

APPG for Prescribed Drug Dependence

Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting and Election of Officers

30 June 2015 at 16:00

Held at the TV Interview Room, House of Lords

Chair: Paul Flynn MP

Attendees: Lord Patel
Earl of Sandwich
Lord Crisp
Lord Luce
Dr James Davies (CEP)
Luke Montagu (CEP)
Harry Shapiro

1) Welcome and opening remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests to the first meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Prescribed Drug Dependence (APPG-PDD).

There was a discussion around the scope of the APPG-PDD, and it was agreed that the group would cover all psychoactive prescribed drugs, including psychiatric drugs and painkillers. Harry Shapiro noted his particular experience and interest in opioid painkillers, and it was agreed that his input in this area would be most useful. Harry Shapiro further agreed that he would create a briefing note on opioid dependence to be circulated to members.

2) Election of Officers and list of supporters

The following officers were duly elected:

Chairman: Paul Flynn MP (Lab)
Co-chair: Lord Patel of Bradford
Co-chair: David Tredinnick MP (Con)
Co-chair: Baroness Masham of Ilton
Co-chair: Earl of Sandwich

In addition to the attendees, it was noted that the following MPs and Peers have indicated that they will be supporters of the APPG-PDD:

Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Mark Durkan MP
Liz McInnes MP
Emily Thornberry MP
Lord Glentoran

Baroness Goudie
Lord Mancroft
Lord Haworth
Baroness Finlay
Baroness Hollins
Baroness Murphy
Lord Jones of Cheltenham

3) Appointment of Secretariat

Dr James Davies and Luke Montagu from CEP, the Council for Evidence-based Psychiatry, gave a short introduction to their organisation.

It was agreed that CEP would provide Secretariat services to the APPG-PDD, with support from Harry Shapiro, to include mailing list management, meeting organisation, press releases, media communications and the set up of a website. In addition, it was agreed that CEP would also complete the form for registration of APPGs, and return this to Paul Flynn's office for approval and submission.

It was noted that Dr Alison Tierney will be the main point of contact between the APPG-PDD and CEP, and that she was sorry not to be attend today due to illness.

4) Review of description of the APPG, its mission statement and objectives

CEP presented a briefing note which included a proposed description, mission statement and objectives for the APPG-PDD. Lord Crisp suggested an amendment to one of the objectives, and it was agreed that these would be adopted as follows:

The APPG for Prescribed Drug Dependence (PDD) will address the growing problem of dependency on prescribed medication. Increasing numbers of prescriptions for addictive, psychoactive drugs are being given to both adults and children, including benzodiazepines, antidepressants, antipsychotics, stimulants and painkillers. While these drugs may help some people in the short term, there is growing evidence that long-term use leads to worse outcomes, and many patients report devastating persistent withdrawal and other negative effects. The APPG will engage with this issue by demanding appropriate services for those affected, proper training for medical professionals, reduced prescribing through adherence to new and existing guidelines, better data regarding the prevalence of PDD and more research into long-term harms associated with PDD.

Mission statement

"The APPG for PDD will recognise, address and reduce the harm caused by prescribed drug dependence"

Objectives

- 1) To raise awareness of PDD by communicating the latest evidence to parliament, government and other policymakers*
- 2) To ensure that the evidence is supported by appropriate research and analysis, including into long-term harm*
- 3) To ensure appropriate withdrawal and support services are provided for those affected by PDD*
- 4) To improve training and awareness of PDD among medical professionals*
- 5) To reduce prescribing by ensuring adherence to existing guidelines, and through the creation of new guidelines where needed*

5) Future meetings and activities

It was agreed that the APPG-PDD would meet at least three times a year, and that the next meeting will be scheduled in October. It was further agreed that joint meetings would sometimes be held with other APPGs where there is a relevant overlap of interests. Outside speakers would be invited to present evidence to these meetings. It was noted that the OPD Alliance has been in touch requesting attendance at a future meeting, and it was agreed that in general contributions from relevant external organisations would be welcomed.

It was also noted that there may still be an opportunity for the APPG-PDD to provide evidence to the Mental Health Taskforce which will publish a strategy for NHS England in the autumn. It was agreed that Lord Patel would make contact with the chair of the Taskforce, Paul Farmer of MIND, to establish if this is possible, and that, if appropriate, CEP could adapt its briefing note as an evidence submission.

It was noted that, as part of its planning, the APPG-PDD should review upcoming policy windows in order to maximise the impact of its work.

6) AOB

There being no other business, the meeting closed.