

Minutes for APPG on Dementia: Annual General Meeting

Meeting held virtually at 4.00pm on 10th February 2021

Meeting chaired by: Debbie Abrahams MP

In attendance: Debbie Abrahams MP (Co-Chair); Baroness Greengross (Co-Chair); Marie Rimmer MP (Vice-Chair); Simon Baynes MP (Vice-Chair); Judith Cummins MP (Vice-Chair); Dr James Davies MP (Vice-Chair); Jeremy Wright MP (Vice-Chair); Lord Tebbit; Baroness Murphy; Lord Best; Rachael Maskell MP; Lord Colgrain; Tracy Brabin MP; Greg Smith MP; Jordan Clark* (Alzheimer's Society); Tom Redfearn* (Alzheimer's Society); James White* (Alzheimer's Society); Dan Simpson* (Alzheimer's Society); Office of Steve Bonnar MP*; Office of Dr Lisa Cameron MP*.

Those present denoted with * are not entitled to vote.

Apologies: Diane Abbott MP; Paul Girvan MP; Andrew Rosindell MP; Kerry McCarthy MP; Baroness Finlay; Baroness Ritchie; Office of Steve Double MP; Dr Lisa Cameron MP

4.00pm Meeting opened

- The Chair opened the meeting and thanked those in attendance for joining.

Election of Officers

- Lord Colgrain asked the Chair if members of the House of Lords can serve as Officers of the APPG. The Chair said that she hoped members from both Houses would serve as Officers and involve themselves in the APPGs work.
- a) **Co-Chairs:** Debbie Abrahams MP proposed herself and Baroness Greengross as Co-Chairs of the APPG. Seconded by Rachael Maskell MP. Both were elected unanimously.
- b) **Vice-Chairs:** Marie Rimmer MP, Simon Baynes MP, Judith Cummins MP, Dr James Davies, and Jeremy Wright MP proposed themselves as Vice-Chairs. Debbie Abrahams MP proposed Mark Menzies MP, Elliot Colburn MP, Baroness Finlay, Dr Lisa Cameron MP, and Baroness Ritchie as Vice-Chairs in their absence. Seconded by Rachael Maskell MP. All were elected unanimously.

APPG Work in 2020

- The Chair shared a summary of the APPG's work in 2020. The Chair shared that the APPG's work had been disrupted by the pandemic but that they had:
 - i) Held a small inquiry session investigating the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on people affected by dementia.
 - ii) The Chair also led a Westminster Hall debate in November 2020 on Covid-19 and Dementia.
- The Chair highlighted the effects that social isolation has had on people with dementia and that they had raised this with the Minister for Social Care at the Westminster Hall debate.

APPG Work in 2021

- The Chair proposed that the APPG would be looking to hold 3 inquiries throughout the year investigating the following topics.
 - i) **Dementia Moonshot:** The Chair shared that the Government have committed to increase dementia research funding and that the Group will hold an inquiry investigating the state of dementia research in the UK and the need for the Dementia Moonshot.
 - ii) **Social Care reform:** The Chair said that the Government should soon bring forward proposals for social care reform and that the APPG would be holding an inquiry to investigate these proposals and ensure that the needs of people with dementia are represented.
 - iii) **Dementia and Covid-19:** The Chair reiterated the impact the pandemic has had on people with dementia and their families and stated that the inquiry would be a good opportunity to evaluate the effects of the pandemic on people with dementia and what support is needed to help them recover.
- The Chair then opened to comments from the Group.
- Jeremy Wright MP said that it was important that dementia is seen as a health issue and not just a social care issue and this should be reflected in any work carried out. The Chair agreed.
- Rachael Maskell MP shared that there are concerns of the effects of the pandemic on the health of people with dementia, particularly that reduced social contact is leading to accelerated progression in people's dementia. Rachael said that any inquiry should investigate this further, including what support can be made available to help them recover from the pandemic. It was considered this would likely sit within the final proposed inquiry. The Chair agreed.
- Simon Baynes MP welcomed the topics of the suggested inquiries and shared that he valued the Westminster Hall debate in November and feels that it is a topic of particular importance to the public.
- Lord Tebbit raised the importance of ensuring that when issues like dementia research are discussed, the Group must ensure they include all types of dementia such as Lewy Body dementia. The Chair echoed this point.
- Tom Redfearn shared with the Group that Alzheimer's Society will be providing a bi-monthly regular update to APPG members on topics relevant to dementia to update them.

2021 Budget

- Ahead of the Budget in March 2021, the Chair proposed that the Group write to the Chancellor highlighting the need for the implementation of the Dementia Moonshot and social care reform.
- The Chair suggested circulating a letter amongst Officers before sending to the Chancellor. The Group agreed.

Other business

- Dr James Davies asked the Chair if there were any plans for the APPG to do any work around Brain Awareness Week, starting 11th March. The Chair said there were no plans but this would be considered. The Chair said that Alzheimer's Society do usually do something for Dementia Action Week.
- Tom Redfearn shared that Alzheimer's Society will be promoting actions around Coronavirus Action Day on March 1st, to highlight the effects the pandemic has had on people with dementia and their families – both in deaths and health effects.
- Lord Tebbit asked if it was known if the increased deaths in care homes care home residents were from Covid-19 or dementia. Tom Redfearn said that at the beginning of the pandemic it was clear from excess death data that Covid-19 was causing increased deaths. It has been harder to measure this now as the Government does not publish care home occupancy rates so the number of excess deaths is harder to calculate. The Group noted that care home occupancy rates should be published.
- Tom Redfearn shared with Group members the details of an upcoming “Zoom Surgery” that will be taking place at the end of February. The session will be an opportunity for Peers, MPs and their staff to hear updates on the pandemic and dementia. Alzheimer's Society would also be holding a ‘Coronavirus Action Day’ on 1st March in memory of the disproportionate number of people with dementia who had lost their lives to the virus and looking ahead to what can be done to best support those with dementia adversely affected by the pandemic. Alzheimer's Society would provide further information on this to members.
- The Chair asked attendees to show support for her constituent who had just rowed across the Atlantic to raise money for charity.

4.35 Meeting close

- The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.