

Minutes

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer

Officers meeting

Thursday 25th March 2021, 10-11.30am, virtual meeting via Zoom meeting.
Chaired by Tonia Antoniazzi MP, APPGC Chair.

Attendees

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Derek Twigg MP
Navendu Mishra MP
Grahame Morris MP
Baroness Masham
Baroness Morgan
Mark Tami MP
Amy Callaghan MP
Rachel Hopkins MP
Sharon Hodgson MP
Baroness Finlay
Baroness Walmsley

Maria Herron
Joshua Price

Office of Sharon Hodgson MP
Office of Tim Farron MP
Office of Christian Wakeford

Andy McGuinness
Bekki Smiddy
Emma Stevenson
Tatiana Sherwood
Jennifer Green
Eve Byrne

Secretariat, APPG on Cancer
Secretariat, APPG on Cancer
Secretariat, APPG on Cancer
Secretariat, APPG on Cancer
Secretariat, APPG on Cancer
Secretariat, APPG on Cancer

Natasha Marisa
Lara Montgomery

Expert by experience
Expert by experience

Heather
Kate Sanger
Emily Waller
Aidan Rylatt
Ryan Stalley
Alison Railton
Anna Champness
Laura Challinor

CRUK
Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust
Pancreatic Cancer UK
Less Survivable Taskforce
Target Ovarian Cancer
MNDA
Breast Cancer Now
Blood Cancer UK

Apologies

Lord Rennard
Craig Tracey MP
Tim Farron MP
Steve Brine MP
Henry Smith MP

Thangam Debbonaire MP
Nicola Richards MP

Minutes

1. Welcome from Chair of the APPGC (5 mins)

The Chair thanked the Officers for joining the meeting, and read out apologies received.

The Chair acknowledged the difficulties of the past year, and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

2. Minutes from AGM – 11 February 2020 (5 mins)

The Chair then ran through the Minutes of the previous AGM – the AGM, 11 February 2020.

There were no objections to the Minutes from Officers present, and no objections made to the Chair or Secretariat prior to the meeting.

3. Re-election of APPG on Cancer Vice-Chairs and Members (10 mins)

The Secretariat then addressed the question of elections, and discussed who had asked to become or remain a Vice-Chair.

There were no objections to any elections or re-elections of the Chair or Vice-Chairs. The APPG on Cancer has therefore elected the following members:

Tonia Antoniazzi (Chair) (Labour)
Lord Rennard (Treasurer) (Liberal Democrat)

Vice Chairs: Grahame Morris (Labour), Amy Callaghan (Scottish National Party), Nicola Richards (Conservative), Baroness Masham (Crossbencher), Baroness Morgan (Crossbencher), Baroness Walmsley (Liberal Democrat), Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat), Craig Tracey (Conservative), Navendu Mishra (Labour), Elliot Colburn (Conservative), Sharon Hodgson (Labour), Henry Smith (Conservative), Baroness Finlay (Crossbencher)

4. APPG on Cancer Accounts (5 mins)

The Secretariat then ran through the Group's accounts for the year, and explained that these had been signed off the previous week by the Treasurer, Lord Rennard. There were no questions, and the accounts were approved.

5. APPG on Cancer priorities and proposed workplan (15 mins)

The Secretariat talked the group through the proposed workplan for the year, which had been shared in advance.

The APPG on Cancer will focus on the following activities in 2021. This does not mean the APPGC will not engage in activity that supports additional policy areas, reactive work, or campaigns beyond these three areas, however our proactive influencing activity will be dictated by these priorities.

1. Addressing the backlog in cancer diagnosis, care and treatment
2. The Cancer Workforce
3. Financial Cost of Cancer

The planned workplan for the group includes two meetings with Jo Churchill MP, Stakeholder Group meetings each parliamentary term and an event on the Cancer Workforce in November.

The Group approved the workplan and priorities, with no amendments. Several Group members also expressed interest in other areas which they would like to consider alongside the main priorities. These were as follows:

- Mark Tami MP- the financial and mental health impact of cancer, on the person diagnosed and their family
- Baroness Morgan- access to drugs for cancer patients
- Baroness Masham- how many people have sadly died from cancer after delays to their treatment
- Navendu Mishra MP- the postcode lottery

The Secretariat offered to meet with any members who wished to discuss their priorities and areas of concern.

6. Panel Discussion and Q&A

(45 mins)

The Chair then chaired a thought-provoking panel on the current situation facing the cancer system.

Eve Byrne from the secretariat updated the Group on how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted cancer care. She noted that Macmillan Cancer Support estimate 37,000 people missed their first treatments for cancer between March 2020 and January 2021. If the NHS were to operate at 110% of pre-pandemic levels, it would take 15 months to clear this backlog. Eve reminded the group that behind each statistic was a personal story, as the Group would hear from the other panellists. She also thanked the Group for their time in lobbying the Government and the NHS, which had enabled the drop in treatments to be reduced from its worse point in April, but clarified that there was still much to be done.

Natasha Marisa and Lara Montgomery then shared their personal stories of living with cancer, and how the pandemic had affected them and their families. They both spoke about how delayed treatments had negatively impacted their care and outlook, the difficulties of hearing devastating news via the phone in the absence of face-to-face appointments, and how difficult it is not to be with their families during these times.

The Chair thanked Natasha and Lara for powerfully sharing their experiences so openly.

The Chair then started the discussion by asking Tonia and Lara what the Government could do differently.

Natasha said the Government could allow those living with cancer to be with their families when they need it, including during treatment. She drew a comparison with childcare bubbles.

Lara said they could raise awareness of the problems currently faced by those living with cancer during the pandemic, which are not always highlighted by Government statistics.

Grahame Morris MP spoke about the difficulties faced in holding the Government and NHS to account, which were echoed by the Secretariat. Grahame discussed with the panellists what could be done to address this, and bring individual stories to life.

Baroness Masham thanked the panellists for their time and expressed concern about the shortage of radiographers and radiologists.

Baroness Morgan highlighted the importance of having data about the full patient journey, rather than focusing solely on getting people into the system.

Baroness Finlay concurred with concerns regarding the workforce. She also called for more personalised care, with patients able to access treatment over longer hours, and have access to their own data.

Sharon Hodgson MP shared her concern on the North-South divide in the treatment of Ovarian Cancer. She updated the Group on the work she has been doing as the Chair of the APPG on Ovarian Cancer to push for an Ovarian Cancer specialist centre in the North East, in collaboration with local MPs, Asima Mukhopadhyay of Gateshead Hospital and Saladin Sawan of South Tees Hospital. Maria Herron offered to provide more details to those interested.

The secretariat thanked the Group for sharing their concerns and echoed these, especially around workforce, personalised care and holding the Government and NHS to account. The secretariat highlighted that these issues would be addressed in meetings across the coming year.

As there was no other business, the Chair thanked all Officers and stakeholders present for their time.