

Minutes of the Cross Group on Alcohol and Drugs held on 22nd December via zoom

Present

MSPs Monica Lennon, Clare Baker, Paul Sweeney and Stuart McMillan

In Attendance:

Dave Liddell, Austin Smith, Tracey McFall. Joanne Smith, Liam Mehigan, Michael Trail, Emma Crawshaw, Kenny Harrison, Aileen O'Gorman, Alexandra Taylor, Elinor Jayne, Laura Wilson, Arun Menon, Alison Douglas, Craig Reilly, Cameron Scally, Dougie McBean, David Macdonald, Sandra Holmes, Brenda Bradley, Saket Priyadarshi, Stephanie Morrison, Susan Grant, Peter Krykant, Gillian Spence, Rebecca McColl, Annemarie Ward, Stephen Wishart and Kirsten Horsburgh

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 28th October 2021 were approved

Right to Recovery Proposals

The proposals were summarised by Annemarie Ward and Steven Wishart. The proposals were to deliver a Right to Recovery legislation through the adoption of a private members bill being put forward by Douglas Ross the Conservative Party leader in Scotland

The general principles of the proposal were outline as follows:

The aim of this proposed Bill is to ensure that everyone has access to the necessary drug and alcohol addiction treatment they need. This will enable those living with addiction issues to survive, get better and reduce Scotland's shameful drug and alcohol death numbers.

The proposed Bill would enshrine the right to necessary addiction treatment in Scots law. It would place an obligation on Scottish Ministers, Health Boards and others to provide treatment and set up reporting arrangements so that the quality and access of treatment provided can be monitored and reported to the Scottish Parliament. This will ensure that individuals may access a preferred treatment option unless it is deemed to be harmful by a medical professional. The proposal is a Bill that would include, but not be limited to, a statutory right to:

- Short-term residential rehabilitation;
- Long-term residential rehabilitation;
- Community-based rehabilitation;
- Residential detoxification;
- Community-based detoxification;
- Stabilisation services;

- Substitute prescribing services; and
- Any other forms of treatment as a health professional may deem appropriate, in line with guidance from the Scottish Ministers.

The Bill would seek to prevent individuals seeking drug and alcohol treatment services from being refused access for reasons including:

- A medical history of substance misuse;
- A criminal history involving substance misuse;
- Automatically on the outcome of a mental health assessment;
- The individual currently being in receipt of substitute prescribing services, regardless of the volume of prescription; and
- The individual currently still undertaking alcohol and/or drug misuse.

In addition, it would see the introduction of new national standards and guidance to increase the accessibility of rehabilitation programmes. I also intend to consider how effective and appropriate the current NHS complaints procedures are, and whether an additional complaints procedure specific to this proposal should be included in the Bill. The Bill would also aim to establish a national funding scheme to ensure that resources swiftly reach frontline treatment services in areas of acute demand.

Discussion of group members followed as to the merits of the proposals and members were urged to make the views known through the consultation on the proposed bill which ends on 12th January 2022

Items for future topics

1. Issues relating to work force development including burn-out recruitment, training and retention.
2. Inviting Angela Constance to speak on progress with delivering the Drugs Mission