



House of Commons

London SW1A 0AA

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss & The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health

16:00 – 18:00, Tuesday 18th July 2017

Commons Committee Room 15, House of Commons

Smokefree Skills: An assessment of maternity workforce training

MINUTES

Attendance

- Antoinette Sandbach MP - Cons
- Patricia Gibson MP - SNP
- Bob Blackman MP - Cons
- Sharon Hodgson MP - Lab
- Alex Cunningham MP – Lab
- Will Quince MP - Cons

Apologies: Lord Boswell, Victoria Prentis MP

There were also around 55 external guests, aside from the speakers below.

16:00 AGMs

The APPG on Baby Loss held its AGM, chaired by Antoinette Sandbach MP. In attendance for quoracy were:

- Antoinette Sandbach MP - Cons
- Patricia Gibson MP - SNP
- Bob Blackman MP - Cons
- Sharon Hodgson MP - Lab
- Alex Cunningham MP - Lab

The following officers were proposed:

Co-Chairs: Antoinette Sandbach MP (Cons), Will Quince MP (Cons)

Vice-Chairs: Sharon Hodgson MP (Lab), Patricia Gibson MP (SNP), Victoria Prentis MP (Cons)

The officers were seconded and approved by the parliamentarians in attendance.

Antoinette detailed the financial statement for the APPG on Baby Loss, which outlined the Group had no income or expenditure for its reporting period, but the total value of benefits in kind received fell into the band of £15,001 - £16,001. These benefits-in-kind were chiefly the value of the secretariat support provided by the Lullaby Trust and the organisation and delivery of the Baby Loss Awareness Week event last October by the Lullaby Trust and other charities. The financial statement was proposed, seconded and approved by the parliamentarians in attendance.

Finally, Antoinette nominated The Lullaby Trust to continue providing the secretariat support, which was seconded and approved.

The AGM for the APPG on Baby Loss was completed. Bob Blackman commenced the AGM for APPG on Smoking and Health. All nominations for officers were proposed and acceptances.

16:15 Welcome from Chair of APPG on Smoking and Health

Bob Blackman introduced the meeting, and welcomed the attendees. He also welcomed the publication of the government tobacco control plan, the Smokefree Skills report, as well as the ongoing support of the Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group.

16.20 Francine Bates, Chief Executive of Lullaby Trust and Co-Chair of Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group

Bob introduced Francine Bates, who said that the group was set up in 2011 in response to the then new Tobacco Control Plan to look at how to implement this plan. The target set out in the original plan was achieved, which was laudable, but there is still more work to do to convince all pregnant women to stop smoking. Smoking is one of the biggest controllable factors in sudden infant deaths, as well as other forms of baby death such as stillbirth.

Francine outlined that there is a huge amount of activity going on, but it is vital for all stakeholders (to include all relevant perspectives and expertise) to come together to keep pushing for better policy and strategy.

16.25 Dr Misha Moore, Report Author, Action on Smoking and Health

Bob introduced Dr Misha Moore to give an overview of the report. Dr Moore is a Public Health Registrar and Specialist Registrar Obstetrics and Gynaecology. This report is the result of a training needs assessment for professionals involved in maternity, including a wide-ranging stakeholder engagement process. There were three key findings:

- across the board, professionals felt that smoking was a key issue
- given this importance, professionals felt that training on smoking should be embedded, and often thought it was, though it usually was not, or was only optional, within curricula

- there is no way to mandate training across the board for professionals

In short, midwives and obstetricians both want and need more training, but there is no single answer to provide this training. We need a multi-system approach to address this need.

Selected recommendations from the report included:

1. Ensure that training related to addressing smoking in pregnancy is promoted at a national level in particular through current mechanisms such as the Maternity Transformation Programme by NHS England/Public Health England
2. Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to include training to address smoking in pregnancy in the specialty training curriculum which is currently being reviewed
3. Smoking in Pregnancy Challenge Group and its members must continue to advocate for a fully trained maternity workforce with respect to addressing smoking in pregnancy.

