individual patient pleas for help. (The secretary can spend months on a key injustice to an individual). Members also attend relevant meetings – e.g. on suicide prevention, and participate in meetings called by the Alliance. We have pursued the human rights issue over chronic pain excessive waiting times with the Scottish Commission on Human Rights and contacted mental health organisations to urge that suicide risk with severe pain should be included in the Scottish Government’s Suicide Prevention strategy. The Group’s MSPs ask scores of Parliamentary Questions, all taking considerable time. The Secretary has been at two Stirling meetings of the new Collaborative which was set up to cut waiting times for several conditions. We await action.

**Attendance:** MSPs Miles Briggs, Elaine Smith, Tom Mason

**Non MSPs:** John Thomson, Susan Archibald, Rob McDowall, David Caulfield, Ian Semmons, Karen Neil, Claire Daisley, Marion Scott, Irene O’Neill, Mairi O’Keefe, Dr Jackie Mardon, Dorothy-Grace Elder, Catherine Hughes, Maureen McAllister, Laura Clark, Fiona Collins, Geraldine McGuigan, Arlene Byrne, Rob Friel, Anne Hughes, George Welsh, Robert Dickson, Frances Boyle, A Floyd.

**Organisations:** Action on Pain, The Equality Council, Scottish Mesh Survivors Group, Independent Federation of Nursing in Scotland, Leuchie House Respite Centre, NHS Centre for Integrative Care, The Alliance for Health & Social Care, Versus Arthritis, NHS GGC Rheumatology Physio, Fibromyalgia Friends.