

**REMOTE AND RURAL GENERAL PRACTICE SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP
MINUTE OF MEETING
Tuesday 12 June 2018
BMA Offices, 14 Queen Street, Edinburgh 14.00 – 16.00**

Chair:

Professor Sir Lewis Ritchie (LR) – Chair, Scottish Government

Present:

Dr Jonathan Ball (JB), GP (Highland)
Dr Hugh Brown (HB), GP (Ayrshire & Arran)
Dr Paul Davidson (PD), NHS Highland Associate Medical Director
Fiona Duff (FD), Senior Rural Advisor, Scottish Government
Richard Foggo (RF), Deputy Director and Head of Primary Care Division, Scottish Government
Dr Alan McDevitt (AM), Chair, Scottish General Practitioners Committee, BMA
Dr Brian Michie (BM), GP, (Western Isles)
Joyce Robinson (JR), Argyll and Bute Primary Care Lead
Dr Chris Williams (CW), RCGP Scotland

Secretariat:

Hilary Lagha (HL) – secretariat, Scottish Government
Joseph McKeown (JM), Scottish Government

Video link:

Dr Charles Dunnett (CD), GP (Dumfries & Galloway)
Pamela Gowans (PG), Chief Officer, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership
Dr David Hogg (DH), Chair, Rural GP Association of Scotland (RGPAS)
Dr Denise McFarlane (DM), GP (Grampian)
Ralph Roberts (RR), Chief Executive, NHS Shetland
Dr Emma Watson (EW), Health Workforce, Scottish Government
Dr Tony Wilkinson (TW), GP (Orkney)

Apologies

Dr Andrew Buist, Deputy Chair, Scottish General Practitioners Committee
Liam Kearney, Implementation Policy Lead, Scottish Government
Dr John Nugent, Senior Medical Adviser, Scottish Government
Niamh O'Connor, Head of Implementation, Scottish Government

Welcome and introductions

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair extended an offer to meet, or engage with, all members of the group either individually or with their representative organisations and stakeholders, in order to better facilitate the group's work.
2. The group acknowledged the importance that its work be open and transparent, and recognised the need to balance this against discussing confidential or sensitive matters. The secretariat will ensure papers are marked as either for

sharing or sensitive. Papers for sharing may be circulated among the organisations the group members represent, and sensitive papers should not. The group agreed that communications to the wider public would be managed by the whole group using a communications strategy. Requests for factual information, such as from journalists, should be directed to the Scottish Government.

- Action - Scottish Government to develop Communications Strategy for group.

Context of meeting: journey to this point

3. The Chair acknowledged there are issues to be addressed around the implementation of the new GMS contract in rural areas and invited RF and AM to lead a discussion on this item.
4. The group recognised that there is no one size fits all solution to the disparate issues affecting rural areas, and noted that many of the issues affecting rural general practice, particularly Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) workforce challenges, are not isolated to rural areas but in fact exist across Scotland and the whole of the UK. Responsibility for implementing the contract locally lies with Integration Authorities and NHS Territorial Boards, and the Scottish Government has a role in setting the strategic direction of primary care and setting the legislative framework underpinning the commissioning of primary care services by HSCPs and delivered by NHS Boards.
5. DH highlighted the concerns of RGPAS members who have expressed clear anxieties about the implementation of the new contract, and the uncertainty created by the challenge of effective implementation in rural areas. This view was shared by other members in the group, including members from Orkney and Shetland adding that Rural GPs who experience recruitment and workforce challenges directly are concerned about agreeing with Primary Care Improvement Plans based on expanding the MDT.
6. The group agreed with DH's view that its role should include exploring how to solve rural MDT challenges as a means to support delivery of the contract in rural areas. The group will consider and agree options to do this including feasibility studies of rural workforce models against the service work streams in the Memorandum of Understanding, pilots and tests of change, and commissioned work.
7. The group also discussed how it could consider funding for rural areas. While the remit of the group does not extend to renegotiating the present funding arrangements in the new contract (see Terms of Reference paper), the group considered ways to support implementation by exploring the issues emerging from the application of the new funding model. It was specifically noted, as an example, that Primary Care Improvement Funds are dispersed using the NRAC formula, which has itself historically been the subject of debate on its suitability for use in rural areas.

Discussion on ways of working and terms of Reference

8. The Chair led a discussion on the *Terms of Reference*. The group agreed with the Terms of Reference with the exception of the amendments described.
9. The group agreed on the delivery of an annual report, but also recognised that it is likely it will be asked to comment on specific matters from time to time. The group agreed to consider such requests as and when required, within the context that advice is offered to the Scottish Government and SGPC as negotiators of the GMS Contract.
 - ACTION: Scottish Government to redraft Terms of Reference along lines discussed and reissue to group for consideration. Amendments and resulting actions are:
 - Paragraph 4: 'can' to be changed to 'should'
 - To note that specialist expertise will be invited to participate as and when required.
 - To invite a patient representative to take part in the group.
 - Paragraph 5: merge points 3 and 4, retaining phase 1 language and to include mention of health boards alongside other stakeholders.
 - In 'Deliverables' section, add a line in paragraph 7 emphasising the group's role in sharing information and best practice with the wider stakeholder community. Secretariat to share members contact info (emails addresses) to support early discussions.
 - 'Deliverables' to clarify that advice from this group informs negotiations between SG/SGPC.
 - Group agreed on an annual publication of its work.
 - The document should promote interactive discussion between members. The Scottish Government will consider ways to support this as an on-going action.
 - The group agreed that 3 monthly meetings would be a guide but that more frequent meetings may be held.
 - The group agreed that the next meeting to be held in Inverness. Highland colleagues offered to support organising this.
 - The group agreed that it is not necessary to travel extensively for the group, with the importance being on ensuring options for TC/VC flexibility to maximise member participation, and this should be emphasised in the document.
 - The document should clearly indicate that the Scottish Government will meet the costs of participation in the group as this should not be a limiting factor for any members.
 - Paragraph 33, 'engagement with wider networks' - a diagram is to be added showing the policy/governance/oversight landscape of groups, with descriptions of the purpose and membership of each group. To be shared before next meeting.
10. The group agreed to develop a risk register document for its programme of work as a means of capturing the specific concerns of groups represented by the members.

- ACTION – Scottish Government to prepare a Risk Register Document based on the group's agreed programme of work.

AOB

11. The Chair has offered to meet, and engage with, members of the group and their representative organisations or stakeholders. The Chair will begin contacting individual members to discuss issues.

- ACTION – Secretariat to arrange meetings with individual members.

12. DH invited the group to note that action is needed to address the concerns of some rural GPs, as highlighted in the Rural GP Association for Scotland's publication [*Looking at the Right Map*](#). The Chair recognised this and noted that many of the organisations represented within the group have concerns that they will wish to see addressed as a priority. To this end, the Chair invited all members to provide a note of their views on what the key issues, risks and threats to implementation are that the group should be dealing with, as well as suggestions on possible solutions and opportunities.

13. This will provide a basis for a work plan for the group and products commissioned by the group including a Rural FAQ document. The Chair will discuss this developing work with members individually, and help to facilitate discussion within the group, on these matters ahead of the next meeting.

- ACTION – All members to submit note of key priorities, challenges and solutions by 26th June.

14. The group agreed to meet again in September 2018.

- ACTION - The secretariat will take forward arranging a programme of meetings.

END OF MEETING