The full report and a summary are available at: <http://ash.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Smokefree-skills-an-assessment-of-maternity-workforce-training.pdf>

16.40 Panel Discussion

The report was discussed by a panel of experts with contributions from the two APPGs' members and members from the floor, and moderated by Will Quince MP, Co-Chair of the APPG on Baby Loss. The panel consisted of:

- Professor Janice Rymer, Vice-President, Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Cathy Warwick, Chief Executive, Royal College of Midwives
- Professor Viv Bennett, Chief Nurse and Smokefree Pregnancy Champion, Public Health England
- Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Head of Maternity, Children and Young People and Smokefree Pregnancy Champion, NHS England

All panel members were supportive of the report's findings and recommendations. Key issues discussed following questions from the parliamentarians and audience included:

- bringing the voice of the mother into the conversation
- securing support for mums who work away from their home and local GP
- role of midwives in coordinating care
- improving difficult-to-access services, rather than purely a focus on 'hard-to-reach' communities
- promoting generic professional capabilities to disseminate good practice
- carbon monoxide measurement, and importance of looking at living arrangements when measuring carbon monoxide, given the risks associated with poor quality housing
- neonatal staff and how they could play a role in reducing smoking
- saving lives care bundle
- application of NICE guidelines

17.15 Steve Brine MP, Public Health Minister

The Public Health Minister gave an update on the Department of Health's new Tobacco Control Plan, published today, and responded to the recommendations of the report.

The Minister thanked the APPGs for inviting him, and lauded the commitment of their colleagues. Health has always been a passion for him, and he said that it was great to see his colleagues working with equal passion.

The Minister said that tobacco is one of the biggest causes of health problems and inequality in England. In turn, the Tobacco Control Plan is about tackling cancer and the causes of cancer. Smoking rates are down to their lowest level in England ever, achieved through world-leading public health measures over decades. But there is much more to do, and we must go further - particularly with groups where smoking makes the biggest impact, including with new mums. The key ambition relevant to pregnancy is to reduce the incidence of smoking in pregnancy from 10.5% to 6% or less by 2020. He welcomed the Smokefree Skills report, and said this was exceptionally well-timed - he and his team will pore over this report in the weeks to come. The Minister said that he was very optimistic of both meeting and exceeding the targets the Tobacco Control Plan sets.

The Minister thanked the Groups and the report author again.

The Plan is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england>

17.25 Sharon Hodgson MP, Shadow Public Health Minister

The Shadow Minister gave the Opposition's viewpoint on the government's plans for tobacco control, and responded to the recommendations of the report.

The Shadow Minister started by thanking the Minister for publishing the Plan, and said that this Plan was an example of good cross-party working. If the next aim is to find some funding to make the amazing ambitions a reality, then she will be fully supportive. The Minister responded that the government is working with local authorities, with £16bn of public health spend which will be ringfenced over the next period. Part of the approach will be to focus this funding on areas of the greatest need.

The Shadow Minister thanked both APPGs for convening this meeting, and to Dr Moore and the other panelists. She said that she was in agreement with the presentations provided. The evidence on the impact of smoking in pregnancy is clear, for instance 1 in 5 stillbirths are associated with smoking. It is not just mothers' responsibility, but partners' too - the risk of secondhand smoke is also well established.

After pushing Steve Brine's Public Health Minister predecessors to publish a tobacco control plan, she was very pleased to see the Plan from the Minister and impressed with the content. The funding challenge remains; we do not want to see the ambitious plans hobbled by lack of funding.

Among other key elements from the Smokefree Skills report welcomed by the Shadow Minister, she highlighted the crucial point about making 'every contact count' to stopping or reducing smoking.

The Shadow Minister thanked the Minister and the Groups again.

Bob Blackman formally closed the meeting.

17.25 Networking

There was an opportunity for the guests to continue the discussion informally after the end of the meeting business.

18.00 Close

Date of next meeting of APPG on Baby Loss: Tuesday 11th September,
4pm - 6pm

Date of next meeting of APPG on Smoking and Health: date TBC